

The Marriage Service

3

Alternative Services Series 3

Black numbers indicate material which is mandatory
Blue numbers indicate material which is optional

Notes

- 1 The Banns.** The banns are to be published in the church on three Sundays at the time of Divine Service by the officiant in the form set out in the Book of Common Prayer or in the following form : I publish the banns of marriage between *N* of . . . and *N* of This is the first [second] [third] time of asking. If any of you know any reason in law why these persons may not marry each other you are to declare it now.
- 2 Hymns and Canticles.** These may be used at suitable points during the service. Sections 1; 20, and 23 may be sung if so desired.
- 3 Permitted Omissions.** Sections with numbers in blue may be omitted.
- 4 Seating.** It is recommended that chairs should be provided for the bride and bridegroom during the lessons and sermon. It is appropriate that they should stand for section 6.
- 5 The Readings.** At least one reading must be used, either at the beginning of the service (section 4) or after the Marriage (section 22) ; but readings must not be used at both places. At Holy Communion there are two readings, of which the Gospel must be one. Suggested readings are printed on pp. 21–24.
- 6 The Giving Away.** This ceremony is optional. If the bride is not given away in marriage by her father, this

may be done by another member of her family, or by a friend representing the family.

- 7 **The Vows.** In sections 11 and 12 the vows A and the vows B are not interchangeable. Either the vows A or the vows B must be used throughout. Before the day of the marriage the priest shall inquire of the couple which form of the vows they have agreed to use.

The couple may read the vows (sections 9–16) or repeat them after the priest.
- 8 **The Registration of the Marriage.** If the registration of the marriage does not take place at section 21, it shall take place at the end of the service.
- 9 **The Psalm.** The psalm (section 23) may be used in any authorized form.
- 10 **The Lord's Prayer.** The Lord's Prayer (section 29) may be used in the Prayer Book version or the Series 2 version.
- 11 **Prayers.** Instead of the additional prayers (sections 31–38), prayers which the couple have written or selected in co-operation with the priest may be used. Silence may be kept ; or free prayer may be offered.
- 12 **Congregational Prayers.** Sections 32, 33, 36 and 38 may be said by the congregation if so desired.

The Marriage Service

1 Stand

The bride and bridegroom stand before the priest.
The following sentence may be said :

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

1 John 4.16

2 The priest may say,

The Lord be with you.

All

And also with you.

3 Priest

God our Father,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law.
Grant to your servants
that, loving one another,
they may continue in your love
until their lives' end :
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All

Amen.

4 Sit

A lesson or lessons may be read (see section 22). If two or three lessons are read, a psalm (see section 23) or a hymn may be sung between them.

5 A sermon may be preached.

The Marriage

6 The bride and bridegroom stand before the priest, and the priest says,

We have come together in the presence of God, to witness the marriage of *N* and *N*, to ask his blessing on them, and to share in their joy. Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and through his Spirit he is with us now.

The Scriptures teach us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.

Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their

hearts and lives. It is given, that they may have children and be blessed in caring for them and bringing them up in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife belong to one another, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life that all should honour ; and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

This is the way of life, created and hallowed by God, that *N* and *N* are now to begin. They will each give their consent to the other ; they will join hands and exchange solemn vows, and in token of this they will give and receive a ring.

Therefore, on this their wedding day we pray with them, that, strengthened and guided by God, they may fulfil his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

7 The priest says to the congregation,

But first I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

8 The priest says to the couple,

And if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, you must declare it now : for the vows you are about to take are to be made in the name of God, who is judge of all and who knows all the secrets of our hearts.

9 Stand

The priest says to the bridegroom,

N, will you take *N* to be your wife ?
Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live ?

He answers,

I will.

10 The priest says to the bride,

N, will you take *N* to be your husband ?
Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live ?

She answers,

I will.

11 Either A :

The priest may receive the bride from the hands of her father.

The bride and bridegroom face each other. The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his, and says,

I, N, take you, *N*,
to be my wife,
to have and to hold
from this day forward ;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part,
according to God's holy law ;
and this is my solemn vow.

They loose hands.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says,

I, N, take you, *N*,
to be my husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward ;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part,
according to God's holy law ;
and this is my solemn vow.

They loose hands.

12 Or B :

The priest may receive the bride from the hands of her father.

The bride and bridegroom face each other. The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his, and says,

I, *N*, take you, *N*,
to be my wife,
to have and to hold
from this day forward ,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love, cherish, and worship,
till death us do part,
according to God's holy law ,
and this is my solemn vow.

They loose hands.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says,

I, *N*, take you, *N*,
to be my husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward ;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love, cherish, and obey,
till death us do part,
according to God's holy law ;
and this is my solemn vow.

They loose hands.

13 The priest receives the ring(s). He says.

Heavenly Father, by your blessing, let *this ring* be to *N* and *N* a symbol of unending love and faithfulness, to remind them of the vow and covenant which they have made this day ;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All

Amen.

14 The bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand, and holding it there, says,

I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

15 If only one ring is used, before they loose hands the bride says,

I receive this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- 16 If rings are exchanged, they loose hands and the bride places a ring on the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand, and holding it there, says,

I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- 17 The priest addresses the people.

In the presence of God, and before this congregation, *N* and *N* have given their consent and made their marriage vows to each other. They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands and by the giving and receiving of a ring. I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

- 18 The priest joins their right hands together and says,
That which God has joined together,
let not man divide.

- 19 The congregation remain standing. The husband and wife kneel, and the priest blesses them.

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve, and keep you ;
the Lord mercifully grant you the
riches of his grace,
that you may please him both in body
and soul,
and, living together in faith and love,
may receive the blessings of eternal life
Amen.

All

- 20 These acclamations may be used.

Priest Blessed are you, heavenly Father :
All **You give joy to bridegroom and bride.**
Priest Blessed are you, Lord Jesus Christ :
All **You have brought new life to mankind.**
Priest Blessed are you, Holy Spirit of God :
All **You bring us together in love.**
Priest Blessed be Father Son, and Holy Spirit :
All **One God, to be praised for ever. Amen.**

Sit

- 21 The registration of the marriage may take place at this point or at the end of the service.

- 22 If sections 4 and 5 have been omitted, at least one lesson is read here, and a sermon may be preached.

- 23 One or more of the following psalms are used, or a hymn may be sung.

Psalm 67

- 1 Let God be gracious to us and bless us:
and make his face shine upon us;
2 That your ways may be known on earth:
your liberating power · among all nations.
3 Let the peoples praise you · O God:
let all the peoples praise you.
4 Let the nations be glad and sing:
for you judge the peoples with integrity,
and govern the nations upon earth.
5 Let the peoples praise you · O God:
let all the peoples praise you.
6 Then the earth will yield its fruitfulness:
and God our God will bless us.
7 God shall bless us:
and all the ends · of the earth will fear him.

Glory to the Father and to the Son:
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:
and shall be forever. Amen.

Psalm 121

- 1 I lift up my eyes · to the hills:
but where · shall I find help?
2 My help comes · from the Lord:
who has made heaven · and earth.
3 He will not suffer your foot to stumble:
and he who watches over · you will not sleep.
4 Be sure he who has charge of Israel:
will neither slumber · nor sleep.
5 The Lord himself · is your keeper:
the Lord is your defence upon your right hand;

- 6 the sun shall not strike you · by day:
nor shall the moon by night.
7 The Lord will defend you from all evil:
it is he · who will guard your life.
8 The Lord will defend your going out and
your coming in:
from this time forward · forevermore.

Glory to the Father and to the Son:
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:
and shall be forever. Amen.

Psalm 128

- 1 Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord:
and walks in the confine of his ways.
2 You will eat the fruit of · your labours:
happy shall you be and all · shall go well with you.
3 Your wife within your house:
shall be · as a fruitful vine;
4 your children around your table:
like the fresh shoots of the olive.
5 Behold thus shall the man be blessed:
who lives · in the fear · of the Lord.
6 May the Lord so bless you · from Zion:
that you see Jerusalem in prosperity
all the days · of your life.
7 May you see your children's children:
and in Israel let there · be peace.

Glory to the Father and to the Son:
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:
and shall be forever. Amen.

24 Kneel

The husband and wife kneel before the holy table

Priest Almighty God,
you send your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of all your
people :
open the hearts of these your children
to the riches of his grace,
that they may bring forth the fruit
of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace ;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All

Amen.

25 Either or both of these prayers are said.

26

Heavenly Father, maker of all things,
you enable us to share in your work of
creation. Bless this couple in the gift
and care of children, that their home
may be a place of love, security, and
truth, and their children grow up to
know and love you in your Son Jesus
Christ our Lord.

All

Amen.

27

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who shared at Nazareth the life of an
earthly home :
reign in the home of these your
servants as Lord and King ;
give them grace to minister to others
as you have ministered to men ;
and grant that by deed and word

14

they may be witnesses of your
saving love
to those amongst whom they live ;
for the sake of your holy Name.

All

Amen.

28 Other prayers may be said here (see sections 31–38).

29

Priest As our Saviour has taught us,
so we pray :

All

**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.
Do not bring us to the time of trial
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

30 The priest blesses the couple and the congregation,
saying,

God the Holy Trinity make you strong
in faith and love, defend you on every
side, and guide you in truth and peace ;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the
Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be
among you and remain with you always.

All

Amen.

15

Additional Prayers

31 Almighty God, giver of life and love, bless *N* and *N*, whom you have now joined in Christian marriage. Grant them wisdom and devotion in their life together, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy. So unite their wills in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they live and grow together in love and peace all the days of their life ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

32 Almighty and most merciful Father, the strength of all who put their trust in you :
we pray that, as you have brought *N* and *N* together by your providence, so you will enrich them by your grace, that those vows which they have made to one another in your sight, they may truly and faithfully perform ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

33 Almighty Father,
you have created all mankind to glorify you in body and in spirit.
Give these your children joy in one another,

as living temples of the Holy Spirit, and bring them by this joy to know and share

in your creative and redeeming love ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

34

Eternal God, true and loving Father, in holy marriage you make your servants one. May their life together witness to your love in this troubled world ; may unity overcome division, forgiveness heal injury, and joy triumph over sorrow ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

35

We praise you, Father, that you have made all things, and hold all things in being. In the beginning you created the universe, and made mankind in your own likeness : because it was not good for them to be alone, you created them male and female ; and in marriage you join man and woman as one flesh, teaching us that what you have united may never be divided.

We praise you that you have made this holy mystery a symbol of the marriage of Christ with his Church, and an image of your eternal covenant with your people.

And we pray for your blessing on this man and this woman, who come before you as partners and heirs together of your promises. Grant that this man may love his wife as Christ loves his bride the Church, giving himself for it and cherishing it as his own flesh ; and grant that this woman may love her husband and follow the example of those holy women whose praises are sung in the Scriptures. Strengthen them with your grace that they may be witnesses of Christ to others ; let them live to see their children's children, and bring them at the last to fullness of life with your saints in the kingdom of heaven ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Heavenly Father,
we thank you that in our earthly lives
you speak to us of your eternal life ·
we pray that through their marriage
N and *N*
may know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly,
day by day ;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God of love, look mercifully upon *N* and *N* in the new life which they begin together this day. Unite them evermore in your love. Keep them faithful to the vows they have made one to the other. Strengthen them with every good gift. And let your peace be with them, now and always ; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
who gave marriage to be a source of
blessing to mankind,
we thank you for the joys of family life.
May we know your presence and peace
in our homes ;
fill them with your love,
and use them for your glory ;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Marriage Service with Holy Communion

When the Marriage Service is combined with the Holy Communion Service either of the following orders may be used. Optional parts of the services may be omitted in accordance with the normal instructions. The Lessons must include (i) either an Old Testament Lesson or an Epistle, and (ii) a Gospel ; and the Thanksgiving should include the Proper Thanksgiving. See the Readings and Propers below.

Section numbers refer to Series 3 Holy Communion, but the corresponding sections of Holy Communion Series 1 and 2 Revised may be used in place of these.

Order A	Service	Section
Sentence	Marriage	1
Collects and Lessons	Marriage	2-4
Sermon	Marriage	5
Marriage	Marriage	6-21
Peace	Holy Communion	21-22
Taking of the Bread and Wine	Holy Communion	23-25
Thanksgiving	Holy Communion	26-29
Breaking of the Bread	Holy Communion	30
Giving of the Bread and Cup	Holy Communion	31-34, 36
Post-Communion Sentence	Marriage	Readings and Propers below
Post-Communion Prayers	Marriage	24-27
	Marriage	31-38
	and/or Holy Communion	39-40
Blessing	Marriage	30
Dismissal	Holy Communion	43
		Optional

Order B	Service	Section
Marriage	Marriage	6-21
Sentence	Marriage	1
Collects and Lessons	Marriage	2-4
Sermon	Marriage	5

The service then follows the Order A continuing from The Peace.

Readings and Propers

Sentence

God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them. [1 John 4.16](#)

Old Testament Lesson

God said, 'Let us make man in our own image and likeness to rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air, over the cattle, over all the wild beasts of the earth, and over all the reptiles that creep upon the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him ; male and female he created them. And God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' And God saw everything that he had made ; and it was very good.

[Genesis 1 26-28, 31a](#)

Epistle

On my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name, I pray that out of the riches of his glory he may grant you through his Spirit strength and power in your inner being, and that through faith Christ may dwell in your hearts ; so that, being rooted and grounded in love, you may have power to grasp with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ, and to know it, though it is beyond knowledge ; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than either we can ask or think by the power at work within us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen. [Ephesians 3.14–21](#)

or

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the Church. It is his body, and he is its saviour. As the Church is subject to Christ, so must wives be to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself up for it to consecrate it. He cleansed the Church by water and word, so that he might present it to himself in splendour, without stain or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.

So husbands also must love their wives as they love their own bodies ; and in loving their wives they love themselves. No-one hates his own body, but nourishes and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the Church, because it is his body, of which we are parts. That is why 'a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one.'

This mystery is great, and I take it to mean Christ and the Church ; however, each of you must love his wife as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband. [Ephesians 5.21–33](#)

Gospel

Jesus said, 'Not every one who says to me, "Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Every one therefore who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock : the rain fell, the floods rose, the wind blew, and beat upon the house ; but it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. And every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon sand : the rain fell, the floods rose, the wind blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell ; and great was the fall of it.'

[Matthew 7.21, 24–27](#)

or

Jesus said to his disciples, 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you ; dwell in my love. If you keep my commands you will dwell in my love, as I have kept my Father's commands and dwell in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.' [John 15.9–12](#)

Proper Thanksgiving

And now we give you thanks, because you have made the union between Christ and his Church a pattern for the marriage between husband and wife. Therefore with angels . . .

Postcommunion Sentence

Jesus said, 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you ; dwell in my love.' [John 15.9](#)

Suggested alternative readings

Epistle : [Rom. 12.1–2, 9–13](#) ; [1 Cor. 13](#) ; [Col. 3.12–17](#) ;
[1 John 4.7–12](#).

Gospel : [Mark 10.6–9](#) ; [John 2.1–11](#).

This service has been authorized for use from 1 November 1977 until 31 December 1979, pursuant to Canon B 2 of the Canons of the Church of England. Canon B 3 provides that decisions as to which of the authorized services are to be used shall, in the case of occasional offices (other than Confirmation) be made by the minister conducting the service, subject to the right of any of the persons concerned to object beforehand to its use.

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Designed by Keith Murgatroyd PPSTD

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