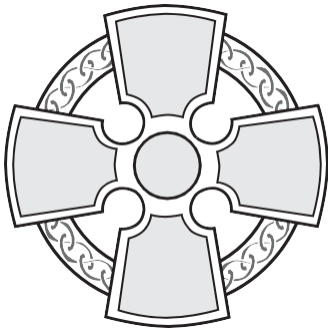


**Liturgy for the Blessing  
of a Same-sex  
Civil Marriage or Civil Partnership**



**Liturgy for the Blessing  
of a Same-sex  
Civil Marriage or Civil Partnership**

*The couple may enter the church together as a sign of their commitment already made in their Civil Marriage or Civil Partnership.*

*Music may be played or a hymn sung.*

## **THE GATHERING**

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*Words of welcome are extended to the couple, their families, friends, and supporters.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Either:*

Beloved in Christ, we come together in the presence of God to celebrate the union of *N.* and *N.* and to ask his blessing on their future together.

God, the Creator of all, is closer to us than our very breath.

God's love was revealed among us as he sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

1 John 4:9

Jesus said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.'

Matthew 22. 37-38

Desiring to follow this path of commitment to God, we look to Jesus who perfectly embodies love in all its fullness, divine and human. We turn to him, our gentle guiding light, for support, forgiveness and boundless grace. We pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that we may bear the love and joy and peace which are the marks of Jesus in his disciples.

Therefore, through Jesus, let us turn to God in prayer.

*Or:*

Beloved in Christ, we are gathered here today in the presence of God to celebrate *N.* and *N.*'s love for each other, to support them in life's journey and to pray for God's blessing on their *Marriage / Civil Partnership* as together they live in faithful love and commitment.

We are reminded in Holy Scripture that human beings are created to live in loving and enduring relationship with one another and with God who called us into being, creating us in God's own image. When two people commit themselves faithfully to one another in a lifelong covenant their relationship reveals the gracious purposes of God who loves the whole human family unconditionally.

‘No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.’

1 John 4:12

Through Jesus, who embodies love in all its fullness,  
let us turn to God in prayer.

## Opening prayer

*Either:*

Almighty God,  
from whom all good things come  
and in whom all loving relationships have their beginning:  
we ask that your Holy Spirit be with us  
on this day of great rejoicing.  
We give you thanks for calling N. and N. to be your servants.  
Help them to respond gladly to your call and obey your will.  
Make them ready for every demand you make upon their lives,  
that they may serve you faithfully  
and show forth your love to the world  
through the life-long commitment  
they make before your Church gathered here this day.  
We make this prayer through Christ,  
our living, loving Lord.  
**Amen.**

*Or:*

Holy and blessed Trinity,  
you reveal yourself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
living and reigning in perfect unity;  
may the life-giving grace of your ceaseless love  
overflow into the lives of N. and N.  
May it bind them together within your perfect covenant,  
that they may grow in love and commitment  
to one another and to you,  
for you live and reign  
one God, world without end.  
**Amen.**

*A hymn may be sung.*

## **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

*One or more readings from Scripture follow.*

*The following list includes some examples of appropriate readings. One reading must be from one of the Gospels.*

Song of Solomon 2. 10-13; 8. 6, 7  
Isaiah 43. 1-3a, 4-5a  
Ruth 1. 16-18  
Psalms 67 or 121  
Matthew 5. 1-10  
John 2. 1-11  
John 15. 9-17  
Romans 12. 1, 2, 9-13  
1 Corinthians 13  
Philippians 4. 4-9  
Colossians 3.12-17  
Ephesians 3.14 - end  
1 John 4. 7-12

*The Scriptural reading(s) may end*

*with ... Either:*

This is the word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*Or:*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*At the discretion of the minister, an appropriate non-biblical reading may be included.*

## **The Address**

*An address may be given at this point.*

## **REAFFIRMATION OF COMMITMENT**

*The couple then stand before the minister and the congregation to make their promises before God and the Church.*

Beloved, let us love one another,  
because love is from God.

1 John 4. 7b

*Either:*

### **The Repeating of Promises**

*At the discretion of the minister, the couple may repeat the promises made at their Marriage / Civil Partnership ceremony.*

*N. and N. are legally married / have contracted their Civil Partnership. Now, before God and the Church, they repeat their promises made on (insert date here).*

*The couple face each other and join hands and repeat their promises.*

*Or:*

### **Act of Commitment**

*N. and N. you have already committed yourselves to each other at your Marriage / Civil Partnership when, [in the presence of your family and friends] you made solemn promises to establish a covenant of love and faithfulness between you for the rest of your life together.*

*I now invite you, to renew your commitment to one another before God and the Church.*

*N. and N. is it your desire to proclaim afresh your love and commitment to one another [before your family and friends and] in the presence of God?*

*Couple: **It is.***

*Each person responds to the following questions in turn.*

*N.*, do you give yourself in love, faithfulness and commitment to *N.* in a covenant of love for the rest of your life?

**I do.**

*N.*, do you give yourself in love, faithfulness and commitment to *N.* in a covenant of love for the rest of your life?

**I do.**

*Family and friends* will you support and care for *N.* and *N.* in their covenant of love for one another?

**We will.**

*The couple may express their response to God's love in the words of Psalm 16.*

**Psalm 16**

*(NRSV)*

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.  
I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord;  
I have no good apart from you.'  
As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in  
whom is all my delight.

Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their  
drink-offerings of blood I will not pour out  
or take their names upon my lips.  
The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you  
hold my lot.  
The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I  
have a goodly heritage.

I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;  
in the night also my heart instructs me. I  
keep the Lord always before me;  
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.  
Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;  
my body also rests secure.  
For you do not give me up to Sheol,  
or let your faithful one see the Pit.  
You show me the path of life.  
In your presence there is fullness of joy;  
in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

## **The Blessing of the Rings (optional)**

*The couple may remove their rings and place them on the prayer book of the minister, or they may hold their left hands together as their rings are blessed.*

Gracious God,  
through the power of your Spirit,  
gentle as a dove,  
yet burning with the fire of your love,  
may these rings be to N. and N.  
a sign and symbol of your unending love for them  
and of their love for each other.  
Bind them to one another and to you  
in a perfect covenant of love and faithfulness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*The couple then place the rings on the hand of the other or if they are already in place, hold them on each other's hand, and say the words below. Alternatively they may offer each other a gift or symbol, or may each light a candle of a triple candlestick, when the words in brackets are used.*

## **The Exchange of Rings or Gifts or Lighting of a Symbolic Candle**

N. this ring / gift is the token of my love for you,  
or [N. I light this candle as a token of my love for you]  
the sign of my commitment to you,  
the offering of all that I am and all that I have to you  
I will love you when we are well and times are good.  
I will love you when we face sickness and life is hard going.  
May this sign bind us together in an unending covenant of love  
for the rest of our life together.  
I make this covenant in the presence of  
God who made us, loves us and gives us  
life.

*If candles are lit a third candle is then lit by the couple together and the single candles either side extinguished.*

## **THE BLESSING OF THE COUPLE**

*The minister may wrap his / her stole around the couple's hands.*

*Either:*

The love of the Lord bind you together  
with cords that cannot be broken. **Amen.**

The love of the Lord nurture you  
as you learn to love each other more and more. **Amen.**

The love of the Lord challenge you  
to become people fully alive to him. **Amen.**

The love of the Lord watch over you  
and protect you from all that is evil. **Amen.**

The love of the Lord bless you  
as you journey on together. **Amen.**

The love of the Lord bring you to eternal life. **Amen.**

*Or:*

*As the couple hold their hands together:*

May God the Father,  
who created you and breathed life into you,  
bless you.

May God the Son,  
who extended his arms in love upon the cross,  
bless you.

May God the Holy Spirit,  
who kindles the flame of love in your hearts,  
bless you.

May the infinite and glorious Trinity strengthen the covenant between you,  
and so bind your lives together in love,  
that you may be a blessing to each other  
and a visible sign of God's loving purposes for all his children.  
**Amen.**

*A hymn may be sung.*

### **[The Presentation of a Certificate]**

*An appropriately worded certificate may be presented to the couple at this point to remind them of the promises made before God.*

## THE PRAYERS

*One of the following forms may be used, or some other, at the discretion of the minister and according to personal circumstances.*

*Either:*

Loving Lord,  
we give thanks for *N.* and *N.*  
and seek your grace as we support them  
in the commitment they have made before you today.  
Help them to trust you and one another  
that that they may face the future with excitement, confidence and hope.  
May they know the peace of your presence throughout their life together.

Lord of all life and love,  
**hear our prayer.**

Loving Lord,  
we give thanks for all who rejoice with *N.* and *N.* today.  
As your Son shared the life of an earthly home  
so we ask that these families become ever more willing to love and serve you  
as they care for one another's needs.  
Bless them abundantly  
and make their hearts worthy of your presence.

Lord of all life and love,  
**hear our prayer.**

Loving Lord,  
may the home of *N.* and *N.* be a place of peace and unity  
where their mutual love overflows in service to their community.  
May their home be a foretaste of the eternal home  
which Christ prepares for us.

Lord of all life and love,  
**hear our prayer.**

Loving Lord,  
we pray for the church community [to which *N.* and *N.* belong],  
asking your blessing on all who share in its life.  
Bless the ministry of word and sacrament,  
teaching and evangelism,  
pastoral care and service to the needy,  
and joyful cooperation with other churches.

Lord of all life and love,  
**hear our prayer.**

Loving Lord,  
we pray that *N* and *N* may embrace their future together with hope and  
realism,  
equipped by your Spirit to bear with one another in generous, sacrificial love  
and so face life's difficulties with steadfastness and resolve.

Help them to remain true to the promises they have made here today,  
knowing that you are ever faithful and bless your children with undying love.

Lord of all life and love,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Other prayers may be offered as appropriate.*

*Or:*

Almighty God you have made us in your image  
and you redeem us by your grace.  
Help us to love you wholeheartedly  
and our neighbours as our ourselves.  
Strengthen *N.* and *N.*  
as they receive your blessing on the covenant of their love  
and through their generous fidelity make them signs of your glory.

Lord, hear us.  
**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Pour down upon *N.* and *N.* the loving gift of your Spirit  
to strengthen and renew them in their life together  
that their relationship may be life-giving and life-long.  
May they be a support and strength to one another on life's journey,  
especially in times of anxiety, difficulty or sorrow.

Lord, hear us.  
**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Bless their home [*any family names may be inserted here as appropriate*]  
as a place of welcome and hospitality for family, friends, or strangers.  
May they share from the fullness they have received from you  
bringing peace, hope and joy to neighbours in need  
and comfort to any who are in distress.

Lord, hear us.  
**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Guide and guard them through the gift of your word  
and the riches of your sacraments  
that their faith in you  
may be that solid foundation upon which their relationship stands firm.

Lord, hear us.  
**Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Other prayers may be offered as appropriate and they may end with the following:*

Merciful Father,  
**accept these prayers,  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Being made one by the Spirit, Lord teach us to pray.

*Either:*

**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.**

*Or:*

**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.  
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.**

## **THE SENDING OUT**

*The blessing concludes the service, either in this form or some other prescribed form.*

God whose Spirit fills our hearts with love, joy and peace,  
be with you,  
those whom you love,  
and those for whom you pray  
this day and forever;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be with you and remain with you all. **Amen.**

*As the couple leave the church, music is played or a hymn sung.*

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