

RITUAL

PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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COMMUNION SERVICE

(After appropriate singing the Minister shall give the following invitation:)

“If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” I John 2:1-2

Wherefore, ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways; draw near with faith, and devoutly make your humble confession to Almighty God.

(Then shall the general confession be made by all, as follows:)

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men, we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed by thought, word, and deed, against Thy Divine Majesty; provoking most justly Thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us. The burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us most merciful Father; for Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may hereafter serve Thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of Thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

(This Collect may then be said by the Minister and those intending to receive the Holy communion:)

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

(Optional: Then shall the Minister say the prayer of Humble Access:)

We do not presume to come to this Thy Table, O Merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table. But Thou art the same Lord, whose character is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore gracious Lord, so to commemorate in this breaking of bread the death of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, that we may feed on Him in our hearts by faith, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us. *Amen.*

(Then the Minister shall say the Prayer of Consecration as follows:)

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, Who of Thy tender mecy did give Thine only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there, (by His oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in His Holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of His precious death until His coming again. Hear us, Merciful Father, we most humbly beseech Thee, and grant that we, receiving these elements of bread and wine, according to Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ’s holy institution, in remembrance of His most blessed body and blood. Who in the same night that He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying: “Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me.”

Likewise after the supper He took the cup. And when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." *Amen.*

(Here the Minister shall say: "The Lord's Supper is open to all who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. You need not be a member of this local church to partake of the Holy Communion".)

(Then shall the Minister receive the communion in both kinds, and proceed to deliver the same to other ministers, or Elders, [if any be present], after which he shall proceed to administer the communion to the people in order. When he delivers the bread he shall say:)

May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

(The Minister, while delivering the cup, shall say:)

May the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

(Then shall follow appropriate singing, or extemporaneous prayer, or the following:)

O Lord, our heavenly Father, we Thy humble servants desire Thy Fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching Thee to grant that, by the merits and death of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in His blood, we and Thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion. And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto Thee; humbly beseeching Thee that all we who are partakers of His holy communion may be filled with Thy grace and heavenly benediction. And although we are unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto Thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech Thee to accept this our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offenses, through Jesus Christ our Lord; by Whom, and with Whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory be unto Thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. *Amen.*

(Optional Scripture Readings:)

Isaiah 53:4-12

Isaiah 55:6-9

I Corinthians 10:14-22

I Corinthians 11:23-32

John 6:35,48-51

John 6:53-58

John 15:1-17

John 10:11-18

BAPTISM OF INFANTS

(The Minister, addressing the parents and congregation, shall say:)

Baptism is an outward sacred rite signifying an inward purity accomplished by Christ's atonement, administered by the use of water to professing believers or to their children in obedience to the Holy Scriptures in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Children of believing parents, parent, or guardian are suitable candidates for baptism. Infant baptism includes an act of dedication whereby believers by sacred oath consign the child to God.

It contemplates (1) a course of religious training, (2) that those presenting children for baptism are to bring them up in fear and love of God, and (3) they are to be solemnly admonished to a faithful performance of these things.

Although our young children do not yet understand these things, they are nevertheless to be baptized. The promise of God is made to believers and to their seed, as God declared unto Abraham: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." (Gen. 17:7)

(The Minister, addressing the congregation shall say:)

Dearly beloved: Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Savior Christ, said, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that having of His bounteous mercy redeemed this child by the blood of His Son, he will grant that *he/she*, being baptized with water, may also be baptized with the Holy Ghost, be received into Christ's Holy Church, and become a lively member of the same.

(Then shall the Minister address the parents or guardians as follows:)

Dearly Beloved: Forasmuch as this child is now presented by you for Christian baptism, and is thus consecrated to God, and to His Church, you must remember that it is your part and duty to see that *he/she* be taught, as soon as *he/she* shall be able to learn, the nature and purpose of this holy sacrament. That *he/she* may know these things the better, you shall call upon *him/her* to give reverent attendance upon the appointed means of grace, such as the ministry of the word and the public and private worship of God. Further, you shall provide that *he/she* shall read the Holy Scriptures and learn the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Catechism, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe for *his/her* soul's health, in order that *he/she* may be brought up to lead a virtuous and holy life, remembering always that baptism does represent unto us that inward purity which disposes us to follow the example of our Savior Christ. As He died and rose again for us, so shall we, who are baptized, subsequently being born again, die unto sin and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all corrupt affections and daily proceeding in all virtue and Godliness.

Do you, therefore, solemnly promise to fulfill these duties, so far as in you lies, the Lord being your helper?

Answer. We do.

Hear the words of the Gospel written by St. Mark(10:13-16).

"They brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and He said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hand upon them, and blessed them."

(Then shall the people stand, and the Minister, taking the child into his arms, shall say to the parents of the child:)

What is this child's name?

(Then repeating the name, he shall baptize the child, using water and saying:)

(Child's name) I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

(The following or an extemporaneous prayer may be offered:)

Almighty and Everlasting God, we give Thee humble and hearty thanks for the abundant provision Thou hast made, both for us and our children, in the Gospel Covenant. As Thou hast called many of us to a knowledge of Thy grace, and to faith in Thee, we beseech Thee to increase this knowledge in each of us, and confirm this faith for evermore. As Thou, of Thy great mercy, didst save Noah and his family in the ark from perishing by water, and didst safely lead Thy people Israel through the Red Sea, and as Thou didst, by the baptism of Thy well-beloved Son sanctify the use of water in it, grant unto this child, we beseech Thee, thy Holy Spirit; that *he/she* may receive the inward and spiritual grace represented by it, that *he/she* may be born of the Spirit, and may thus by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, be made an heir according to the hope of eternal life. Grant this, most merciful Father, through Jesus Christ or Lord. *Amen.*

NB - Every baptism must be registered as soon as possible by the minister performing the ceremony, and a suitable certificate shall be issued to the parents.

Optional questions

(The Minister shall address the parents or guardians and ask the following:)

1. Do you affirm in the presence of God and these witnesses that you are trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, that you are saved by faith in Him, and not by any works or character of your own, but simply through faith in God's free gift of grace in Christ?
2. Do you acknowledge that your faith in Christ places you in covenant community which is His Church, and that this covenant relationship was signified and certified by your own baptism?
3. Do you receive this covenant relationship for your child, and therein consecrate your child to God, receiving also the baptism of your child as the sign and seal of the promises covenanted to *him/her* by God?
4. Do you acknowledge that this ordinance is not a saving ordinance, and that your child will be required to receive Christ as personal Savior when *he/she* reaches the age of responsibility?
5. Do you promise, with God's help, to raise your child in the training of God's Word, to pray with and for *him/her*, and to live before *him/her* as Christian parents who are also subject to the Lord?
6. Do you promise to avail yourselves of all the means of grace, such as the private and public worship of God, and do your utmost to lead your child to a knowledge of Christ at the earliest age?

7. Do you acknowledge your willingness to give this child back to God who placed *him/her* in your home as a sacred trust, so that if He sees fit in His providence to call this child back to Himself, you will not set yourself against the perfect will of God?

8. Do you, the members of (*Name of Church*) receive this child of the covenant, and do you agree with God and these parents to aid in every possible way the ministry to this family to the end that these baptismal vows be fulfilled?

Optional prayer:

Eternal God, our gracious heavenly Father, we bring this child to Thee in the covenant rite of Holy Baptism. We rejoice that Thou has granted unto us this sacred privilege of covenant relationship with Thee, not only for ourselves but also for our children. We bless Thee that Thou did institute the family as an organic unity, making the children one with the parents. We thank Thee for the assurance of the Word that it is Thy purpose that the children shall be one with their parents in redemption, and that to this end they are regarded as heirs of the covenant. We here place the sign and seal of the covenant of grace upon this child, and commit this child to Thee. We pray that Thy grace shall attend *him/her* through all *his/her* days, that in Thy appointed time and way *he/she* might personally receive with joy the Lord Jesus Christ as *his/her* own Savior and Lord, and thus confirm *his/her* covenant relationship by faith. Wilt Thou grant grace to these parents that they might have wisdom and faith as they seek to fulfill their covenant obligations? Make them to be examples of the Christian life and teachers of Thy Word. And grant to this congregation the grace to fulfill their acknowledged responsibility as spiritual sponsors of this child. Unto Thee who covenant faithfulness is our trust, be all glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. *Amen.*

BAPTISM OF ADULTS

Those persons who have believed on Jesus Christ unto salvation, and wish to make a public confession by being baptized will come forward while a hymn is being sung or singing may be omitted.

(When the persons to be Baptized present themselves, the Minister shall say:)

DEARLY BELOVED: Forasmuch as our Savior Christ did commission His disciples to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that, of His bounteous mercy, He will grant to *these persons* now to be baptized, grace whereby they may serve Him acceptably and be lively *members* of the church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and heirs of eternal life.

(Addressing the candidates the Minister shall ask the following questions:)

1. Do you believe in the existence of God, and that He is a rewarder of all those who diligently seek Him?

Answer: I do.

2. Have you received Christ as your Redeemer, Savior and Lord?

Answer: I have.

3. Having received Christ by faith as your only and all-sufficient Savior, are you now determined, by divine grace, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to forsake every evil way, and to walk in all the commandments of God?

Answer: I am.

4. It is our duty to search the Scriptures, and attend on all the ordinances of the house of God: will you endeavor to be faithful in the discharge of these duties?

Answer: I will.

5. Will you now be baptized in this Christian faith?

Answer: This is my desire.

(The Minister shall then repeat the name of the person to be baptized: sprinkle, or pour water upon him/her, or immerse him/her saying:)

I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And now dear *brother/sister*, the vows of the Lord are upon you. Of your own free will you have sought this significant and solemn Christian ordinance. It is an ordinance in which you have pledged allegiance to Christ. The typical water of divine appointment is upon you, and henceforth, even from this hallowed hour, you go forth a confessor of Christ before the world. In your baptism you have witnessed a good confession. Be steadfast in it. Be true to it. Let your baptism prove the sacramental seal of life-long covenant with God, whose blessed Son, Jesus Christ, said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before My Father in heaven."

(Optional: Testimony of Christian Faith may be given at this point if so desired by the candidate.)

(The Minister then may conclude with an extemporaneous prayer and benediction.)

THE FORM FOR THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY

(The persons to be married standing together: the man on the right hand and the woman on the left, the Minister shall say:)

DEARLY BELOVED: We are gathered together in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together Mr. (*name*) and Miss. (*name*) in holy matrimony, which is an honorable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is *between* Christ and His Church, which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with His presence and the first miracle that He wrought in Cana of Galilee, and is commended by St. Paul to be honorable among men; and is therefore not by any to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons now come to be joined. Therefore, if any can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let them now speak or else hereafter forever hold their peace.

(Also speaking unto the persons who are to be married, he shall say:)

I REQUIRE and charge you both, that if either of you know any *reason* why you may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, you do now confess it: for be well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's Word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful.

(If no impediment be alleged, then shall the Minister say:)

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Answer. (*Guardian or Parent.*) Her Mother and I.

(The Minister shall then address the man to be married as follows:)

(Groom), will you have this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor her, and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep yourself only unto her so long as you both shall live?

The man shall answer. I will.

(The Minister shall then say unto the woman:)

(Bride), will you have this man to be your wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love, honor, and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep yourself only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

The woman shall answer. I will.

(Then the Minister shall cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand, and say after him as follows:)

I, *(Groom)*, take thee, *(Bride)*, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith.

(Then shall the Minister loose their hands, and the woman with her right hand, taking the man by his right hand, shall likewise say after the Minister:)

I, *(Bride)*, take thee, *(Groom)*, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and there I pledge thee my faith.

(Then shall the Minister say:)

O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author everlasting life, send Thy blessing upon this man and this woman; enabling them to live faithfully together; to perform and keep the solemn vow and covenant between them made. May they ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to Thy laws, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

(The Minister addressing the bridegroom shall say:)

What pledge have you for the faithful fulfillment of these marriage vows?

(Then the bridegroom shall hand the ring to the Minister, who holding it in view, shall say:)

This circlet of precious metal is justly regarded as a fitting emblem of the purity and perpetuity of the marriage state. The ancients were reminded by this circle, of eternity; as it was so fashioned as to have neither beginning nor end; while gold is so incorruptible that it cannot be tarnished by use or time. So may the union at this time solemnized, be incorruptible in its purity and as lasting as time itself.

(The Minister shall then cause the man to place the ring on the third finger of the woman's left hand, and the man shall say to the woman, repeating after the Minister:)

With this ring I thee wed, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. *(Repeat if double ring service is used.)*

(Then shall the Minister join their right hands together and say:)

Forasmuch as *(Groom)* and *(Bride)* have consented together in Holy Matrimony, and have witnessed the same before God and this company; and have pledged their faith each to the other by giving and receiving a ring; and have declared the same by joining their hands; I pronounce that they are Husband and Wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. *Amen.*

(Then shall the Minister offer an extemporaneous prayer, and conclude with the Benediction, or use the following:)

Most merciful God, our Heavenly Father! We thank Thee, that in Thy great mercy to mankind Thou hast instituted the sacred and blessed ordinance of Marriage. We thank Thee, O gracious Savior, that Thou wast pleased to be present at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. As Thou the fountain of all blessing was there, so in infinite compassion be Thou here, with Thy rich blessing upon this married couple. Ever may they feel their dependence upon Thee. Ever may they come to Thee for grace and guidance. Teach them to love each other in the Lord. So may they be united, not only by the ties of early relationship but, in the grace of Christ, in the peace and comfort of the Holy Spirit sanctify and bless the, that they may please Thee both in body and soul, and live together in holy love unto their lives end. *Amen.*

May God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with His favor look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that you may so live together in this life that in the world to come you may have life everlasting. *Amen.*

(The Minister shall introduce the couple to the witnesses and say:)

I am very happy to introduce Mr. and Mrs.

_____.

**THE FORM FOR THE
SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY
*(Alternate "A")***

(When the bride is not given in marriage by the father, then at the time the man shall stand at the right hand of the woman. The best man shall stand next to the groom, and the maid of honor next to the bride. When the bride is given by her father, she shall stay at the father's side until the time to be given in marriage.)

(At the appropriate time, the Minister shall say:)

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

(A prayer of invocation asking God's blessing can properly be offered at this time.)

We are met on this occasion to join Mr. *(name)* and Miss. *(name)* in the bonds of holy matrimony. This is a holy and honorable estate according to the Word of God and the practice of Christian fellowship of believers. No one should enter this fellowship without full consideration of its just spiritual requirements and possible blessings. If any person can show any just cause why these people may not be joined in marriage, opportunity is hereby given to declare it.

(If the bride is to be given in marriage by the parents, the following question and answer should be given.)

Who gives away this daughter to be married?

The father will answer: Her mother and I.

(Optional: At this time the Minister may call the parents forward for the parental consent.)

(The bride then leaves the side of her father and joins the groom facing the Minister.)

If either of you as contracting parties in this marriage knows of any reason why you may not lawfully be united as husband and wife, you should make it known at this time, for be well assured that though such reason may not be known to men, they are known to God.

This impresses upon you the very sacredness of matrimony. God inaugurated the union between man and woman in Eden when He made woman out of man, in order that she might be a helpmate for him. Therefore, saith the Scripture, “for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh.” The Lord Jesus Christ also honored the institution of matrimony when He said, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” The Holy Spirit taught the glory of marriage, for He inspired Paul in writing the beautiful comparison of the union between husband and wife and union found between Christ and His Church.

(The Minister may then read I Corinthians 13 or the following:)

“Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

(The Minister will ask the contracting parties to join right hands, and continue by saying:)

Now that you have joined the right hand of fellowship as a token of your mutual love, you should be mindful that you make these vows before Almighty God. He has instituted holy matrimony, He blessed it, and He requires that the promise we make at the altar of marriage shall be kept sacred and made real by actual living.

(The Minister shall then turn to the man and say:)

Do you Mr. *(name)* accept the love of Miss. *(name)* and take her to be your wedded wife? If so, answer, I do.

The man shall answer: I do.

Will you love her, comfort her, support her, pray for her, and be loyal to her in all circumstances of life, so long as you both shall live? If so, answer, I will.

The man shall answer: I will.

(Then the Minister shall turn to the woman and say:)

Do you, Miss *(name)* accept the love of Mr. *(name)* and take him to be your wedded husband? If so, answer, I do.

The woman shall say: I do.

Will you love him, honor him, obey him, pray for him, and sustain him in all circumstances of life, as long as you both shall live? If so, answer, I will.

The woman shall say: I will.

(The man and the woman, facing each other, may then audibly voice their promise to each other as follows: The Minister shall ask first the man and then the woman to repeat after him the following:)

I, *(name)*, take thee, *(name)*, to keep from this day forward, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, in joy or in sorrow, for richer or poorer, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's Holy Word.

(The Minister shall ask the following:)

What is the sign of your love to each other?

(In case the single or double ring ceremony is used, the minister will ask first the man and then the woman to place the ring on the third finger of the companion's left hand, and repeat after him in turn, or if preferred, both of them together, the following:)

With this ring, I thee wed, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

(If the ring ceremony has been used, their right hands have been unclasped. Instruct them to rejoin right hand.)

You have made your bows in the presence of Almighty God and of these witnesses. You have sealed your vows with the giving and receiving of this ring *(these rings)*. As a representative of the Church, and of her head the Lord Jesus Christ, I now pronounce you husband and wife, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. As a representative of the State of *(name of state)* I now pronounce the bond of legal marriage between Mr. *(name)* and Miss *(name)* lawfully constituted.

May Christ be the head of your home, the silent listener of every conversation, the unseen guest at every table. May you remember that now abideth faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love. Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Confess your faults one to another, pray for one another. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

(Instead of using the word "husband" in the next paragraph, the first or full name of the husband may be used. The following may then be said by the Minister:)

Husband, love your wife even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her.

Man ought to love his wife as his own body. He that loves his wife, loves himself.

Husband, dwell with her according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers may not be hindered.

(Instead of using the word "wife" in the next paragraph, the first name or the full new name of the wife may be substituted:)

Wife, submit yourself unto your husband, as unto the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the Church. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wife be subject to his husband in everything.

Finally, be ye of one mind, having compassion one for another, tenderhearted, courteous: not rendering evil for evil, nor insult for insult; but contrariwise, blessing: knowing that you are called, that you should inherit a blessing.

In so doing, you will enjoy the peace of God that passes all understanding, and you will enjoy happiness in your home with the blessing of God attending your way.

(Optional: A wedding candle service may be used at this time.)

(The Minister may then offer a prayer. If the Lord's Prayer is to be sung, this may be at the conclusion of the Minister's prayer.)

“The Lord bless thee and keep thee.

The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.” *Amen.*

(The Minister shall congratulate the bride and groom. This can be by clasping their hands together, the Minister's hands above and below the clasping hands of the bride and groom. The other optional method is to have the bride and groom unclasp their hands, and the Minister congratulates them separately.)

(This is the appropriate time for the bride and groom to exchange the marriage kiss.)

(Then the Minister shall introduce the couple to the witnesses and say:)

I am very happy to introduce Mr. and Mrs. *(name)*. Congratulations are in order.

THE FORM FOR THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY

(Alternate “B”)

(At the appropriate time, the Minister will say:)

The Scriptural Sentences

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.” *(I John 4:7-12)*

The Invocation

O God, our Father, Whose very nature is love, and from Whom comes every good and perfect gift; look with favor upon this man and this woman who come into Your holy presence to make their vows of love and loyalty, and to seek Your blessing upon their marriage. Send upon them Your Holy Spirit, that He may sanctify them and make them truly one. Help them to grow together in true love, and in perfect peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Address

Dearly beloved, we are assembled here in the presence of God to join together *(Groom and Bride)* in holy marriage. We find that marriage is instituted of God; regulated by His commandments; blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ; and to be held in honor among all men.

Let us remember therefore that God has established and sanctified marriage for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Our Savior has declared that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. By His apostles, He has instructed those who enter into this relationship to cherish a mutual esteem and love; to bear with each other's infirmities and weaknesses; to comfort each other in sickness, trouble and sorrow; to provide for each other in temporal things; to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to God; and to live together as the heirs of the grace of life.

Into this holy estate, this couple comes now to be joined and thus to unite two hearts and lives, blending all interests, sympathies and hopes.

(Groom and Bride), you are about to assume mutual relationships and responsibilities, and to pledge to each other your undying devotion and fidelity. Henceforth you will no longer be two, but one flesh. Your paths will be parallel. Your responsibilities will increase, but your joy will be multiplied, if you are sincere and earnest in your relations one with another, and with God, in whose presence you make this covenant.

By coming into His presence you hereby recognize that this covenant is not only a legal contract, but a bond of union, made in heaven. It therefore is not to be entered into lightly, but reverently, knowing that God, in His heaven, will richly bless those who seek His favor.

The Charge

I charge you both, as you stand in the presence of God, to remember that God's standard of true love and loyalty will avail as the foundation of a happy home. If the solemn vows you are about to make be kept inviolate, and if you steadfastly endeavor to do the will of your Heavenly Father, your lives will be full of joy, and the home you are about to establish will abide in peace.

No other human ties are more tender, and no other vows are more sacred than those you are about to assume.

The Questions

(Groom,) will you take *(Bride)* to be your wedded wife and to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony. Will you love, honor and cherish her in sickness and in health, and be true and loyal to her, as long as you both shall live?

Answer by Groom: I will.

(Bride), will you take *(Groom)* to be your husband and to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony; will you love, honor and cherish him in sickness and in health, and be true and loyal to him, as long as you both shall live?

Answer by Bride: I will.

The Presentation of the Bride

Who gives *(Bride)* to be married to *(Groom)*?

(The person giving the bride shall say "I do", or "Her mother and I do.")

The Vows

(The groom shall repeat after the Minister, saying:)

I *(Groom)* take you *(Bride)* to be my wedded wife. . . and I do promise. . . before God and these witnesses. . . to be your loving and faithful husband. . . in plenty and in want. . . in joy and in sorrow. . . in sickness and in health. . . as long as we both shall live.

(The bride shall repeat after the Minister, saying:)

I (*Bride*) take you (*Groom*) to be my wedded husband. . . and I do promise. . . before God and these witnesses. . . to be your loving and faithful wife. . . in plenty and in want. . . in joy and in sorrow. . . in sickness and in health. . . as long as we both shall live.

The Ring Ceremony

(*Groom and Bride*), what token do you give in symbol of this pledge?

(*After taking the ring[s], the Minister shall say:*)

From time immemorial, the ring has been used to seal important covenants. When the race was young and parliaments were unknown, the great seal of state was fixed upon a ring worn by the reigning king, and its stamp was the sole sign of imperial authority. Friends often exchanged the simple band of gold as enduring evidence of good will.

The ancients were reminded by this circle of eternity; as it was so fashioned as to have neither beginning or end. Also, gold is so incorruptible that it cannot be tarnished by use or time.

From such impressive precedents the gold circlet, has come to its loftiest prestige in the symbolic significance it provides at the wedding altar. Here, untarnishable material and unique form become the precious tokens of pure and abiding qualities of the ideal marital state.

(*Groom shall repeat:*)

With this ring. . . I thee wed. . . in the name of the Father. . . and of the Son. . . and of the Holy Spirit. . . Amen.

(*Bride shall repeat:*)

With this ring. . . I thee wed. . . in the name of the Father. . . and of the Son. . . and of the Holy Spirit. . . *Amen.*

The Scripture Lesson - I Cor. 13:1-13

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but when face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

The Prayer

(*The Groom and Bride shall kneel as the Minister prays, saying:*)

O God of love, Thou hast established marriage for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Thine was the plan, and only with Thee can we work it out with joy.

Bless this husband. Bless (*Groom*) as provider of nourishment and raiment, and sustain him in all the exactions and pressures of his labor for bread. May his strength be her protection, his character be her boast and her pride, and may he so live that she will find in him the haven for which the heart of a woman truly longs.

Bless this loving wife. Give (*Bride*) tenderness that will make her great, a deep sense of understanding and a great faith in Thee. Give her that inner beauty of soul that never fades, that eternal youth that is found in holding fast to the things that never age.

Teach (*Groom and Bride*) that marriage is not living merely for each other; it is two uniting and joining hands to serve Thee. Give them a great spiritual purpose in life. May they seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the other things shall be added unto them.

May they never take each other's love for granted, but always experience that breathless wonder that exclaims, "Out of all this world, you have chosen me."

When life is done and the sun is setting, may they be found then as now, hand in hand, still thanking God for each other. May they serve Thee happily, faithfully, together, until at last one shall lay the other into the arms of God.

This we ask through Jesus Christ, the great lover of our souls. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. *Amen.*

The Declaration

By the authority committed unto me as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Primitive Methodist Church, I declare that (*Groom and Bride*), having consented together in holy marriage, having pledged their faith to each other, and having declared the same by giving and receiving of rings, and now husband and wife, according to the ordinance of God, and the laws of the (*name of State or Commonwealth*) in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder".

The Candle Lighting Service

The Challenge

This day marks a new era in your lives now united. From henceforth, you travel life's pathway, not alone, but together. Let God's love be forever enshrined in your united hearts.

We commend you to our Heavenly Father, asking Him that according to His abundant grace He may bestow upon you both a gracious spirit. May he enable you to establish a Christian home where the voice of prayer and praise shall, as sweet incense continually ascend unto Him who has purchased you with His own precious blood.

May your experience, as you travel down life's pathway together, be like unto the experience of the two disciples who journeyed together from Jerusalem to Emmaus. We read that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. And may heaven's constant benediction crown your union with the ever-increasing joy and blessedness and true affection of a happy marriage.

The Embrace

You may now kiss.

The Presentation

And now it is my privilege to present to you Mr. and Mrs. (*married name*).

**ALTERNATE OPENINGS FOR
WEDDING SERVICES**

(Alternate Opening "A")

The greatest treasure that anyone can have in this world is the undivided love of another person. Today a couple has come with their families and their friends to this Church to begin their married life. It is a festive and joyful event.

How beautiful, then, the marriage of two Christians, two who are one in hope, one in desire, one in the way of life they follow, one in the religion they practice. Side by side they visit God's church and partake of God's banquet: side by side they face difficulties and persecution, and share their consolations. To such as these, He gives His peace.

We are gathered together in the sight of God and in the presence of this company to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony which is ordained of God, blessed by His favor, and to be held in honor among all men. Our Savior, having blessed a marriage ceremony by his presence, said that a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife and they two shall be one flesh. As one in union of heart, mind and body they are to live in mutual esteem and forbearance, and in whole-hearted love for each other. They are to help and comfort each other; to provide for each other, as is fitting, in material things, and to help each other and pray for each other as heirs together of the grace of life.

Into this holy estate these two persons now come to be joined. Therefore, if any can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let them now speak or else hereafter forever hold their peace.

**ALTERNATE OPENINGS FOR THE
MARRIAGE SERVICE**

(Alternate Opening "B")

We are gathered together in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is an honorable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is between Christ and His Church, which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with His presence and the first miracle that He wrought in Cana of Galilee, and is commended by St. Paul to be honorable among men. Therefore, it becomes those who purpose to enter therein, duly to weigh what the Word of God teaches concerning it.

Knowing therefore, that marriage was ordained by God Himself, when He said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Hear also what God has commanded concerning this estate: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church." "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is Head of the Church."

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Marriage is well pleasing to God, and has His blessings; as it is written: "God created man in His own image: male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and said unto them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.' " Therefore, "Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing and obtaineth favor of the Lord."

Marriage is therefore not to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons now come to be joined. Therefore, if any can show cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let them now speak or else hereafter forever hold their peace.

PARENTAL CONSENT

(Optional Statement of Consent with Candle Ceremony)

(The Minister shall call forward the parents at the appropriate time and say the following:)

The two outside candles are lighted to represent the lives of *(name)* and *(name)* at this moment. They are two distinct light, each capable of going its own way. To bring bliss and happiness to their home, these must merge into one light. This is what our Savior meant when He said: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and the twin shall be one flesh." Mr. and Mrs. *(name of parents of bride)*, Mr. and Mrs. *(name of parents of groom)*, you are the parents who brought these young folk into the world, nurtured them, educated them, prepared them for this hour. This is a crowning hour of family happiness and parental success, however, your duties and responsibilities come to completion at this ceremony.

Are you willing to release your child from the family bond and permit *him/her* to establish *his/her* own life and home under God, yet assuring *him/her* of your continued undergirding love and support, when and where requested?

Parents answer: "We are."

By this parental permission, *(groom)* and *(bride)* will, from now on, concentrate their thoughts upon each other, rather than for their individual selves. Their plans shall be mutual, their joys and sorrows shall be shared alike.

As they each take a candle and together light the center candle, they will extinguish their own, thus letting the center candle represent the union of their lives into one flesh. As this one light cannot be divided, their pledge is that their lives shall not be divided, but a united testimony in a Christian home. May the radiance of this one light be a testimony of their unity in the Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

PARENTAL CONSENT

(Optional Statement of Consent)

(The Minister shall call the parents forward at the appropriate time:)

(The Minister shall address the bride's parents and say:)

Do you Mr. and Mrs. *(name of bride's parents)* accept *(groom's name)* as your daughter's husband? Do you acknowledge the vows that they are about to exchange that will set them apart as a family? If so, answer, I do.

The bride's parents answer together: "I do."

(The Minister shall address the groom's parents and say:)

Do you Mr. and Mrs. *(name of groom's parents)* accept *(bride's name)* as your son's wife? Do you acknowledge the vows that they are about to exchange that will set them apart as a family? If so, answer, I do.

The groom's parents answer together: "I do."

THE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

(Optional Ceremony that may be added to the Wedding Service)

(A Candleabra, containing three candles, shall have been provided. The two outer candles will be burning during the ceremony.)

(At the appropriate time the minister shall say the following:)

You stand now as Mr. and Mrs. *(married name)*. Just as your hearts have been united in common love and aspiration, so too have you henceforth committed your lives and your resources to His service.

The contribution which you two now have made individually in the world is now strengthened and multiplied by God's bond and blessing which has made you one. As you transfer the flame from separate candles to the one, may you sense with permanent joy, the fusion of your two lives into a common, glorious companionship. What God has put together, indeed man cannot undo!

FUNERAL SERVICE

(The Minister meeting the funeral cortège at the church door and going before it shall say:)

“I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.” *(St. John 11:25-26)*

“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” *(Job 19:25-27)*

“We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord. *(1 Tim. 6:7, Job 1:21)*

(Then shall be sung an appropriate hymn, after which the Minister shall offer prayer:)

(One of the following Scriptures may then be read:)

(1) Psalm 90

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as asleep; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up; in the evening it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength, labor and sorrow; for it is soon cutoff, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Return, O Lord, how long? And let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants. O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea the work of our hands establish Thou it.

(Other Old Testament readings:)

Psalm 23 Psalm 103:15,16
Psalm 91:1-8 Psalm 91:9-14
Psalm 46:1-3 Deuteronomy 4:29-31
Isaiah 54:7,8,10

(2) II Cor. 4:5-10, 16-18, 5:1-11, 14-15

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, by not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.

(3) I Corinthians 15:1-18

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James: then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

(4) I Corinthians 15:19-34

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead; and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet.

But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?

I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.

Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

(Other New Testament readings)

Romans 8:35-39 John 14:1-7
Revelation 22:1-5 I Thess. 4:14-18
John 5:25-29

SCRIPTURE READING FOR A CHILD

Isaiah 40:1,11
Psalm 25:1,16-18
Matthew 18:1-14

OPTIONAL PRAYER FOR A CHILD

O God, whose only-begotten Son did take little children into His arms and bless them. Give us grace, we beseech Thee, to entrust this dear child to Thy never-failing care and love, and bring in all to Thy heavenly kingdom; through Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

COMMITTAL

(At the grave, when the body is laid in the earth, the minister shall say:)

“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.”

In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for comfort, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?

Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Savior, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not Thy merciful ears to our prayers, but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Savior, Thou most worthy Judge eternal. Suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from Thee.

FORASMUCH as the spirit of the departed has returned to God who gave it we therefore commit *his/her* body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; looking for the resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ; at Whose second coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed, and made like unto His own glorious body; according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

“**I HEARD** a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which died in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”

(Then the minister shall offer the following prayer:)

O MERCIFUL God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the resurrection and the life; in Whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally: We meekly beseech Thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life we may rest in Him; and at the resurrection on the last day we may be found acceptable in Thy sight, and receive that blessing which Thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear Thee, saying: “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Grant this we beseech Thee, O Merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

OPTIONAL COMMITTALS

Form for the Committal of a Believer

Forasmuch as it seemed wise to Almighty God to take out of this world the soul of our departed *brother/sister*, we therefore commit *his/her* body to the ground: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust. We depend on the satisfying grace of God for this life, and believing on the promises of God for the life to come, look for His glorious resurrection, at which time the dead in Christ shall rise at the sound of His voice, and enter into *his/her* eternal reward.

We submit ourselves to His mysterious providence, and invoke His divine strength, in order that we may be prepared for our death and the glorious promise of our resurrection in Christ.

Form for the Committal of an Unbeliever

Forasmuch as it hath pleased God to take out of this life the soul of our departed, we therefore commit *his/her* body to the ground: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust.

We who observe this committal may learn that as we commit this body to the ground, so we in our life should commit the keeping of our souls to a faithful Creator.

May the heavenly Father touch our hearts so that by faith we may trust in the atoning death of Jesus Christ, and renew our commitment to Him. May the great Shepherd of our souls watch over us and keep us, in order that finding life through faith in the Son of God, we may look for His glorious resurrection and our eternal redemption.

RECEPTION OF JUNIOR MEMBERS

Children who have reached the age of twelve, having experienced the new birth, and have been baptized, and understand the obligations of the Christian faith, and have completed the prescribed course of instruction, shall be admitted to the church.

(At the appointed time, the Minister shall read the names of the Juniors to be received; and, after they have come forward, he shall say to the Congregation:)

DEARLY BELOVED, these persons here present before you are baptized children of the Church, who having arrived at the years of discretion, desire now to confirm the vows of their baptism and to enter upon the active duties and the full privileges of membership in the Church of Christ. They have been duly instructed as to the truths of the Christian faith, and have been examined as to their fitness for such membership. Before they assume the required vows, let us invoke on their behalf the gracious blessing of God our Father, and the continued presence of the Holy Spirit, who hath inclined their hearts to this end.

(Then shall the Minister say:)

Let us pray.

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who hast appointed unto children a place in Thy kingdom, and through Thy well beloved Son didst give unto them Thy blessing, we beseech Thee that Thou wilt visit with Thy favor the homes of this congregation, and fill the hearts of all parents with the fear of God and the spirit of wisdom and love. We pray that Thy church may be faithful in the nurture of those committed to her care. Let Thy blessing rest upon these, Thy children, whom Thou hast graciously inclined to Thy service and to the fellowship of thy people.

We beseech Thee that Thou wilt so further them by thy grace and direct them by Thy Spirit, that they may be faithful servants in Thy kingdom on earth, and finally reign with Thee in Thy kingdom above, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

(Then shall the Minister say:)

Hear the word of the Gospel as written by St. Luke. (2:40-52)

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him. Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him not, they turned again to Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him. Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I sought Thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

(Then shall the Minister address the persons seeking admission as follows:)

DEARLY BELOVED, We rejoice in the grace of God in that He has brought you to this place, and by His Spirit has confirmed you in your purpose to serve Him and to live in the fellowship of the Church of Christ. It is needful now that you should declare your faith and purpose in the presence of this congregation by answering the following questions:

Do you here, in the presence of God and of this congregation, renew the solemn promises contained in the Baptismal Covenant, ratifying and confirming the same, and acknowledging yourselves to be bound faithfully to observe and keep that Covenant?

Answer. I do.

Have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior?

Answer. I have.

Do you confess Him as your Lord and Master?

Answer. I do.

Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Answer. I do.

Will you be loyal to the Primitive Methodist Church, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?

Answer. I will.

(Then, the candidates kneeling, the Minister shall say:)

Defend, O Lord, these Thy children with Thy heavenly grace, that they may continue Thine forever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more and more, until they come into Thy everlasting kingdom. *Amen.*

Then the Minister, extending the right hand of fellowship, shall say to the candidates:)

We welcome you to the communion of the Church of God; and, in testimony of our Christian affection and the cordiality with which we receive you, I hereby extend to you the right hand of fellowship: and may God grant that you may be a faithful and useful member of the Church militant till you are called to the fellowship of the Church Triumphant, which is “without fault before the throne of God.”

(Option: Testimony of Christian Faith may be given at this point, if so desired by the candidate.)

(Then the Minister may offer an extemporaneous prayer.)

RECEIVING JUNIOR MEMBERS TO ADULT MEMBERSHIP

(Those who are to be received into church membership may be called forward by name, and the Minister shall say to them:)

DEARLY BELOVED: You are come seeking larger fellowship with the Church our Savior has purchased with His own blood, and Adult Membership in this corporate body of believers. You, as Junior Members, know how solemn are the duties of membership, and before you are admitted to senior fellowship, it is proper that you reaffirm your faith, and renew your covenant with this Church by answering the following questions:

1. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior?

Answer. I have.

2. Do you confess Him as your Lord and Master?

Answer. I do.

3. Do you receive and confess the Christian faith as contained in the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Answer. I do.

4. Will you be loyal to the Primitive Methodist Church, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts and your service?

Answer. I will.

5. Will you contribute of your earthly substance, according to your ability, to the support of the Gospel, and the various benevolent enterprises of the Church?

Answer. I will.

(The Candidates shall kneel, and the Minister shall say:)

Defend, O Lord, these Thy servants with Thy heavenly grace, that they may continue Thine forevermore, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit, more and more until they come into Thy everlasting kingdom. *Amen.*

(Then the Minister shall extend the right hand of fellowship and say:)

We welcome you to the communion of the Church of God; and in testimony of our Christian affection and the cordiality with which we receive you, I hereby extend to you the right hand of fellowship, and may God grant that you may be a faithful and useful member of the Church militant till you are called to the fellowship of the Church triumphant which is without fault before the throne of God.

(Option: Testimony of Christian Faith may be given at this point if so desired by the candidate.)

(Then the Minister may offer extemporaneous prayer.)

(Option: Have new member(s) stand in receiving line to be greeted by their church family.)

RECEPTION OF ADULT MEMBERS

(Those who are to be received into Church Membership may be called forward by name and the Minister, addressing the congregation shall say:)

DEARLY BELOVED, that none may be admitted hastily into the Church, we receive persons who seek fellowship with us on profession of faith, in which proof may be made, both to themselves and to the Church, of the sincerity and depth of their convictions and of the strength of their purpose to lead a new life.

The *persons* here present desire to be so admitted. You will hear their answers to the questions put to them, and if you make no objections they will be received.

It is needful, however, that you be reminded of your own responsibility, as having previously entered this holy fellowship and now representing the Church into which they seek admission. Inasmuch as they should find in you holy examples of life and loving help in the true serving of their Lord and ours, I beseech you to so order your own lives that these new disciples may take no detriment from you.

DEARLY BELOVED, the Scriptures teach us that the Church is the household of God, of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and that it is the design of the gospel to bring together in one all who are in Christ. The end of this fellowship is the salvation of men and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth. As helps thereto, the Church is charged with the maintenance of sound doctrine and of the ordinances of Christian worship, and with the exercise of that power of godly admonition and discipline which Christ has committed to her for the promotion of holiness.

The duties of those united in this fellowship are to continue steadfast in the faith and practice of the Gospel to promote the peace and unity of the Church; to labor for the spread of love and righteousness; and by word and deed to bring others into the fold of Jesus Christ.

Into this holy fellowship the *persons* before you, who have already received the sacrament of baptism come seeking admission. We now propose, in the fear of God, to question *them* as to *their* faith and purposes, that you may know that *they* are proper *persons* to be admitted into the Church.

(Then addressing the persons seeking admission, the Minister shall say:)

DEARLY BELOVED, you are come seeking the great privilege of union with the Church our Savior has purchased with His own blood. We rejoice in the grace of God unto you in that He has called you to be His *followers*. You have heard how solemn are the duties of membership in Christ's Church; and before you are admitted, it is proper that you do here publicly confess your faith and declare your purpose, by answering the following questions:

Have you been Baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Answer. I have.

Have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior?

Answer. I have.

Do you confess Him as your Lord and Master?

Answer. I do.

Do you receive and confess the Christian faith as contained in the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Answer. I do.

Will you be loyal to the Primitive Methodist Church, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service in keeping with the duties of membership?

Answer. I will.

Will you contribute of your earthly substance, according to your ability, to the support of the Gospel, and the various benevolent enterprises of the Church?

Answer. I will.

(Then the candidates, kneeling, the Minister shall say:)

Defend, O Lord, *these* Thy servants with Thy heavenly grace; that *they* may continue Thine forever; and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit, more and more, until *they* come into Thine everlasting kingdom. *Amen.*

(Then, the Minister, extending the right hand of fellowship, shall say to the candidates:)

We welcome you to the fellowship of the *(name of church)*, and, in testimony of our Christian affection and the cordiality with which we receive you I hereby extend to you the right hand of Christian fellowship. May God grant that you be a faithful and useful member of the Church militant till you are called to the fellowship of the Church triumphant, which is without fault before the throne of God.

ORDINATION OF ELDERS

The ceremony of ordination shall be performed in a public assembly, by the president of the Conference, assisted by the vice-president and secretary, or persons appointed by the Conference to perform the same.

Immediately preceding the ordination, a sermon shall be preached or a charge given by one appointed by the previous Conference, having reference to the life and duties of a Christian minister; and the responsibilities and obligations of the church.

(After the sermon, or charge, the vice-president shall present the candidates to the president, and say:)

I present unto you *(naming the candidates)* to be ordained to the ministry of the Church of Christ.

(The president shall say to the members of Conference:)

BRETHREN: You have declared by your votes that this person *(or these persons)* *(is/are)* worthy to be ordained to the Christian ministry. If any of you know evil in him *(or them)* that would justly exclude him *(or them)* from this office, come forward and make it known.

(The following or an extemporaneous prayer shall be offered:)

Almighty God, Giver of all good things, anoint with Thy Holy Spirit *(this/these)* Thy servant(s) now called to be a Minister in Thy Church. Replenish *(him/them)* daily with Thy grace. Fill *(his/their)* mind with Thy holy doctrine; and may *(his/their)* life be blameless and pure, so that by word and good example *(he/they)* may faithfully serve Thee in this office, to the glory of Thy name and the edification of Thy Church, through the merits of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, world without end. *Amen.*

(The Scriptures shall be read.)

The Great Commission

“And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” *Amen. Matthew 28:18-20*

The Epistle

“Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” *Ephesians 4:7-13*

(The congregation and the members of the Conference shall remain seated while the candidates kneel. The Ministers selected shall then lay their hands upon the head of each candidate while the president pronounces the following:)

The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Spirit for the office and work of a pastor, committed unto thee by the election of thy brethren and the imposition of our hands. Be thou faithful.

(Candidates will then rise. The president shall present him with an open Bible, saying:)

Take authority to preach this Word, and to administer the ordinances in the Church of Christ.

Feed the flock of God, taking the oversight there of; not as a lord over God’s heritage, but an example to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear thou shalt receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

(Then shall the president say:)

Let us pray.

Most merciful Father, we beseech Thee to grant unto these Thy servants, now set apart to the office of pastor, Thy heavenly blessing. So endue them with Thy Holy Spirit, that they, preaching Thy Word, may not only be in earnest to reprove, beseech, and exhort with all patience and long-suffering; but also may be to such as believe, wholesome examples in doctrine, in conversation, in love, in faith, in charity, in purity; that faithfully fulfilling their course, at the last day each one may receive a crown of righteousness laid up by the Lord, the righteous Judge, who liveth and reigneth, one God with the Father and the Holy Spirit world without end.

Assist us, O Lord, in all our doings, with Thy gracious favor, and further us with Thy continued help, that in all our works, begun and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy Name, and finally, by Thy mercy, obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

(An extemporaneous prayer may be substituted for the above. The service to conclude with the doxology and benediction.)

ORDINATION OF LAY ELDERS

(Candidates are seated in front pews of church.)

Pastor:

Will read the responsibilities and qualifications as found in the Discipline.

Lay Elder, (representing the elders):

Introduction of Candidates:

I present to you *(name(s) of candidates)* who have responded to the call of God to commit their lives to the church of Jesus Christ as lay elder(s). They have been appointed by the Pastor and confirmed by the Quarterly Conference to assist in the work of spiritual leadership in the church. They have completed their preparation and have demonstrated emotional and spiritual maturity qualifying them for spiritual leadership within the *(name of church)*.

Lay Elder:

Titus 1:5-9. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

Pastor, (to the candidates):

I Peter 5:1-4. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof,

not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Pastor, (to the congregation):

Heb. 13:17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

(Candidates will kneel)

Pastor:

(The pastor will offer an extemporaneous prayer of consecration).

Pastor, (congregation standing):

(Chosen elders will lay their hands upon the candidates)

The Lord pour upon thee the Holy Spirit for the office and work of an elder, committed unto thee by the confirmation of the Quarterly Conference and the imposition of our hands, and be thou faithful.

(If they are to be presented with a Bible and/or certificate):

Pastor, (candidates standing):

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as an elder, not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be. Do not lord it over those entrusted to you, but be an example to the flock.

Pastor, (benediction):

Now to Him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to Him be the glory in the church and in Jesus Christ to all generations, forever and ever. *Amen.*

COMMISSIONING SERVICE FOR MISSIONARIES - IMB

Beloved in the Lord: In the name of the International Mission Board we are here to commission you as a missionary of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and fellow-worker in His Church.

Believing that God would have “all men to be saved to come to a knowledge of the truth”, and that Christ’s death does completely atone “for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”, and that the Holy Spirit empowers us to witness unto Him in all the world by calling us to go forth in His Name and carry the Gospel of salvation to those who do not know the Lord Christ, you have heard and accepted His call to Missionary service. This is a high and holy calling of love and service to men all over the world, in obedience to the Great Commission: “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel.”

Your calling acknowledged the opportunity to share the living Christ with the “regions beyond”.

God, in the early Church, appointed “apostles and prophets, evangelists and pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”.

“I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

You have previously declared your faith in and allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ, and have promised to follow Him with loyalty and devotion.

You now declare your conviction that He has called you to serve Him in another land. This call has been confirmed by the gifts which God gave you, by the circumstances pertaining to your call, by the opinion of your friends, and by the judgment of the Church, as expressed through Her agencies. You have answered satisfactorily the questions which have been asked in accordance with the Articles of Faith of our Church, regarding your Christian faith and your loyalty to the Government and Discipline of the Primitive Methodist Church in the U.S.A.

We ask you to publicly declare your position by answered these questions individually:

---- In acceptance of this commission of the Church through the International Mission Board, have you been constrained to seek this appointment by the love of Christ and a sincere desire to promote His Glory through the Gospel? If so, answer by saying,

“I have been fully constrained.”

---- Are you fully prepared and ready to take upon yourself this high and holy ministry? If so, answer by saying,

“I am so prepared and ready.”

---- Do you promise to be faithful in guarding yourself against all that is not in harmony with the teaching of God’s Word, and will you endeavor to lead a holy life following the commandments of God? If so, answer by saying,

“I do so promise.”

---- Do you promise to adorn your Christian profession with a Christ-like character, and exemplify Christian love for those among whom you serve and in hearty cooperation with your fellow missionaries, wherever you are assigned as an ambassador and servant of Christ? If so, answer by saying,

“I do so promise.”

You have given yourself to God in consecration, and now you are to be publicly set apart in the presence of the Church for this ministry, as you kneel at the altar before this congregation of people assembled.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, and by the authority vested in the International Mission Board of the Primitive Methodist Church in the U.S.A., we now, by the laying on of our hands, commission you as a missionary of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and a fellow worker in His Church, and send you forth as God’s chosen servant. May God permit His Presence to be with you as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. “Ge ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations”.

Now we admonish you, the congregation of God, who have witnessed this service to remember this(*these*) missionary(*ies*) in prayer, so that he(*she, they*) may reach his(*here, their*) place of service in safety and that he(*she, they*), as God’s messenger(*s*) and our representative(*s*), may experience the blessing of God. Cooperate with him(*her, them*) by your prayers and gifts for the work in which he(*she, they*) and we are alike responsible. Strive to promote missions in your places of service, so that in time “The earth may be filled with the knowledge of the Glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” and the “Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ”.
Amen.

(It is suggested that officers and members of IMB be used in commissioning service, plus Conference officers and president of School of Theology.)

COMMISSIONING SERVICE OF A NATIONAL MISSIONARY

(The Commissioning Ceremony shall be performed in a public assembly by the members of the National Mission Board. The Executive Director of the National Mission Board shall present the missionary to the President of the National Mission Board, and say:)

It is a privilege to present unto you the Reverend (*name*), whom we have chosen to be placed in National Mission work.

(The President will read the following Scripture in a free paraphrase of Acts 13:1-4).

“Now there were in the Conference certain ministers and delegates composing the National Mission Board. As they ministered to the Lord, the Holy Ghost said, ‘Separate unto me (*name of missionary*) for the work whereunto I have called him’. And when they had laid their hands on him and prayed, they sent him away. So he, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed to preach the Word.”

(The missionary shall kneel and the members of the National Mission Board will lay hands on him and present him to the Lord.)

(The assembly will sing the following chorus:)

We are on in the bond of love,
We are one in the bond of love,
We have joined our spirits with the Spirit of God,
We are one in the bond of love.

(The President will pronounce the benediction:)

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory forever and ever. *Amen.*

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS

Church Officers Please Stand: - My fellow servants, you have been called by God to serve Him through the office to which you have been chosen. Your fellow-members have confirmed this call through their prayers and election. The church membership has placed their confidence in you, that you will be faithful in fulfilling the duties of your position or positions to the best of your God-given abilities. I now ask you, in the presence of God and His congregation, to affirm your commitment to the church and your positions.

Do you promise, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, to faithfully fulfill all the responsibilities of the position or positions you are about to assume. Do you promise to seek God, asking for His strength and guidance to help you in carrying out your duties? - If so answer - I do.

Membership Please Stand: As members of the (name of the local church), it is your responsibility to cooperate with the leadership of the church for the building up of the body of Christ. I now ask you to publicly pledge your support to these leaders. Officers, I remind you that you are doing the same for each other.

Do you promise to do your part by offering your support, prayers and encouragement to the officers you have chosen to lead this church in the coming year? If so answer - I do.

Father, we thank You for the New Year that is quickly approaching and for the men and women You have chosen to lead this ministry. I pray that Your hand of blessing would be with all our leaders and congregation and that you would prosper us in this coming year. In Jesus Name - Amen.