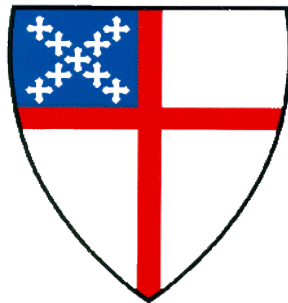


A Service for
The Celebration Of A Marriage



Episcopal service booklet for Lay Leaders



Liturgy for a Marriage

For use in the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska by Licensed Worship Leaders

Concerning this service:

This liturgy may be used by Licensed Worship Leaders who have requested prior approval from the Bishop. It may ONLY be used by a Licensed Worship Leader who also holds a Marriage Commissioner Appointment from an Alaskan Court. Information on how to apply for a Marriage Commissioner Appointment may be found here:

<http://courts.alaska.gov/trialcourts/index.htm#marriage>

This liturgy follows closely the order found in the Book of Common Prayer “Holy Matrimony” beginning on page 423. Some of the Prayer Book Liturgy wording has been changed and portions deleted to conform with a liturgy officiated by a Worship Leader. However, the congregation should be invited to follow along in the Prayer Book.

The Procession and Statement of Intent

At the time appointed, the persons to be married, with their witnesses, assemble in the church or some other appropriate place.

During their entrance, a hymn or song may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.

Once the couple is together at the front of the assembly, all standing, the Celebrant/Worship Leader, facing the people and the persons to be married, addresses the congregation and says (inserting individual’s first name at the “N”, and full name at the N.N.)

Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of N. and N. in Matrimony. The joining of two people in a life of mutual fidelity signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and so it is worthy of being honored among all people.

The union of two people 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, when it is God’s will, for the gift of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

Into this holy union N. N. and N. N. now come to be joined.

If any of you can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, speak now; or else for ever hold your peace.

Then the Worship Leader says to the persons to be married

I require and charge you both, here in the presence of God, that if either of you knows any reason why you may not be united in marriage lawfully, and in accordance with God’s Word, you do now confess it.

The Declaration of Consent

The Worship Leader says to one member of the couple, then to the other

N., will you have this woman/man/person to be your wife/husband/spouse; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her/him, comfort her/him, honor and keep her/him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her/him as long as you both shall live?

Answer I will.

The Worship Leader then addresses the congregation, saying

Will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?

People We will.

A hymn or song may follow.

The Ministry of the Word

The Worship Leader then says to the people

	The Lord be with you.
People	And also with you.
Celebrant	Let us pray.

The Worship Leader says one of the following Collects

God of abundance: assist by your grace N. and N., whose covenant of love and fidelity we witness this day. Grant them your protection, that with firm resolve they may honor and keep the vows they make; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

or this

Almighty and everliving God: look tenderly upon N. and N., who stand before you in the company of your Church. Let their life together bring them great joy. Grant them so to love selflessly and live humbly, that they may be to one another and to the world a witness and a sign of your never-failing love and care; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, to the ages of ages. Amen.

or this

O God, faithful and true, whose steadfast love endures for ever: we give you thanks for sustaining N. and N. in the life they share and for bringing them to this day. Nurture them and fill them with joy in their life together, continuing the good work you have begun in them; and grant us, with them, a dwelling place eternal in the heavens there all your people will share the joy of perfect love, and where you, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, live and reign, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

or for those bringing children into the marriage

Holy Trinity, one God, three Persons perfect in unity and equal in majesty: Draw together with bonds of love and affection N. and N., who with *their families* seek to live in harmony and forbearance all their days, that their joining together will be to us a reflection of that perfect communion which is your very essence and life, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who live and reign in glory everlasting. Amen.

Then one or more of the following passages from Holy Scripture is read. Other readings from Scripture suitable for the occasion may be used. Readers may be assigned by the Worship Leader.

Genesis 1:26–28 (*Male and female he created them*)
Song of Solomon 2:10–13; 8:6–7 (*Many waters cannot quench love*)
Tobit 8:5b–8 (*New English Bible*) (*That she and I may grow old together*)

1 Corinthians 13:1–13 (*Love is patient and kind*)
Ephesians 3:14–19 (*The Father from whom every family is named*)
Ephesians 5:1–2 (*Walk in love, as Christ loved us*)
Colossians 3:12–17 (*Love which binds everything together in harmony*)
1 John 4:7–16 (*Let us love one another, for love is of God*)

Matthew 5:1–10 (*The Beatitudes*)
Matthew 5:13–16 (*You are the light ... Let your light so shine*)
Matthew 7:21, 24–29 (*Like a wise man who built his house upon the rock*)
John 15:9–12 (*Love one another as I have loved you*)

The people remain seated for the readings (including any reading from the Gospels).

The Reader may conclude each reading by saying:

Reader: *The Word of the Lord*

People: *Thanks be to God*

Between the Readings, a psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sung or said. Appropriate psalms are Psalm 67, Psalm 127, and Psalm 128.

A homily or other response to the Readings may follow.

The Marriage

Standing in front of the Worship Leader and in sight of the Witnesses, each member of the couple, in turn, takes the right hand of the other and says (The Worship Leader may prompt the couple with the words to be said)

In the Name of God, I, N., take you, N., to be my wife/husband/spouse,
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,
until we are parted by death.
This is my solemn vow.

If Rings are to be exchanged, the Worship Leader receives the rings and says: "We who have witnessed these vows pray that these rings may be a lasting sign to all people of the promises this couple has made to each other, in the Love of God. Amen.

The giver places the ring on the ring finger of the other's hand and says (The Worship Leader may prompt the couple with the words to be said)

N., I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow,
and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you,
in the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit [or in the Name of God].

Then the Worship Leader joins the right hands of the couple and says

Now that N. and N. have given themselves to each other by solemn vows,
with the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of rings,
I pronounce that they are wed to one another,
in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.
Amen.

People

The Prayers

All standing, the Worship Leader says

Let us pray together in the words our Savior taught us.

People and Celebrant

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,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

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.

A person appointed reads the following prayers, to which the People respond, saying, Amen.

Leader

Let us pray.

Eternal God, creator and preserver of all life, author of salvation, and giver of all grace: Look with favor upon the world you have made, and for which your Son gave his life, and especially upon N. and N. whom you make one flesh in Holy Matrimony. *Amen.*

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. *Amen.*

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. *Amen.*

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

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

Bestow on them, if it is your will, the gift and heritage of children, and the grace to bring them up to know you, to love you, and to serve you. *Amen.*

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

Grant that all married persons who have witnessed these vows may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed. *Amen.*

Grant that the bonds of our common humanity, by which all your children are united one to another, and the living to the dead, may be so transformed by your grace, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven; where, O Father, with your Son and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign in perfect unity, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Peace

The Worship Leader then says to the People

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People

And also with you.

The newly married couple then greet each other, after which greetings may be exchanged throughout the congregation.

The Parish Register may be signed before the Wedding Party leaves the church.

The wedding party leaves the church. A hymn or song may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

The Marriage License

It is the Worship Leader's responsibility to sign the Marriage License and to be sure it is signed by two witnesses (traditionally the "Maid of Honor" and the "Best Man"). The signed Marriage License must be mailed/submitted to the Alaska State Health Analytics & Vital Records Section: PO Box 110675 Juneau, AK 99811-0675.

Recording the Marriage

The Worship Leader must record the marriage in the Parish Register. The Parish Register is the "Green" book/journal. The Marriage section of the register is found after the section for Baptisms and Confirmations. When recording the Marriage in the Parish Register, it is important to enter the names of the Witnesses as well as the Couple married. There is a place in the Register for the Witnesses and the Marriage Couple to sign. Signing the Parish Register is sometimes done after the Peace and before the Couple leaves the Church. This assures that it doesn't get forgotten especially if the couple will be living away from the parish community

Blessing by the Bishop/Priest

If the couple wishes to have a formal Blessing offered by the Bishop or a Priest, that may be done at the Bishop's next visit, or the couple may ask for a blessing at a service of Holy Communion at their next visit to an Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alaska.



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