

This Certifies

That on the _____ day of

_____ in the year of our Lord

United in Marriage

at _____

according to the ordinance of God

and the Laws of _____

Minister _____

Witnesses: _____

When a couple come to be married in the Church, it should mean that they desire the blessing of God on their marriage, and that they want to begin their life together in God's sight and presence. A man and a woman take each other as husband and wife not only as a private act of commitment, but also before society and before God.

The Marriage Service centres around the two of you and your vows of love and loyalty given to each other; vows which you make before God and God's people. Because of this, it is only right that you participate, along with the Minister, in the planning and preparation of your service. This booklet has been prepared to help you in your planning and to give you some ideas that you may use. Then the service will reflect your unique individuality and should be more meaningful for you on your important and happy day. It should also help you to keep in mind that the service is a service of worship and all that is done or said, played or sung, should be an offering of praise to God, and in keeping with the Christian faith.

If there are other reasons for your coming to the Minister to be married, different than the one outlined above, we would appreciate your being frank and open about them. When we share our reasons freely and with trust, we can plan together in a meaningful way.

We have given an outline of the parts of the service first. Then in the second section, the parts are explained and some different options are given. After you have worked through the booklet, we will meet together to make the final plans for your service. Other suggestions that are not found in this booklet will be welcomed by the Minister, provided that they are in keeping with the Christian concept of marriage.

Anything that detracts from the purpose of the service should be eliminated. For this reason, we allow pictures only as the bride comes through the doors at the beginning of the processional, but not during the service. Likewise, pictures may be taken while we are signing the register. Some couples want a posed picture in the sanctuary after the service. If you want this, the Minister will be pleased to explain the arrangements. Arrangements may also be made to have the service recorded.

Special music or solos may be used in the service, if you wish. The music should be carefully chosen and planned into the service as an integral part. Two suggested places are included in the order. Other places that solos may be used are just prior to the processional and during the signing of the register. The decision to have a hymn or hymns, or a soloist is yours. If there are pieces of music that have a special religious significance to you that are not mentioned in the outline, please feel free to mention them in the final planning.

A. AN ORDER FOR THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

- 1 **The Processional** Option _____
- 2 **Call to Worship** Option _____
- * 3 **Hymn or Solo** Option _____
- 4 **Introduction** Option _____
- 5 **Prayer of Approach to God** Option _____
- 6 **Address to the People** Option _____
- 7 **Question of Impediment**
- 8 **Address to the Couple** Option _____
- 9 **Scripture Reading** Option _____
- 10 **Prayer for Grace** Option _____
- *
- 11 **Questions of the Families** Option _____
- 12 **Questions of Intention** Option _____
- 13 **The Exchange of Vows** Option _____
- 14 **The Exchange of Rings** Option _____
- 15 **Declaration of Marriage**
- 16 **The Marriage Prayer and
 Lord's Prayer** Option _____
- * 17 **Hymn or Solo** Hymn Solo
- 18 **The Benediction** Option _____
- * 19 **Lighting of the Unity Candle** Option _____
- 20 **Signing of the Register**
- 21 **Presentation of the Couple** Option _____
- 22 **The Recessional**

B. OPTIONS AND EXPLANATION OF PARTS

1. THE PROCESSIONAL

The music for the Processional should be suitable for use in a service of worship, with hymn tunes such as Joyful, Joyful We Adore You; Love Divine, All Loves Excelling; Praise, My Soul, The God of Heaven; Praise to The Lord, The Almighty being recommended. Trumpet Voluntaire is also a beautiful selection for the Procession.

The type of Procession should be made in consultation with the Minister, bearing in mind the floor plan of the church building and the position of the aisle(s). Some types of Processions follow:

(a) The Groom, his attendants, and the Minister are all at the front of the Church. The Bride enters the sanctuary on her father's right arm. She is usually preceded down the aisle by her attendants. Or both parents may escort the Bride down, with the mother on the Bride's left and the father on her right.

(B) The entire wedding party is in the Procession. The attendants, in couples, come down the aisle first, followed by the Minister; then the Groom escorted by his parents; then the Bride escorted by her parents. At the front, the couple is given to each other by the parents and they come the final few steps together.

(C) The Minister meets the couple in the vestibule or the vestry and leads them down the aisle, with the attendants following behind the couple.

2. CALL TO WORSHIP

Because your marriage service is a service of worship, all assembled are called to enter into this worship experience, centred around you and the vows that you will make before God and your gathered families and friends.

- (a) Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.
Unless the Lord builds the house,
Those who build it labour in vain.
- (b) Give thanks to the Lord, because God is good;
God's love is eternal.
- (c) God is love, and whoever lives in love
lives in God, and God lives in them.
- d) Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labour in vain.
In all your ways acknowledge God,
and God's Spirit will make straight your paths.

- (e) Give thanks to God and praise God!
The Lord is good; God's love lasts forever
and God's faithfulness for all time.

- (f) Let us approach God in silence. Let us open
our whole lives to the guidance of God's Spirit.

3. HYMN OR SOLO

The decision to use a hymn that your guests will sing or to have a solo is optional. A hymn can be a meaningful and beautiful addition to your marriage service, but only if your guests can and will participate by singing. The hymn can be taken from the book that is in the pews (the Minister can tell you which one is used in the church) or if you are using a printed bulletin, the hymn can be chosen from another source and printed in it. Some of the hymns that are meaningful for a marriage service are:

O Perfect Love, All Human Thought Transcending
O Father, All Creating
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
O God of Bethel, By Whose Hand
The Lord's My Shepherd
O God Who Gave Humanity Its Name
Now Thank We All Our God
God, The All-Holy
God Who Blesses New Beginnings
Crown With Love, God, This Glad Day
Friends, Let Us Love Each Other
When Love Is Found
Our God, Creation's Loving Source

Solos are sometimes used prior to the Processional and also often during the Signing of The Register. A Hymn can also be sung as a Processional Hymn or a Solo may be sung during the Processional. The Minister would be pleased to assist you in the choice of music to be used during your marriage service.

4. INTRODUCTION

In most legal jurisdictions, marriage has to be public which means that anyone may come. For that reason, you are introduced by your full legal names. As you read the choices in this section, notice how they focus on us gathering to witness your marriage. That means that you are indeed marrying each other and the Minister who is officiating is the official representative of the province or state as well as of the church.

(a) Dear Friends: We are gathered here in God's presence to witness the marriage of _____ and _____, and to ask God to bless them in their life together.

By our presence here we all accept responsibility for helping _____ and _____ and for encouraging them in the new relationship into which they are about to enter. We are called to rejoice with them in their happiness, to help them when they have trouble, and to remember them in our prayers. Let us pray.

(b) We, as a community of friends, are gathered here at the Church to celebrate and witness the union of _____ and _____ in marriage.

We come today to worship God and to witness the vows that _____ and _____ will make to each other. We share their joy and pledge our support to them as they live the coming days as husband and wife, asking God to bless them in their life together. Let us pray.

(c) Dear friends and relatives of _____ and _____: Throughout religious history people have felt the need to celebrate the great moments of life. At those times we call upon our friends to help commemorate the great moment. We feel that we cannot do justice to those moments alone. But even more we have felt the need to bring these mountain-top experiences before God. Thus, in this sanctuary, before you and in the presence of God, _____ and _____ come to give their vows of love and loyalty. For them, and with them, let us approach God in prayer.

(d) Dear families and friends, this is a day for celebration and thanksgiving. We are gathered to witness the marriage of _____ and _____. They have invited us to share in their public declaration of lifelong commitment to each other. We come in the presence of God to ask for God's divine blessing on them on this solemn and joyful occasion.

5. PRAYER OF APPROACH TO GOD

(a) O God, you are the creator of all things; you made us, and you sustain us; we depend on you. For the gift of life, we praise you. For being able to think about its meaning and purpose, we thank you. In the world without, and in our lives within, there is much that is confusing and contradictory. Many voices counsel us; many forces pressure us; many things tempt us. We need your light to lead us, and your hand to hold us, and your love to complete us. In Jesus' name we ask your blessing now. Amen

(b) Almighty and eternal God, in you we live and move and have our being: you have so created us for yourself that our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant to us now purity of heart and strength of purpose, so that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing your will, and no weakness from doing it; and that in your light we may see our life clearly, and in your service find perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(c) O Lord our God, you are always more ready to give your good gifts than we are to seek them, and are willing to give us more than we desire or deserve; help us to seek that we may truly find, so to ask that we may joyfully receive, so to knock that the door of your mercy may be opened to us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(d) O God in heaven, bless these friends of ours who are about to give their vows of faithfulness to each other and to live together in the covenant bond of marriage. Let your love become their love, so that in their lives together they may be more concerned about the other than themselves. Above all, help each of us to be their silent partner as we pray for them in the coming days, and

be ready to assist them with good counsel and a helping hand. In the name of Jesus, their Lord and ours, we pray. Amen.

e) O God our Helper, source of infinite love, bless us with a sense of your indwelling presence as we worship here. Keep us sensitive to the wonder of things which fill our days and give meaning to life. Deepen in us the level of our loving, both for those near and dear to us, and for those, who, through strangers, need our concern.

Especially do we pray for your divine blessing on _____ and _____ who come here in this high moment of their lives. Be near to them as they make their promises to each other, that they may pledge their vows with deepest sincerity, knowing full well the meaning of the words they say.

And do grant to us all, we pray, a heightened sense of the joy of life because we share this moment with them, in your loving Spirit. Amen

(f) O God, Lord of heaven and earth, we ask you to help _____ and _____ as they enter marriage. They stand before you very happy, but also somewhat nervous. They feel that you have brought them together in the beginning, helped their love grow, and in this moment are with them in a special way. Make them as conscious of your presence as they are of ours, and give them the confidence that you will help them to be true to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(g) O God of promise, your greatest gift is love; bless _____ and _____ who today within your presence will take each other in marriage. We thank you that they have found such love and faith and trust in each other that they wish to live for the other all the rest of their lives. Let nothing come between them, but throughout all the chances and changes of life keep them forever loving and forever true to each other. Keep them safe from all trouble which would hurt them in any way. But, when any trial does come to them, grant that it may only bring them closer together and closer to you. Grant to them through all their days the perfect love which many waters cannot quench and which is stronger than even death itself; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

6 ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE

(a) Dear Christian Friends: Since marriage is a part of God's order of creation, and is to be honoured by God's people, let us consider what marriage means.

Marriage is as old as the human family. It is the highest of life's relationships. It was created by God in the very nature of our being as man and woman. God's creative love toward God's children is revealed through this relationship.

The occasion that declares publicly the intention of a man and a woman to enter into this relationship has come to be known in our society as a wedding. For the Christian, this occasion is not a spectacle, but worship; it is not a mere formal observance, but the participation in the will of God for life. A wedding is the celebration of the highest we know in human love — the pledging of the deepest human fidelity — the expression of the highest human aspiration. A relationship so sacred must not be entered into casually or flippantly, but thoughtfully, deliberately, freely, and joyfully.

(b) Marriage, like our creation as men and women, owes its very existence to God. It is God's will and intention that a husband and wife should love each other and be faithful to each other throughout their lives. It is also God's will that they should make a responsible decision regarding parenthood, and that if any children are born to them they should enjoy the security of family and home.

Such a marriage must not be entered into lightly or thoughtlessly, but with mutual respect, with reverence for God, and with the intention to obey God's will; then we can be assured that God will give us God's joy and peace.

(c) Marriage has been established so that man and woman might have lifelong companionship, that natural instincts and affections might be fulfilled in mutual love, that children might have the benefit of family life and love, and that our society might rest on a firm foundation. In the scriptures, married love is compared to the love that Christ has for his Church, and we are urged and encouraged to follow his pattern and example. Thus we have a vision of what marriage ought to be: a life of mutual, self-giving love.

Marriage is therefore not to be entered into lightly or carelessly, but thoughtfully, seriously, soberly, and in reverence before God.

(d) Let us remember that marriage has been established and sanctified for the welfare and happiness of people individually and of society as a whole. It is a commitment of two people to each other; a commitment that sees the establishment of a new home. But because our whole future as a society depends on the quality of home life, this is not just a notable event in the lives of these two individuals, but also in the larger life of humanity. It is a private commitment, to be sure, but it is one celebrated before witnesses and before God. Because we believe this, we continue this service with reverence, joy and praise, believing that the great heights of sharing and fulfillment can be experienced by this man and woman and by all of us as a caring community.

7. QUESTION OF IMPEDIMENT

Full name _____ and full name _____ you have made known your desire to be married, and no one has shown a valid reason why you may not be united in Christian marriage. If either of you knows of a reason why you may not be married, I charge you before God, the Searcher of all hearts, to declare it now.

8. ADDRESS TO THE BRIDE AND GROOM

(a) _____ and _____ your marriage is intended to join you for life in a relationship so intimate that it will change your whole being. It offers you the hope, and indeed the promise, of a love that is true and mature. To attain such love you will have to commit yourselves to each other freely and gladly for the sake of a richer and deeper life together. Seek to become one in mind and heart as well as one in body.

Let God be your helper and guide as you exchange your vows and live together in the covenant bond of marriage.

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(b) _____ and _____, out of the wild exuberance of creation, you two have appeared — each of you unique, distinctive, and wondrously human. You have chosen to journey together in the remaining moment of time that is yours. From this day forward, you are to become one unit of life.

You are both called to a new existence, for the whole universe has come to you in the form of this particular person who has a unique love for you and is beloved by you.

What then is love?

Love is sensing the other as a person. This must now be your mode of living. Love is receiving the feelings, thoughts, and intentions of the other into your own understanding. Love is faithfulness over the long haul. In the battle for excellence, in the tension of difference, in the travail of defeat, in the joy of being warmly human, in all the experiences of life, love must be faithful.

Love must share all the areas of life: body, mind, and spirit, until you are united in ecstasy with each other — one whole person united in joy with another whole person.

Love is sharing together, talking together, listening together, until the harmonies of what it means to be fully human pulse also in you.

In this love, let the giving love of God which we know in Jesus be your example and strength.

(c) _____ and _____, as you stand here before God and before us, preparing to make your vows to each other, think again of the fact that from now on your lives and destinies will be woven together in one pattern, and your troubles and your joys should not be known apart. The words, "I love you," first spoken shyly in the months gone by, when it was not known for sure if they would be accepted or returned, are today spoken in the full commitment of yourselves to each other and to a family responsibility in society.

The relationship of the Church to our Lord is the ideal to be sought in the relationship between a man and a woman in marriage. May you see in the relationship between a man and a woman in marriage. May you see in the relationship of Christ and his Church the pattern of self-giving love and service and devotion that you need to have toward one another. The kind of love that you need is described by Paul in his unforgettable words written to the Corinthian Christians: "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous,

or conceited, or proud; love is not ill-mannered, or selfish, or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up: its faith, hope and patience never fail. Love is eternal."

This love must be the substance of the vows that you make to each other, for "unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain."

(d) _____ and _____, here in this sanctuary where we celebrate God's presence, and in the presence of your families and friends, you have come to affirm the choice that you have made of each other as your lifelong partner in marriage. Although your lives are your own, they also are inseparably bound up with other lives; first with your parents, and then with (sisters, brothers, and) other relatives and friends. Today you come, not to break those old ties, but to transform them and create a new one as you bind yourselves together with love and commitment in the covenant bond of marriage with this your chosen partner. As you share your lives, let it not be at the expense of your own individuality; but let your uniqueness be enhanced by the strength of this common bond of love that you share. In love accept the mystery of each other as you seek to discover the mystery of being and of being together.

To love well is not to dominate, but rather to give of yourselves to each other, and to help each other to grow to your full human potential. Let your love be outgoing: first to each other, and then together to your families and friends, and then to the world. May the great example of love that we see and experience in Jesus the Christ strengthen you as you begin this new relationship of love and loyal commitment.

In place of these addresses or supplemental to them, other readings which speak of the loving commitment between a woman and a man may be used. Or, if it is your desire, or the church's custom, a short sermon or meditation on the meaning of marriage may be given here.

9. THE SCRIPTURE READING

Usually about four passages of Scripture, taken from a modern translation, are read. Some people have family members or friends who will read the Scripture. Some suggested readings are:

Psalm 23	John 13:34, 35
Psalm 67	John 15:9 - 12
Psalm 100	1 Corinthians 12:4 - 8(a), 14:1(a)
Psalm 121	Ephesians 3:14 - 19
Psalm 128	Colossians 3:12 - 14
Matthew 7:24 - 27	1 John 4:7 - 12
Matthew 19:4 - 6	

10. PRAYER FOR GRACE

(a) O God, most holy and most merciful, O God of nature and of grace, Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of all, your presence alone can sweeten and sanctify every relationship of life. We give you thanks for all your blessings, and at this time we especially thank you for the institution of marriage.

We thank you that you have led _____ and _____ into mutual love and confidence. Look upon them, loving God, and support them with mutual love, strengthened by your loving kindness and tender mercy.

Guide and bless them with your Spirit and grant to them a true and deep understanding of the meaning and obligations of the vows that they are about to make. May these your servants enter into this sacred relationship in humble dependence upon your enabling grace

And may it please you, without whose benediction nothing can prosper, to grant us now the joy and blessing of your continued presence. Grant this, O God, with the forgiveness of all our sins, for we ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(b) O God, we pray for _____ and _____ who want to begin their life together with you and always continue it with you. Help them never to hurt and never to grieve one another. Help them to share all their work, all their hopes, all their dreams, all their successes and all their failures, all their sorrows and all their joys. Help them to have no secrets from one another, so that they may truly be one. Keep them always true to one another, and grant that the years ahead may draw them ever closer to one another. Grant that nothing may ever make them drift apart.

And as they live with one another, help them to live with you, so that their love which they are to pledge now may grow perfect in your love, for you are the God whose name is love. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

(c) Let us pray for this man and this woman as they make their marriage vows. O God of love, as _____ and _____ pledge themselves to each other, help them and bless them; that their love may be pure, and their vows may be true; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(d) Gracious God, bless this man, _____, and this woman, _____, who come now to join themselves together in marriage, that they may give their vows to each other in the strength and spirit of your faithful love. Let the promise of your Word root and grow in their lives. Grant them vision and hope to persevere in trust and friendship all their days. Keep ever before them the needs of your world. By your grace enable them to be true disciples of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

(e) Love, these two people come into your presence to be married today. As newlyweds, the life that is ahead of them will not be the same as the lives of others. When they need a friend and counsellor to help them, send them your Holy Spirit, the Counsellor. When few people rejoice with

them, be their Friend. If they begin to walk the terrible road that divides and where ways part, send them the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Unite them in holy love, and may the years before them be the daily rehearsal of the unity of believers. Make their marriage the meeting place between you and them; for we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

(f) Out of this tangled world, O God, you have drawn _____ and _____ together and are binding them firmly by the sure insights of love. We thank you for the homes in which they have been nurtured in their formative years; for parents who have sacrificed on their behalf; for the Church which has awakened them to the meaning of eternal life.

Loving God, bless them as they come before you and their families and friends to affirm the choice that they have made of each other and their intention to establish a home where your love may be celebrated in the family. Grant them a seriousness of purpose that they may be kept from empty words and casual commitments. Be with them and let your love be the example and the power to help their love to grow. May you nurture them all the days of their lives that their dreams and their aspirations for life may find fulfilment the doing of your will in all things. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

11. QUESTIONS OF THE FAMILIES

If you wish, we may involve your families by asking one of the following optional questions. Questions may be asked of both sets of parents, of the extended families, or of the children when this is a second marriage where one or both of the parties to the marriage are parents, or of all your assembled guests.

(a) As _____ and _____ become husband and wife they leave their separate family units and create a new one. Parents, do you greet their new relationship with joy and celebration and give them your blessing?

"We do" or "We are glad that they have chosen each other and we bless their marriage with our approval."

(b) Who gives _____ and _____ to each other and gives blessing to their marriage?

"We do" Or "We, their families, do give each to the other and give our blessing to their marriage."

(c) Do you, the families of (or the children of) (or the families and friends of) _____ and _____, give them your blessing and promise to uphold and care for them in their marriage?

"We do."

12. QUESTIONS OF INTENTION

The Questions of Intention are asked so that publicly the gathered people, representing our society, might hear your plans and intentions as you enter marriage, with the Minister being the official representative of church and state. Every marriage is important to our society for a new home is being created through your vows of love and loyalty. The home is a most central unit in our society, for children, who are the future, have their attitudes, values, and objectives formed there while they are very young. The quality of home life to a very large degree shapes the future of our society.

(a) _____, will you have this woman to be your wife, to live together following God's law, in the holy estate of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honour and

keep her through all the circumstances of life, and forsaking all others, keep only to her as long as you both shall live? "I will."

_____, will you have this man to be your husband, to live together following God's law, in the holy estate of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honour and keep him through all the circumstances of life, and forsaking all others, keep only to him as long as you both shall live? "I will."

(b) Do you realize the significance of what you are about to undertake with these marriage vows? The decision to marry, made in the context of human uncertainty, requires tremendous faith; faith in yourselves as individuals and in the strength of your relationship; faith that you will be able in your marriage, with God's help, to deal with whatever the future holds.

_____, will you step forth in faith and affirm that you will accept _____ and _____ alone, in sickness and in health, poverty and good fortune, difference and agreement, in times of comfort and times of struggle, as long as you both shall live?
"I will."

_____, will you step forth in faith and affirm that you will accept _____ and _____ alone, in sickness and in health, poverty and good fortune, difference and agreement, in times of comfort and times of struggle, as long as you both shall live? "I will."

(c) _____ and _____, do you freely choose to bind yourselves together in marriage? Will you help your love to grow; will you receive into your own understanding the other's feelings, thoughts, and intentions; will you be partners with God, the source of all creativeness, to see that your lives reveal a quest for beauty, truth, and goodness, through faith, hope, and love? Will you keep faithful to each other throughout your lives?
"I will."

(d) There is in marriage the tremendous possibility for failure as well as for success; for pain as well as for joy. The possibility of sorrow, and happiness is greater in the married life than in the single life. The person who has not made the wager of devotion to another person cannot be hurt by the unfaithfulness of another as much as can the person who has made the leap of faith, nor can they know the sublimity of the joyous, majestic heights as the one who shares life in depth with a trusted, compatible, loving companion.

_____, with this in mind, do you choose _____ to be your wife? Will you love, respect, and honour her, sharing your plans and interests, ideals and emotions, through crisis and anxiety, through joy and pleasure, caring for her in lifelong commitment? "I will."

_____, with this in mind, do you choose _____ to be your husband? Will you love, respect, and honour him, sharing your plans and interests, ideals and emotions, through crisis and anxiety, through joy and pleasure, caring for him in lifelong commitment? "I will."

13. THE EXCHANGE OF VOWS

This is the central act of the marriage service. You will turn to face each other and join your right hands, so that you can give your vows directly to each other. One of the ways to exchange vows is for you to memorize the vow that you choose and give it, without prompting, to each other. But if you feel the least bit nervous about your memory, then you should repeat the vows after the Minister.

You will notice that all vows listed here emphasize the equality that is the ideal in marriage. If you wish to write your own vows, please keep that concept in mind.

If the Bride is carrying a bouquet or a Bible, it should be passed to the bridesmaid before the exchange of vows because you need both hands free for the vows and especially for the exchange of rings.

(a) In the presence of God, and before these witnesses, I, _____ take you, _____, to be my _____; to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; in joy and in sorrow; to love and to cherish you and to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live.

(b) _____, I take you to be my _____ to laugh with you in joy; to grieve with you in sorrow; to grow with you in love; serving humanity in peace and hope; as long as we both shall live.

(c) I, _____, take you _____, to be my _____, I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.

(d) I, _____, take you, _____, to be my _____; to love you and to share in all that our life together may bring, and to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live.

(e) _____, I promise with God's help to be your faithful _____, to love and serve you as Christ commands, as long as we both shall live.

(f) _____, I join you in marriage, to take you as my _____; to share all of life with you, its responsibilities and freedoms, its tensions and trials, its joys and pleasures, to cherish and to care for you, and with you to follow God's leading for the rest of my life. This is my promise to you.

(g) In the presence of God, our families and friends, I, _____, take you, _____, to be my partner in marriage, and in life; to love you and honour you; to give thanks for you and to serve you; to be faithful to you; and to share all that our life together may bring; following Christ's command that we love one another as Christ first loved us.

Some couples like to seal the vows with the exchange of a kiss at this time, others after the exchange of rings and others after the Benediction. Some prefer to omit this symbolic act. Your preference should be the guide.

14. THE EXCHANGE OF RINGS

The Best Man should wear the Bride's ring on his little finger, and the Bridesmaid should wear the Groom's ring on her thumb, so that they are readily available. If yours is a double ring ceremony, we repeat the procedure chosen

After the last ring has been put on, the Minister will have you join your left hands, and then will place his/her hand over your joined hands, pronouncing a blessing on the rings.

(a) _____, do you give this ring as a token that you will keep this covenant and perform the vows that you have just made? "I do."

_____, do you receive this ring as a token that you will keep this covenant and perform the vows that you have just made? "I do."

(b) _____, I give you this ring in God's name as a symbol of all that we shall share.

(c) _____, take this ring as a sign of my love and loyalty, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

(d) _____, I give you this ring that you may wear it as a symbol of our marriage.

(e) _____, I give you this ring that you may wear it as a symbol of the vows we have made this day.

(f) _____, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and loyalty, that you may wear it as a symbol of our marriage.

The Blessing of the rings: Let these rings continue to you both as a symbol of the value, the purity, and the fidelity of true wedded love, and as a sign and seal of the vows that you have just made. Amen.

15. THE DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

The Minister will now join your right hands as a symbol of your being joined in marriage. Please remain with your right hands joined for the rest of the service to emphasize this symbolism.

Forasmuch as you, _____ Full Name _____ and you, _____ Full Name _____, have made this solemn covenant of marriage before God and before all of us here, and have pledged your vows to each other and have confirmed them by the joining of your hands and the giving and receiving of a ring, now therefore in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, I declare you to be husband and wife. Amen
People must not separate what God has joined together.

16. THE MARRIAGE PRAYER

For this prayer, the couple may stand or kneel, according to your preference. The first three prayers are ones that you would say. If you choose one of these, the Minister will turn his book so that you may read the prayer. You should practice reading aloud together. The other prayers in this section are ones that the Minister would read. The other option is that you would use a prayer of your own composition.

(a) **BOTH TOGETHER:** O God, our Creator and Redeemer, we now (stand, kneel) before you very happy, but somewhat nervous. We feel that you brought us together in the beginning, help our love grow, and are at this moment with us in a special way. We ask you to stay by our side in the days ahead. Protect us from anything which might harm this marriage, give us courage when burdens come our way, teach us to forgive one another when we fail.

THE GROOM: I ask from you the assistance I need to be a good husband. Never let me take _____ for granted or forget she needs to be loved.

THE BRIDE: I ask from you the assistance I need to be a good wife. Never let me take _____ for granted or forget that he needs to be loved.

BOTH TOGETHER: (If you bless us with children, we promise to love them, to care for them, to give them the best possible example, and to step aside when they must walk their own paths.) We ask, finally, that in our old age we may love one another as deeply, and cherish each other as much as we do at this very moment. May you grant these wishes which we offer through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

(b) **BOTH TOGETHER:** O Father, our hearts are filled with great happiness on this our wedding day. We come before you at the altar of love, pledging our lives and our hearts to one another. Grand that, with your help, we may be true and loving, living together in such a way as to never bring shame and heartbreak into our marriage. Temper us with kindness and understanding and rid us of all pretence and jealousy.

Help us to be sweethearts, helpmates, friends, and lovers, that together we may meet the cares and problems of life more bravely. And as time takes away our youthful charm, may we find contentment in the greater joys of rich companionship.

May our home truly be a place of love and harmony where your Spirit is ever present
Bless us on our wedding day, our Father, and walk with us through all our life together. Amen

(c) *This prayer is to be read by the couple and is particularly for a second marriage where both parties to the marriage have children.*

BOTH TOGETHER: Almighty God, our Creator and Redeemer, we give you thanks for your gift of life, and for your guiding presence as we have climbed the heights of ecstasy and plummeted into the depths of loneliness and despair. Before today we each have known joy, felt sorrow, seen triumph and known struggle. We thank you that you have led us to each other and have blessed us with mutual love, We thank you for your strengthening support as we make this commitment of sharing, trust, and fidelity. Glory be to you, O God, for bringing us together and for giving us this day to pledge and celebrate our love. O God, our help in ages past, be our strength in the years to come.

We thank you for the families from whom we have received our heritage. We thank you for our children, your gift of a future. We each thank you for the children born to us, and for all they have added to our lives, both the joys and the sorrows. We each thank you for the children born to our partner, the children whom we now choose, for they are an essential part of our relationship. Teach us and guide us to be good parents of all our children, that as we blend these families they may know our love, and through us, your love. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

(d) O God, Creator and Redeemer of us all, we thank you for the gift of life — and in life, for the gift of marriage.

We praise and thank you for all the joys that can come to men and women through marriage, and the blessing of home and family.

Today, especially we think of _____ and _____ as they begin their life together as husband and wife. With them we thank you for the joy they find in each other.

We pray for their parents, that at this moment of parting they may rejoice in their children's happiness.

Give _____ and _____ strength, Father to keep the vows they have made and to cherish the love that they share, that they may be faithful and devoted to each other.

Help them to support each other with patience, understanding and honesty.

(Teach them to be wise and loving parents of any children they may have.)

Look with favour, God, on all our homes, defend them from every evil that would threaten them, from outside or within.

Let your Spirit so direct all of us that we may each look to the good of others in word and deed, and grow in grace as we advance in years; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(e) O God, you are the Author and Giver of all good things, we bless you for the gifts of love and friendship, and for the joys which gladden our lives. May your blessing rest upon and remain with _____ and _____ who have here pledged their mutual love. Crown this day with your perpetual favour, and lead them always in your ways of love and peace, even to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(f) O God, Lord of life and Love eternal, we thank you for the gift of marriage. We bless you for the joy which _____ and _____ have found in each other, and for the covenant of marriage which they have made before you.

Gracious God, your love is everlasting, grant _____ and _____ may live together in love and unity all the days of their lives. Give them health, prosperity, and peace. Strengthen them to obey and serve you, that they may walk in the steps of Jesus your Anointed One. And when the joys and sorrows, and all the good and evil of this passing world are ended, let them inherit your promises and share in your eternal glory.

O God, look in favour upon all our homes. Defend them from every evil that would threaten them, from without or within, and supply their needs according to the riches of your grace.

O Lord, grant that, being led and strengthened by your Spirit we may each look to the good of others in word and deed, and grow in grace as we advance in years; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(g) Eternal God, Creator and Redeemer of us all, we praise you for creating us male and female, so that each may find fulfilment in the other. We praise you for all the ways in which your love comes into our lives, and for all the joys that can come to men and women through marriage.

Today, especially we think of _____ and _____ as they begin their married life together. With them we thank you for giving them life and for bringing them together in marriage. With them, we thank you for the love and care of their parents, which has guided them to maturity and prepared them for each other. With them, we pray for their parents, that at this moment of parting, they may share their children's joy.

And now, O God, we pray for _____ and _____ themselves, Give them strength to keep the vows they have made, to be loyal and faithful to each other, and to support each other throughout their lives; that they may bear each other's burdens and share each other's joys. Help them to be honest and patient with each other, (to be wise and loving parents of any children they may have) and to welcome friends and strangers into their home. In all their future together, may they enjoy each other's lives and grow through each other's love.

Finally, we ask you to keep them faithful to you, and at the end of this life on earth to receive them, and all of us, into your eternal presence, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

(h) O God, Lord of life and love, we thank you for the gifts of love and friendship, and for the blessings brought into our lives by your gift of marriage. We praise you for the love and joy that _____ and _____ have found in each other and for the vows of love and loyalty that they have made before you. May your blessing remain with them always. Grant that they may live together in love and unity throughout life. Give to them health, prosperity, and peace. Help them also, O Lord, that in loving each other, they may know you and your love; and that knowing you and receiving your love, they may, in turn, love and serve you all the days of their lives. Crown this day, O God, with your continuing love, and lead _____ and _____ always in your ways of love and peace until the day comes when the joys and sorrow, and all the good and evil of this passing world are ended; then, Father, let them inherit your promises and share in your eternal glory, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

(i) Most merciful and gracious God, grant to these your children the strength to fulfil the vow they have just made between them. Guide them with your sure hand through all the chances and

changes which lie before them, that their love may be made strong, that their home may become a source of warmth and understanding for all who come there. Guide them, keep them, sustain them, help them,
that your loving will may be done through them, and that their joy may be full. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(j) Gracious God, out of all the human family you have brought together these two persons and united them in marriage. Grant them the grace of faithfulness and true affection toward each other. May their love, in oneness, be patterned after that love which according to your word, is slow to lose patience, looks for ways of being constructive, is not possessive, knows no limits to its endurance, no end to its trust, or fading of its hope.

In good days and bad, strengthen and defend them. Keep their love for you and their fellowship with the Church creative and healthy, that the joys and blessings of this life may be a foretaste of the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Following one of the prayers above, we will say the Lord's Prayer together.

And now as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we pray together, saying,
"Our father, who art in heaven, Hallowed by 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

17. HYMN OR SOLO

Again this is optional. For suggestions see Number 3 above.

18. THE BENEDICTION

(a) The Lord bless you and keep you. May God make God's face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: may God lift up God's countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

(b) The grace of Christ attend you, the love of God surround you, the Holy Spirit keep you. Amen

(c) May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and show you God's favour. May the Lord befriend you and prosper you. Amen.

d) And now _____ and _____ may:

The God of mercy touch you with the healing of God's forgiveness and teach you always to be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

The God of righteousness guide you into holy living and be compassionate with you as you grow in grace and the knowledge of God's way in marriage.

The God of peace calm your fears, guard your days, and grant you the serenity to live securely in a world of God's making.

The God of strength knit you firmly to one another that you may support each other in life's every endeavour.

The God of love give you God's love in abundance and teach you to love one another as Christ has first loved you.

The God of faith, who trusts you to each other and both of you to the living of these days, bind you together with the strong cords of fidelity and an unshakeable trust in God's loving kindness.

The Lord bless you, _____, and you, _____; The Lord keep you; may God make God's face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: may God lift up God's countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen

(e) Go now, carrying with you the peace of Christ, the love of God, and the encouragement and support of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

19. LIGHTING OF A UNITY CANDLE

Some people want to symbolize their union in marriage by lighting a Unity Candle. We recommend that it be done at this point in the service, but there are others who prefer it directly after the Declaration of Marriage. Depending on the architecture of the Church, if it is possible it is nicer to do this as you face your guests. The Unity Candle may be lit without any announcement or statement, or you may choose one of the following statements to be made by the Minister or you may read one of the prayers found in (d) and (e).

a) _____ and _____ are now going to symbolize their union in marriage by lighting the Unity Candle. It is a sign that they have bound themselves together in marriage. May the light of Christ enable their love to burn brightly today and always.

(b) The two outside candles on the table were lit to represent the two families from which this couple had their beginning. From those two candles they light the central Unity Candle symbolizing that they are bound together as one by their mutual love and by the love of God.

(c) _____ and _____, as a symbol of this new level that you have entered in your relationship, I invite you to light the Unity Candle as a symbol of the love which binds you together as husband and wife, taking the flame from the candles representing the love you have shared in your families and with friends. As you become one in spirit, the joining of the flames creates a new light which spreads even more light and love in our world. But as the candles separate, we are also reminded that you still retain those unique gifts of personality and being which made you beloved by your partner and by your families.

(d) Let us pray: O Christ, the Light of the world, and our Light, grant now your Light to shine upon us as we light this Unity Candle. May the light taken from the candles representing our different families join to express and illustrate our oneness and the oneness found in marriages blessed by you. Amen

(e) Let us pray: May the flame that burns brightly on this Unity Candle be a sign of the love that burns within our hearts. Grant, O God, that the fire of our love may burn brightly here while we have life and breath, and after into the eternity of your love. Amen

20. THE SIGNING OF THE REGISTER

The couple and all their attendants will follow the minister into the vestry for the signing. In some cases, it is appropriate to sign in front of the assembled people. The men will take the ladies on their left arms. As was mentioned previously, pictures are allowed during the signing but not during the service. A solo may be sung during the signing of the register if you so desire. Otherwise the organist will play appropriate music while we are out.

21. THE PRESENTATION OF THE COUPLE

(a) "Ladies and Gentlemen, (or Christian Friends) I present to you Mr & Mrs.

(b) "Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you the Bride and Groom,
_____ and _____."

(c) "Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you the Bride and Groom,
and _____ Mr. and Mrs.

22. THE RECESSIONAL

The Bride and Groom will then enter the sanctuary with the Bride on the Groom's right arm. They will proceed to the designated aisle, followed by their attendants. The Bride's parents should follow the last of the attendants, with the Groom's parents following. Then the immediate families will be grouped around you as a couple. If you wish to return to the sanctuary for pictures, the Minister will explain the procedure if this is possible.

**Our
Marriage
Ceremony**

XXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXX

and

XXXXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXXXX

*By Rev. Myles Vardy
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