

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.
Amen.

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.
Amen.

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.
Amen.

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.
1 Corinthians 13.4-7

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
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

**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.

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.
Amen.

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.
Amen.

Children, other Family Members and Friends

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.
Amen.

For faithfulness

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.

Amen.

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.

Amen.

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.

Amen.

Preface

These words or those on page 26 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.

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. **Amen.**

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.
Amen.

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.
Amen.

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.
Amen.

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. **Amen.**

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?
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.
Amen.

Readings

At least one reading from the Bible is used. A selection of readings is found on page 27.

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, 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.

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. **Amen.**

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.
Amen.

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.
Amen.

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.
Amen.

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

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.
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.

Prayers and Thanksgivings

For the sharing of love

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.
Amen.

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.
Amen.

Spiritual Growth

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. **Amen.**

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.’

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

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.

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.

Amen.

Registration of the Marriage

A hymn or psalm may be used

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.

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

1 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

Prayers

These or other suitable prayers are used. 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:

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:

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:

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:
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:
hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**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.

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.

1 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.

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.

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.

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.

Amen.

An Order for Prayer and Dedication after a Civil Marriage

Introduction

A hymn may be sung.

The minister may welcome the people and then says

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.

Readings

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.

1 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

Supplementary Texts

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.

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

**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.

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

**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.**

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.

Notes

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.

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.
Amen.

(or)

Lord, in our weakness you are our strength.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, when we stumble, you raise us up.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, when we fail, you give us new life.
Lord, have mercy.
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.
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.
Amen.

Readings

At least one reading from the Bible is used. A selection of readings is found on pages 27.

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.

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.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is said.

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**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. **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.

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.

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.

Amen.

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 It is.
and wife

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.

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?

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.

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.

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.

Amen.