

Participation of Congregation

The wedding service is a worship service in which the guests are fellow worshipers, not spectators. A wedding taking place within a community of faith gives that community, our church, the opportunity to publicly affirm and declare our support of you.

There are many possibilities for involving the congregation, from singing hymns to joining in responsive readings, either from scripture, or from a litany you have written. One or several persons from the congregation could be asked to share a thought, a challenge or a “blessing.” Persons beside the minister could be asked to read scriptures, lead in prayer, or give a short meditation.

But it is also good to give the congregation a more formal opportunity to pledge support of you as you enter marriage. Below are some examples. Some need to be fully in the bulletin. Others can just be spoken by minister, with the congregation giving their support with a “we will: or by standing. You may feel free also to create your own.

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A. We as a congregation also want to declare our support of your relationship. You have invited all of us to share this special moment with you. And so we are here as your guests. But we are more than your guests. We are participants with you in this service of worship and commitment. As participants and friends, we all want to affirm your relationship and your marriage. We know that you will be good for each other. We all pledge to you our friendship, our prayers, our council, our caring, and our continued support of your marriage.

B. As a community of friends, we too want to express our support of your marriage. We rejoice with you in this celebration of love. We affirm your relationship and your marriage. Our presence here is an indication and a pledge to you of our friendship and our caring support of your marriage relationship. And since we are not only a community of friends, but also a community of faith, we want to express our support and faith kinship by praying for you.

C. Question to congregation: Will you also pledge your support for _____ and _____, in their marriage relationship? Will you surround them with your friendship and caring as they seek to build a Christian home? Will you promise to be with them in times of need when they seek your support?

Congregation: We pledge our love and support.

D. *A Litany of Life*

Minister: Within the covenant of marriage, we experience life intimately in its many dimensions:

Congregation: ...the wonder as two become one yet remain two; the beauty, strength, and healing of understanding and compassion communicated to glance of touch, the mystery of change and diversity that continually challenges us to grow, learn, and adapt. These bring joy in their presence, sorrow in their absence. These are the intimacies of love.

(continued on next page)

- Couple:* *We experience mystery--*
 Minister: ...to leap into the unknown, not always knowing why. Congregation:...to stand in a garden and sense “it is created for you.” But not fully comprehend our purpose and responsibilities.
- Couple:* *We cherish joy--*
 Minister: ...to recognize differences and expect the spontaneous; to rejoice in surprise and laugh with each other.
- Congregation: ...to experience in the garden the presence of God, encouraging us to continue discovering each other.**
- Couple:* *We accept sorrow--*
 Minister: ...to experience the tragic and to feel the incompleteness and limitedness of our lives; to know separation and to anticipate our own death.
- Congregation: ...to regret unfulfilled dreams and promises, but to rededicate ourselves to what we can accomplish; to recognize the uncertainty of life and to accept it as a gift.**
- Minister: Look outward from the strength and security of your own love to remain sensitive and receptive to the needs of others.
- Couple:* *We want to conduct our life together in such a way as to be a part of humanity’s joy and pride.*
- Minister: Then let your beliefs, traditions, and values be transmitted with love and conviction to your children and to the community in which you reside.
- Couple:* *And we will seek to discover abilities and recognize limits, to exercise freely within our capacities and to encourage life affirmation in others.*
- Congregation: _____ and _____, we accept and respond to you. We will share with you our encouragement, experiences, and perspectives with trust and openness.**
Although our values and opinions may differ from yours, we do not ask you to be other than you are in order to receive our support and friendship.
We promise you, on this day of covenant making, that as long as we are in relation with you, we shall listen to you.
consoling your sorrow,
sharing the happiness of you joy.
supporting you through the uncertainties.
- Minister: May the One who has created and sustains us, hearing our words to each other, grant blessing to this couple, their families, and their friends. Amen

E. (See call to worship item “M”).