

CHURCH BLESSING OF CIVIL SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

(Parts of the ritual – the declaration that the couple wish for God’s blessing, the Lord’s Prayer and the Blessing – are authorised. The rest of the ritual is intended as a guide.)

PRELUDE

HYMN

GREETING

The Pastor:

The Lord be with you!

The Congregation:

And with your spirit! *or:* And also with you!

The Greeting may be omitted, or the Pastor may say:

The grace of our Lord, Jesus, Christ

and the love of God

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with you all!

or

Grace be with you and peace from God our Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTORY COLLECT

The Pastor:

Let us pray!

Dear God,

heavenly Father,

our life is in Your hands.

You follow us through days and nights.

We thank You for those people with whom we share our lives,

for each loving gaze, in the light of which we have matured,

and for each meeting that has opened the world to us.

We beseech You,

stretch out the heaven of Your love over us

and strengthen us with Your grace,

so that we never hesitate

to lay our lives in each other’s hands.

Amen.

ADDRESS/SERMON

EXCHANGE OF VOWS AND PRONOUNCEMENT

The Pastor:

N.N. and N.N.! You have already entered into marriage and have come into God’s house today to pray for God’s blessing on your life together.

I ask you N.N:

Will you love and honour N.N. and live with him/her for better or for worse until death do you part?

- I will!

Likewise I ask you N.N.:

Will you love and honour N.N. and live with him/her for better or for worse until death do you part?

- I will!

The Pastor continues:

The Apostle Paul writes:

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which is the bond of perfection."

INTERCESSION

The Pastor:

Let us pray!

The couple kneel, and the Pastor places his/her hands on their heads, and says:

Risen Lord and Saviour,

the source of love,

we beseech you:

Bless N.N. and N.N.,

grant them the faith of Your faith,

and the joy of Your joy.

Be with them as they live together in the new days to come,

until they one day shall meet You face to face.

Amen.

or

God who is goodness,

the source of love,

we beseech You:

Bless N.N. and N.N.

Let Your faithfulness and love light their path,

as they live together in the new days to come,

until You one day meet them face to face.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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,
forever and ever.
Amen.

Peace be with you!

Or

(contemporary)
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.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours,
now and forever.
Amen.

Peace be with you!

HYMN

READING

Reading(s) from the Bible (suggestions for readings are enclosed).

CONCLUDING COLLECT

The Pastor:
Let us pray!
God,
You who today have blessed N.N. and N.N.,
bless us all.
Open our hearts,
so that we can give ourselves without fear.
Let Your light surround us,
let Your mercy raise us up
and let us not walk alone.

Almighty God,
inscribe your commandments in our hearts
and make us alive.
Be with us through sorrows and joys
through all our time,
until the day when You gather us
and become all in all.
Amen.

or

Bountiful God!
We thank You for the gift
of life unfolding in
love and devotion,
We thank You that You have heard N.N. and N.N. promise each other
to walk together through life.
Let their promise remind us
of what we must take pains to do
in our life with one another.
Help us to reflect our promises
in Your life and resurrection,
so that our faith is strengthened,
our hope confirmed,
and we have the desire and the courage
to live in Your love.
In Jesus' name.
Amen.

BLESSING

The Pastor:

The Lord bless you and keep you!
The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you!
The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace!

The Congregation:

Amen. Amen. Amen.

HYMN

POSTLUDE

Note: *Pastors who for theological reasons do not wish to use this ritual are exempted from doing so.*