

A MARRIAGE SERVICE

HAVING LED BRIDEGROOM AND BEST MAN TO THE ALTAR STEPS, THE MINISTER PROCEEDS TO MEET THE BRIDE AT THE MAIN DOOR INTO THE CHURCH. FROM THIS POINT HE BEGINS THE SERVICE.

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Let us worship God.

(A HYMN IS SUNG DURING WHICH THE MINISTER LEADS THE BRIDAL PARTY TO THE ALTAR STEPS)

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.

Our help is in the Name of the Lord who has made Heaven and Earth.

(CONGREGATION ARE SEATED)

Dear Friends, we are gathered as a congregation in God's presence to join together this man and woman in marriage.

Marriage is the act of God the Creator who has made man and woman united in His own image so that the love and community which are of the nature of God may be shown forth in the human family. It is He who brings together a man and a woman in such a way that for ever after each is unthinkable apart from the other.

Christian marriage takes place within the Body of Christ where our broken relationship with God and our damaged relationships with one another are forgiven, healed and reconciled through the Cross of Christ.

Christian marriage is an image of the mystical union between Christ and His Church.

Christian marriage is a means of grace whereby the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is offered to seal the covenant between a man and a woman and to lift them up into the love, joy and peace of the Godhead.

Into this holy estate these two persons now desire to enter. Wherefore I am required to ask that if anyone can show any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together in marriage, he now declare it.

A-- and B--, have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?

(We have)

Let us pray.

O Holy Father, to whom we draw near with boldness through our Lord Jesus ; look upon His merits and not on our unworthiness; and grant that our prayers being asked in His Name, may be accepted for His sake; to whom with Thee and the Holy Spirit be all praise and glory, now and for evermore.

Let us make confession of our sin.

Righteous God, we confess

selfishness which puts ourselves at the centre of life

pride which is quick to take offence

thoughtlessness which will not see another's need

unhealed resentment which corrodes our love

and we acknowledge our Father that these and all our failure are but symptoms of the sin into which we were born; which has separated us from Thee and which divides us from one another.

We acknowledge our own powerlessness to change and we turn to Thee trusting in that perfect conversion of our nature wrought by Jesus our Lord.

Lord have mercy; Christ have mercy; Lord have mercy.

The Almighty and Merciful God grant to you pardon and absolution of all your sins and the power of a new life in Christ Jesus.

Merciful God, who in Jesus Christ has opened a new and living way into communion with Thyself, grant that this service of covenant and union may witness to that reconciliation by which we now live as a people healed and forgiven, one with Thee and with one another to Thine honour and praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ONE OR MORE SCRIPTURE LECTIONS ARE THEN READ. THEY MUST INCLUDE A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

A HYMN IS SUNG

Let us pray.

Father, all powerful and everliving God, we do well always and everywhere to give Thee thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Him Thou hast entered into a New Covenant with Thy people. Thou hast restored mankind to grace in the saving mystery of redemption. Thou dost grant us to share in the divine life through our union with Christ. Thou hast made us heirs of His eternal glory.

We praise Thee that this outpouring of love in the New Covenant of grace is symbolised in the marriage covenant which seals the love of husband and wife and reflects The divine plan of love.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts; Heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory, Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high.

We thank Thee our Father for A-- and B-- our friends.

For the ways in which Thou hast led them in a loving plan for their lives.

For the homes from which they come; the love, support and encouragement they have been given.

For the place in our affection which they have won for themselves.

We thank Thee for leading them to each other.

For the friendship, love, trust and commitment in which they have grown together.

For the fulfilment of this holy hour when they come with praise to be united by Thy Spirit.

By the presence and power of Thy Holy Spirit, O God, may Thy children know the risen Christ to be with them now as they make their covenant in Thy sight and before all the company of heaven.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us; unto Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.

CONGREGATION STAND

As a seal to the vows you are about to take, give each other the right hand.

PARTIES MAY READ THE FOLLOWING FROM PRINTED CARDS

I A-- take you B-- to be my wedded wife and in God's presence and before this congregation promise and covenant to be a loving faithful and dutiful husband to you until God separates us by death.

I B-- take you A-- to be my wedded husband and in God's presence and before this congregation promise and covenant to be a loving and faithful and dutiful wife to you until God separates us by death.

As a token of the covenant into which you have entered this ring/these rings is/are given and received.

THE MINISTER TAKES THE RING, OR RINGS IN TURN, AND ASKS A BLESSING UPON THEM
Bless this ring, Merciful Lord, that he/she who gives it and she/he who wears it may continue faithful the one to the other in unbroken love.

By this sign you take each other 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 parts you.

Forasmuch as you have covenanted in holy marriage and have declared the same before God and this congregation, I pronounce you to be husband and wife; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

What therefore God has joined together let no man put assunder.

PARTIES KNEEL WHILE THE MINISTER, LAYING HIS HANDS UPON THEM, GIVES THE BLESSING
God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit bless, preserve and keep you; the Lord pour out upon you the riches of His grace that you may please Him and live together in holy love until your lives' end. The Lord bless you and keep you ----

THE AARONIC BLESSING IS SUNG

CONGREGATION ARE SEATED

Let us pray

Most Holy God, we give Thee thanks for the privilege of sharing with A-- and B-- one of the greatest moments in their lives.

We pray that the blessing which they have received from Thee will inspire them throughout their life together.

Keep guard over the covenant they have made that it may always be the foundation of their union.

Loving Father, bless their home wherever it may be through the years to defend it from evil. May it be a home where Christ is known and loved as its head. May his love cast out all fear and his cross bring reconciliation and forgiveness.

Supply A-- and B-- with their need and grant them a generous heart and a welcoming spirit. What we ask for these Thy children Our Father we ask for each family represented here. May those who took vows to each other in the past renew those vows this day and find them strengthened.

So lead us through this life we pray that when we have fully served Thee in our generation we may be received into the presence of Thy Glory and be numbered with those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, even Jesus Christ Our Lord who has taught Thy family upon earth to pray together,
OUR FATHER -----.

A HYMN IS SUNG

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ Our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always.

Colin R. Williamson
St. Paul's Parish Church
Leith

THE PLACE OF CAESAR IN WORSHIP

Whenever the Church or individual churchmen endeavour publicly to evaluate, in the light of Christian teaching, the policies and actions of governments, local councils, financial institutions, the business world, trade unions, or the forces of law and order, those who take exception to their conclusions are often heard to protest that the Church and its spokesmen should stick to 'religion' and stop meddling in other people's affairs. The cry of 'trespasser' is raised, and it is not hard to understand why. Authorities, corporate bodies and individuals possess alike the tendency to stake out for themselves territory over which they believe they may claim sole jurisdiction. They will struggle to gain possession of and to defend what they regard as being exclusively their own. They may sometimes be willing to recognise circumstances in which others have a legitimate interest in their affairs, but they will normally take steps to ensure that such an interest is never allowed to expand to the point at which they have ceased to be masters in their own house. This does not mean that they will never recognise or even defend the autonomy of others. On the contrary, they may well fight at considerable expense to preserve freedoms other than their own, but they are generally unlikely to sustain what may have commenced as an act of genuine altruism if it is felt to be subverting their own autonomy.