**A Service of Christian Marriage**

**An Order**

**Called to Worship**

**The Gathering**

*The couple intending to marry, their families and members of the wedding party shall gather for worship with the other members of the congregation. Music may be appropriate to the scripture lessons for the day, the season of the year, or the occasion of marriage.*

**Processional**

**Call To Worship**

Beloved, let us love one another,

Because love is from God;

**Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God**.

No one has ever seen God;

**If we love one another, God lives in us**

**and God’s love is perfected in us**.

Blessed are those who put their trust in the Lord.

Let us worship God.  *I John 4:7, 12; Ps. 84:12*.

**OR**

Jesus said:

“I have spoken to you,

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.”

Let us worship God. *John 15:11, 12.*

HYMN

**Prayer Of Adoration**

God of life,

we rejoice in your love

which has filled creation from the beginning

and which calls all life into being.

We praise you for Jesus Christ

who reveals most fully your loving purpose for all people.

We bless you for your Spirit

who draws all humanity

into the circle of your tender love.

Gracious God,

bless us with your presence

so that our worship and our lives

may be a true celebration of your love in Jesus Christ,

in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

**Confession Of Sin And Pardon**

The proof of God’s amazing love is this:

while we were sinners

Christ died for us. *Rom. 5:8.*

In faith and penitence,

let us confess our sin

before God and one another.

**God of mercy:**

**you have called us to be thankful**

**for your good gifts to us,**

**but too often we have taken them for granted**

**as if we deserved them.**

**You have called us to be hopeful**

**through the gospel of Jesus Christ,**

**but too often despair has come upon us,**

**and the cares of the world**

**have weighed us down.**

**You have called us to be joyful**

**in the wonder of your presence among us,**

**but too often we become mired in the mundane**

**and lose the gift of reverence.**

**By your saving power, O God,**

**enable us to celebrate your love for us**

**with joy and thanksgiving.***Ps. 69:29, 30.*

*Silent reflection.*

Friends in Christ,

hear and believe the good news!

“If we confess our sins,

God, who is faithful and just, will forgive us our sins

and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” *I John 1:9.*

We may trust the mercy of God:

in Jesus Christ our sin is forgiven.

**Thanks be to God.**

**OR**

*An alternative confession and pardon may be used in the following or other words.*

We know that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Let us, therefore, be free to confess the wrong we have done.

**God of mercy:**

**as we gather to celebrate your gift of love,**

**we recall with sorrow**

**the times when we forget you**

**and are divided one from the other.**

**How often our thoughts, our words,**

**and our actions,**

**have betrayed the goodness you have shown to us.**

**Forgive us, merciful God.**

**Mend what is broken.**

**Heal the wounded relationships**

**that separate us from you and one another;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

*Silent reflection.*

While it is true that we have sinned,

it is a greater truth that we are forgiven

through God’s love in Jesus Christ.

To all who humbly seek the mercy of God I say,

in Jesus Christ your sin is forgiven.

**Thanks be to God.**

**The Word Proclaimed**

**Lessons From Scripture**

*Appropriate lessons from the Old Testament, the Epistles and the Gospels shall be read, and the Psalm for the day may be read or sung.*

**Sermon**

**Ascription Of Praise**

*The sermon may conclude with these or similar words.*

Praise and glory,

thanksgiving and honour

be to our God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN OR PSALM

**The Rite of Marriage**

*The couple intending to marry and members of the wedding party take their places before the minister.*

**Purpose Of Marriage**

*The minister shall say:*

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

have come to make their covenant of marriage

and to seek God’s blessing on their union.

As we witness this event

we share in their joy,

and surround them with our prayers.

Marriage is a gift of God.

God gives marriage

for the full expression of love between people

and for the life-long companionship,

help and comfort,

that the members of a couple shares with each other.

God gives marriage

for the nurture of children

and for the building up of family life.

God gives marriage

for the good of human society,

which can be secure and free

only where the covenant of marriage is honoured.

God gives marriage

that the relationship between a couple may reflect

God’s steadfast love for creation;

and that the family may become a sign

of God’s kingdom on earth.

Marriage was blessed

by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ

at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee.

Paul, the apostle, tells us

that marriage is a symbol

of the mystical union between Christ and the church.

John, in his Revelation, describes

the fulfilment of human history

as a marriage between our Lord and the new creation,

to be celebrated with a joyous wedding feast.

The apostles instructed those

who enter into the marriage relationship

to develop a mutual respect and love;

to comfort each other in sickness, trouble, and sorrow;

to provide for each other

and for their household

in honesty and industry;

to pray for each other,

encourage each other,

and to live together as those who inherit eternal life.

Marriage is, therefore, a high calling

not to be entered into lightly or carelessly,

but prayerfully, responsibly and with reverence for God.

As \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ give themselves to each other,

we seek God’s blessing on their marriage.

**LEGAL QUESTIONS**

*This section will be used only if required by the Province or Territory in which the marriage is celebrated.*

If anyone present knows any legal reason

why \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ may not be married,

I ask that person to declare it.

*If there is no response, proceed to the next question.*

*If someone answers, arrange to meet immediately outside the sanctuary.*

And I must ask you both:

are you legally free to marry,

and have you come freely and willingly

to be married here today?

*Those preparing to enter into the marriage relationship:* **Yes.**

**Declarations Of Intent**

*The minister asks each of those preparing to enter the marriage relationship individually in turn:*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, having heard how God has created, ordered and blessed the covenant of marriage, do you affirm your desire and intention to enter this covenant?

*Answer*: **I do.**

**Affirmation Of Family And Friends**

Will the families and friends of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ please stand.

The marriage of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

creates a new family,

and a new relationship with each of you.

Will you give them your blessing,

pray for them,

and support them

with the love and freedom they need?

*All respond:* **I will**.

**Exchange Of Vows**

*The minister addresses the couple intending to marry.*

Please join hands

and make your vows to one another.

*Then, each of those entering into the marriage relationship will say the vows to each other in turn. If necessary, they may repeat after the minister.*

Before God and these witnesses,

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

to be my husband/wife/spouse

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.

**Exchange Of Rings**

*The following prayer may be said before the exchange of the rings. If only one ring is used, changes are needed in the wording. A symbol other than a ring may be used.*

*The minister takes the rings and says:*

Let us pray.

Eternal God,

bless the giving and receiving

of these rings.

May they be signs

of your unending love and faithfulness,

and of the promises of love and fidelity

which \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ make today.

Through Jesus Christ, ourLord. **Amen**.

*Each, in turn, will place a ring on the ring finger of the other, and will say:*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring

as a sign of the covenant we have made,

before God and these people.

**Prayer Of Blessing**

*The couple may kneel, the minister placing a hand on the head of each. Or, if the couple remains standing, they will face each other, join hands, and the minister will place a hand over theirs saying:*

Was omitted online due to copyright see page 548.

**OR**

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

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord be kind and gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favour

and give you peace. **Amen.** *Num. 6:24–26*.

**Declaration Of Marriage**

*The couple faces the minister, who will say:*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,
you have pledged yourselves to one another
in the bond of Christian marriage;

you have made your promises

before God and these people;

you have joined hands

(and exchanged rings)

as a sign of your covenant.

Therefore, I declare you to be united in marriage;

in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

and of the Holy Spirit.

What God has joined together,

let no one separate.

**The Peace**

May the peace of Christ be with you now and always.

**And also with you**.

*The couple may greet one another with a kiss. They may extend a sign of peace to their families and friends, using the sign of a kiss, embrace or handclasp as appropriate.*

*The register may be signed at this time or before the dismissal.*

*If the service is neither a Sunday service of public worship nor a service which includes the Lord’s Supper, it may conclude here with the dismissal and the wedding party may recess.*

*A full service of Word and Holy Communion continues with intercessions or Prayers of the People.*

**Prayers Of The People**

*Prayers may be offered for the church, the world, society, rulers, for those just married and all who live in human community. The prayers below may be used or others appropriate to the occasion.*

Gracious God,

you have called together a people

to be the church of Jesus Christ.

May your people be one in faith and discipleship,

breaking bread together,

and telling good news

so that the world may believe you are love,

turn to your ways,

and live in the light of your truth. **Amen.**

**OR**

Eternal Ruler,

in your mighty realm the nations rise and fall.

Hear our prayers for those who rule

that they may learn wisdom and truth,

establish justice and mercy,

and seek the ways of peace. **Amen.**

**OR**

Gracious God:

we ask your blessing on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

now united in marriage.

May love, faith and hope strengthen their union

through the seasons of their life together.

May mutual respect and understanding
nurture their individuality.

May their home be blessed with your presence.

In its privacy may needs be expressed,

may knowledge become more intimate,

may differences be understood and accepted,

may forgiveness heal hurts and wrongdoing.

By your gracious Spirit, bind them together

and make them a blessing to others.

In the name of Jesus Christ,

to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,

we give all honour and glory. **Amen.**

*Other prayers of intercession may be offered, concluding with the following or similar words.*

These prayers we offer

in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,

who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN

*The presiding minister moves to the table during the singing of the hymn. If the Lord’s Supper is not to be celebrated, turn to page 15 for an alternative conclusion.*

**The Great Thanksgiving**

**Invitation To The Lord's Table**

This is the joyful feast of the people of God!

They will come from east and west,

and from north and south,

and sit at table in the kingdom of God. *Luke 13:29*.

According to Luke,

when our risen Lord was at table with his disciples,

he took the bread, blessed,

broke it and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened

and they recognized him. *Luke 24:30, 31.*

This is the Lord’s table.

Our Saviour invites all those who trust him

to share the feast which he has prepared.

O taste and see that the Lord is good. *Ps. 34:8a.*

**Presentation Of Gifts**

*The minister says:*

Let us return to God

the offerings of our life

and the gifts of the earth.

*An anthem or hymn may be sung as the offerings are received. Those who will assist in serving communion retire to the place where the bread and wine are in readiness.*

*A doxological stanza or communion hymn is sung as the gifts are carried in procession to the table. First the bread, then the wine are received. Servers and ushers return to their appointed places. When the table has been arranged, minister and people proceed to the prayer.*

**Great Prayer Of Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you.

 **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

 **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

 **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Holy God, Creator of heaven and earth,

with joy we give you thanks and praise.

You give us love

and show us its fullness

in your offering of Jesus Christ for us.

You created us,

and in your gift of marriage

you call us to share our lives with each other.

You made us in your image

to live with one another in love.

Through long generations

you have been patient and kind to all.

How wonderful are your ways, almighty God.

How marvellous is your name, O Holy One.

You alone are God.

Therefore with apostles and prophets,

and that great cloud of witnesses

who live for you beyond all time and space,

we lift our hearts in joyful praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

 **Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

 **Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise you, most holy God,

for sending your only Son Jesus to live among us,

full of grace and truth.

Sharing our joy and sorrow,

he healed the sick and was a friend of sinners.

Obeying you,

he took up his cross and died that we might live.

We praise you that he overcame death

and is risen to rule the world.

He is still the friend of sinners.

We trust him to overcome every power
that can hurt or divide us,

and believe that when he comes in glory

we will celebrate victory with him.

We thank you that on the night before he died,

Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you,

broke the bread and said,

“Take, eat.

This is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.”

In the same way he took the cup, saying,

“This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood.

Do this for the remembrance of me.”

Therefore, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,

we take this bread and this cup

and give you praise and thanksgiving

as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

 **Christ has died,**

 **Christ is risen,**

 **Christ will come again**.

Gracious God,

pour out your Holy Spirit upon us,

and upon these your gifts of bread and wine
that we, and all who share this feast,

may be one with Christ and he with us.

Give to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the spirit of peace and grace,

that they may continue to grow in love and understanding,

and that their life together may be

a reflection of your love for them

and a sign of your faithfulness to us.

In your mercy,

accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

Fill us with the joy of eternal life,

that we may be your faithful people

until we feast with you in glory.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

all glory and honour are yours, almighty God,

for ever and ever. **Amen**.

**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 forever. Amen.**

**Breaking The Bread**

*Holding up the loaf so that all may see, the minister says:*

Because there is one bread,

we who are many are one body,

for we all partake of the one bread.  *I Cor. 10:17.*

*Here the presiding minister breaks the loaf in full view of the congregation, saying:*

When we break the bread,

it is a sharing in the body of Christ. *I Cor. 10:16.*

*Here the minister pours the wine and lifts the cup, saying:*

When we bless the cup,

it is a sharing in the blood of Christ. *I Cor. 10:16.*

*The minister then holds out both the bread and the cup to the people.*

The gifts of God

for the people of God.

**Communion Of The People**

*The minister and those who will assist in serving receive both the bread and wine. They then proceed to serve the people in the manner appointed.*

*During the distribution there may be silence, Scriptural sentences may be said or a hymn may be sung.*

**Prayer After Communion**

*When all have been served, the meal concludes with a prayer offered by the minister or by all.*

**Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy meal**

**with which you have fed us with the bread of life,**

**have united us to Christ,**

**and have given us a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb.**

**In the strength of your Spirit,**

**may we go into the world**

**to serve and praise you in our daily lives**

**in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**The Dismissal**

HYMN

**The Charge**

*The leader may charge the people using one of the following or similar words.*

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*. Rom. 12:9–12.*

**OR**

Live in harmony with one another.

Be sympathetic and loving,

compassionate and humble.

Do not repay evil with evil,

or insult with insult.

Instead, repay with a blessing,

for to this you have been called

that you may inherit God’s blessing. *Based on I Peter 3:8–9.*

**OR**

Go out into the world in peace.

Whatever you do, in word or deed,

do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,

giving thanks to God through him. *Col. 3:17*.

**Benediction**

*The minister, with hands raised over the people, pronounces a blessing.*

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,

the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit

be with you all. **Amen.**  *II Cor. 13:13.*

*A hymn or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played as the wedding party leaves.*

**Alternative Conclusion**

**Prayer Of Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you.

 **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

 **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

 **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Almighty God, fountain of all mercies,

we give you humble and hearty thanks

for your goodness to us and all people.

You created us in your image

with the freedom to seek and choose your gifts:

of dignity which is for all people,

respect which is mutually shared,

service which cares for the other,

mercy which forgives and accepts forgiveness,

love which binds us to you and to one another.

For these and all your blessings, we give you thanks;

but above all we praise you for the love and mercy

you have shown to us

through the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ.

By taking flesh and living among us,

by his passion, death and resurrection,

he has made a new covenant

between you and your people,

and baptized us into the life of your new realm.

 Hear us, O God, as we give you thanks

for the gift of your Spirit,

who came of old and comes again

to strengthen us for holy living and holy dying,

in the joyful hope of eternal life in your presence.

Accept our offerings of praise and thanksgiving,

in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,

who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**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 forever. Amen.**

**The Dismissal**

HYMN

**The Charge**

Go out into the world in peace.

Whatever you do, in word or deed,

do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,

giving thanks to God through him. *Col. 3:17*.

 **Benediction**

*The minister, with hands raised over the people, pronounces a blessing.*

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,

the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit

be with you all. **Amen.**  *II Cor. 13:13.*

*A hymn or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played as the wedding party leaves.*

**Scripture Readings**

Care should be taken to discuss with the couple the kinds of Biblical readings that are meaningful to them individually and as a couple. Some of the lessons from scripture listed below may be appropriate for use in a Service of Christian Marriage. At least one reading should be from the Gospels.

**Old Testament**

*Proverbs 8:1–10*

*Song of Solomon 8:6,7*

*Song of Solomon 2:10–13*

**Psalms**

*Psalm 8*

*Psalm 16:1–3, 5–11*

*Psalm 19*

*Psalm 20:1–5*

*Psalm 36:5–9*

*Psalm 85:8–13*

*Psalm 91:1–4, 9–16*

*Psalm 95:1–7*

*Psalm 96*

*Psalm 98*

*Psalm 100*

*Psalm 103:1–5, 8–14, 19–22*

*Psalm 111 (Could be divided for reading by minister, wedding party, congregation)*

**Psalms**

*Psalm 119 selected verses*

*Psalm 145:1–18, 21 (Could be divided for reading by minister, wedding party, congregation)*

*Psalm 150*

**Epistles**

*I Corinthians 13 (or 13:4–10)*

*Philippians 1:9–11*

*Colossians 3:12–17*

*I John 3:18–24*

*I John 4:7–13*

**Gospels**

*Matthew 7:24-27*

*John 15:1-17*