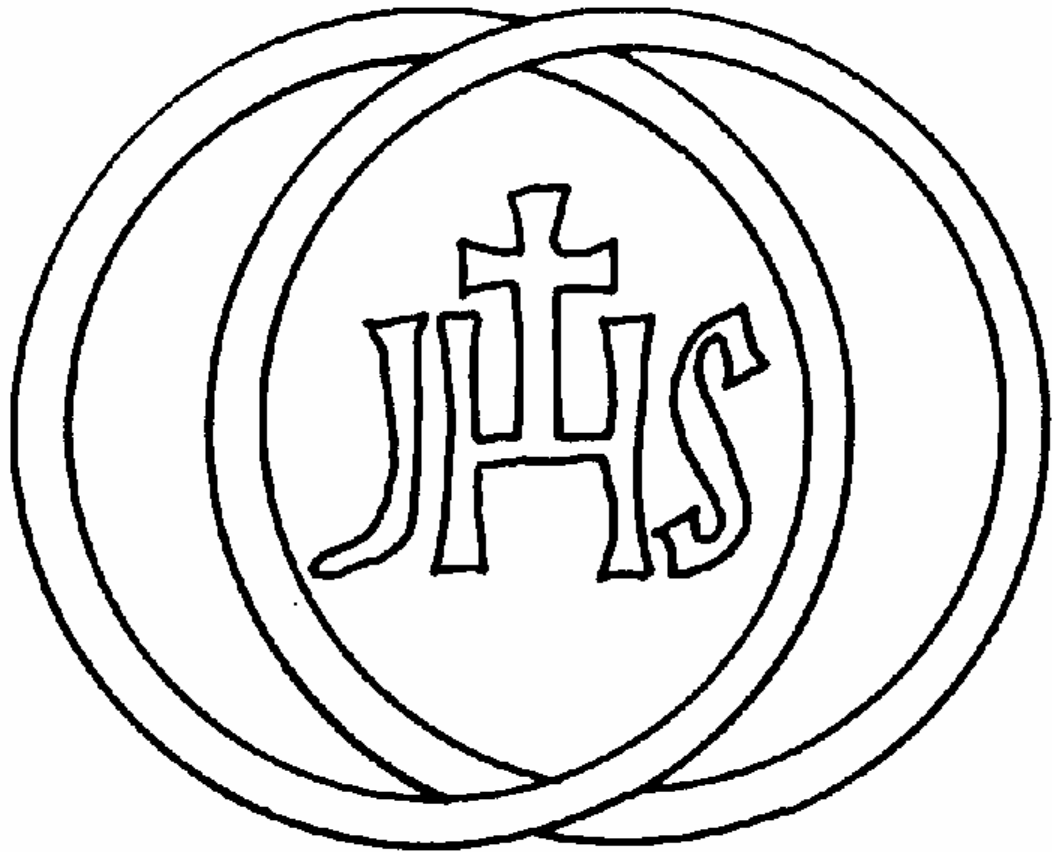


**Weddings at Saint Luke's Lutheran Church
Colorado Springs, Colorado
Policies and Guidelines**



The Holy Estate of Christian Marriage

Marriage is a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman. In marriage, two persons become “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19 4-6; Mark 10:6-9; Ephesians 5:31), a personal and sexual union that embodies God’s loving purpose to create and enrich life. By the gift of marriage, God “founded human community in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come.”

Christians yearn for marriages that are loving and life-giving. In the intimacy of marriage, spouses can learn to share feelings and fears, to listen deeply, and to respect the differences of the other. Being loved and accepted by God helps them to love and accept one another. Rather than one dominating the other, each spouse seeks to empower and encourage the other.

From the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Message on Marriage, November 9, 1996

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in having your wedding at Saint Luke's Lutheran Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Due to the large number of requests we receive for weddings, it has become necessary to develop a written statement regarding the process of preparing for a wedding at Saint Luke's, and to state the specific policies relating to weddings within this congregation. As you read through this booklet, our hope is that many of your questions will be answered. Certainly, not every possible issue is covered, but we have made an effort to address the most common questions.

Who May Have a Wedding at Saint Luke's?

Although we want to welcome all people to our church, many request use of a church for a wedding simply based on "appearance"; they like the looks of the place and think it would make a good "setting" or "backdrop" for their photos. In our Lutheran understanding, a marriage is a "Rite" of the Church of Jesus Christ, as those entering into the holy estate of matrimony come to their church home to ask God's blessing upon their relationship. Those who do not take seriously their Christian faith (or have no Christian involvement whatsoever!) are encouraged to have their marriage performed by a judge, through the civil marriage system. We encourage people to consider, "If one is not involved with the Church of Jesus Christ in an intentional, committed way, why would one want to have His blessing on their marriage?" Certainly, marriage within the Church may be an intentional beginning to lives lived in faith and commitment. If this is the case, we want to encourage and upbuild that intention. However, please be aware that requests for weddings at Saint Luke's where the bride and groom are not members of this church, and who have no connection to any congregation are not often approved. A request may be made, but with the understanding that these requests are not usually approved. Friends and family members of Saint Luke's congregants are, of course, welcome, and those who are active members of other congregations who are in special circumstances (i.e. have family in Colorado Springs, have difficulty with the annulment process in their own tradition, etc.) are certainly welcome to request having a wedding at Saint Luke's.

How Early Should We Begin the Process?

Those who desire to be married at Saint Luke's should contact the church office as soon as possible to inquire regarding date, availability of the pastor/musicians/building. You will also receive important information about pre-marital counseling (discussed later), cost, etc. Six months in advance is not too early to notify the church office of your intentions. If you know the date of your wedding a year in advance, contacting the church office at that time will help to secure the date you want for your wedding. Contacting the church or the pastor too late may result in not being able to have your wedding at Saint Luke's.

What is Pre-marital Counseling?

Marriage is a serious commitment, and one that brings with it unusual strains, pressures, and difficulties, along with joy, blessings and fulfillment. Because the Church of Jesus Christ views the marriage bond as a life-long commitment, we encourage those considering marriage to look honestly at themselves, their relationship, and strengths, as well as areas for growth. At Saint Luke's, as in most Christian congregations, we require that this happen through "pre-marital counseling". This involves several sessions with a licensed marriage and family counselor. The pastor or church office will provide you with one or two names of counselors, if you desire. However, if you have a counselor you would prefer to use, that is encouraged as well. The couple should contact the counselor as early as possible, arrange a time for meeting, and begin the process. Counselors charge an hourly fee, that the couple pay as agreed with the counselor. Some counselors may work with a sliding fee scale, if cost is an issue. Consider this the most valuable money spent in preparation for your wedding. We suggest parents or family might consider covering the cost of "premarital counseling" as their gift to the couple. The usual number of premarital sessions is three, however this is up to the counselor and couple to decide. The usual hourly fee is \$70-\$100.

Don't Pastors Often Provide Pre-Marital Counseling?

In the past, many clergy offered pre-marital counseling. It is our firm belief that couples who work with a licensed marriage and family counselor receive a more valuable, in depth pre-marital experience. If you have a pastor friend or home pastor that you would like to use for pre-marital counseling, that would be acceptable. It is not appropriate to do pre-marital counseling with a close relative (father, mother, brother, sister, grandparent) who is a pastor or counselor.

How Do We Plan the Marriage Service?

Although the bride and groom are the ones making their marriage commitment, above everything else, the marriage service is a service of worship in which the bridal party and invited guests are worshipers. The service is a glad service overflowing with joy, and those who participate in this service focus on God, His presence, and His many gifts. For this reason, the marriage service will normally follow the form found as an appendix in this booklet. This service utilizes the richness of the Lutheran tradition within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. It encourages participation of all present, ensures the integrity of the service, and provides the needed structure. The service is designed to present a variety of options, suggestions and possibilities. Bear in mind, however, as Christian marriage is a "rite" of the church, the pastor is the final authority regarding the service, music, decorations, worship furnishings and articles.

May the Marriage Service Include Holy Communion?

When those being married are members of this congregation (bride and/or groom), or are active Christians in another congregation, the marriage service may be placed within the Holy Communion, so that the Lord's Supper may be celebrated as part of the service. Doing so enhances and makes vivid the wedding imagery of the Eucharist and the eucharistic intimacy of marriage. The bride and groom, family members or friends may be used as communion assistants, heightening the special nature of the Lord's Supper as a gift for all present. When the Holy Communion is celebrated as part of a marriage it is always open to the congregation, and never restricted to only the bride and groom or wedding party.

Who Selects the Scripture Lessons and Vows for the Marriage Service?

The bride and groom, working in consultation with the pastor, are encouraged to select the passages from Scripture that they would like read at the wedding. A list of some appropriate passages is included as an appendix to this booklet. One, two or three Scripture lessons may be read. Also included as an appendix are several vows from which the couple may choose. The vows are the words that the bride and groom will speak to make their commitment to each other, before God and the witnesses gathered. Choose the vow that best reflects your thoughts and feelings about your relationship. If you would like to combine certain parts of one vow with another, the pastor will assist you. You may also choose to write your own vows, however, speak with the pastor about this early on to receive guidance, so that your vows will reflect the mutuality, commitment and life-long intentions that must be a part of marriage vows.

How Do We Select A Musician and Music?

Most weddings include music in some form, whether organ or piano, vocal soloist, guitar or flute. Almost any instrument may be used within the marriage service. The first decision to be made is what musician(s) you would like to use. If you have a friend or relative you would like to use, you may do so, making certain they are competent and comfortable playing for a wedding. The congregation does have competent musicians who may be available to play/sing for weddings. The church office will provide you with their names, should you desire them. You should contact musicians as early as possible to see if they are available, and what they charge. You are responsible for payment, and should bring a check made out to the musician(s) for the proper amount, to the rehearsal. The pastor will hold the check for the musician(s) until after the wedding. This assures the musician(s) are paid in a timely fashion and are not "forgotten" in the excitement after the wedding. We discourage the use of CD's and taped music, although this may be discussed with the pastor. Regarding the selection of music: keep in mind the marriage service is a service

of worship, and if there is music, it must be carefully and discriminatingly chosen. It should embody high standards of quality and the texts should reflect the praise of God, the steadfast love of Christ for His Church as the foundation and model for love and fidelity in marriage, the invocation of God's presence and blessings. Consequently, much popular music is not appropriate. Again, the pastor should be consulted early about choice of music, and is the final authority regarding which music may be used within the marriage service in this church.

May We Have Our Service Without Music?

Music is not required for weddings. Many simple services without music are beautiful, dignified and memorable. You may choose whether to have music or not, at your wedding, as you wish.

Is There a Rehearsal for the Wedding?

The rehearsal is normally scheduled for the evening prior to the service, and will be co-ordinated by the pastor. All musicians, attendants, parents and the bridal couple should be present. The rehearsal will last no more than an hour. It is important that all persons arrive and be ready to begin at the appointed time.

May We Have Other Clergy Perform Our Wedding at Saint Luke's?

Other Christian clergy may perform your wedding at Saint Luke's, with approval of the pastor of Saint Luke's. These clergy need not be Lutheran, however they must feel comfortable within the Lutheran church. They may not "rearrange" the church or chancel; the altar, pulpit, cross, etc., must remain in place. There must be respect for this congregation's worship space, worship practices and policies. The pastor of Saint Luke's is the final authority regarding all marriages that take place within our church building. Other clergy should contact the pastor of Saint Luke's as early as possible to discuss performing a wedding at Saint Luke's.

What Decorations May Be Used?

As mentioned above, the pastor is the final authority regarding decorations, flowers, etc. As a general rule, no flowers or plants or other decorations are ever allowed on the altar, or in front of the altar or pulpit **in such as way as to block or obscure the centrality of the altar and pulpit**. Flowers and plants may be placed in front of or around the altar and pulpit, so long as they do not block or obscure the centrality of the altar and pulpit. Again, the pastor will determine if the placement of flowers/plants is acceptable. Use of arches in front of the altar is discouraged. Bows or decoration may be taped to chairs at the aisles, within reason. Flowers or plants may be placed on the plant shelves on either side of the chancel. Cloth or plastic aisle runners may be used.

May We Use A Unity Candle?

Although a so-called "Unity Candle" is not a normal part of the wedding service, it may be included in the Rite of Marriage. You should purchase or rent the necessary articles, and bring them to the church for the rehearsal. The Unity Candle may be placed on the altar, with limited adornment. The Unity Candle-lighting usually takes place after the exchange of vows and rings. It is appropriate to have music during the lighting of the candle, however it is not required.

May We Throw Rice or Bird Seed?

No rice, bird seed or flower pedals may be thrown as the couple leaves the church. A viable option used by many couples today are the small vials of "bubbles" that may be blown "at" the couple. Flower petals scattered by flower girls during the procession up the aisle at the beginning of the marriage service are allowed.

May We Use the Atrium For A Reception?

Members (and in some circumstances family and personal friends of members) of the congregation may use the Atrium of the church for “cake” receptions after the service. A fee of \$150 is required to use the Atrium that covers cost of cleaning/set-up/clean-up. You may serve champagne, a sparkling cider punch, or a clear/lemon-lime punch. However no open bar, other alcohol or beverages are allowed. Members who would like to have a reception with food service may request use of the downstairs large west multi-purpose room. This room will seat no more than 50, persons, comfortably. The downstairs kitchen may be used for serving, if you are having a food reception in the downstairs multi-purpose room. Again, there is a \$150 fee, and if unusual cleaning is required, an additional charge may be made. Members who wish to use the Atrium or downstairs multi-purpose room and would be willing to clean and restore the rooms to original condition may request waiver of the \$150 fee. The church sexton must be consulted and will consider waiver of the fee. The building is not available for receptions of any kind by non-members.

What is the Church’s Policy Regarding Photography/Videography?

Photographs and videos may be taken as desired before the service begins and after the service has ended, including the procession and recession. During the service, photographs may be taken from the rear of the church, with no flash. Video cameras may be used from the rear of the church during the service, provided aisles are left clear and unobstructed.

May we Have a Printed Bulletin for our Wedding?

Depending on the complexity of the service, a simple order of worship printed on plain white paper may be provided by the church. If you choose to order special wedding bulletin folders with picture/print on the cover, you may do so at your expense. The church office may be able to do the preparation/printing, depending upon the size of the wedding. Please consult the pastor/church office regarding bulletins.

What is the Church’s Policy Regarding Smoking/Alcohol?

No smoking is allowed anywhere in the building or on the grounds at any time. Please inform guests/participants in this regard. If you are having a reception at the church, champagne/wine is allowed for the wedding toast. No other alcohol is allowed in the building or on the grounds at any time.

What are the Fees Related to Weddings at Saint Luke’s?

Security/damage deposit (<i>refundable after wedding</i>)	\$ 300
Use of church by members/friends/non-members:	\$ 150
Use of Atrium for cake reception by members	\$ 150
Use of downstairs multi-purpose room by members	\$ 150
Normal honoraria for minister:	\$ 150
Cost of pre-marital counseling: <i>As agreed upon: Normally \$70-\$100 per session</i>	
Normal honoraria for musicians: <i>As agreed upon: Normally \$100-\$200</i>	

When Should Fees Be Paid?

When you have completed the attached “Wedding Request Form”, submit the form, the check for security/damage deposit (\$ 300), and appropriate building use (made out to Saint Luke’s Lutheran Church) to the church office. If approved, your check will secure your wedding date. If not approved, your check will be returned to you. If, for some reason, you decide not to have your wedding at Saint Luke’s, your complete deposit/fee will be returned to you. After the wedding, if there is no damage/excessive wear/excessive cleaning, the \$300 deposit will be returned to you. The church pastor/sexton reserve the right to retain any portion, or all of the security/damage deposit at their discretion. The honoraria for musicians/minister should be placed in envelopes with appropriate names on them, and given to the pastor at the rehearsal. The pastor will distribute the check(s) after the wedding.

What Should We Do With the Marriage License?

Bring the marriage license with you to the rehearsal. The pastor will keep it until the wedding, and will organize the “signing”. After the wedding, the church office will complete the form and return it to the appropriate county office immediately. Please be sure to schedule an early, appropriate time to secure your marriage license. Bear in mind that the county office that handles licenses is closed evenings, weekends and holidays!

Adopted by Congregation Council, August 26, 2000

Wedding/Marriage Checklist with Regard to Saint Luke's Lutheran Church:

- ___ Receive and read Saint Luke's Wedding Policy Booklet
- ___ Complete Wedding Request Form and submit to church office with check for security/damage deposit and building use made out to "Saint Luke's Lutheran Church"
- ___ Receive approval of request
- ___ Contact musician(s)
- ___ Contact counselor/therapist to begin pre-marital counseling
- ___ Meet with musician(s) to select music
- ___ Complete pre-marital counseling
- ___ Choose Scripture lessons for service and marriage vows (from Booklet appendix)
- ___ Meet with pastor to plan service
- ___ Meet with church sexton, if applicable, to discuss reception plans
- ___ Invite attendants, musician(s), parents, ushers to rehearsal, emphasizing date, time and place
- ___ Obtain marriage license
- ___ Arrive ON TIME for rehearsal, with marriage license and checks/honoraria for musicians/minister
- ___ Arrive ON TIME for wedding
- ___ Sign marriage license after marriage service

Other checklist items unique to your marriage service:

THE SERVICE OF MARRIAGE

The Processional Hymn (*Music should be chosen for the processional.*)

Pastor: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, (+) and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: AMEN.

THE EXHORTATION

P: Dearly beloved: Forasmuch as Marriage is a holy estate, ordained by God and to be held in honor by all, it becomes those who enter therein to weigh, with reverent minds, what the Word of God teaches concerning it:

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, “For this reason shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no one put asunder.”

P: Into this holy estate, this man and woman come now to be united.

If any one, therefore, can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, speak now, or forever hold your peace.

THE DECLARATION OF CONSENT

P: Who presents this woman and this man to be married to each other?

(The person or persons making the presentation answer...)

I/We do, and ask God’s blessing upon them.

P: (Name), do you take this man to be your wedded husband, to live together in this holy estate of Marriage; to love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, and forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

(The woman answers...)

I do.

P: (Name), do you take this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together in this holy estate of Marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, and forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

(The man answers...)

I do.

P: Will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?

C: WE WILL.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

P: Let us pray.

O Gracious and Everliving God, you have created us male and female in your image, and by the gift of marriage have founded human community in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come. As you gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee by the presence of your Son, so by His presence now bring your joy to this wedding. Look mercifully upon _____ and _____, who come to you seeking your blessing, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love, they may honor and keep the vows they make this day, that rejoicing in all your gifts, they may at length celebrate with Christ the marriage feast which has no end; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

C: AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS

(If there is more than one lesson, music may be offered between the lessons.)

THE MARRIAGE

P: (Name) and (Name), if it is your intention to share with each other your joys and sorrows and all that the years will bring, with your promises now bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife.

(The bride and groom face each other and join hands. Each, in turn, promises faithfulness to the other in the words of the marriage vows.)

The Vows are exchanged.

(The pastor asks God's blessing on the rings as follows:)

P: Bless, O Lord, these rings, to be a sign of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other, in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: AMEN.

(The bride and groom exchange rings with these words:)

I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness, and with all that I have, I honor you, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

P: (Name) and (Name), by their promises before God and this congregation, have bound themselves to one another in marriage. I pronounce them husband and wife: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

C: AMEN.

(The husband and wife kneel to receive the pastoral blessing.)

The Blessing

(The Unity Candle, if used, is lighted at this time. There may be music during the lighting.)

The Prayers

The Benediction

The Recessional *(Music should be chosen for the recessional.)*

(If there is Holy Communion, the service continues with the Peace, the Eucharistic Prayer, the Communion, the Post-Communion Prayer, Benediction and Recessional)

Some Suggested Scripture Lessons for Weddings (All are from the Revised Standard Version)

Psalm 33

- 1: Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.
- 2: Praise the LORD with the lyre, make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!
- 3: Sing to him a new song, play skilfully on the strings, with loud shouts.
- 4: For the word of the LORD is upright; and all his work is done in faithfulness.
- 5: He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.
- 6: By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth.
- 7: He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he put the deeps in storehouses.
- 8: Let all the earth fear the LORD, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!
- 9: For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood forth.
- 10: The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nought; he frustrates the plans of the peoples.
- 11: The counsel of the LORD stands for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.
- 12: Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!
- 13: The LORD looks down from heaven, he sees all the sons of men;
- 14: from where he sits enthroned he looks forth on all the inhabitants of the earth,
- 15: he who fashions the hearts of them all, and observes all their deeds.
- 16: A king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.
- 17: The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save.
- 18: Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love,
- 19: that he may deliver their soul from death, and keep them alive in famine.
- 20: Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and shield.
- 21: Yea, our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.
- 22: Let thy steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in thee.

Psalm 100

- 1: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the lands!
- 2: Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!
- 3: Know that the LORD is God! It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- 4: Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name!
- 5: For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures for ever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 117

- 1: Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!
- 2: For great is his steadfast love toward us; and the faithfulness of the LORD endures for ever. Praise the LORD!

Psalm 127

- 1: Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.
- 2: It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.
- 3: Lo, sons are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.
- 4: Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of one's youth.
- 5: Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128

- 1: Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!
- 2: You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.
- 3: Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.
- 4: Lo, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.
- 5: The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!
- 6: May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel!

Psalm 136

- 1: O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever.
- 2: O give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures for ever.
- 3: O give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 4: to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 5: to him who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 6: to him who spread out the earth upon the waters, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 7: to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 8: the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 9: the moon and stars to rule over the night, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 10: to him who smote the first-born of Egypt, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 11: and brought Israel out from among them, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 12: with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 13: to him who divided the Red Sea in sunder, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 14: and made Israel pass through the midst of it, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 15: but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 16: to him who led his people through the wilderness, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 17: to him who smote great kings, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 18: and slew famous kings, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 19: Sihon, king of the Amorites, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 20: and Og, king of Bashan, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 21: and gave their land as a heritage, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 22: a heritage to Israel his servant, for his steadfast love endures for ever.
- 23: It is he who remembered us in our low estate, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 24: and rescued us from our foes, for his steadfast love endures for ever;
- 25: he who gives food to all flesh, for his steadfast love endures for ever.
- 26: O give thanks to the God of heaven, for his steadfast love endures for ever.

Psalm 150

- 1: Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament!
- 2: Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his exceeding greatness!
- 3: Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!
- 4: Praise him with timbrel and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!
- 5: Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
- 6: Let everything that breathes praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

Old Testament Lessons

Genesis 1:26-31

26: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." 27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28: And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." 29: And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30: And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31: And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

Genesis 2:18-24

18: Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." 19: So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20: The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. 21: So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; 22: and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23: Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24: Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Song of Solomon 2:10-13

10: My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; 11: for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. 12: The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. 13: The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Song of Solomon 8:6-7

6: Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a most vehement flame. 7: Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned.

Isaiah 63:7-9

7: I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel which he has granted them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. 8: For he said, Surely they are my people, sons who will not deal falsely; and he became their Savior. 9: In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Epistle Lessons

Romans 12:1-2

1: I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. *2:* Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

I Corinthians 12:31-13:13

31: But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

1: If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

2: And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. *3:* If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. *4:* Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; *5:* it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; *6:* it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. *7:* Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. *8:* Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. *9:* For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; *10:* but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. *11:* When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. *12:* For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. *13:* So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 5:21-33

21: Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. *22:* Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. *23:* For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. *24:* As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. *25:* Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, *26:* that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, *27:* that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. *28:* Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. *29:* For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, *30:* because we are members of his body. *31:* "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32: This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church; *33:* however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Gospel Lessons

St. Matthew 19:4-6

4: He answered, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, 5: and said, `For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? 6: So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

St. John 2:1-10

1: On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there;
2: Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. 3: When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4: And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." 5: His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6: Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.
7: Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8: He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. 9: When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom 10: and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." 11: This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

St. John 15:9-12

9: As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. 10: If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11: These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. 12: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Marriage Vows

A:

I take you, name, to be my (wife/husband), and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help and care for you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come until death parts us.

B:

I take you, name, to be my (wife/husband). I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful (husband/wife), to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health; to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.

C:

Name, I take you to be my (wife/husband) from this time onward; to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.

D:

I take you, name, to be my (wife/husband) from this day forward; to join with you and to share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.

E: (traditional)

I, name, take you, name, to be my wedded (wife/husband); to have and to hold from this day forward: for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death do us part, according to God's Holy Word; and thereto I pledge you my faithfulness.