

Recognising a Civil Registered Partnership

Notes on the Service

I was asked at fairly short notice to conduct the service. Two other, younger, ministers had declined to officiate. John Stewart is a former student of mine and has an honours MA in Church History and Politics. I had met Neil Fletcher once or twice at civic functions. Both are City councillors. I met them before agreeing and was convinced of the seriousness of their purpose.

Several decisions had been made prior to my involvement. The time of the service had been arranged for 9.45 a.m. The Aberdeen registrar was not available until 10 a.m. This explains the interlude. The University had agreed to grant the use of King's College Chapel as John is a graduate. One hundred and sixty invitations had been issued and accepted. Guests included the Lord Provost, City councillors, the Deputy First Minister and members of the Holyrood and Westminster Parliaments as well as family and friends. This explains the content of the first prayer, compiled by myself.

The first hymn was chosen by John and the second by Neil, who has a Methodist background. They composed the vow and chose the Scripture reading, the Aria, and the Processional and Recessional. I suggested the congregational participation in the Aaronic Blessing, the Lord's Prayer and the Grace.

Henry R. Sefton

**Service of Blessing
with John Stewart and Neil Fletcher
upon entering their
Civil Registered Partnership
20 December 2005**

Processional: Intermezzo from 'Karelia Suite' (Sibelius)

Hymn: Immortal invisible, God only wise

Prayer: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.
Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.
Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.
For the peace which is from above
and for the salvation of our souls,
let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the peace of the whole world
and for an end to violence and discord,
let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For temperate weather, abundance of fruits of the earth
and for the relief of famine,
let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For our country, our Queen and her ministers,
and our Parliaments at Holyrood and Westminster,
let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For this city, the Lord and Lady Provost,
for councillors and administrators, industry and commerce,
let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the universities, colleges and schools of this city,
and for all who teach or study therein,
let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For this holy house and for those
who with faith, reverence and godly fear
enter herein,
let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the hungry and the homeless,
for the sick and the suffering
and all those
who work to relieve pain and distress,
let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For John and Neil
as now they make their pledges to each other,
let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Protect us, save us,
have mercy upon us and preserve us, O God,
by your grace.

We commend ourselves and one another
and our whole life to Christ, our God.

For all glory, honour and worship befits you,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.
Amen.

The Exchange of Vows and Rings

The Vow In the presence of God and our families and friends, I (*name*) declare my love for you (*name*) and seek God's blessing on our partnership. I will continue to love you, care for you, and consider you before my own needs, in good times and bad. I will rejoice when you are happy and grieve when you are sad. I will share your interests and hopes for the future. I will try to understand you, even when I do not agree with you and will help you to be your true self. In all this, I ask God's help, now and in the days to come. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Interlude *John, Neil and their witnesses will now leave the Chapel to sign their Civil Registered Partnership in Elphinstone Hall. A selection of organ music will be played by Roger Bevan Williams until their return.*

The Aaronic Blessing

The congregation will rise and say together:

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

Prayer

Let us pray.

Recalling their loving relationship over many years,
we pray for Neil and John
as they enter their Civil Registered Partnership.

We pray that they may be true
to the pledges they have made in our presence this day
and may remain faithful and loyal to each other.
We pray for their parents, their families and their friends
and all who have helped and supported them
over the years.

Maintain, we pray, these bonds of kinship,
friendship and support.

Renew and strengthen in us
whatever is good and wholesome
and caring and unselfish.

We ask it for the sake of Jesus Christ
our Redeemer and Advocate.

Amen.

Aria

‘Laudamus te’ from ‘Mass in C Minor’ (Mozart)
Soloist: Mrs Kathleen Hawthorne

Scripture Reading I Corinthians 13:4-13 (Love)

The Lord’s Prayer (said by all)

Hymn Love Divine, all loves excelling

The Grace The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the Love of God,
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, forever more.

Amen.

Recessional Hornpipe in D (Handel)

Henry R. Sefton