

Marriage

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For General Rules, see page 462.

The Marriage Service

Pastoral Introduction

This may be read by those present before the service begins.

A wedding is one of life's great moments, a time of solemn commitment as well as good wishes, feasting and joy. St John tells us how Jesus shared in such an occasion at Cana, and gave there a sign of new beginnings as he turned water into wine.

Marriage is intended by God to be a creative relationship, as his blessing enables husband and wife to love and support each other in good times and in bad, and to share in the care and upbringing of children. For Christians, marriage is also an invitation to share life together in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is based upon a solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman, declared and celebrated in the presence of God and before witnesses.

On this their wedding day the bride and bridegroom face each other, make their promises and receive God's blessing. You are witnesses of the marriage, and express your support by your presence and your prayers. Your support does not end today: the couple will value continued encouragement in the days and years ahead of them.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

I Corinthians 13.4-7

The Marriage Service

Structure

¶ Introduction

The Welcome

Preface

The Declarations

The Collect

Readings

Sermon

¶ The Marriage

The Vows

The Giving of Rings

The Proclamation

The Blessing of the Marriage

Registration of the Marriage

Prayers

The Dismissal

For Notes, see pages 132–134.

The Marriage Service

Introduction

The Welcome

The minister welcomes the people using these or other appropriate words

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you

All **and also with you.**

This sentence may be used

God is love, and those who live in love live in God
and God lives in them.

1 John 4.16

This prayer may be said

All **God of wonder and of joy:
grace comes from you,
and you alone are the source of life and love.
Without you, we cannot please you;
without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.
Send your Holy Spirit,
and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may worship you now
with thankful hearts
and serve you always with willing minds;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

A hymn may be sung.

Preface

These words or those on page 136 are used

In the presence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
we have come together
to witness the marriage of *N* and *N*,
to pray for God's blessing on them,
to share their joy
and to celebrate their love.

Marriage is a gift of God in creation
through which husband and wife may know the grace of God.
It is given
that as man and woman grow together in love and trust,
they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind,
as Christ is united with his bride, the Church.

The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together
in the delight and tenderness of sexual union
and joyful commitment to the end of their lives.
It is given as the foundation of family life
in which children are [born and] nurtured
and in which each member of the family,
in good times and in bad,
may find strength, companionship and comfort,
and grow to maturity in love.

Marriage is a way of life made holy by God,
and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ
with those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee.
Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty
which all should uphold and honour.
It enriches society and strengthens community.
No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly
but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God.

N and *N* are now to enter this way of life.
They will each give their consent to the other
and make solemn vows,
and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring.
We pray with them that the Holy Spirit will guide
and strengthen them,
that they may fulfil God's purposes
for the whole of their earthly life together.

The Declarations

The minister says to the congregation

First, I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

The minister says to the couple

The vows you are about to take are to be made in the presence of God,
who is judge of all and knows all the secrets of our hearts;
therefore if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry,
you must declare it now.

The minister says to the bridegroom

N, will you take N to be your wife?
Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her,
and, forsaking all others,
be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

He answers

I will.

The minister says to the bride

N, will you take N to be your husband?
Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him,
and, forsaking all others,
be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

She answers

I will.

The minister says to the congregation

Will you, the families and friends of N and N,
support and uphold them in their marriage
now and in the years to come?

All **We will.**

The Collect

*The minister invites the people to pray, silence is kept
and the minister says the Collect*

God our Father,
from the beginning
you have blessed creation with abundant life.
Pour out your blessings upon N and N,
that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship,
in holiness and commitment to each other.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Readings

*At least one reading from the Bible is used.
A selection of readings is found on pages 137–149.*

Sermon

The Marriage

A hymn may be sung.

The couple stand before the minister.

The Vows

The minister introduces the vows in these or similar words

N and N, I now invite you to join hands and make your vows,
in the presence of God and his people.

The bride and bridegroom face each other.

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his.

These words, or those on page 150, are used

I, N, take you, N,
to be my wife,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says

I, N, take you, N,
to be my husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The Giving of Rings

*The minister receives the ring(s), and says this prayer
or the prayer on page 151*

Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let these rings be to N and N
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness,
to remind them of the vow and covenant
which they have made this day
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

*The bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the
bride's left hand and, holding it there, says*

N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*If rings are exchanged, they loose hands and the bride places a ring on
the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand and, holding it there, says*

N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If only one ring is used, before they loose hands the bride says

N, I receive this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Proclamation

The minister addresses the people

In the presence of God, and before this congregation,
N and N have given their consent
and made their marriage vows to each other.
They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands
and by the giving and receiving of rings.
I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

The minister joins their right hands together and says

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

The Blessing of the Marriage

The husband and wife kneel. The minister may use the following blessing or one of those on pages 152–155.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
for you have created joy and gladness,
pleasure and delight, love, peace and fellowship.
Pour out the abundance of your blessing
upon N and N in their new life together.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts
and a crown upon their heads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
awake and asleep,
in joy and in sorrow,
in life and in death.
Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that banquet
where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home.
We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

The minister says to the couple

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve and keep you;
the Lord mercifully grant you the riches of his grace,
that you may please him both in body and soul,
and, living together in faith and love,
may receive the blessings of eternal life.

All **Amen.**

Registration of the Marriage

See Note 10 on page 134.

A hymn or psalm may be used (see pages 148–149).

Prayers

These or other suitable prayers are used (see Note 9 on page 133 and pages 156–168). The prayers usually include these concerns and may follow this sequence:

¶ *Thanksgiving*

¶ *Spiritual growth*

¶ *Faithfulness, joy, love, forgiveness and healing*

¶ *Children, other family members and friends*

Faithful God,
holy and eternal,
source of life and spring of love,
we thank and praise you for bringing *N* and *N* to this day,
and we pray for them.

Lord of life and love:

All **hear our prayer.**

May their marriage be life-giving and life-long,
enriched by your presence and strengthened by your grace;
may they bring comfort and confidence to each other
in faithfulness and trust.

Lord of life and love:

All **hear our prayer.**

May the hospitality of their home
bring refreshment and joy to all around them;
may their love overflow to neighbours in need
and embrace those in distress.

Lord of life and love:

All **hear our prayer.**

May they discern in your word
order and purpose for their lives;
and may the power of your Holy Spirit
lead them in truth and defend them in adversity.

Lord of life and love:

All **hear our prayer.**

May they nurture their family with devotion,
see their children grow in body, mind and spirit
and come at last to the end of their lives
with hearts content and in joyful anticipation of heaven.
Lord of life and love:

All **hear our prayer.**

The prayers conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

(or)

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on 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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

A hymn may be sung.

The Dismissal

The minister says

God the Holy Trinity make *you* strong in faith and love,
defend *you* on every side, and guide *you* in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among *you* and remain with *you* always.

All **Amen.**

The Marriage Service within a Celebration of Holy Communion

Structure

- ¶ **The Gathering**
 - The Welcome
 - Prayers of Penitence
 - Preface
 - The Declarations
 - The Collect

- ¶ **The Liturgy of the Word**
 - Readings
 - Gospel Reading
 - Sermon

- ¶ **The Marriage**
 - The Vows
 - The Giving of Rings
 - The Proclamation
 - † The Blessing of the Marriage
 - Registration of the Marriage
 - Prayers

- ¶ **The Liturgy of the Sacrament**
 - The Peace
 - Preparation of the Table
 - Taking of the Bread and Wine
 - The Eucharistic Prayer
 - The Lord's Prayer
 - † *The Blessing of the Marriage*
 - Breaking of the Bread
 - Giving of Communion
 - Prayer after Communion

- ¶ **The Dismissal**

† indicates alternative position allowed and shown indented in italics

The Marriage Service within a Celebration of Holy Communion

¶ *The Gathering*

The Welcome

*The minister welcomes the people using these
or other appropriate words*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you

All **and also with you.**

This sentence may be used

God is love, and those who live in love live in God
and God lives in them.

1 John 4.16

This prayer may be said

All **God of wonder and of joy:
grace comes from you,
and you alone are the source of life and love.
Without you, we cannot please you;
without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.
Send your Holy Spirit,
and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may worship you now
with thankful hearts
and serve you always with willing minds;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

A hymn may be sung.

Prayers of Penitence

Invitation to Confession

A minister may use these or other suitable words

As we prepare to hear God's word
and to celebrate the marriage of *N* and *N*,
we remember our human frailty
and our need for God's help in all that we do.

(or)

Gathered together as God's family,
let us ask forgiveness from our heavenly Father,
for he is full of gentleness and compassion.

(or)

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden,
to ask for his forgiveness and peace.

Confession and Absolution

Either

All **Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds
and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

The president says

The Lord forgive *you* your sin,
unite *you* in the love which took Christ to the cross,
and bring *you* in the Spirit to his wedding feast in heaven.

All **Amen.**

(or)

Lord, in our weakness you are our strength.

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord, when we stumble, you raise us up.

Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, when we fail, you give us new life.

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

The president says

May God in his goodness forgive *us our* sins,
grant *us* strength in *our* weakness,
and bring *us* to eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Preface

These words or those on page 136 are used

In the presence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
we have come together
to witness the marriage of *N* and *N*,
to pray for God's blessing on them,
to share their joy
and to celebrate their love.

Marriage is a gift of God in creation
through which husband and wife may know the grace of God.
It is given
that as man and woman grow together in love and trust,
they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind,
as Christ is united with his bride, the Church.

The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together
in the delight and tenderness of sexual union
and joyful commitment to the end of their lives.
It is given as the foundation of family life
in which children are [born and] nurtured
and in which each member of the family,
in good times and in bad,
may find strength, companionship and comfort,
and grow to maturity in love.

Marriage is a way of life made holy by God,
and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ
with those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee.
Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty
which all should uphold and honour.
It enriches society and strengthens community.
No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly
but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God.

N and *N* are now to enter this way of life.
They will each give their consent to the other
and make solemn vows,
and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring.
We pray with them that the Holy Spirit will guide
and strengthen them,
that they may fulfil God's purposes
for the whole of their earthly life together.

The Declarations

The minister says to the congregation

First, I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

The minister says to the couple

The vows you are about to take are to be made in the presence of God,
who is judge of all and knows all the secrets of our hearts;
therefore if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry,
you must declare it now.

The minister says to the bridegroom

N, will you take N to be your wife?
Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her,
and, forsaking all others,
be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

He answers

I will.

The minister says to the bride

N, will you take N to be your husband?
Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him,
and, forsaking all others,
be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

She answers

I will.

The minister says to the congregation

Will you, the families and friends of N and N,
support and uphold them in their marriage
now and in the years to come?

All We will.

The Collect

*The minister invites the people to pray, silence is kept
and the minister says the Collect*

God our Father,
from the beginning
you have blessed creation with abundant life.
Pour out your blessings upon N and N,
that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship,
in holiness and commitment to each other.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

Readings

Either one or two readings from Scripture precede the Gospel reading (see pages 137–149).

At the end of each the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

The psalm or canticle (pages 169–172) follows the first reading; other hymns and songs may be used between the readings.

Gospel Reading

An acclamation may herald the Gospel reading.

One of the following may be used

Alleluia, alleluia.

God made them male and female
and the two will become one.

All Alleluia. *cf Mark 10.8*

(or)

Alleluia, alleluia.

God is love;
let us love one another
as God has loved us.

All Alleluia. *cf 1 John 4.8-11*

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to N.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

The Marriage

A hymn may be sung.

The couple stand before the minister.

The Vows

The minister introduces the vows in these or similar words

N and N, I now invite you to join hands and make your vows,
in the presence of God and his people.

The bride and bridegroom face each other.

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his.

These words, or those on page 150 are used

I, N, take you, N,
to be my wife,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says

I, N, take you, N,
to be my husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The Giving of Rings

*The minister receives the ring(s), and says this prayer
or the prayer on page 151*

Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let these rings be to N and N
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness,
to remind them of the vow and covenant
which they have made this day
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

*The bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the
bride's left hand, and, holding it there, says*

N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*If rings are exchanged, they loose hands and the bride places a ring on
the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand, and, holding it there, says*

N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If only one ring is used, before they loose hands the bride says

N, I receive this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Proclamation

The minister addresses the people

In the presence of God, and before this congregation,
N and N have given their consent
and made their marriage vows to each other.
They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands
and by the giving and receiving of rings.
I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

The minister joins their right hands together and says

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

The Blessing of the Marriage

The Blessing of the Marriage may be used here or after the Lord's Prayer.

The husband and wife kneel. The minister may use the following blessing or one of those on pages 152–155.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
for you have created joy and gladness,
pleasure and delight, love, peace and fellowship.
Pour out the abundance of your blessing
upon N and N in their new life together.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts
and a crown upon their heads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
awake and asleep,
in joy and in sorrow,
in life and in death.
Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that banquet
where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home.
We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

The minister says to the couple

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve and keep you;
the Lord mercifully grant you the riches of his grace,
that you may please him both in body and soul,
and, living together in faith and love,
may receive the blessings of eternal life.

All **Amen.**

Registration of the Marriage

See Note 10 on page 134.

A hymn or psalm may be used (see pages 148–149).

Prayers

These or other suitable prayers are used (see Note 9 on page 133 and pages 156–168). The prayers usually include these concerns and may follow this sequence:

¶ *Thanksgiving*

¶ *Spiritual growth*

¶ *Faithfulness, joy, love, forgiveness and healing*

¶ *Children, other family members and friends*

Faithful God,
holy and eternal,
source of life and spring of love,
we thank and praise you for bringing *N* and *N* to this day,
and we pray for them.

Lord of life and love:

All **hear our prayer.**

May their marriage be life-giving and life-long,
enriched by your presence and strengthened by your grace;
may they bring comfort and confidence to each other
in faithfulness and trust.

Lord of life and love:

All **hear our prayer.**

May the hospitality of their home
bring refreshment and joy to all around them;
may their love overflow to neighbours in need
and embrace those in distress.

Lord of life and love:

All **hear our prayer.**

May they discern in your word
order and purpose for their lives;
and may the power of your Holy Spirit
lead them in truth and defend them in adversity.

Lord of life and love:

All **hear our prayer.**

May they nurture their family with devotion,
see their children grow in body, mind and spirit
and come at last to the end of their lives
with hearts content and in joyful anticipation of heaven.
Lord of life and love:

All **hear our prayer.**

Father of all,
in Jesus Christ you open to us
the treasures of your kingdom;
guide us by your Holy Spirit
that we may receive your redeeming grace
and reflect the perfect unity of your love,
for you live and reign,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

A hymn may be sung.

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

*The president may introduce the Peace with a suitable sentence.
The following may be used*

To crown all things there must be love.
Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.
The peace of the Lord be always with you

All and also with you.

(or)

We have celebrated the love of N and N.
We now celebrate God's love for all of us.
Peace, in Christ, to all of you

cf 1 Peter 5.14

All and also with you.

These words may be added

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

*The service continues with the Preparation of the Table. Presidential texts for the rest of the service are to be found in *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (pages 155–335) and the *President's edition* (pages 381–524).*

Preparation of the Table Taking of the Bread and Wine

The following prayer may be used

In your goodness, Lord,
accept the gift of our love,
and with a father's affection watch over this couple
you have joined in the covenant of marriage;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

An authorized Eucharistic Prayer is used.

One of these Proper Prefaces may be used

Short Proper Preface

And now we give you thanks
because you have made the union between Christ and his Church
a pattern for the marriage between husband and wife.
Therefore with angels . . .

Extended Proper Preface

All glory, honour, thanks and praise
be given to you, creator of heaven and earth.
When you made us in your image,
creating us male and female,
you gave us the gift of marriage.
When sin marred that image
you healed our brokenness,
giving your Son to die for us.
Therefore we raise our voices,
with all who have served you in every age,
to proclaim the glory of your name:

The Lord's Prayer
The Blessing of the Marriage
(if not used earlier)

Breaking of the Bread

Giving of Communion

Prayer after Communion

The following Post Communion may be used

Gracious God,
may N and N, who have been bound together
in these holy mysteries,
become one in body and soul.
May they live in faithfulness and peace
and obtain those eternal joys
prepared for all who love you;
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

¶ The Dismissal

The minister says

The Lord bless you and keep you:

All **Amen.**

The Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you:

All **Amen.**

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace:

Numbers 6.24-26

All **Amen.**

The Lord God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
the holy and undivided Trinity,
guard you, save you,
and bring you to that heavenly city,
where he lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

Notes to the Marriage Service

1 Preparation

It is the custom and practice of the Church of England to offer preparation for marriage for couples who are soon to be married, as well as to be available for support and counselling in the years that follow.

2 The Banns

The banns are to be published in the church on three Sundays at the time of Divine Service by the officiant in the form set out in *The Book of Common Prayer* or in the following form:

I publish the banns of marriage between NN of ... and NN of ...
This is the *first / second / third* time of asking. If any of you know any reason in law why they may not marry each other you are to declare it.

We pray for these couples (*or N and N*) as they prepare for their wedding(s).

A suitable prayer may be said (see page 135).

3 Hymns and Canticles

These may be used at suitable points during the service.

4 Entry

The bride may enter the church escorted by her father or a representative of the family, or the bride and groom may enter church together.

5 Readings and Sermon

At least one reading from the Bible must be used. Suggested readings are printed on pages 137–149. If occasion demands, either the Sermon or the Readings and Sermon may come after the Blessing of the Marriage. Chairs may be provided for the bride and bridegroom.

6 'Giving Away'

This traditional ceremony is optional. Immediately before the couple exchange vows (pages 108 and 123), the minister may ask:

Who brings this woman to be married to this man?

The bride's father (or mother, or another member of her family or a friend representing the family) gives the bride's right hand to the minister who puts it in the bridegroom's right hand.

Alternatively, after the bride and bridegroom have made their Declarations, the minister may ask the parents of bride and bridegroom in these or similar words:

N and N have declared their intention towards each other.

As their parents,

will you now entrust your son and daughter to one another as they come to be married?

Both sets of parents respond:

We will.

7 The Declarations and the Vows

The *Book of Common Prayer* version of the Declarations, and /or the alternative vows on pages 150–151, may be used. The couple repeat the vows after the minister, or may read them. If preferred, the question to the bride, and her vow, may come before the question to the bridegroom and his vow.

8 The Giving of Rings

If desired, the bride and bridegroom may each place a ring on the fourth finger of the other's hand, and may then say together the words 'N, I give you this ring ...'. The prayer on page 151 may be used instead of the prayer on pages 109 and 124.

9 The Prayers

Several forms of intercession are provided. Other suitable forms may be used, especially prayers which the couple have written or selected in co-operation with the minister. Whatever form is used, silence may be kept as part of the intercession. Free prayer may be offered.

10 Registration of the Marriage

The law requires that the Registers are filled in immediately after the solemnization of a marriage. This may take place either after the Proclamation or at the end of the service.

11 Holy Communion

For communicant members of the Church it is appropriate that they receive communion soon after their marriage. For some this may make it appropriate for the marriage to take place within the context of a Celebration of Holy Communion.

12 The Marriage Service within a Celebration of Holy Communion

The Notes to the Order for the Celebration of Holy Communion, as well as the Notes to the Marriage Service, apply equally to this service. Texts are suggested at different points, but other suitable texts may be used. Authorized Prayers of Penitence may be used. In the Liturgy of the Word, there should be a Gospel reading, preceded by either one or two other readings from the Bible. If desired, the Blessing of the Marriage may take place between the Lord's Prayer and the Breaking of the Bread.

13 Ecumenical Provisions

Where a minister of another Christian Church is invited to assist at the Solemnization of Matrimony, the permissions and procedures set out in Canon B 43 are to be followed. The Church of England minister who solemnizes the marriage must establish the absence of impediment, direct the exchange of vows, declare the existence of the marriage, say the final blessing, and sign the registers. A minister invited to assist may say all or part of the opening address, lead the declarations of intent, supervise the exchange of rings, and join in the blessing of the marriage. He or she may also read a lesson and lead all or part of the prayers. Where the couple come from different Christian communions the bishop may authorize such variations to the marriage service as are set out in *An Order for the Marriage of Christians from Different Churches*, which is published separately.

Supplementary Texts

¶ *Prayers at the Calling of the Banns*

Prayers such as the following may be used

Lord,
the source of all true love,
we pray for *these couples*.
Grant to them
joy of heart,
seriousness of mind
and reverence of spirit,
that as they enter into the oneness of marriage
they may be strengthened and guided by you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Lord of love,
we pray for *N* and *N*.
Be with them in all their preparations
and on their wedding day.
Give them your love in their hearts
throughout their married life together,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Alternative Preface

We have come together in the presence of God, to witness the marriage of *N* and *N*, to ask his blessing on them, and to share in their joy. Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and through his Spirit he is with us now.

The Bible teaches us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.

Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given as the foundation of family life in which children may be born and nurtured in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife belong to one another, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life that all should honour; and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

This is the way of life, created and hallowed by God, that *N* and *N* are now to begin. They will each give their consent to the other; they will join hands and exchange solemn vows, and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring.

Therefore, on this their wedding day we pray with them, that, strengthened and guided by God, they may fulfil his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

¶ Readings and Psalms

Any suitable translation may be used.

Old Testament and Apocrypha

Genesis 1.26-28

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

Song of Solomon 2.10-13; 8.6,7

My beloved speaks and says to me:

'Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;

for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtle dove
is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.'

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
a raging flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If one offered for love
all the wealth of one's house,
it would be utterly scorned.

Jeremiah 31.31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt – a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Tobit 8.4-8

When the parents had gone out and shut the door of the room, Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah, 'Sister, get up, and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety.' So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying, 'Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations for ever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you for ever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself."

I now am taking this kinswoman of mine,
not because of lust,
but with sincerity.
Grant that she and I may find mercy
and that we may grow old together.’
And they both said, ‘Amen, amen.’

Epistle

Romans 7.1,2,9-18

Do you not know, brothers and sisters – for I am speaking to those who know the law – that the law is binding on a person only during that person’s lifetime? Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband.

I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died, and the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.

Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.

Romans 8.31-35,37-39

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 12.1,2,9-13

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Romans 15.1-3,5-7,13

We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.'

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 3.14-end

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 4.1-6

I, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 5.21-end

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own

body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Philippians 4.4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Colossians 3.12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

I John 3.18-end

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

I John 4.7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Gospel

Matthew 5.1-10

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

Matthew 7.21,24-end

Jesus said, 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell – and great was its fall!'

Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Mark 10.6-9,13-16

Jesus said, 'From the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

John 2.1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

John 15.1-8

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.'

John 15.9-17

Jesus said to his disciples: 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.'

Psalms

Psalm 67

- 1 God be gracious to us and bless us ♦
and make his face to shine upon us,
- 2 That your way may be known upon earth, ♦
your saving power among all nations.
- 3 *Let the peoples praise you, O God; ♦
let all the peoples praise you.*
- 4 O let the nations rejoice and be glad, ♦
for you will judge the peoples righteously
and govern the nations upon earth.
- 5 *Let the peoples praise you, O God; ♦
let all the peoples praise you.*
- 6 Then shall the earth bring forth her increase, ♦
and God, our own God, will bless us.
- 7 God will bless us, ♦
and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

Psalm 121

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills; ♦
from where is my help to come?
- 2 My help comes from the Lord, ♦
the maker of heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not suffer your foot to stumble; ♦
he who watches over you will not sleep.
- 4 Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel ♦
shall neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5 The Lord himself watches over you; ♦
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
- 6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day, ♦
neither the moon by night.
- 7 The Lord shall keep you from all evil; ♦
it is he who shall keep your soul.
- 8 The Lord shall keep watch over your going out
and your coming in, ♦
from this time forth for evermore.

Psalm 127

- 1 Unless the Lord builds the house, ♦
those who build it labour in vain.
- 2 Unless the Lord keeps the city, ♦
the guard keeps watch in vain.
- 3 It is in vain that you hasten to rise up early
and go so late to rest, eating the bread of toil, ♦
for he gives his beloved sleep.
- 4 Children are a heritage from the Lord ♦
and the fruit of the womb is his gift.
- 5 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, ♦
so are the children of one's youth.
- 6 Happy are those who have their quiver full of them: ♦
they shall not be put to shame
when they dispute with their enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128

- 1 Blessed are all those who fear the Lord, ♦
and walk in his ways.
- 2 You shall eat the fruit of the toil of your hands; ♦
it shall go well with you, and happy shall you be.
- 3 Your wife within your house
shall be like a fruitful vine; ♦
your children round your table,
like fresh olive branches.
- 4 Thus shall the one be blest ♦
who fears the Lord.
- 5 The Lord from out of Zion bless you, ♦
that you may see Jerusalem in prosperity
all the days of your life.
- 6 May you see your children's children, ♦
and may there be peace upon Israel.

Alternative Vows

Form I

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his, and says

I, N, take you, N,
to be my wife,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part,
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says

I, N, take you, N,
to be my husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love, cherish, and obey,
till death us do part,
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

Form 2

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his, and says

I, N, take thee, N, to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

They loose hands.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says

I, N, take thee, N, to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.

[If desired, the word 'obey' may be omitted, as follows

I, N, take thee, N, to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.]

¶ *Prayer at the Giving of the Ring(s)*

Heavenly Father, source of everlasting love,
revealed to us in Jesus Christ

and poured into our hearts through your Holy Spirit;
that love which many waters cannot quench,

neither the floods drown;

that love which is patient and kind, enduring all things without end;
by your blessing, let these rings be to N and N
symbols to remind them of the covenant made this day
through your grace in the love of your Son
and in the power of your Spirit.

All **Amen.**

¶ *The Blessing of the Marriage*

One of the following forms may be used

- I God of life and beginnings,
you created man and woman in your likeness
and joined them together in union of body and heart;
God of love and forgiveness,
you loved us in Jesus Christ
who humbled himself to death on a cross;
God of grace and strength,
you bring your people to faith
and fill them with your presence.
Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
for you have created joy and gladness,
pleasure and delight, love, peace and fellowship.
Pour out the abundance of your blessing
upon N and N in their new life together.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts,
and a crown upon their heads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
awake and asleep,
in joy and in sorrow,
in life and in death.
Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that banquet
where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home.
We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

2 All praise and blessing to you, God of love,
creator of the universe,
maker of man and woman in your likeness,
source of blessing for married life.
All praise to you, for you have created
courtship and marriage,
joy and gladness,
feasting and laughter,
pleasure and delight.
May your blessing come in full upon *N* and *N*.
May they know your presence
in their joys and in their sorrows.
May they reach old age in the company of friends
and come at last to your eternal kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

3 Eternal God,
you create us out of love
that we should love you and one another.
Bless this man and this woman, made in your image,
who today become a sign of your faithful love to us
in Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

By your Holy Spirit,
fill bride and bridegroom with wisdom and hope
that they may delight in your gift of marriage
and enrich one another in love and faithfulness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Bring them to that table
where your saints celebrate for ever in your heavenly home;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

4 Blessed are you, Lord our God,
God of love, creator of all.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

Bridegroom Blessed are you, Lord our God,
you make us in your image and likeness.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

Bride Blessed are you, Lord our God,
you make man and woman to reflect your glory.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

Bridegroom Blessed are you, Lord our God,
you make us for joy and promise us life.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

Bride Blessed are you, Lord our God,
you create a people to know your love.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

Minister May N and N enjoy the blessing of your kingdom.
Give them faith and joy in their marriage.
Blessed are you, Lord our God,
you give joy to bride and groom.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

May their love be fruitful
and their home a place of peace.
Blessed are you, Lord our God,
you make marriage a sign of your love.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

May they know the love of the Father,
the life of the Son,
and the joy of the Spirit.
Blessed are you, Lord our God,
Lover, Beloved and Friend of Love.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

5 *This form may be added to any of the preceding blessings, or may be used on its own*

Blessed are you, heavenly Father.

All **You give joy to bridegroom and bride.**

Blessed are you, Lord Jesus Christ.

All **You bring life to the world.**

Blessed are you, Holy Spirit of God.

All **You bind us together in love.**

Blessed are you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Longer Prayers and Litanies

I Eternal God,
creator and redeemer,
from whom comes every good and perfect gift,
fill *N* and *N* with the riches of your grace
and breathe into their marriage
the strength of your holy and life-giving Spirit.
Lord, hear us:

All **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Send upon them the gift of love
that puts no limit to its faith and forbearance.
Lord, hear us:

All **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Sow in their lives the joy that comes from sharing
and grows with giving.
Lord, hear us:

All **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let peace spring from their faithfulness to each other
and flow deeper with the passing years.
Lord, hear us:

All **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Give them patience with their failures
and persistence with their hopes.
Lord, hear us:

All **Lord, graciously hear us.**

May their kindness, born of a gracious heart,
be shown to others in a generous spirit.
Lord, hear us:

All **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let goodness flower with forgiveness
and be the fruit of their married life.
Lord, hear us:

All **Lord, graciously hear us.**

In gentleness let them be tender with each other's dreams
and healing of each other's wounds.

Lord, hear us:

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Gracious God,
accept our prayers for *N* and *N*,
that as their love ripens
and their marriage matures
they may reap the harvest of the Spirit,
rejoice in your gifts
and reflect your glory in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All Amen.

2 A prayer for all people

Almighty God, look graciously on the world which you have made
and for which your Son gave his life.

Bless all whom you make one flesh in marriage.

May their life together be a sign of your love to this broken world,
so that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt, and joy overcome despair.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

May *N* and *N* so live together
that the strength of their love may reflect your love
and enrich our common life.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

May they be gentle and patient, ready to trust each other,
and, when they fail, willing to recognize and acknowledge their fault
and to give and receive forgiveness.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

[May *N* and *N* be blessed with the gift of children.

Fill them with wisdom and love as they care for their family.

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.]

May the lonely, the bereaved, and all who suffer want or anxiety,
be defended by you, O Lord.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

May those whose lives are today brought together
be given wisdom, patience and courage
to serve one another in Christ's name.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

May friends and family gathered here,
and those separated by distance,
be strengthened and blessed this day.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

We praise you, merciful God,
for those who have died in the faith of Christ.
May we be strengthened by their example.

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.

All **Grant that what we have asked in faith
we may by your grace receive,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

3 Eternal God,
creator and preserver of all life and giver of grace;
look with favour on the world you have made,
and especially on this man and this woman
whom you in holy marriage have made one.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

Give them wisdom and devotion in ordering their common life,
that each may be to the other
a strength in need, a counsellor in perplexity,
a comfort in sorrow and a companion in joy.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will,
that they may grow together in love and peace
with one another and with you all the days of their life.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

Give them grace when they hurt one another
to recognize and acknowledge their fault
and to seek each other's forgiveness
and your pardon and peace.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

Make their life together a sign of Christ's love
in this broken and disordered world,
that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal injury
and joy overcome despair.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

[Bestow on them, if it is your will,
the heritage and gift of children
and the grace to bring them up
to know you, to love you and to serve you.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.]**

Give them such fulfilment of their affection
that they may reach out in love and concern for others.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

Grant that all those who have witnessed these vows
may find their lives strengthened
and their loyalties confirmed.

Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

Grant that the bonds of our common humanity
by which all your children are united to one another
may be so transformed by your grace
that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven;
where, O Father, with your Son and the Holy Spirit,
you live and reign in perfect unity, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

4 Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we lift up our hearts to you
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Through him you have made a covenant of grace with your people
by the outpouring of your Holy Spirit.

We praise you for the gift of marriage
in which the love of husband and wife
reveals your purposes of love for the world.

We thank you today for *N* and *N*,
for leading them to each other
in friendship and love, commitment and trust,
and for bringing them here for the blessing of their marriage.

Living God,
by the presence of your Holy Spirit,
may they know the risen Christ to be with them now,
as they celebrate this covenant together.
May their lives be a witness to your saving love
in this troubled world.

As you pour out your love,
may they grow together in your sight,
and each be to the other
a companion in joy, a comfort in sorrow and a strength in need.

As you blessed the earthly home at Nazareth
with the presence of your Son,
may their home be a place of security and peace.
[Bless this couple with the gift and care of children,
that they may grow up to know and love you in your Son.]

And bring us all at the last
to that great marriage banquet of your Son
in our home in heaven,
where, with all your saints and angels,
in the glory of your presence,
we will for ever praise you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Thanksgiving

For the sharing of love

- 5** Father of all,
in Jesus Christ you open to us
the treasures of your kingdom;
guide us by your Holy Spirit
that we may receive your redeeming grace
and reflect the perfect unity of your love,
for you live and reign
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

- 6** God of love,
we thank you for the gift of marriage and for the joys it brings.
Bless us as we share in this wedding.
We thank you for the love
which has brought *N* and *N* to each other
and for their desire to share that
love for the rest of their lives;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Spiritual Growth

7 For the home

- Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home:
reign in the home of these your servants as Lord and King;
give them grace to minister to others
as you have ministered to them,
and grant that by deed and word
they may be witnesses of your saving love
to those among whom they live;
for the sake of your holy name.

All **Amen.**

8 For the Holy Spirit

Almighty God,
you send your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of all your people.
Open the hearts of these your servants to the riches of his grace,
that they may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
 in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

9 For grace to live well

Faithful God,
giver of all good things,
give *N* and *N* wisdom and devotion
in the ordering of their life together.
May they dwell together in love and peace
all the days of their life,
 seeking one another's welfare,
 bearing one another's burdens
 and sharing one another's joys;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

10 For discipleship

Eternal God,
without your grace nothing is strong, nothing is sure.
Strengthen *N* and *N* with patience, kindness, gentleness
and all other gifts of the Holy Spirit,
so that they may fulfil the vows they have made.
Keep them faithful to each other and to you.
Fill them with such love and joy
that they may build a home of peace and welcome.
Make their life together a sign of Christ's love
 in this broken world,
that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt,
and joy conquer despair;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

11 For a glimpse of eternal love

Eternal God, our maker and redeemer,
as you once enriched the wedding at Cana
when your Son turned water into wine,
so by his presence now bring your joy to this day.
May we drink deeply from your boundless love
and know in our hearts the delights of your Holy Spirit.
As we honour the union of a man and a woman,
let the love we celebrate today be a sign of your eternal love,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

12 For the gift of love

God of wonder and of joy:
grace comes from you,
and you alone are the source of life and love.
Without you, we cannot please you;
without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.
Send your Holy Spirit,
and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may worship you now
with thankful hearts
and serve you always with willing minds;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

13 For marriage as a sign to the world

Almighty God, in whom we live and move and have our being,
look graciously upon the world which you have made
and for which your Son gave his life,
and especially on all whom you make to be one flesh
in holy marriage.
May their lives together be a sign of your love to this broken world,
so that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt,
and joy overcome despair;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Faithfulness, Joy, Love, Forgiveness and Healing

14 For the joy of loving

God our creator,
we thank you for your gift of sexual love
by which husband and wife
may delight in each other
and share with you the joy of creating new life.
By your grace may *N* and *N* remain lovers,
rejoicing in your goodness all their days.

All **Amen.**

15 For the healing of memory

Loving God,
you are merciful and forgiving.
Grant that those who are suffering the hurts of the past
may experience your generous love.
Heal their memories, comfort them,
and send them all from here
renewed and hopeful;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

16 For the joy of companionship

All praise and blessing to you, God of love,
creator of the universe,
maker of man and woman in your likeness,
source of blessing for married life.
All praise to you, for you have created
courtship and marriage,
joy and gladness,
feasting and laughter,
pleasure and delight.
May your blessing come in full upon *N* and *N*.
May they know your presence
in their joys and in their sorrows.
May they reach old age in the company of friends
and come at last to your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

17 For grace and delight

God of love, ever gracious and kind,
we pray for *N* and *N* as they make the promises of marriage.
Let them know you
as the God of mercy and new beginnings,
who forgives our failures and renews our hope.
May the grace of Christ
be poured into their wedding
for celebration and for joy.
God of love, ever present and faithful,
may *N* and *N* know that their marriage is your delight and will.
May the promises they make govern their life together,
as your presence surrounds them,
and your Spirit strengthens and guides them;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

For faithfulness

18 God of all grace,
friend and companion,
look in favour on *N* and *N*,
and all who are made one in marriage.
In your love deepen their love
and strengthen their wills
to keep the promises they have made,
that they may continue
in life-long faithfulness to each other;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

19 Gracious God,
as you have brought *N* and *N* together in love,
enable them through the power of your Holy Spirit
to make and keep the solemn promises of marriage;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

20 O gracious and ever-living God,
male and female you have created us in your image:
look mercifully upon this man and this woman
who come to you seeking your blessing;
assist them with your grace,
that with true fidelity and steadfast love
they may honour and keep the promises and vows they make;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

21 For faithfulness and peace

O God of love,
look mercifully upon N and N in the new life
which they begin together this day.
Unite them evermore in your love.
Keep them faithful to the vows they have made one to the other;
strengthen them with every good gift;
and let your peace be with them,
now and always;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

22 For daily following of Christ

Heavenly Father,
we thank you that in our earthly lives
you speak to us of your eternal life:
we pray that through their marriage
N and N may know you more clearly,
love you more dearly
and follow you more nearly,
day by day;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Children, other Family Members and Friends

23 For children and home

Heavenly Father,
maker of all things,
you enable us to share in your work of creation.
Bless this couple in the gift and care of children,
that their home may be a place of love, security and truth,
and their children grow up to know and love you in your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

24 For children and family

Lord of life,
you shape us in your image,
and by your gracious gift
the human family is increased.
Grant to *N* and *N* the blessing of children.
Fill them with wisdom and love
as they care for their family,
so that they and their children
may know and love you;
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

25 For an existing family

God of all grace and goodness,
we thank you for this new family,
and for everything parents and children have to share;
by your Spirit of peace draw them together
and help them to be true friends to one another.
Let your love surround them
and your care protect them;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

26 For the families of the couple

Gracious Lord,
bless the parents and families of *N* and *N*
that they may grow in love and friendship.
Grant that, as they have witnessed these vows today,
they may find their lives enriched and strengthened
and their loyalties confirmed;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

27 For the support of friends

Holy Spirit of God,
you know our strength
and have compassion on our frailty.
Be with *N* and *N*
in all they undertake.
And grant that we their friends,
with all who become their friends,
may sense and understand their needs;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

A Song of Solomon

Refrain:

All **Many waters cannot quench love;
neither can the floods drown it.**

- 1 Set me as a seal upon your heart, ♦
as a seal upon your arm;
- 2 For love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave; ♦
its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.
- 3 Many waters cannot quench love, ♦
neither can the floods drown it.
- 4 If all the wealth of our house were offered for love, ♦
it would be utterly scorned. *cf Song of Solomon 8.6-7*

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

A Song of the Bride

Refrain:

All God makes righteousness and praise blossom before all the nations.

- 1 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, ♦
my soul shall exult in my God;
- 2 Who has clothed me with the garments of salvation, ♦
and has covered me with the cloak of integrity,
- 3 As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, ♦
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
- 4 For as the earth puts forth her blossom, ♦
and as seeds in the garden spring up,
- 5 So shall God make righteousness and praise ♦
blossom before all the nations.
- 6 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, ♦
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
- 7 Until her deliverance shines out like the dawn, ♦
and her salvation as a burning torch.
- 8 The nations shall see your deliverance, ♦
and all rulers shall see your glory;
- 9 Then you shall be called by a new name ♦
which the mouth of God will give.
- 10 You shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, ♦
a royal diadem in the hand of your God. *Isaiah 61.10,11; 62.1-3*

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Magnificat (The Song of Mary)

- 1 My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; ♦
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
- 2 From this day all generations will call me blessed; ♦
the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his name.
- 3 He has mercy on those who fear him, ♦
from generation to generation.
- 4 He has shown strength with his arm ♦
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,
- 5 Casting down the mighty from their thrones ♦
and lifting up the lowly.
- 6 He has filled the hungry with good things ♦
and sent the rich away empty.
- 7 He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, ♦
to remember his promise of mercy,
- 8 The promise made to our ancestors, ♦
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Luke 1.46-55

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

A Song of the Lamb

Refrain:

**All Let us rejoice and exult
and give glory and homage to our God.**

- 1 Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ♦
whose judgements are true and just.
- 2 Praise our God, all you his servants, ♦
all who fear him, both small and great.
- 3 The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns: ♦
let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory.
- 4 For the marriage of the Lamb has come ♦
and his bride has made herself ready.
- 5 Blessed are those who are invited ♦
to the wedding banquet of the Lamb. *Revelation 19.1b,2b,5b,6b,7,9b*

**To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb ♦
be blessing and honour and glory and might,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

An Order for Prayer and Dedication after a Civil Marriage

For Notes, see page 183.

Introduction

A hymn may be sung.

The minister may welcome the people and then says

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Preface

N and *N*, you stand in the presence of God as man and wife to dedicate to him your life together, that he may consecrate your marriage and empower you to keep the covenant and promise you have solemnly declared.

[The Bible teaches us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.

Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given as the foundation of family life in which children may be [born and] nurtured in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory. This is the meaning of the marriage you have made.]

You now wish to affirm your desire to live as followers of Christ, and you have come to him, the fountain of grace, that, strengthened by the prayers of the Church, you may be enabled to fulfil your marriage vows in love and faithfulness.

Let us keep silence and remember God's presence with us now.

God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.

1 John 4.16

This prayer may be said

All **Almighty God,**
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Prayers of Penitence

The following Summary of the Law may be said

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,

with all your soul, with all your mind,

and with all your strength.’

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All **Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

A minister may use these or other suitable words

God so loved the world

that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ

to save us from our sins,

to be our advocate in heaven,

and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,

firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments

and to live in love and peace with all.

(or)

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden,

to ask for his forgiveness and peace.

One of the following forms or another authorized form of Confession and Absolution may be used

Either

All **Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

The minister says

The Lord forgive *you your* sin,
unite *you* in the love which took Christ to the cross,
and bring *you* in the Spirit to his wedding feast in heaven.

All **Amen.**

(or)

Lord, in our weakness you are our strength.

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord, when we stumble, you raise us up.

Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, when we fail, you give us new life.

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

The minister says

May God in his goodness forgive *us our* sins,
grant *us* strength in *our* weakness,
and bring *us* to eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Collect

The minister invites the people to pray, silence is kept and the minister says the Collect

God our Father,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law.
Grant to your servants
that, loving one another,
they may continue in your love until their lives' end:
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Readings

At least one reading from the Bible is used. A selection of readings is found on pages 137–149.

If there are two readings, a psalm or a hymn may be sung between them.

A sermon may be preached here or after the Dedication.

The Dedication

The husband and wife face the minister, who says

N and N, you have committed yourselves to each other in marriage,
and your marriage is recognized by law.
The Church of Christ understands marriage to be,
in the will of God,
the union of a man and a woman,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till parted by death.
Is this your understanding of the covenant and promise
that you have made?

*Husband
and wife* It is.

The minister says to the husband

N, have you resolved to be faithful to your wife,
forsaking all others,
so long as you both shall live?

Husband That is my resolve, with the help of God.

The minister says to the wife

N, have you resolved to be faithful to your husband,
forsaking all others,
so long as you both shall live?

Wife That is my resolve, with the help of God.

The minister may say

Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let *these rings* be to N and N
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness
and of the promises they have made to each other;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The minister says to the congregation

N and N have here affirmed
their Christian understanding and resolve
in the marriage which they have begun.
Will you, their families and friends,
support and uphold them in their marriage,
now and in the years to come?

All **We will.**

The congregation remains standing.

The husband and wife kneel and say together

Heavenly Father,
we offer you our souls and bodies,
our thoughts and words and deeds,
our love for one another.
Unite our wills in your will,
that we may grow together
in love and peace
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The minister says

Almighty God give you grace to persevere,
that he may complete in you
the work he has already begun,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Lord bless and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace
all the days of your life.

All **Amen.**

A sermon may be preached.

A hymn may be sung.

Prayers

One or more of the following prayers may be used

Almighty God,
you send your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of all your people.
Open the hearts of these your servants to the riches of his grace,
that they may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

For the gift of children

Heavenly Father,
maker of all things,
you enable us to share in your work of creation.
Bless this couple in the gift and care of children,
that their home may be a place of love, security and truth
and their children grow up to know and love you in your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

For families

Father of all life,
whose promise is to be the God of all the families of your people,
give your grace to *N* and *N* in their new life together
and bless those for whom they care.
Enfold them in your love
as they share in their new family,
that they may grow up in all things into Christ,
who gave himself that all humanity might be made one in him.

All **Amen.**

For families

Heavenly Father,
we are your children, made in your image.
Hear our prayer
that fathers and mothers, sons and daughters,
may find together the perfect love that casts out fear,
walk together in the way that leads to eternal life
and grow up together into the full humanity
of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Concluding prayer

Eternal God, true and loving Father,
in holy marriage you make your servants one.
May their life together witness to your love in this troubled world;
may unity overcome division,
forgiveness heal injury
and joy triumph over sorrow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer is said.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

(or)

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on 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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

A hymn may be sung.

The minister blesses the congregation in these or other words

God the Holy Trinity make *you* strong in faith and love,
defend *you* on every side, and guide *you* in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among *you* and remain with *you* always.

All **Amen.**

1 The Nature of the Service

The service is one in which the couple – already married – wish to dedicate to God their life together. Because it is not a marriage service, banns may not be called nor any entry made in the Register of Marriages.

2 Entrance of the Couple

Husband and wife should enter the church together without ceremony and sit together at the front of the church.

3 The Prayers

Other prayers may be used, especially when they form part of the particular Christian tradition of the husband or wife.

4 The Rings

Because the marriage has already taken place, no ring is to be given or received in the course of the service. If a ring is worn and the prayer of blessing is to be used, the hand should be extended towards the minister.

5 The Minister

When the service is not led by a priest, the Grace is used in place of the Blessing.

6 Holy Communion

The structure of the Marriage Service within the Order for the Celebration of Holy Communion should be followed. The Introduction in this service replaces the Introduction; Prayers of Penitence must be used; also, in the Liturgy of the Word, there must be a Gospel reading, preceded by either one or two other readings from Scripture and followed by a sermon. This is followed by the Dedication and the Prayers, and the Liturgy of the Sacrament follows. Any of the proper material in the Marriage Service within the Order for the Celebration of Holy Communion may be used.

Thanksgiving for Marriage

Note

This outline service is designed for a number of different occasions. It may be used:

- ¶ on occasions when a number of couples reaffirm their vows together;
- ¶ to celebrate an anniversary;
- ¶ after a time of separation or difficulty in marriage;
- ¶ either at home or in church;
- ¶ combined with another service, such as the Holy Communion.

For each occasion, suitable prayers and other words should be chosen – with the couple if that is appropriate – from the resources which follow, or elsewhere. One way of amplifying the Outline Order for the first occasion above, which might be a major church occasion where some formality is right, is provided in the service which follows on page 185. On other occasions much may be done informally or extempore.

Thanksgiving for Marriage: An Outline Order

Introduction

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Prayer of Preparation
- 3 Preface
- 4 Readings
- 5 Psalms, Songs or Hymns
- 6 Sermon

Renewal of Vows

- 7 The couple(s) are invited to renew their marriage vows in a suitable form.
- 8 A ring or rings may be blessed.
- 9 Prayers are offered, including prayers of thanksgiving and blessing.

Thanksgiving for Marriage: A Sample Service

This sample service is derived from the Outline Order on page 185.

Introduction

The Welcome

The minister welcomes the people, introduces the service informally and invites those present to pray.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you

All **and also with you.**

This sentence may be used

God is love, and those who live in love live in God
and God lives in them.

1 John 4.16

Prayer of Preparation

God our Father,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law;
grant to your servants *N* and *N*
that, loving one another,
they may continue in your love until their lives' end;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

A hymn or song may be sung.

Preface

We have come together in the presence of God
to give thanks [*with N and N*] for [... years of] married life,
[to ask his forgiveness for all that has been amiss,]*
to rejoice together and to ask for God's blessing.
As our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest
at the wedding in Cana of Galilee,
so through his Spirit he is with us now.
Marriage is a gift of God in creation
and a means of his grace;
it is given that a husband and wife
may comfort and help each other,
living faithfully together
in times of need as well as in plenty,
in sadness and in joy, in sickness and in health;
it is given that with delight and tenderness
they may know each other in love.
[It is given as the foundation of family life
in which children may be born and nurtured
in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.]
In marriage a couple belong together
and live life in the community;
it is a way of life created and hallowed by God,
that all should honour.
Therefore we pray with them
that, strengthened and guided by God,
they may continue to fulfil his purpose for their life together.

*Silence is kept for reflection on the years that have passed
and on shared experiences, good and bad.*

Readings and Sermon

*One or more passages from the Bible is read.
Psalms or hymns may follow the readings. Other songs and readings
may be used.
A sermon may be preached.*

* There may be occasions when this should be omitted; it may be important to include it when a couple are celebrating their reconciliation.

¶ *Renewal of Vows*

The minister says to the couple(s)

I invite you now to recall the vows that you made at your wedding.

Husband and wife face each other and hold hands.

The husband says

I, N, took you, N, to be my wife;

The wife says

I, N, took you, N, to be my husband;

The couple say together

to have and to hold from that day forward,
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish,
till death us do part, according to God's holy law,
and this was our solemn vow.

Today, in the presence of our family and friends,
we affirm our continuing commitment to this vow.

The minister says to the congregation

Will you, the family and friends of N and N,
continue to support and uphold them
in their marriage now and in the years to come?

All **We will.**

The Rings

If a new ring (or new rings) is to be blessed, this prayer may be used

Heavenly Father, source of everlasting love,
revealed to us in Jesus Christ
and poured into our hearts through your Holy Spirit;
that love which many waters cannot quench,
neither the floods drown;
that love which is patient and kind, enduring all things without end;
by your blessing, let *these rings* be to *N* and *N*
symbols to remind them of the covenant made on their wedding day,
through your grace in the love of your Son
and in the power of your Spirit.

All Amen.

If a ring (or rings) is to be given these words are used

I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Or, if not, each may touch the wedding ring(s) with the words

I gave you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The couple kneel together. The minister or others may pray, using these or similar prayers

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve and keep you;
the Lord mercifully grant you the riches of his grace
that you may please him both in body and soul,
and, living together in faith and love,
may receive the blessings of eternal life.

All Amen.

Blessed are you, heavenly Father.

All You give joy to husband and wife.

Blessed are you, Lord Jesus Christ.

All You have brought new life to mankind.

Blessed are you, Holy Spirit of God.

All You bring us together in love.

Blessed be Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All One God, to be praised for ever. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we lift up our hearts to you
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Through him you have made a covenant of grace with your people
by the outpouring of your Holy Spirit.

We praise you for the gift of marriage
in which the love of husband and wife is brought together
and reflects your plan of love for the world.

We thank you today for *N* and *N*,
and for leading them to each other
in friendship and love, commitment and trust,
and for bringing them here for the blessing of their marriage.

Living God,
by the presence of your Holy Spirit,
may they know the risen Christ to be with them now,
as they celebrate this covenant together.
May their lives be a witness to your saving love
in this troubled world.

As you pour out your love,
may they grow together in your sight,
and each be to the other
a companion in joy, a comfort in sorrow and a strength in need.

As you blessed the earthly home at Nazareth
with the presence of your Son,
may their home be a place of security and peace.
[Bless this couple with the gift and care of children,
that they may grow up to know and love you in your Son.]

And bring us all at the last
to that great marriage banquet of your Son
in our home in heaven,
where, with all your saints and angels,
in the glory of your presence,
we will for ever praise you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

(or)

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on 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,
the power and the glory
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Dismissal

The couple may pray together

Heavenly Father,
we offer you our souls and bodies,
our thoughts and words and deeds,
our love for one another.
Unite our wills in your will,
that we may grow together
in love and peace
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The minister blesses the couple and the congregation, saying

God the Holy Trinity make *you* strong in faith and love,
defend *you* on every side, and guide *you* in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among *you* and remain with *you* always.

All **Amen.**