



UNITING CHURCH IN THE CITY



# Complete Marriage Service



# AN OUTLINE OF THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

## **The Gathering of the Community**

1. Greeting
2. Sentences
3. Hymn/song
4. Prayer
5. ► Declaration of purpose

## **The Service of the Word**

6. ► Scripture readings
7. ► Preaching of the Word

## **The Marriage**

8. Declaration of intent
9. Affirmation by the families
10. Affirmation by the people
11. Prayer
12. ► The vows
13. Giving of the ring(s)
14. ► Proclamation of the marriage
15. ► The blessing of the marriage
16. Wedding candle
17. Prayers  
    The Lord's Prayer
18. Hymn/song
19. Blessing
20. Signing the registers  
    Holy Communion

# THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

## The Gathering of the Community

*The people stand as the wedding party enters the church.*

*If a member or friend of the bride's family escorts her into the church, that person brings her to where the bridegroom is standing and then takes a seat in the congregation.*

*The persons to be married stand together before the minister, the bridegroom standing at the right hand of the bride, in the presence of two appointed witnesses and the congregation.*

### 1 GREETING

*The minister says:*

Grace to you and peace  
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

***Romans 1: 7***

**Amen.**

Friends, we have come together in the presence of God to witness the marriage of NNN and NNN, to surround them with our prayers, and to share in their joy.

*or*

Friends, we are here to witness and celebrate the marriage of NNN and NNN. We gather in the presence of God and surround them with prayer as we share in their joy.

Today as N and N commit their lives in love to each other, let us commit ourselves to love and support them, and so celebrate God's love for us all.

*The minister may welcome the people.*

## 2 SCRIPTURE SENTENCES

*The minister calls the people to worship with one or more Scripture sentence(s), such as:*

Come, let us sing to the Lord;  
let us come before his presence  
with thanksgiving.

*Psalm 95: 1 - 2*

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his mercy endures forever.

*Psalm 118:1*

This is the day which the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

*Psalm 118:24*

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

*1 John 4:16*

## 3 HYMN

*A hymn or song may be sung.*

## 4 PRAYER

Let us pray:

Gracious God,  
your generous love surrounds us,  
and everything we enjoy comes from you.  
In your great love  
you have given us the gift of marriage.  
Bless N and N as they pledge their lives to each other;  
that their love may continue to grow  
and be the true reflection of your love for us all;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*The following prayer of confession may be said.*

God of mercy,  
you are the giver of life and the bringer of joy.  
In body, mind and soul,  
you heal us and make us new.  
We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

*Where appropriate, the following or similar words may be included:*

For those times  
when we have failed in our relationships  
and broken our commitments,  
we ask your forgiveness.

May the God of love  
heal and strengthen us,  
deepen our love for one other,  
and renew our lives,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## **DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

*If a Prayer of Confession is used, a Declaration of Forgiveness such as the following is appropriate.*

God is love.  
Through Christ your sins are forgiven.  
Take hold of this forgiveness  
and live your life in the power of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

## 5 DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

*The minister says:*

Marriage is a gift of God  
and a means of grace.  
In the life-long union of marriage  
we can know the joy of God,  
in whose image we are made, male and female.

Marriage is founded in God's loving nature,  
and in the covenant of love made with us in Christ.

Husband and wife,  
in giving themselves to each other in love, reflect the love of  
Christ for his Church.

In Christian marriage,  
husband and wife are called  
to live together faithfully,  
and to love each other with respect,  
tenderness and delight.  
The companionship and comfort of marriage  
enables the full expression  
of physical love between husband and wife.

They share the life of a home  
and may be entrusted  
with the gift and care of children.  
They help to shape a society  
in which human dignity and happiness  
may flourish and abound.

Marriage is a way of life which all people should honour;  
it is not to be entered into lightly or selfishly,  
but responsibly and in the love of God.

N and N are now to begin this way of life which God has created and Christ has blessed. Therefore, on this their wedding day, we pray that they may fulfil God's purpose for the whole of their lives.

*The bride, bridegroom and their attendants may sit.*

## **THE SERVICE OF THE WORD**

### **6 SCRIPTURE READINGS**

*One or more passages of Scripture shall be read.  
The following may be used after the final reading:*

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **7 PREACHING OF THE WORD**

*Following the Preching of the Word, a Bible may be presented to the couple.*

## **THE MARRIAGE**

### **8 DECLARATION OF INTENT**

*The bride and bridegroom stand.  
The minister asks the couple:*

N and N,  
do you believe that God has blessed and guided you,  
and now calls you into marriage?

*The bridegroom and bride each answer:*

**I do.**

*The minister shall ask the bridegroom:*

N, will you give yourself to N to be her husband,  
to live together in the covenant of marriage?  
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 shall ask the bride:*

N, will you give yourself to N to be his wife,  
to live together in the covenant of marriage?  
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.**

## **9 AFFIRMATION BY THE FAMILIES**

*The Minister may ask the parents or representatives of  
the families one of these questions.*

Do you, N and N, (*names of parents*)  
give your blessing to N and N  
and promise to support them in their marriage?

**We do.**

*or*

Do you, on behalf of your family,  
give your blessing to N and N  
and promise to support them in their marriage?

**I do.**

*or*

Do you, on behalf of both families,  
give your blessing to N and N  
and promise to support them in their marriage?

**I do.**

## **10 AFFIRMATION BY THE PEOPLE**

*The minister may ask the people:*

Will you, the families and friends of N and N,  
who have come to share this wedding day,  
give them your blessing and support?

**We will.**

## **11 PRAYER**

*The minister may offer this prayer:*

Gracious God,  
you are always faithful in your love for us.  
Look mercifully upon N and N,  
who have come seeking your blessing.  
Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them  
so that with steadfast love  
they may honour the promises they make this day,  
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**Amen.**

## 12 THE VOWS

*The bride and bridegroom face each other.*

A.

*The bridegroom takes the bride's hand.*

*The bridegroom says:*

**I, N, in the presence of God,  
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,  
as long as we both shall live.  
This is my solemn vow.**

*They loose hands.*

*The bride takes the bridegroom's hand.*

*The bride says:*

**I, N, in the presence of God,  
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,  
as long as we both shall live.  
This is my solemn vow.**

*They loose hands.*

*or B.*

*The bridegroom takes the bride's hand.  
The bridegroom says:*

**I, N, in the presence of God,  
take you, N, to be my wife.  
All that I am I give to you,  
and all that I have I share with you.  
Whatever the future holds,  
I will love you and stand by you.  
as long as we both shall live.  
This is my solemn vow.**

*They loose hands.*

*The bride takes the bridegroom's hand.*

*The bride says:*

**I, N, in the presence of God,  
take you, N, to be my husband.  
All that I am I give to you,  
and all that I have I share with you.  
Whatever the future holds,  
I will love you and stand by you,  
as long as we both shall live.  
This is my solemn vow.**

*They loose hands.*

### **13 GIVING OF THE RINGS**

*The Minister receives the ring(s) and may say:*

God of steadfast love, by your blessing,  
let these rings (this ring) be to N and N  
a symbol of the vows which they have made this day;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*As the giver places the ring on the ring-finger of the other's  
left hand, the following words may be said:*

**N, I give you this ring  
as a sign of our marriage  
and of the vows which we have made today.**

*If only one ring is given, the following words may be said  
by the receiver:*

N, I receive this ring  
as a sign of our marriage  
and of the vows which we have made today.

### **14 PROCLAMATION OF THE MARRIAGE**

*The couple join hands.*

*The minister asks the people to stand, and addresses them:*

Before God and in the presence of us all,  
N and N have made their solemn vows.  
They have confirmed their marriage  
by the joining of hands  
and by the giving and receiving of rings (a ring).

In the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
I therefore proclaim,  
that they are now husband and wife.

Those whom God has joined together no one must separate.

## **15 THE BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE**

*A.*

God the Father make you holy in his love;  
God the Son enrich you with his grace;  
God the Holy Spirit strengthen you with joy.  
The Lord bless you and keep you in eternal life.  
**Amen.**

*or B.*

The riches of God's grace be upon you,  
that you may live together in faith and love  
and receive the blessings of eternal life.  
May almighty God,  
who creates you, redeems you and guides you,  
bless you now and always.  
**Amen.**

*or C.*

And now may the blessing of God the Father who gives joy  
to bridegroom and bride, be upon you;  
the blessing of God the Son, who brings new life to the world,  
be upon you;  
the blessing of God the Holy Spirit, who brings us together in  
love, be upon you and remain with you this day and forever  
more.  
**Amen.**

*or D.*

Eternal God,  
without your grace no promise 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.  
Let their love for each other  
be a seal upon their hearts,  
a mantle about their shoulders,  
and a crown upon their heads.

Bless them in their work and in their companionship,  
in their joys and in their sorrows.  
And finally in your mercy  
bring them with all your saints  
to their heavenly home.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

*The couple may seal their covenant with a kiss.*

*Where the guests are familiar with the Church's present custom, the Peace may be given here and greetings exchanged.*

## 16 WEDDING CANDLE

*The couple may light a wedding candle together, as they prepare to join with the congregation in prayer for their life together. They light their candle from the Easter Candle.*

*The minister may choose to introduce the lighting of the candle with words such as the following, addressed to the couple.*

We light this candle as your marriage is blessed, from the great candle which the Church lights at Easter as a symbol of the risen Christ.

We also light candles from it at baptisms as new Christians go out into the world, bearing Christ.

Your love is a sign of the victory of God's love over the divisions and disputes of humankind. May this candle remind you of this day, and the light of Christ be with you always.

## 17 PRAYERS

*Some or all of the following petitions may be used or a free prayer offered).*

*Each petition or a grouping of petitions may conclude with:*

God, in your love,  
**Hear our prayer.**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

All grace comes from you, O God,  
and you alone are the source of eternal life.  
Bless your servants N and N,  
that they may faithfully live together  
to the end of their lives.

May they be patient and gentle,  
ready to trust each other,  
and to face together the challenge of the future.

Be with them in all their happiness;  
And strengthen them in every time of trouble.  
Give N and N grace, when they hurt each other,  
to acknowledge their fault,  
to ask each other's forgiveness,  
and to know your mercy and love.

May your peace dwell in their home,  
and be a sign of hope for peace in the world.

Let their home be a place of peace and love,  
Warm and welcoming to others.

Through loving one another in Christ,  
may they be strengthened to love Christ in their neighbour.

May they be creative in their daily work,  
and find fulfilment in the life of their community.

*The following petition may be included:*

May N and N enjoy the gift and heritage of children,  
and may they may be wise and loving parents.

*or*

We thank you for the gift of their child(ren),  
And find fulfilment in the life of their community.

Grant N and N grace to share their love and faith,  
that they may grow together as a loving family.

Bless the parents and families of N and N,  
that they may be united in love and friendship.

May all who have witnessed these vows today  
find their lives strengthened  
and their relationships and commitments renewed.  
We ask these prayers in the name of Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

*or*

**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.**

## **18 HYMN**

*A hymn or song may be sung.*

*At the conclusion, the people remain standing for the Blessing.*

## **19 BLESSING**

**The blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you always.  
Amen.**

*or*

**Go in peace to live among the signs of God:  
May Christ Jesus break bread at your table,  
the Creator spread a cloth for the feast,  
and the Spirit dance in the centre of your gathering.  
Amen.**

## **20 SIGNING OF THE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES**

## **SUGGESTED HYMNS FROM *Together in Song***

All creatures of our God and King	100
Be thou my vision	547
Brother, sister, let me serve you	650
Come down, O Love divine	398
For the beauty of the earth	137
From all who dwell below the skies	72
God be in my head	549
In faith and hope and love	628
In heavenly love abiding	588
Joyful, joyful, we adore you	152
Love divine, all loves excelling	217
May the mind of Christ my Saviour	609
Morning has broken	156
Now thank we all our God	106
O Lord my God	155
O perfect Love, all human thought transcending	603
Praise, my soul, the king of heaven	134
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	111
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord	161
Thank you for giving me the morning	162
The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want	10
To God be the glory	147
When the light of first creation	698

# SUGGESTED READINGS

## OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1: 26 - 28	Male and female he created them
Genesis 2: 4 - 9,15 - 24	A man cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh
Psalms 67	May God be merciful to us and bless us
Psalms 100	Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands
Psalms 128	Happy are they all who fear the Lord
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12	Two are better than one
Song of Solomon (Songs) 2: 10 - 13, 8: 6 - 7	Many waters cannot quench love

## EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 13: 1 - 13	Love is patient and kind
Ephesians 3: 14 - 21	The Father, from whom every family is named
Colossians 3: 12 - 17	Love which binds everything together
1 John 4: 7 - 16	Let us love one another, for love is of God

## GOSPEL

Matthew 5: 1 - 10	The Beatitudes
Matthew 5: 13 - 16	You are the light. . . let your light shine
Matthew 7: 21 - 29	Hearing and doing
Matthew 22: 35 - 40	This is the great and first commandment
John 2: 1 - 11	The marriage at Cana in Galilee
John 15: 1 - 8	Abide in me, and I in you
John 15: 9 - 17	This I command you, to love one another