



CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

— *at* —

THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

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*2450 River Oaks Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77019
713.622.3600 — sjd.org*

A Christian wedding is a joyous event to all of us. Consequently, we heartily congratulate you and are happy that your wedding will be celebrated in The Church of St. John the Divine.

We will make every effort to assist you in your planning to ensure your wedding will occur with the beauty, dignity, and reverence a Christian service should provide. Please help us by reading this booklet carefully and by complying with its instructions and suggestions. Any question it fails to address or answer satisfactorily may be discussed with the officiating clergyman in the premarital counseling sessions. Experience has shown that the procedures outlined herein will present a service which will honor God in Christ as well as be inspiring and pleasing to you and to your guests.

In Christian marriage a couple embraces a lifestyle which seeks to reflect the presence of God in all they do. This effort is achieved as they nurture their relationship with one another in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. Such an endeavor requires commitment. A couple must take its Christian marriage vows seriously and see the spiritual dimension of their marriage as extremely important. In the years following your wedding, St. John the Divine will provide support to you to expand this spiritual dimension through our worship, education, fellowship, and witness. Our desire is to celebrate your wedding, but also to celebrate your marriage as it is lived out among us.

Again, we are delighted to share in this Holy event with you and anticipate it with great joy.

In Christ's Name,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clay" with a small cross-like mark at the end of the word.

The Rev. Dr. Clay A. Lein
Rector

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. The canons of The Episcopal Church specify that Holy Matrimony is “...entered into within the community of faith.” Therefore, the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage in The Church of St. John the Divine is reserved for communicants of this parish or those with a pastoral relationship.
2. Since baptism is the foundation of the Christian community. It is a requirement that at least one of the couple be a baptized Christian. Those who have not been baptized and who wish to be baptized should speak to one of the priests to have it arranged.
3. A priest on the active staff of St. John the Divine will officiate at weddings held here. Other clergy, either of The Episcopal Church or another denomination, who have a special relationship with the bride or groom, may be invited by the officiating priest to assist him or her in the service.
4. Priests of other Episcopal parishes or missions are welcome to use the church or chapel for weddings of their members, provided scheduling can be arranged and the rules of this parish are observed.
5. The Episcopal Church requires that notice of intention to marry be made at least 30 days prior to the proposed marriage date. Additional time is required if either the bride or groom has been married previously and the former spouse is still living. In this situation, permission for remarriage must be obtained from the Bishop after a consultation with and petition by a priest of St. John the Divine. If either of the couple have been married more than once there are additional requirements that must be met.
6. The Canons of The Episcopal Church require clergy to provide premarital counseling to engaged couples prior to performing their marriage. This is done through our five-week *Marriage Preparation Classes* that are offered in both the Fall and Spring. These classes are required for marriage at St. John the Divine. Only under certain circumstances, such as one person living out of town, can alternate arrangements for personal counseling sessions be made. The need for such arrangements must be made with the individual clergy person performing the ceremony. In addition to the *Marriage Preparation Classes*, the clergy person will meet several additional times with the engaged couple to develop the specifics of their service.

7. *The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage* as found in the Book of Common Prayer is the service that must be used in The Episcopal Church. Personally composed vows or other services may not be used.
8. The Book of Common Prayer provides special scripture readings for the service, from which the couple may make a choice, whether or not Holy Communion is planned. Should the wedding be planned without Holy Communion, the couple is urged to receive this sacrament together as near the wedding date as possible.
9. A valid Marriage License is required for marriage. A wedding at St. John the Divine cannot take place without a marriage license, and the couple should provide this license before or at the rehearsal.
10. Texas Marriage licenses are valid for 30 days from the date of issue, with a 72 hour (3 days) waiting period before the marriage may take place. So, please plan accordingly.
11. The officiating priest is the only person who signs the license following the marriage ceremony. The church is responsible for returning the signed license to the County Clerk's office.
12. For information about obtaining a marriage license in Harris County, Texas, contact the Harris County Clerk's office by calling 713.755.6411 or view their website: www.cclerk.hctx.net.

SCHEDULING A WEDDING

1. Weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays, or during Holy Week (beginning with the Saturday before Palm Sunday), or during the week before Christmas. Weddings scheduled during the week after Christmas will be held with full Christmas decorations remaining intact.
2. Normally, not more than one wedding per day will be scheduled in either the church or chapel. If it becomes necessary to schedule more than one wedding on the same day in either facility, three hours shall be the minimum time between weddings.
3. To reserve a date for a wedding, please contact the church's Event Coordinator. After conferring with you and the priest you desire to officiate at your wedding, the Event Coordinator will enter the date and time into the church calendar.

4. Your wedding invitation **must** be sent to the church's Events Coordinator. This will serve to confirm the date and time you have reserved for your wedding.

FEEES

1. Our Events Coordinator will discuss with the bride and groom the current fees for a wedding at St. John the Divine and will provide a list of the fees to the couple.
2. A deposit of 50% of the total fees is due at the time that the wedding date is confirmed with our Events Coordinator and the officiating priest.
3. The balance of the fees, including all music fees, are due two weeks prior to the wedding date.
4. In the event of a cancellation, please contact the Events Coordinator as penalties and fees may apply.
5. An honorarium from bride and groom to the officiating priest may be presented to either the priest directly or to the Wedding Coordinator for the priest at the rehearsal or following the marriage ceremony and will be gratefully accepted.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

St. John the Divine provides a Wedding Coordinator to assist with the wedding ceremony.

1. The Wedding Coordinator and members of Wedding Hostess Guild will be present at both the rehearsal and the wedding to coordinate the details of the ceremony with the priest, organist, and wedding participants.
2. If an outside wedding consultant has been employed, his or her involvement will be limited to the reception and other nonchurch activities. The rehearsal and wedding are the responsibility of the staff of St. John the Divine.

MUSIC

A church wedding is a Sacrament in the Episcopal Church. The music, like the ceremony, should be an act of worship. As one of the most joyous moments in a Christian's life, a marriage before the Altar should have music which expresses both the joy and reverence of this important occasion. To ensure a uniform standard of excellence in the music at weddings celebrated at St. John the Divine, we have adopted the policies set out below.

1. The Director of Music or a designated representative from the Music Ministry Staff *must* be retained for all weddings requiring music.
2. After confirming the date of your wedding with the Event Coordinator, please contact the Music Ministry Office by telephone or email music@sjd.org to reserve a consultation with the Director of Music. In this consultation, the Director of Music will provide you pertinent information and advice to assist and guide your preparations. Early planning will ensure adequate preparation of the music selected.
3. Many possible choices of music styles from traditional to contemporary are available for your wedding. Music at weddings varies from simple organ or harp music to more elaborate combinations. Some weddings engage instrumental or vocal soloists. Other weddings use brass, strings, hand bells or multiple combinations of instruments and soloists. A choir is engaged for some weddings. The music ministry staff will guide and assist you in making your choices.
4. Concerning texts, The Episcopal Church requires that the sung portions of any service be in words of Holy Scripture, or the Prayer Book, or an authorized Hymnal. Any other text requests are subject to careful scrutiny and must be congruent with scripture. The rector is the final authority on questions of textual appropriateness.
5. It is customary to schedule one meeting with the music ministry staff to confirm the specific selections for your ceremony, to review the placement of music within your ceremony, and to review the number of participating musicians and their fees.

6. All musicians must be contracted through the Music Office. Musicians shall not be contracted prior to consulting with the Director of Music, and all vocalists and instrumentalists must be approved by the Director of Music prior to their engagement. Only professional soloists and instrumentalists are engaged for ceremonies to ensure the highest standards of worship.
7. The Church of St. John the Divine does not allow music to be played from CD or tape during the ceremony.

Additional information is available on the church website: sjd.org.

DECORATIONS

Simplicity and good taste should always be the mark of decoration in the House of God. Extensive and elaborate floral displays are unnecessary and discouraged, because of the inherent beauty of the church and chapel.

The following is a list of decorations which may be used in the Church:

1. Altar Flowers: Two arrangements of fresh flowers are to be supplied by the bride's florist and must be arranged to fit the church altar vase liners. No bows or artificial flowers may be used. Arrangements must be left on the flower counter for the church's Sexton or Altar Guild member to position properly. All flowers for the altar are your gift to St. John the Divine and **are not** to be removed from the church after the wedding.
2. Pew Markers consisting of greenery, flowers, and/or bows may be attached to the pews, but only in a manner and with materials that do not damage the pews.
3. Aisle Candelabra: The Church's aisle candelabra are attached to the pews along the center aisle. There are 14 candles covered by glass chimneys. All costs for use of candelabras and candles are in the Fee Schedule.
4. Candelabra belonging to a florist may not be used.
5. Following the wedding, the florist must remove all decoration on the pews so that the church may be cleaned for the next scheduled service.

6. The church furnishes needlepoint wedding cushions for the couple to kneel on at the altar. A runner down the center aisle is not permitted.

Rules for decorating the Chapel are basically the same as for the Church, with the following variations:

1. The wall behind the Chapel altar is wood. Nothing may be attached in any fashion to the wall.
2. Altar Flowers: The Chapel has several sets of brass vases from which to choose. The liners or a pair of vases may be picked up by the florist a day or two before the wedding, if desired, and the flower arrangements may then be placed in the brass containers and left on the flower counter the day of the wedding. The flower vases are placed on the Altar shelf and must be of appropriate size to flank the cross. The Sexton or Altar Guild member will place them on the Altar shelf. The flowers on the Altar are your gift to The Church of St. John the Divine and *are not* to be removed from the Chapel after the wedding.
3. Aisle Candelabra: The Chapel's aisle candelabra are black wrought iron standards clamped to the pews, with three candle holders each, covered by glass chimneys. Three candelabra are installed on each side, three rows apart. The church will supply the candles. One pair of seven-branch candelabra, complete with candles, may be placed on either side of the sanctuary step. See Fee Schedule for costs.

The services of the St. John the Divine Flower Guild may be obtained for arranging the Altar flowers and decorating the candelabra for your wedding. Please call the Flower Guild chairperson for information regarding this procedure.

PRINTED WEDDING LEAFLETS

1. You may design your own service leaflet or the church will provide a wedding leaflet for a nominal fee.
2. The leaflet will contain an outline of the order of service and a list of the wedding party.

3. Information must be submitted to the Music Office and Wedding Coordinator at least three (3) weeks before the ceremony to allow for typesetting, proofreading and printing.
4. If you wish to have a leaflet designed elsewhere you must submit a proof to the Music Office and Wedding Coordinator, so that it can be approved before it is printed.

PHOTOGRAPHY

As a marriage service is a Sacrament of the Church, in keeping with the atmosphere of worship, only the professional photographer hired for the wedding may take photographs during the ceremony as described below.

1. The bride and groom are responsible for informing their photographer, family and guests of the church policy regarding photographs.
2. Wedding guests are also expected to observe this courtesy and must not interrupt the service by the taking of photographs during the ceremony. Their failure to do so may make it necessary for a reminder of this during the service. The Ushers at the wedding are encouraged to remind the guests of this policy.
3. Photographs may be taken before the service in the Bride's Room, the Family Room, the Rector's Sacristy, outside on the church grounds, and in the narthex as the wedding party is lined up for the procession.
4. The photographer may, from the balcony of the Church or Chapel, take a timed exposure using existing light, requiring no flash, during the service.
5. The bride and groom may be photographed from the narthex coming down the aisle after the service.
6. Photographs may be taken after the service in front of the Altar, provided they can be taken within a fifteen minute period.
7. Neither the photographer nor the wedding party may go behind the Altar Rail for pictures.

VIDEO

Videotaping of the ceremony has become very popular and offers the bride and groom a very special opportunity to relive their sacred event.

1. St. John the Divine offers a competitive Wedding package and provides a demo to show quality of product and pricing. The video package will include a minimal of four cameras, state of the art sound reinforcement of the ceremony live as well as to tape, and a trained audio and video crew to capture this special event. The final product will be provided on DVD for the bride and groom. This service can be contracted through the Media Director of St. John the Divine.
2. If however, you choose to use another videographer, the videographer you choose must contact the Director of Media at least one week prior to the wedding for specific approved camera locations and audio requirements.
3. After confirming your wedding date with the Event Coordinator, please telephone the Director of Media to reserve your date for their services.

CHILD ATTENDANTS

1. Flower girls and ring bearers must be at least five years of age and able to conduct themselves in an orderly fashion.
2. The flower girl may carry a basket of flowers, but may not drop flower petals, either live or silk, or any other material.
3. The ring bearer should not carry the wedding rings on the pillow.

THE REHEARSAL

1. All members of the wedding party should be present at the rehearsal. Please request that they be prompt, so that the rehearsal can proceed within the allotted time, which is usually one hour.
2. The rehearsal is under the direction of the officiating priest. The Priest will be assisted by the Wedding Coordinator and/ or a member of the Wedding Hostess Guild. She will give the appropriate signals to the Organist and will help space the bridal party for procession. No one else is needed to give these directions.

3. The marriage license **must** be brought to the rehearsal and given to the officiating priest at the time that the Marriage Register is signed by the bride and groom and their witnesses.
4. Ushers to escort the bride and groom's mothers and grandmothers should be appointed prior to the rehearsal.
5. Ushers will be instructed by the officiating priest and the Wedding Coordinator as to seating the wedding guests. Basic information is as follows:
 - a. Guests are seated from the side aisles only. The center aisle is reserved for the bridal procession.
 - b. Ushers should offer the right arm to female guests.
 - c. Traditionally, the bride's family and friends are seated on the left side, and the groom's on the right side. It is also proper to seat guests on either side.
 - d. Please ask family members and friends to inform the usher if they are to be seated in a special pew.
6. The bride's mother should lead the congregation in standing at the bride's entrance. Other directions for standing and sitting during the service will be given by the officiant.
7. After the service the wedding party processes out, the last bridesmaid and groomsman being immediately followed by the bride's parents and the groom's parents.
8. Ushers should be assigned to bring out unescorted mothers and grandmothers.

DRESSING AREAS

1. The Bride's Room in the Church is located to the right as one enters the narthex from the center door. There is ample room for the bride and her mother to dress in this room. Bridesmaids may dress in the Ladies Lounge, to the right of the narthex and across from the Bride's Room.
2. The Bride's Room in the Chapel is located to the right as one enters the narthex. It is the first room off the corridor that is accessed from the narthex.

3. Each of these rooms contains a restroom, full length mirrors, and space to hang dresses. Pictures of the bride, her mother, and her attendants may be made in these rooms. Bridesmaids should have hair and makeup done before they arrive to dress; however, touch-ups can certainly be made in the dressing rooms.
4. Dresses may be delivered in the morning on the day of the wedding and will be checked in by the Sexton. Dressing rooms will be opened two hours before the wedding.
5. The groom, groomsmen, and ushers should arrive dressed for the wedding. In the Church, they may gather in the Family Room located off the long corridor along the right side of the church from the narthex. In the Chapel, the groom, groomsmen, and ushers may gather in the Family Room, which is the second room located along the hallway to the right after one enters the chapel.
6. Please plan to have someone remove all personal articles from the dressing rooms after the wedding service.

RECEPTIONS

After the ceremony, you may choose to celebrate your wedding with a reception at St. John the Divine. Below are the policies we have adopted for receptions held in our facilities:

1. Receptions are scheduled through our Events Coordinator. It would be wise to reserve the time and space desired for the reception at the same time as the Church or Chapel is reserved for the wedding, as space and availability are limited.
2. Wedding receptions may be held in Sumners Hall or the Parlor.
3. Couples are responsible for providing all food and drink, paper products, decorations, servers, musicians and clean-up. **Alcoholic beverages may not be served.**
4. St. John's Director Food Services **must** be retained for all receptions, as all food that comes onto St. John the Divine's premises must be cleared through her.

5. St. John the Divine has a full service kitchen and has right of first refusal for providing food or catering any event that uses the church's facilities. If we are not able to cater the event, then another caterer of your choosing may be employed.
6. If another caterer is used they must provide certification and proof of insurance to St. John's Business Manager at least two weeks before the event.
7. When caterers are used, the caterer is subject to the oversight of the Director of Food Services or her designated agent. He/She will assist in locating utensils and operating kitchen equipment, but does not make arrangements for the reception, the serving or the clean-up.
8. The church will provide tables and chairs according to the caterer's request.
9. **Receptions must end by 10:00 pm.** Out of consideration to our sextons, please remember, most weddings are on Saturdays and they must prepare the church facilities for Sunday morning use. We do not wish to rush you, but ask only for sensitivity to the needs of the church and its staff.

LEAVING THE CHURCH - RICE, ETC.

The ringing of the church bells is an effective and appropriate way to greet the newly married couple as they leave the Church or Chapel.

1. Rice, birdseed, rose petals, confetti etc. *may not* be thrown after the ceremony or after a reception held in the church facilities, either inside or outside the buildings.
2. The release of balloons, birds or animals is also prohibited.

CHILDCARE

1. St. John the Divine does not supply childcare for weddings or rehearsals.
2. Church Nursery rooms are not available for use during weddings or rehearsals.
3. Parents should make private off-site babysitting arrangements for their children.

OTHER FACILITY INFORMATION

1. Parking is limited at St. John the Divine; please ask your guests when parking on the street to observe “No Parking” signs and refrain from blocking driveways or their vehicles may be ticketed or towed. Please follow the directions of the personnel helping with the control of traffic and parking.
2. The facilities of St. John the Divine are in constant use by a number of groups with many activities occurring simultaneously. Please be considerate of those that are here for purposes other than your wedding.
3. There are no checkrooms or secure package storage area in the Church, Chapel or reception areas. Please discourage guests from bringing packages to the church.
4. We ask your help in keeping our facilities clean and litter free.
5. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in any part of the church buildings and grounds. Please remind your wedding party of this rule, as failure to comply will halt the wedding proceedings.

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

with Scripture Texts

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 422-432 (Prayer Book)

CONCERNING THE SERVICE

Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God. In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties must be a baptized Christian; that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conform to the laws of the State and the canons of this Church.

A priest or a bishop normally presides at the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, because such ministers alone have the function of pronouncing the nuptial blessing, and of celebrating the Holy Eucharist.

When both a bishop and a priest are present and officiating, the bishop should pronounce the blessing and preside at the Eucharist.

A deacon, or an assisting priest, may deliver the charge, ask for the Declaration of Consent, read the Gospel, and perform other assisting functions at the Eucharist.

Where it is permitted by civil law that deacons may perform marriages, and no priest or bishop is available, a deacon may use the service which follows, omitting the nuptial blessing which follows The Prayers.

It is desirable that the Lessons from the Old Testament and the Epistles be read by lay persons.

In the opening exhortation (at the symbol of N.N.), the full names of the persons to be married are declared. Subsequently, only their Christian names are used.

THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE

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, psalm, or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.

Then the Celebrant, facing the people and the persons to be married, with the woman to the right and the man to the left, addresses the congregation and says:

Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony. The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.

The union of husband and wife 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 procreation 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 Celebrant says to the persons to be married:

I require and charge you both, here in the presence of God, that if either of you know 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 Celebrant says to the woman:

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

The Woman answers

I will.

The Celebrant says to the man:

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

The Man answers

I will.

The Celebrant 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.**

If there is to be a presentation or a giving in marriage, it takes place at this time. See page 437.

A hymn, psalm, or anthem may follow.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

The Celebrant then says to the people:

The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

O gracious and everliving God, you have created us male and female in your image: Look mercifully upon this man and this woman who come to you seeking your blessing, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep the promises and 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.

READINGS FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Then one or more of the following passages from Holy Scripture is read. If Holy Communion is to be celebrated, a passage from the Gospel always concludes the readings.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:26-28 (Male and female he created them)

Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,* and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind* in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’*

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24 (A man leaves to his wife and they become one flesh)

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground—then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. . Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.’

Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.’ So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.’ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7 (Many waters cannot quench love)

My beloved speaks and says to me: 'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of one's house, it would be utterly scorned.

Tobit 8:5b-8 (New English Bible) (That she and I may grow old together)

We praise thee, O God of our fathers, we praise thy name for ever and ever.

Let the heavens and all thy creation praise thee for ever.

Thou madest Adam, and Eve his wife to be his helper and support; and those two were the parents of the human race. This was thy word: 'It is not good for the man to be alone; let us make him a helper like him.'

I now take this my beloved to wife, not out of lust but in true marriage. Grant that she and I may find mercy and grow old together. They both said 'Amen.'

THE EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (Love is patient and kind)

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

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. Love never ends. But as for

prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 3:14-19 (The Father from whom every family is named)

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33 (Walk in love, as Christ loved us)

Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind-- yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church,

because we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Colossians 3:12-17 (Love which binds everything together in harmony)

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 John 4:7-16 (Let us love one another for love is of God)

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them

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

Psalm 67 Page 675, BCP

Deus misereatur

*May God be merciful to us and bless us,
show us the light of his 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 her increase;
may God, our own God, give us his blessing.
May God give us his blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.*

Psalm 127 Page 675, BCP

Nisi Dominus

*Unless the LORD builds the house,
their labor is in vain who build it.
Unless the LORD watches over the city,
in vain the watchman keeps his vigil.
It is in vain that you rise so early and go to bed so late;
vain, too, to eat the bread of toil,
for he gives to his beloved sleep.
Children are a heritage from the LORD,
and the fruit of the womb is a gift.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.
Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them!
he shall not be put to shame
when he contends with his enemies in the gate.*

*Happy are they all who fear the LORD,
and who follow in his ways!
You shall eat the fruit of your labor;
happiness and prosperity shall be yours.
Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house,
your children like olive shoots round about your table.
The man who fears the LORD
shall thus indeed be blessed.
The LORD bless you from Zion,
and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.
May you live to see your children's children;
may peace be upon Israel.*

When a passage from the Gospel is to be read, all stand, and the Deacon or Minister appointed says

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to _____.

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

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-10 (The Beatitudes)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

- “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
- “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*
- “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
- “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*
- “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*
- “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*
- “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 5:13-16 (You are the light...Let your light so shine)

Jesus said to the crowd, "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Matthew 7:21, 24-29 (Like a wise man who built his house upon the rock)

Jesus told the crowd, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell-- and great was its fall!"

Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Mark 10:6-9, 13-16 (They are no longer two but one)

Jesus said, "From the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

John 15:9-12 (Love one another as I have loved you)

Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

After the Gospel, the Reader says:

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

A homily or other response to the Readings may follow.

THE MARRIAGE

The Man, facing the woman and taking her right hand in his, says:

In the Name of God, 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, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

Then they loose their hands, and the Woman, still facing the man, takes his right hand in hers, and says:

In the Name of God, 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, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

They loose their hands.

The Priest may ask God's blessing on a ring or rings as follows:

Bless, O Lord, this ring to be a sign of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The giver places the ring on the ring-finger of the other's hand and says:

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.

Then the Celebrant joins the right hands of husband and wife 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 a ring, I pronounce that they are husband and wife, 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.

People **Amen.**

THE PRAYERS

All standing, the Celebrant 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.**

If Communion is to follow, the Lord's Prayer may be omitted here.

The Deacon or other person appointed reads the following prayers, to which the People respond, saying, Amen.

If there is not to be a Communion, one or more of the prayers may be omitted.

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 this man and this woman 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 BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE

The people remain standing. The husband and wife kneel, and the Priest says one of the following prayers:

Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life. We thank you, also, for consecrating the union of man and woman in his Name. By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessing upon this man and this woman. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and

in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death. Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

or this

O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, 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 for ever. Amen.

The husband and wife 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

The Celebrant may say 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.

When Communion is not to follow, the wedding party leaves the church. A hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.

AT THE EUCHARIST

The liturgy continues with the Offertory, at which the newly married couple may present the offerings of bread and wine.

At the Communion, it is appropriate that the newly married couple receive Communion first, after the ministers.

In place of the usual post-communion prayer, the following is said:

O God, the giver of all that is true and lovely and gracious: We give you thanks for binding us together in these holy mysteries of the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that by your Holy Spirit, N. and N., now joined in Holy Matrimony, may become one in heart and soul, live in fidelity and peace, and obtain those eternal joys prepared for all who love you; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As the wedding party leaves the church, a hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.

At the Offertory, it is desirable that the bread and wine be presented to the ministers by the newly married persons. They may then remain before the Lord's Table and receive Holy Communion before other members of the congregation.



THE CHURCH OF
ST JOHN THE DIVINE

CHANGING LIVES FOR GOD IN CHRIST

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