

We offer here the full text of the marriage service. This is not to suggest that you print it all in the Order of Service – you are of course welcome to if you wish, but many couples prefer a shorter version (see our examples in the Wedding Pack). Sight of the full text may, however, help you as you plan the shape of your service. And you may find it helpful as a couple to read through the Preface, Declarations and Vows as you prepare for your wedding day, and for the new state of life you are entering into.

The Marriage of N and N

St Luke's, Chelsea
conducted by the Rev'd ...

[Date and Time]

*The congregation is asked to join in all texts printed in **bold**.*

(You may want to add a note of welcome, and perhaps about photos)

The Church of England offers this possible introduction to print in your order of service if you desire, for your guests to read before the service:

A wedding is one of life's great moments, a time of solemn commitment as well as good wishes, feasting and joy. St John tells us how Jesus shared in such an occasion at Cana, and gave there a sign of new beginnings as he turned water into wine. Marriage is intended by God to be a creative relationship, as his blessing enables husband and wife to love and support each other in good times and in bad, and to share in the care and upbringing of children. For Christians, marriage is also an invitation to share life together in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is based upon a solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman, declared and celebrated in the presence of God and before witnesses. On this their wedding day the bride and bridegroom face each other, make their promises and receive God's blessing. You are witnesses of the marriage, and express your support by your presence and your prayers. Your support does not end today: the couple will value continued encouragement in the days and years ahead of them.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13.4-7

Music before the service (*optional*)

Entrance of the Bride (*optional*)

Introduction

Welcome

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

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

Hymn (*optional*)

(Some possibilities are listed at
<https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/article/hymns-for-your-wedding/>)

Please sit

Preface

We have come together in the presence of God, to witness the marriage of N and N, 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 N and N 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 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 Declarations

The minister says to 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.

The minister says to 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.

The minister says to the bridegroom

N, will you take N 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?

He answers

I will.

The minister says to the bride

N, will you take N 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?

She answers

I will.

The minister says to the congregation

Will you, the families and friends of N and N,
support and uphold them in their marriage
now and in the years to come?

We will.

The Collect

Let us pray.

God our Father,
from the beginning,
you have blessed creation with abundant life.
Pour out your blessings upon N and N,
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.

Reading *(optional)*

(At least one reading from the Bible is used. You may choose a further reading – which can be either from the Bible or from another source of your choice. That reading will be read here. A good possible source of inspiration for readings is Mark Oakley, Readings for Weddings, (SPCK, 2004))

Anthem *(optional)*

(If you have a choir, this is often a good place in the service to insert a more reflective piece.)

Reading

(At least one reading from the Bible is used. Various suitable options are provided at <https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/article/bible-readings-for-your-wedding/>)

Sermon

Hymn (*optional*)

The Marriage

The Vows

The minister introduces the vows

N and N, I now invite you to join hands and make your vows,
in the presence of God and his people.

The bride and bridegroom face each other.

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his, and says

I, N, take you, N,
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.

They loose hands.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says

I, N, take you, N,
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.

They loose hands.

The Giving of Rings

The minister receives the ring, and says

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 N and N
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 bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand and, holding it there, says

N, 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 loose hands and the bride places a ring on the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand and, holding it there, says

N, 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.

The Proclamation

The minister addresses the people

In the presence of God, and before this congregation,
N and N 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 a ring.
I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

The minister joins their right hands together and says

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

*(The newly married husband and wife turn to face the congregation.
This is the 'You may kiss the bride' moment.)*

The Blessing of the Marriage

The minister leads the husband and wife to the high altar, and they kneel.

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 *N* and *N* 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.
Amen.

The minister 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.

The Registration of the Marriage

(This will take about 5 minutes, so will benefit from 2 pieces of music for the congregation to enjoy during this time)

Please sit or kneel

Prayers

Faithful God,
holy and eternal,
source of life and spring of love,
we thank and praise you for bringing N and N 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.

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us
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.

Please stand

Hymn *(optional)*

The Dismissal

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.

Recessional *(optional)*

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