

The Blessing and Celebration after a Civil Marriage

The Gathering of the Community

The people stand. The couple stands before the presiding minister.

Presiding Minister The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

Presiding Minister Dear Friends, we have come together in the
presence of God to celebrate the marriage of _____ and _____
and to rejoice with them.

Marriage is a gift of God and a means of his grace, 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, they shall grow
together and be united in that love, as Christ is united with his
Church.

The union of man and woman in heart, body and mind is intended
for their mutual comfort and help, that they may know each other
with delight and tenderness in acts of love (and that they may be
blessed in the procreation, care, and upbringing of children).

In marriage, husband and wife give themselves to each other, to
care for each other in good times and in bad. They are linked to
each other's families, and they begin a new life in the community.

It is a way of life that all should reverence, and none should
undertake lightly.

We pray with them that by God's help _____ and _____ may
fulfill his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

Let us pray.

God our Father,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law.
Grant to these your servants
that loving one another,
they may continue in your love

until their lives' end.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

People

The Proclamation of the Word

Two or three readings, including a Gospel reading, shall normally be read. Members of the family and friends of the couple may read lessons. A psalm, canticle, hymn, anthem, or period of silence may follow the lessons. Suggested reading may be found on p. 549 (BAS). The readings and the response shall be selected in consultation with the couple.

At the conclusion of reading from the Old Testament and the New Testament writings other than the Gospel, the reader says,

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

All stand for the Gospel.

Reader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
According to ...

People **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

At the conclusion of the Gospel, the reader says,

People The Gospel of Christ.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

A sermon may follow.

The Blessing of the Marriage

The couple present themselves before the presiding minister, who asks them in turn the following question, to which each individually makes response.

N, do you here,
in the presence of God and of this congregation,
affirm and renew the commitment you made
when you bound yourself to *N* in marriage?
Response I do.

Then the couple shall say together
Acknowledging our union to be lifelong,
until we are parted by death,
we ask God to bless our marriage.

The people remain standing. The couple kneels and the presiding minister says one of the following prayers.

Most gracious God,
we give you thanks for your tender love
in sending Jesus Christ to come among us,
to be born of a human mother,
and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life.
We thank you, also, for consecrating
the union of man and woman in his name.
By the power of your Holy Spirit,
pour out the abundance of your blessing
upon this man and this woman.
Defend them from every enemy.
Lead them into all peace.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts,
a mantle about their shoulders,
and a crown upon their foreheads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
in their sleeping and in their waking;
in their joys and in their sorrows;
in their life and in their death.
Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table
where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, for ever and ever.

People

Amen.

Or

O God,
you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage
that in it is represented the spiritual unity
between Christ and his Church.
Send therefore your blessing upon these servants,
that they may so love, honour, and cherish each other
in faithfulness and patience,
in wisdom and true godliness,
that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

People

Amen.

The Giving and Receiving of Rings

If rings are to be given and received, the presiding minister receives the rings and addresses the congregation in these or similar words.

Dear friends in Christ,
Let us ask God to bless these rings.

The community may pray silently. The presiding minister then says,

Blessed are you,
God of steadfast love,
source of our joy and end of our hope.
Bless these rings given and received
that they may be symbols of the vow and covenant
_____ and _____ have made in holy marriage,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

People

Each places the ring on the ring-finger of other's hand and says,

N, I give you this ring
as a symbol of my vow.
With all that I am and all that I have,
I honour you in the name of God.

The presiding minister adds this blessing.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve and keep you;
the Lord look upon you with favour
and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace;
that you may faithfully live together in this life,
and in the age to come have life everlasting.

People

Amen.

The couple join right hands.

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

People

Amen.

The Prayers of the People

The Prayers of the people may be led by a friend or member of a family of the couple, or by the presiding minister or another minister.

Leader

Let us pray.

Almighty God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
look graciously upon the world which you have made

and for which your Son gave his life,
and especially on all whom you make to be one flesh in holy
marriage. May their lives together
be a sacrament of your love to this broken world,
so that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt,
and joy overcome despair.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Leader May _____ and _____ so live together
that the strength of their love
may enrich our common life
and become a sign of your faithfulness.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

[*Leader* May they receive the gifts and heritage of children
and the grace to bring them up to know and love you.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.]

Leader May their home be a place of truth, security, and love;
and their lives an example of concern for others.

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Leader May those who have come to join
_____ and _____ in asking for God's blessing
find their lives strengthened
and their loyalties confirmed.

People Lord, in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

If the eucharist is not to be celebrated, the Lord's Prayer (p. 211 BAS) is said at this time.

The congregation stands.

The Peace

Presiding Minister The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People

And also with you.

Members of the congregation, the couple, ministers and people, may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The Celebration of the Eucharist

The Preparation of the Gifts

If the eucharist is to be celebrated, the service continues with the preparation of the gifts. The bread and wine may be presented by the couple.

The Prayer Over the Gifts

When the gifts have been prepared, the celebrant may say the Prayer over the gifts, as follows.

*God of the covenant, hear our prayer,
and accept all we offer you this day.
You have made _____ and _____
one in the sacrament of marriage.
May the mystery of Christ's unselfish love,
which we celebrate in this eucharist,
increase their love for you and for each other;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

People

Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

The celebrant continues with the Great Thanksgiving. Eucharistic Prayer 1 on pp. 193-195 in *The Book of Alternative Services* is appropriate. At the conclusion of the Great Thanksgiving, the Lord's Prayer is said.

The Lord's Prayer

Celebrant

As our Saviour taught us, let us 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 through who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,***

*and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.*

Or

Celebrant

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

All

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Silence

The Breaking of the Bread

The celebrant breaks the consecrated bread for distribution, and may say,

*We break the bread of life,
And that life is the light of the world.*

All

*God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.*

The Communion

The celebrant invites the people to share in communion and may say,

Celebrant

The gifts of God for the People of God.

People

Thanks be to God.

The celebrant receives the sacrament first and then delivers it to the husband and wife, and to such of the congregation as wish to receive communion.

The sacrament is given with the following words,

*The body of Christ (given for you).
The blood of Christ (shed for you).*

Or

*The body of Christ, the bread of heaven.
The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.*

The communicant responds each time, ***Amen.***

Prayer after Communion

Celebrant *Let us pray.*

Standing, the congregation prays in silence. The celebrant then says,

*Gracious God,
may ____ and _____, who are bound together
in these holy mysteries,
continue in one heart and soul.
May they live in fidelity and peace
and obtain the eternal joys
prepared for all who love you;
through your Son, Jesus Christ the Lord.*

People ***Amen.***

Then the following doxology may be said.

Celebrant *Glory to God,
People whose power, working in us,
 can do infinitely more
 than we can ask or imagine.
 Glory to God from generation to generation,
 in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
 for ever and ever. Amen.*

Dismissal

The celebrant may bless the people. The deacon, or other leader, dismisses the people saying,

Leader *Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.*
People ***Thanks be to God.***

From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, ***Alleluia*** may be added to the dismissal and the people's response.