

The 2001 Marriage Service
(from Common Worship: Services and Prayers for The Church of England)

The Minister Begins by welcoming the guests using the following, or other suitable, words

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

The congregation then respond

And also with you

The Minister may then go on to say the following sentence

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

The following Prayer may then be said by the Minister

God of wonder and of joy:

Grace comes from you, and you alone are the source of life and love.

Without you, we cannot please you; without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.
Send your Holy Spirit, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, that we
may worship you now with thankful hearts and serve you always with willing minds;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

At this point in the Service a hymn may be sung and will be followed by the Minister saying aloud one of the following sets of words:

Option A:

In the presence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we have come together
to witness the marriage of <Groom's name> and <Bride's name>, to pray for God's
blessing on them, to share their joy and to celebrate their love.

Marriage is a gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace
of God. It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be
united with one another in heart, body and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the
Church.

The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together in the delight and tenderness of
sexual union and joyful commitment to the end of their lives. It is given as the foundation
of family life in which children are [born and] nurtured and in which each member of the
family, in good times and in bad, may find strength, companionship and comfort, and grow
to maturity in love.

Marriage is a way of life made holy by God, and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus
Christ with those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Marriage is a sign of unity and
loyalty which all should uphold and honour. It enriches society and strengthens
community. No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in
the sight of almighty God.

<Groom's name> and <Bride's name> are now to enter this way of life. They will each
give their consent to the other and make solemn vows, and in token of this they will [each]
give and receive a ring. We pray with them that the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen
them, that they may fulfil God's purposes for the whole of their earthly life together.

Option B:

We have come together in the presence of God, to witness the marriage of <Groom's name> and <Bride's name>, 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 Bible teaches 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 as the foundation of family life in which children may be born and nurtured 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 <Groom's name> and <Bride's name> 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 [each] 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.

The Minister then addresses the Congregation

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

Then the Minister addresses the couple

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

Addressing the Groom, the Minister then asks

<Groom's name>, will you take <Bride's name> 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?

The Groom responds

I will.

Them addressing the Bride, the Minister asks

<Bride's name>, will you take <Groom's name> 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

The Bride responds

I will.

The Minister then addresses the congregation

Will you, the families and friends of <Groom's name> and <Bride's name>,
support and uphold them in their marriage
now and in the years to come?

The appropriate members of the congregation respond

We Will

The Minister then invites people to pray, a moment of silence passes, then he proceeds to say aloud

God our Father,
from the beginning
you have blessed creation with abundant life.
Pour out your blessings upon <Groom's name> and <Bride's name>,
that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship,
in holiness and commitment to each other.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

At least one Bible reading is spoken at this point in the Service and a hymn may also be sung. The Minister will then go on to address the couple

<Groom's name> and <Bride's name>, I now invite you to join hands and make your
vows, in the presence of God and his people.

The Bride and Groom then face each other and the Groom takes the Bride's right hand in his and says either of the following sets of vows

Option A

I, <Groom's name>, take you, <Bride's name> , 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.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

Option B

I, <Groom's name>, take thee, <Bride's name>, to my wedded 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 ordinance;
and thereto I plight thee my troth.

The Bride and Groom loosen hands before the Bride takes the Groom's right hand in hers and makes her vows (they must be the same choice as the Groom's)

Option A

I, <Bride's name>, take you, <Groom's name>, 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.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

Option B

I, <Bride's name>, take thee, <Groom's name>, to my wedded 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 ordinance;
and thereto I plight thee my troth.

The Bride and Groom loosen hands and the Minister receives the rings (normally from the Best Man) and says aloud either of the following prayers

Prayer A

Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let these rings be to <Groom's name> and <Bride's name> 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.
Amen.

Prayer B

Heavenly Father, source of everlasting love, revealed to us in Jesus Christ
and poured into our hearts through your Holy Spirit;
that love which many waters cannot quench, neither the floods drown;
that love which is patient and kind, enduring all things without end;
by your blessing, let these rings be to <Groom's name> and <Bride's name>
symbols to remind them of the covenant made this day through your grace in the love of
your Son and in the power of your Spirit.
Amen.

The Groom then places a ring on the fourth finger of the Bride's left hand and says aloud

<Bride's name>, 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.

They loosen hands before the Bride places a ring on the fourth finger of the Groom's left hand and says aloud

<Groom's name>, 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.

Or if no ring is to be given to the Groom, the Bride will say the following words out loud

<Groom's name>, 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.

The Minister then addresses the congregation

In the presence of God, and before this congregation, <Groom's name> and <Bride's name> 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 rings. I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

The Minister then takes the right hand of both the Bride and Groom, joining them together and proclaiming

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

The Bride and Groom then kneel and the Minister will say aloud one of the following blessings

Blessing A

God of life and beginnings, you created man and woman in your likeness and joined them together in union of body and heart;
God of love and forgiveness, you loved us in Jesus Christ who humbled himself to death on a cross;
God of grace and strength, you bring your people to faith and fill them with your presence.
Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for you have created joy and gladness, pleasure and delight, love, peace and fellowship.
Pour out the abundance of your blessing upon <Groom's name> and <Bride's name> in their new life together.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, and a crown upon their heads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship; awake and asleep, in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death.
Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that banquet where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home.
We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Blessing B

Blessed are you, Lord our God, God of love, creator of all.
(All) Blessed be God for ever.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, you make us in your image and likeness.
(All) Blessed be God for ever.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, you make man and woman to reflect your glory.
(All) Blessed be God for ever.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, you make us for joy and promise us life.
(All) Blessed be God for ever.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, you create a people to know your love.
(All) Blessed be God for ever.
May <Groom's name> and <Bride's name> enjoy the blessing of your kingdom.
Give them faith and joy in their marriage.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, you give joy to bride and groom.
(All) Blessed be God for ever.
May their love be fruitful and their home a place of peace.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, you make marriage a sign of your love.
(All) Blessed be God for ever.
May they know the love of the Father, the life of the Son, and the joy of the Spirit.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, Lover, Beloved and Friend of Love.
(All) Blessed be God for ever.

Blessing C

All praise and blessing to you, God of love, creator of the universe,
maker of man and woman in your likeness, source of blessing for married life.
All praise to you, for you have created courtship and marriage, joy and gladness,
feasting and laughter, pleasure and delight.

May your blessing come in full upon <Groom's name> and <Bride's name>.
May they know your presence in their joys and in their sorrows.
May they reach old age in the company of friends and come at last to your eternal
kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing D

Eternal God, you create us out of love that we should love you and one another.
Bless this man and this woman, made in your image, who today become a sign of your
faithful love to us in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

By your Holy Spirit, fill bride and bridegroom with wisdom and hope
that they may delight in your gift of marriage and enrich one another in love and
faithfulness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Bring them to that table where your saints celebrate 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.

Amen.

***The following may be appended to any of the four blessings or may be used on its
own***

Blessed are you, heavenly Father

(All) You give joy to bridegroom and bride.

Blessed are you, Lord Jesus Christ.

(All) You bring life to the world.

Blessed are you, Holy Spirit of God.

(All) You bind us together in love.

Blessed are you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Minister then says to the couple

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.

***At this point in the Service the Register is normally signed, although it can take
place at the end of the Service.***

A hymn or psalm may be used here, followed by the following, or other suitable, prayers.

Faithful God, holy and eternal, source of life and spring of love,
we thank and praise you for bringing <Groom's name> and <Bride's name> to this day,
and we pray for them.

Lord of life and love:

Hear our prayer.

May their marriage be life-giving and life-long, enriched by your presence and
strengthened by your grace;
may they bring comfort and confidence to each other in faithfulness and trust.

Lord of life and love:

Hear our prayer.

May the hospitality of their home bring refreshment and joy to all around them;
may their love overflow to neighbours in need and embrace those in distress.

Lord of life and love:

Hear our prayer.

May they discern in your word order and purpose for their lives;
and may the power of your Holy Spirit lead them in truth and defend them in adversity.

Lord of life and love:

Hear our prayer.

May they nurture their family with devotion, see their children grow in body, mind and
spirit and come at last to the end of their lives with hearts content and in joyful
anticipation of heaven.

Lord of life and love:

Hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude with the reading of one of the following versions of the Lord's Prayer

Option A

As our Saviour 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.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Amen.

Option B

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

(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.

A final hymn may be sung at this point before the Minister concludes the Ceremony with the following words

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.

Amen.