

Wedding service

The phrases marked by a star * and in bold italic print are alternative forms of the words required by law in England and Wales. Guidance notes are available from the Registrar for those conducting weddings in Scotland.

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Welcome and introduction

Welcome to ... church,
for the celebration of the marriage between ... AB ... and ... CD

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and
the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us worship God.

This is the day that the Lord has made;

All **let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Psalm 118:24

or

Love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave ...
Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.

Song of Songs 8:6b-7a

or

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God,
and God abides in them.

1 John 4:16b

or

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved
you, you also should love one another.

John 13:34

Hymn or song

Statement of purpose

We have come together in the presence of God
to witness the wedding of ... AB ... and ... CD ... ,
to rejoice with them

and to surround them with our prayers.

We are created male and female in the image of God
and marriage is a gift of God within creation.

God has given us marriage so that husband and wife
may live faithfully together.

In plenty or in need, in sorrow or in joy,

they give each other strength, friendship and healing.

With delight and tenderness they may know each other in love,
and so belong to one another in honour and in joy.

*(In marriage, children may be born and nurtured
that they may grow up in the security of love
and come to know the freedom of faith.)*

In marriage, husband and wife begin a new life together.
They are a sign to the world of unity and loyalty;
their love enriches society and strengthens community.
Marriage is a way of life made holy by God.
It is both joy and demand, grace and work.
It is a gift and calling of God
and is not to be entered into lightly or thoughtlessly,
but reverently and responsibly.
This is the way of life that ... A ... and ... C ... have chosen.
They come to accept each other freely,
to give their consent to one another in solemn promises,
and to ask for God's blessing.

Prayer

Eternal God,
you are with us this day
in the fullness of your love.
In the love of one for another
we see your will for all creation.
In the tenderness of love's embrace
we remember your love once made flesh for us.
In the marriage of minds
we know your Spirit between us and among us.
Your love fills our hearts
and draws us to one another with holy desire.
Your love in us offers forgiveness
and sets us free to be together in peace.
Your love creates community
and heals our deepest loneliness.
This love you renew continually
in ... A ... and ... C ...
and in all your people.
Make them today a sign to us
of your love in all creation,
of your enduring affection and faithfulness,
and of your joy in all that you have made.
May we see this day, before our eyes,
the joy of love and the hope of faith.
Bless our celebration with your presence
and touch us with your Spirit,
in Christ's name we pray,
Amen.

All

Readings from Scripture

Some suggested readings:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):

Genesis 1:26-28, 31a, Psalm 23, Song of Songs 7:10-13

New Testament:

Matthew 5:1-9, Mark 10:6-9, John 2:1-1,
1 Corinthians 13:1-8a, 13, Ephesians 3:14-21, 1 John 4:7-19

Sermon

The readings and the sermon may come later in the service,
after the marriage ceremony.

Declarations

The Minister says to the couple:

Before God and before this congregation,
I will ask you to declare your freedom and readiness to
enter into the covenant of marriage.

I will also ask your families and this congregation to
affirm their willingness to support you today and in
the years to come.

Legal declarations:

Due notice of the intention of ... AB ... and ... CD ... to be married
has been given and no objection has been made.

or

I ask the congregation:
if you know of any reason in law
why ... AB ... and ... CD ... may not be joined in marriage,
please declare it now.

To the couple:

I ask you, ... A ... and ... C ... ,
to declare that you know of no reason in law that
you may not be married.

As required by law each one declares in the presence of the Authorised Person, or the Registrar, and two witnesses:

*I declare that I know of no legal reason
why I, ... AB ... ,
may not be joined in marriage to ... CD **

*I declare that I know of no legal reason
why I, ... CD ... ,
may not be joined in marriage to ... AB **

or

*I do solemnly declare
that I know not
of any lawful impediment
why I, ... AB ... ,
may not be joined in matrimony
to ... CD **

*I do solemnly declare
that I know not
of any lawful impediment
why I, ... CD ... ,
may not be joined in matrimony
to ... AB **

or

Are you, ... AB ... , free lawfully to marry ... CD ... ?
*I am. **

Are you, ... CD ... , free lawfully to marry ... AB ... ?
*I am. **

Prayer for Assurance and Sincerity

O God of all faithfulness,
we pray for those who will make promises today:
bless them with sincerity and give them your grace.
May ... A ... and ... C ... know that their love
is both your will and your delight.
May the promises they make govern the life they will lead.
May your presence surround them,
your faithfulness encourage them,
your Spirit strengthen and guide them.

All **Amen.**

The promises

The man is asked:

... AB ... will you take ... CD ...
to be your wife in Christian marriage?
Will you love, comfort, honour and protect her,
in times of prosperity and health
and in times of trouble and suffering?
And will you be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

I will.

The woman is asked:

... CD ... will you take ... AB ...
to be your husband in Christian marriage?
Will you love, comfort, honour and protect him,
in times of prosperity and health
and in times of trouble and suffering?
And will you be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

I will.

If either, or both, has children:

Will you promise to be faithful, loving and caring parents to ... N ... (and ... N ...)?

We will.

The immediate family is asked:

Will you, the families of ... A ... and ... C ... ,
give your blessing to their marriage
and will you always support and encourage them?

We will.

The congregation is asked:

Will you, the friends of ... A ... and ... C ... ,
support and encourage them in their marriage?

All We will.

The vows

The couple turn to face each other and join right hands. In the presence of the Authorised Person, or the Registrar, and two witnesses they exchange vows in this form or one of the alternative forms (pp 150-152).

***I, ... AB ... , take you (thee), ... CD ... ,
to be my wedded wife:****
in accordance with God's holy will,
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.
This is my solemn vow.

***I, ... CD ... , take you (thee), ... AB ... ,
to be my wedded husband:****
in accordance with God's holy will,
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.
This is my solemn vow.

The giving and receiving of rings

The rings are given to the Minister who prays:

Eternal God,
whose love encircles us all,
bless the giving and receiving of these rings.
May they be signs of a love which never ends,
beautiful, holy and strong.
May they be tokens of commitment and faithfulness
and reminders of the promises and vows made today.
In the name of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Creator, Christ and Spirit.*)

All Amen.

Each says in turn:

**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,
all that I have I share with you,
within the holy love of God.**

or

**I give you this ring in God's name
as a sign of all that we have promised
and all that we shall share.**

If only one ring is used, the Minister prays:

Eternal God,
whose love encircles us all,
bless the giving and receiving of this ring.
May it be a sign of a love which never ends,
beautiful, holy and strong.
May it be a token of commitment and faithfulness
and a reminder of the promises and vows made today.
In the name of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Creator, Christ and Spirit.*)

All

Amen.

The man 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,
all that I have I share with you,
within the holy love of God.**

or

**I give you this ring in God's name
as a sign of all that we have promised
and all that we shall share.**

the woman replies:

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

or

**I receive this ring in God's name
as a sign of all that we have promised
and all that we shall share.**

The couple may exchange other appropriate symbols and gifts.

The Marriage blessing

Most gracious God, source of all true love,
we give you thanks that ... A ... and ... C ...
have answered your call
and have given themselves today to one another
in the covenant of marriage.
Pour out the fullness of your blessing on them.
Lead them into that love
which never comes to an end.
Give them grace to forgive when words or actions hurt.
Give them strength to persevere through times of testing
and to support each other through darkness and distress.
May they be thankful
for all that has brought them to this moment.
May they joyfully embrace this new beginning,
and journey on with ever new delight.
Bless their families and friends,
that they may be a constant source of strength.
Bless their home,
that it may be a place of welcome.
*(Bless them in the gift of children,
that they may be wise and loving parents).*

Bless all who celebrate with ... A ... and ... C ... ,
that love may flourish
and friendship touch the lonely.
And grant that we, who today have witnessed
the sharing and exchange of words and signs of love,
may find our faith renewed and our hope restored.
May love, the greatest of all your gifts,
stronger than death, gentle as a touch,
bring us through every passing moment
closer to Jesus Christ, our lover and our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

All **Amen.**

Numbers 6:24-26

The declaration of Marriage

... A ... and ... C ... have declared before God and before you
that they will live together in Christian marriage.
They have made promises to one another,
have exchanged solemn vows
and have symbolised their marriage today
by joining hands and by the giving and receiving of rings. (*a ring*)
I therefore declare them to be husband and wife,
in the name of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Creator, Christ and Spirit.*)
Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate.

Greeting

The couple may kiss. The congregation may applaud.
The sign of Peace may be shared.

Hymn or song

Prayers of Intercession

O God of love,
we pray for all those who
have made a commitment to love another;
for all those newly married today,
for those in the first days of love,
and for those who have celebrated many anniversaries.
Be with us all in the joy and vulnerability of loving.
Strengthen us in commitment and loyalty,
guide us when love is difficult or costly,
and comfort us whenever love ends.

We pray for the Church,
the church communities we know,
and the one Church throughout the world.
May your people be united in love,
embody your peace and grow in faith.
May our worship be joyful and sincere
and our communities welcoming and warm.
Let faith be expressed with integrity
and service to the world offered with love.

We pray for the world,
that the peace of God will reign among the nations
and between all peoples.
May there be an end to conflict and aggression,
a growth in understanding between faiths and traditions,
and among all people a desire for justice.
May the hungry be fed, the enslaved set free,
and the weak find their strength.
May the earth be honoured
and all creatures treated with respect.

We pray for all in need, in sorrow or pain,
for those who are sick,
for those who are sad to be alone,
and for all afraid for the future
or grieving for the past which is gone.
May all in agony find comfort,
all who cry aloud be heard,
all in silent sorrow find the solace of friends.

On this day so full of joy and promise,
we bring the sorrows and struggles which are always with us,
in the confidence that you will hear us
and that your love will bless us with new hope.
We pray in the name of Christ,
and in the power of the Holy Spirit,

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

The service may continue with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Hymn or song

The signing of the register(s)

The register(s) or the marriage schedule is/are signed in the presence of witnesses.

Blessing

May God who is light shine in your darkness.
May God who is love be the love between you.
May God who is life be your life everlasting.
And the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, (*Creator, Christ and Spirit*)
be with you all, now and for ever,

All **Amen.**

or

May the God who made us for one another,
who loves us with a faithful love
and whose spirit makes us passionate and strong,
bless you and embrace you, now and for ever,

All **Amen.**

Text A

*I, ... AB ... , take you (thee), ... CD ... ,
to be my wedded wife.**
I declare my love for you.
I give myself to you
as your husband in Christian marriage.
From this day,
I will share with you
in sorrow and joy,
in poverty and prosperity,
in sickness and health.
I will love you and honour you.
I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.
This is my vow.

*I, ... CD ... , take you (thee), ... AB ... ,
to be my wedded husband.**
I declare my love for you.
I give myself to you
as your wife in Christian marriage.
From this day,
I will share with you
in sorrow and joy,
in poverty and prosperity,
in sickness and health.
I will love you and honour you.
I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.
This is my vow.

Text B

*I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, ... AB ... ,
do take thee, ... CD ... ,
to be my lawful wedded wife: **
in accordance with God's holy will,
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.
This is my solemn vow.

*I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, ... CD ... ,
do take thee, ... AB ... ,
to be my lawful wedded husband: **
in accordance with God's holy will,
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.
This is my solemn vow.

Text C

*I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, ... AB ... ,
do take thee, ... CD ... ,
to be my lawful wedded wife: **

I declare my love for you.
I give myself to you
as your husband in Christian marriage.
From this day,
I will share with you
in sorrow and joy,
in poverty and prosperity,
in sickness and health.
I will love you and honour you.
I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.
This is my vow.

*I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, ... CD ... ,
do take thee, ... AB ... ,
to be my lawful wedded husband: **

I declare my love for you.
I give myself to you
as your wife in Christian marriage.
From this day,
I will share with you
in sorrow and joy,
in poverty and prosperity,
in sickness and health.
I will love you and honour you.
I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.
This is my vow.