

# The Witnessing and Blessing of a Marriage

## The Word of God

### Gathering

The couple joins the assembly.  
A hymn of praise, psalm, or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.

The Presider says the following, the People standing

**Presider** Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**People** Blessed be God, now and for ever. Amen.

In place of the above may be said

**Presider** Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.

**People** Glory to God for ever and ever.

From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost

**Presider** Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**People** The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

In place of the above may be said

**Presider** Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**People** Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Then may be said

**Presider** Beloved, let us love one another,

**People** For love is of God.

**Presider** Whoever does not love does not know God,

**People** For God is love.

**Presider** Since God so loves us,

**People** Let us love one another.

The Presider may address the assembly in these words

Dear friends in Christ [*or* Dearly beloved],  
in the name of God and the Church  
we have come together today with  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
to witness the vows they make,  
committing themselves to one another  
in marriage [according to the laws of the state *or* civil jurisdiction of  
\_\_\_\_\_].  
Forsaking all others,  
they will bind themselves to one another  
in a covenant of mutual fidelity and steadfast love,  
remaining true to one another in heart, body, and mind,  
as long as they both shall live.

The lifelong commitment of marriage  
is not to be entered into lightly or thoughtlessly,  
but responsibly and with reverence.  
Let us pray, then, that God will give them the strength  
to remain steadfast in what they vow this day.  
Let us also pray for the generosity  
to support them in the commitment they undertake  
and for the wisdom to see God at work in their life together.

*Or this, for those who have previously made a lifelong commitment  
to one another*

Dear friends in Christ [*or* Dearly beloved],  
in the name of God and the Church  
we have come together today with  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
to witness the sacred vows they make this day as they are married  
[according to the laws of the state *or* civil jurisdiction of  
\_\_\_\_\_],  
and reaffirm their commitment to one another.

Forsaking all others,  
they will renew their covenant of mutual fidelity and steadfast love,  
remaining true to one another in heart, body, and mind,  
as long as they both shall live.

Let us pray, then, that God will give them the strength  
to remain steadfast in what they vow this day.

Let us also pray for the generosity  
to support them in the commitment they undertake,  
and for the wisdom to see God at work in their life together.

## The Collect of the Day

**Presider** The Lord be with you. *or* God be with you.

**People** And also with you.

**Presider** Let us pray.

*The Presider says one of the following Collects*

God of abundance:  
assist by your grace \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
whose covenant of love and fidelity we witness this day.  
Grant them your protection, that with firm resolve  
they may honor and keep the vows they make;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*or this*

Almighty and everliving God:  
look tenderly upon \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
who stand before you in the company of your Church.  
Let their life together bring them great joy.

Grant them so to love selflessly and live humbly,  
that they may be to one another and to the world  
a witness and a sign of your never-failing love and care;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, to the ages of ages. *Amen.*

or this

O God, faithful and true,  
whose steadfast love endures for ever:  
we give you thanks for sustaining \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_ in the life they share  
and for bringing them to this day.  
Nurture them and fill them with joy in their life together,  
continuing the good work you have begun in them;  
and grant us, with them, a dwelling place eternal in the heavens  
where all your people will share the joy of perfect love,  
and where you, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, live and reign,  
one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

or this, for those who bring children

Holy Trinity, one God,  
three Persons perfect in unity and equal in majesty:  
Draw together with bonds of love and affection  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
who with *their families*  
seek to live in harmony and forbearance all their days,  
that their joining together will be to us  
a reflection of that perfect communion  
which is your very essence and life,  
O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
who live and reign in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

## The Lessons

The people sit. Then one or more of the following passages of Scripture is read. If the Holy Communion is to be celebrated, a passage from the Gospels always concludes the Readings. When the blessing is celebrated in the context of the Sunday Eucharist, the Readings of the Sunday are used, except with the permission of the Bishop.

Ruth 1:16-17

1 Samuel 18:1b, 3, 20:16-17, 42a;  
or 1 Samuel 18:1-4

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 8:6-7

Micah 4:1-4

Romans 12:9-18

1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

Galatians 5:14, 22-26

Ephesians 3:14-21

Colossians 3:12-17

1 John 3:18-24

1 John 4:7-16, 21

When a biblical passage other than one from the Gospels is to be read, the Reader announces it with these words

**Reader** A Reading from \_\_\_\_\_.

After the Reading, the Reader may say

The Word of the Lord.

*or*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*or*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.

**People** Thanks be to God.

Between the Readings, a psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sung or said. Appropriate Psalms are

Psalms 65

Psalms 67

Psalms 85:7-13

Psalms 98

Psalms 100

Psalm 126  
Psalm 127  
Psalm 133  
Psalm 148  
Psalm 149:1-5

Appropriate passages from the Gospels are

Matthew 5:1-16  
Mark 12:28-34  
Luke 6:32-38  
John 15:9-17  
John 17:1-2, 18-26

All standing, the Deacon or Priest reads the Gospel, first saying

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to

\_\_\_\_\_.

or

The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to

\_\_\_\_\_.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

After the Gospel, the Reader says

The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

## The Sermon

## The Witnessing of the Vows and the Blessing of the Covenant

The couple comes before the assembly. If there is to be a presentation, the presenters stand with the couple, and the Presider says to them

Presider Who presents \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ as they seek the blessing of God and the Church on their love and life together?

Presenters We do.

**Presider** Will you love, respect, and pray for \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_, and do all in your power to  
stand with them in the life they will share?

**Presenters** We will.

The Presider then addresses the couple, saying

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
you have come before God and the Church to exchange  
[and renew] solemn vows with one another and to ask  
God's blessing.

The Presider addresses one member of the couple, saying

**Presider** \_\_\_\_\_, do you freely and unreservedly  
offer yourself to \_\_\_\_\_?

**Answer** I do.

**Presider** Will you [*continue to*] live together in faithfulness and  
holiness of life as long as you both shall live?

**Answer** I will, with God's help.

The Presider addresses the other member of the couple, saying

**Presider** \_\_\_\_\_, do you freely and unreservedly  
offer yourself to \_\_\_\_\_?

**Answer** I do.

**Presider** Will you [*continue to*] live together in faithfulness and  
holiness of life as long as you both shall live?

**Answer** I will, with God's help.

The assembly stands, the couple faces the People, and the Presider  
addresses them, saying

**Presider** Will all of you gathered to witness these vows do all in your  
power to uphold and honor this couple in the covenant  
they make?

**People** We will.

**Presider** Will you pray for them, especially in times of trouble, and celebrate with them in times of joy?

**People** We will.

## The Prayers

The Presider then introduces the prayers

**Presider** Then let us pray for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in their life together and for the concerns of this community.

A Deacon or another leader bids prayers for the couple.

Prayers for the Church and for the world, for the concerns of the local community, for those who suffer or face trouble, and for the departed are also appropriate. If the rite takes place in the principal Sunday worship of the congregation, the rubric concerning the Prayers of the People on page 359 of the Book of Common Prayer is followed.

Adaptations or insertions may be made to the form that follows.

A bar in the margin indicates a bidding that may be omitted.

**Leader** For \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, seeking your blessing and the blessing of your holy people; Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For a spirit of loving-kindness to shelter them all their days; Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For friends to support them and communities to enfold them; Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For peace in their home and love in their family;  
Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For the grace and wisdom to care for the children you  
entrust to them [*or* may entrust to them];  
Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For the honesty to acknowledge when they hurt each  
other, and the humility to seek each other's forgiveness and  
yours;  
Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For the outpouring of your love through their work and  
witness;  
Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For the strength to keep the vows each of us has made;  
Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

*The leader may add one or more of the following biddings*

**Leader** For all who have been reborn and made new in the waters  
of Baptism;  
Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For those who lead and serve in communities of faith;  
Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For those who seek justice, peace, and concord among nations;  
Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For those who are sick or suffering, homeless or poor;  
Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For victims of violence and those who inflict it;  
Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

**Leader** For communion with all who have died  
[especially those whom we remember this day:  
\_\_\_\_\_];

Loving God, *or* Lord, in your mercy,

**People** Hear our prayer.

*The Presider concludes the Prayers with the following or another appropriate Collect*

Giver of every gift, source of all goodness,  
hear the prayers we bring before you for  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,

who seek your blessing this day.

Strengthen them as they share in the saving work of Jesus,  
and bring about for them and for all you have created  
the fullness of life he promised,  
who now lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*If the Eucharist is to follow, the Lord's Prayer is omitted here.*

Leader

As our Savior Christ  
has taught us,  
we now pray,

People and Leader

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.

Leader

And now, as our Savior  
Christ has taught us,  
we are bold to say,

People and Leader

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,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

## The Marriage

The people sit. The couple stands, facing the Presider.

Presider \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,

I invite you now, illumined by the Word of God  
and strengthened by the prayer of this community,  
to make your covenant before God and the Church.

Each member of the couple, in turn, takes the hand of the other  
and says

In the name of God,

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give myself to you,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and take you to myself.

I will support and care for you by the grace of God:  
in times of sickness, in times of health.

I will hold and cherish you in the love of Christ:  
in times of plenty, in times of want.

I will honor and love you with the Spirit's help:

in times of anguish, in times of joy,  
forsaking all others, as long as we both shall live.  
This is my solemn vow.

or this

In the name of God,  
I, \_\_\_\_\_, give myself to you,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and take you to myself.  
I will support and care for you:  
in times of sickness, in times of health.  
I will hold and cherish you:  
in times of plenty, in times of want.  
I will honor and love you:  
in times of anguish, in times of joy,  
forsaking all others, as long as we both shall live.  
This is my solemn vow.

If rings are to be exchanged, they are brought before the Presider,  
who prays using the following words

Let us pray.

Bless, O God, these rings as signs of the enduring covenant  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
have made with each other,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The two people place the rings on the fingers of one another,  
first the one, then the other, saying

\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow,  
and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you,  
in the name of God. or in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

If the two have previously given and worn rings as a symbol of their  
commitment, the rings may be blessed on the hands of the couple,  
the Presider saying

Let us pray.

By the rings which they have worn, faithful God,

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

have shown to one another and the world  
their love and faithfulness.

Bless now these rings,

that from this day forward

they may be signs of the vows \_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_ have exchanged

in your presence and in the communion of your Church,  
through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## Pronouncement

*The Presider joins the right hands of the couple and says*

Now that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

have exchanged vows of love and fidelity

in the presence of God and the Church,

I pronounce that they are

married [according to the laws of the state *or* civil jurisdiction of

\_\_\_\_\_]

and bound to one another

as long as they both shall live. *Amen.*

## Blessing of the Couple

*As the couple stands or kneels, the Presider invokes God's blessing upon them, saying*

Let us pray.

Most gracious God,

we praise you for the tender mercy and unfailing care

revealed to us in Jesus the Christ

and for the great joy and comfort bestowed upon us  
in the gift of human love.

We give you thanks for \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_,

and the covenant of faithfulness they have made.

Pour out the abundance of your Holy Spirit upon them.

Keep them in your steadfast love;

protect them from all danger;

fill them with your wisdom and peace;

lead them in holy service to each other and the world.

*The Presider continues with one of the following*

God the Father,

God the Son,

God the Holy Spirit,

bles, preserve, and keep you,

and mercifully grant you rich and boundless grace,

that you may please God in body and soul.

God make you a sign of the loving-kindness and steadfast fidelity

manifest in the life, death, and resurrection of our Savior,

and bring you at last to the delight of the heavenly banquet,

where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*or this*

God, the holy and undivided Trinity,

bles, preserve, and keep you,

and mercifully grant you rich and boundless grace,

that you may please God in body and soul.

God make you a sign of the loving-kindness and steadfast fidelity

manifest in the life, death, and resurrection of our Savior,

and bring you at last to the delight of the heavenly banquet,

where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

## The Peace

The Presider bids the Peace.

*Presider* The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People* And also with you.

In place of the above may be said

*Presider* The peace of Christ be always with you.

*People* And also with you.

The liturgy continues with the Holy Communion. When the Eucharist is not celebrated, the Presider blesses the people. The Deacon, or in the absence of a Deacon, the Priest, dismisses them.

## At the Eucharist

The liturgy continues with the Offertory, at which the couple may present the offerings of bread and wine.

The following proper preface may be said

Because in the giving of two people to each other in faithful love you reveal the joy and abundant life you share with your Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The following postcommunion prayer may be said

God our strength and joy,  
we thank you for the communion of our life together,  
for the example of holy love that you give us in  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
and for the Sacrament of the Body and Blood  
of our Savior Jesus Christ.  
Grant that it may renew our hope  
and nourish us for the work you set before us  
to witness to the presence of Christ in the world,  
through the power of your Spirit,  
and to the glory of your Name. Amen.