

# The Convenanting and Blessing of the Life-Long Union of N. and N.

*In the Episcopal Church it is customary to keep silence before worship as we prepare for prayer.*

Prelude

The Tolling of the Bell *please stand after the ringing of the bell*

## The Gathering of the Community

### Entrance Hymn

*Presider:* Blessed be God who has brought us to this day.

*People:* **Blessed be the God of all our days.**

*Presider:* Thanks be to Jesus who restores us to wholeness.

*People:* **Thanks be to Jesus whose light is our life.**

*Presider:* Praise to the Spirit who calls us to service.

*People:* **Praise to the Spirit who matures us in love.**

*Presider:* Holy and Eternal One, you have called us each by our own name.

*People:* **In our very heart you have named us beloved.**

*Presider:* You surprise us by your grace.

*People:* **We are the fruit of your boundless love.**

*Presider:* On our exodus way you nourish us and free us.

*People:* **You give us companions for our journey.**

*Presider:* You set us apart, shaped by your love, yet call us into the midst of your people.

*People:* **Where we will be your word of blessing.**

*Presider:*

Dearly Beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the covenant of love and fidelity which N.N. and N.N. make with each other. The union of two persons in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and that their love may be a blessing to all whom they encounter. This solemn covenant is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and with the commitment to seek God's will for their lives.

*Presider:* Let us pray.

O gracious and eternal God, you are pleased to dwell among us and to fill our lives with your presence: Look joyfully upon N. and N. who come before this assembled community to make a covenant of love, fidelity, and life-long commitment. Grant them your blessing and assist them with your grace, that their union may be filled with your love and their life together be to us a

sign of your promised reign of justice and peace; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*please be seated*

## **The Word of God**

**The First Lesson** *choose one from the list below*

Song of Solomon 2:10-13

Ruth 1:16-17

Wisdom 8:9-16

Zephaniah 3:13b-20

Micah 4:1-3, 6

*Reader:* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*People:* **Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 67** -- *read in unison*

**Be merciful to us, O God, and bless us, \*  
show us the light of your countenance and come to us.**

**Let your ways be known upon earth, \*  
your saving health among all nations.**

**Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*  
let all the peoples praise you.**

**Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, \*  
for you judge the peoples with equity  
and guide all the nations upon earth.**

**Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*  
let all the peoples praise you.**

**The earth has brought forth its increase; \*  
may you, our own God, give us your blessing.**

**May you give us your blessing, \*  
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of you.**

**The Second Lesson** *choose one from the list below*

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18

I Corinthians 13:1-13

II Corinthians 5:16-20

I John 4:7-16

*Reader:* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*People:* **Thanks be to God.**

**Sequence Hymn** *please stand*

**The Holy Gospel** *choose one from the list below*

Matthew 5:1-10

Matthew 7:21, 24-29

John 2:1-11

John 15:9-12

Luke 6:20-23

Luke 6:32-38

*Priest or Deacon:* The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to

**People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

*after the reading:*

*Priest or Deacon:* The Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**The Homily**

## **The Covenanting and Blessing**

**The Presentation** *please stand*

*The Presider asks the Couple:*

What do you seek?

*The Couple responds in unison:*

We ask a blessing from this community on our covenant.

*The Presider asks the Congregation:*

Who sponsors this couple in their commitment?

*People:*

**We do in the belief that God has blessed N. and N. by calling them into this covenant with each other.**

**The Examination**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, we are all baptized by the one Spirit into one Body, and given gifts for a variety of ministries for the common good. Our purpose is to commission these persons in the Name of God and of this congregation the special ministry of Holy Union to which they are called.

*People:*        **N. and N. Do you promise to honor and cherish one another?**

*Couple:*        I do.

*People:*        **Do you promise to share together in life's joys and triumphs, and to stand with each other in times of grief and misfortune?**

*Couple:*        I do.

*People:*        **Do you promise to be truthful in all things and to strive together to create a home filled with reverence and hospitality?**

*Couple:*        I do.

*People:*        **Do you promise to love one another all the days of your life?**

*Couple:*        I do.

*The People may extend their hands toward the couple:*

**N. and N., may God bless you this day, honoring your love.**

**May God make your love a blessing to all who are touched by its warmth and light.**

**May your love grow ever stronger and always true.**

**And may all who bless you be blessed.**

*Couple:*        Thanks be to God!

*The Couple may embrace or otherwise express the joy of their union.*

*Presider:*

May the God who has given N. and N. the grace to love one another and to enter into this covenant, give them the strength and power to walk in it all of their days. **Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer** *if there is to be no Eucharist, the Lord's Prayer is said here.*

*All remain standing as the Deacon bids the intercessions.*

### **The Prayers of the People**

*The intercessor will say or sing:*

Let us pray for the church, for N. and N. and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Bless N. and N. in their life-long covenant. Give them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their common life, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may grow in love and peace with you and one another all the days of their life.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Give them grace, when they hurt each other, to recognize and acknowledge their fault, and to seek each other's forgiveness and yours.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our Prayer.**

Make their life together a sign of Christ's love to a sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Give them such fulfillment of their mutual affection that they may reach out in love and concern for others.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

### **The Blessing of the Union**

*The people remain standing.*

*The Couple kneels, and the Priest says the following prayer.*

O God, lover of humankind, in whom all our covenants are established, send your blessing upon your servants N. and N., that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*The Couple still kneeling, the Priest adds this blessing:*

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favor look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that you may faithfully live together in this life, and in the age to come have life everlasting. **Amen.**

**The Peace**

*Presider:* The peace of Christ be always with you.

*People:* **And also with you.**

**The Holy Communion**

**Offertory Anthem**

**The Great Thanksgiving: Eucharistic Prayer B, Prayer Book, page 367**

*(preface of Ascension)*

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Fraction Anthem**

**Post Communion Prayer (page 365)**

**Blessing**

**Dismissal**