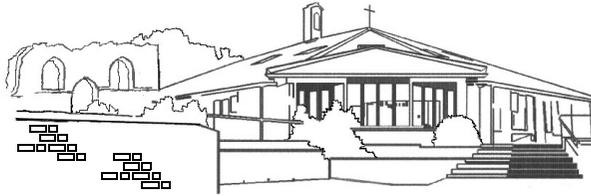


Bowthorpe Church



The Wedding Service



Prologue

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.

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

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The Marriage Service

Entrance of the bride

The bride and groom stand before the minister.

The Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to Bowthorpe church, for the celebration of the marriage between AB and CD.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them. *1 John*
4.16

Hymn – may be sung (optional)

Statement of Purpose

We have come together in the presence of God to witness the wedding of AB and CD, to rejoice with them and to surround them with our prayers.

We are created male and female in the image of God and marriage is a gift of God within creation.

God has given us marriage so that husband and wife may live faithfully together in plenty or in need, in sorrow or in joy, they give each other strength, friendship and healing.

With delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and so belong to one another in honour and in joy.

(In marriage, children may be born and nurtured that they may grow up in the security of love and come to know the freedom of faith.)

In marriage, husband and wife begin a new life together. They are a sign to the world of unity and loyalty; their love enriches society and strengthens community. Marriage is a way of life made holy by God. It is both joy and demand, grace and work. It is a gift and calling of God and is not to be entered into lightly or thoughtlessly, but reverently and responsibly. This is the way of life that A and C have chosen. They come to accept each other freely, to give their consent to one another in solemn promises, and to ask for God's blessing.

Prayer

Eternal God, you are with us this day
in the fullness of your love.
In the love of one for another we see your will for all creation.
In the tenderness of love's embrace we remember your love
once made flesh for us.
In the marriage of minds we know your Spirit between us and
among us.
Your love fills our hearts and draws us to one another with
holy desire.
Your love in us offers forgiveness and sets us free to be
together in peace.
Your love creates community and heals our deepest
loneliness.
This love you renew continually in A and C
and in all your people. Make them today a sign to us
of your love in all creation, of your enduring affection and
faithfulness, and of your joy in all that you have made.
May we see this day, before our eyes, the joy of love and the
hope of faith. Bless our celebration with your presence and
touch us with your Spirit, in Christ's name we pray,
Amen.

The Declarations

The minister says to the couple:

Before God and before this congregation,

I will ask you to declare your freedom and readiness to enter into the covenant of marriage.

I will also ask your families and this congregation to affirm their willingness to support you today and in the years to come.

Legal declarations:

Due notice of the intention of AB and CD to be married has been given and no objection has been made.

or

I ask the congregation:

if you know of any reason in law why AB and CD may not be joined in marriage, please declare it now.

To the couple:

I ask you, A and C, to declare that you know of no reason in law that you may not be married.

As required by law each one declares in the presence of the Authorized Person, or the Registrar, and two witnesses:

I declare that I know of no legal reason why I, AB, may not be joined in marriage to CD.

I declare that I know of no legal reason why I, CD, may not be joined in marriage to AB.

Prayer for Assurance and Sincerity

O God of all faithfulness, we pray for those who will make promises today: bless them with sincerity and give them your grace.

May A and C know that their love is both your will and your delight. May the promises they make govern the life they will lead. May your presence surround them, your faithfulness encourage them, your Spirit strengthen and guide them.

Amen.

The Promises

The man is asked:

AB will you take CD to be your wife in Christian marriage?

Will you love, comfort, honour and protect her, in times of prosperity and health and in times of trouble and suffering?

And will you be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

I will.

The woman is asked:

CD will you take AB to be your husband in Christian marriage?

Will you love, comfort, honour and protect him, in times of prosperity and health and in times of trouble and suffering?

And will you be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

I will.

The congregation is asked

Will you, the family and friends of A and C support and

uphold them in their marriage now and in the years to come?

We will.

The Vows

*The couple turn to face each other and join right hands.
In the presence of the Authorized Person, or the Registrar,
and two witnesses they exchange vows*

*(Please see appendix at end of this booklet for alternative
sets of vows.)*

The Giving and Receiving of Rings

The rings are given to the minister who prays:

Eternal God, whose love encircles us all,

bless the giving and receiving of these rings.

May they be signs of a love which never ends, beautiful, holy
and strong.

May they be tokens of commitment and faithfulness and

reminders of the promises and vows made today.

In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Each says in turn:

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,

all that I have I share with you,

within the holy love of God.

or

I give you this ring in God's name

as a sign of all that we have promised

and all that we shall share.

If only one ring is used, the minister prays:

Eternal God, whose love encircles us all,

bless the giving and receiving of this ring.

May it be a sign of a love which never ends, beautiful, holy and strong.

May it be a token of commitment and faithfulness and a reminder of the promises and vows made today.

In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The man says:

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,
all that I have I share with you,
within the holy love of God.**

or

**I give you this ring in God's name as a sign of all that we
have promised and all that we shall share.**

The woman replies:

I receive this ring as a sign of our marriage.

**With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you,
all that I have I share with you,
within the holy love of God.**

or

**I receive this ring in God's name as a sign of all that we
have promised and all that we shall share.**

*The couple may exchange other appropriate symbols
and gifts.*

The Blessing of the Marriage

The husband and wife kneel.

Most gracious God, source of all true love, we give you thanks that A and C have answered your call and have given themselves today to one another in the covenant of marriage.

Pour out the fullness of your blessing on them.

Lead them into that love which never comes to an end.

Give them grace to forgive when words or actions hurt.

Give them strength to persevere through times of testing and to support each other through darkness and distress.

May they be thankful for all that has brought them to this moment.

May they joyfully embrace this new beginning, and journey on with ever new delight.

Bless their families and friends, that they may be a constant source of strength.

Bless their home, that it may be a place of welcome.

(Bless them in the gift of children, that they may be wise and loving parents).

Bless all who celebrate with A and C, that love may flourish and friendship touch the lonely.

And grant that we, who today have witnessed the sharing and exchange of words and signs of love, may find our faith renewed and our hope restored.

May love, the greatest of all your gifts, stronger than death, gentle as a touch, bring us through every passing moment closer to Jesus Christ, our lover and our Lord.

Amen.

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. **Amen.**

Numbers 6:24-26

The Declaration of Marriage

A and C have declared before God and before you that they will live together in Christian marriage.

They have made promises to one another, have exchanged solemn vows and have symbolised their marriage today by joining hands and by the giving and receiving of rings.

I therefore declare them to be husband and wife, in the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate.

Greeting

The couple may kiss. The congregation may applaud.

The sign of peace may be shared.

Hymn – may be sung (optional)

Reading(s)

The Address

Prayers

The prayers conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

(Alternative version may be used)

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 for ever. Amen.

Hymn – may be sung (optional)

Registration of the Marriage

The register(s) or the marriage schedule is/are signed in the presence of witnesses.

The Blessing

May God who is light shine in your darkness.
May God who is love be the love between you.
May God who is life be your life everlasting.
And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you all, now and for ever, **Amen.**

or

May the God who made us for one another, who loves us
with a faithful love and whose spirit makes us passionate and
strong, bless you and embrace you, now and for ever,
Amen.

The bride and groom leave, followed by their family and friends.

Appendix

The Marriage Vows

Text A

*I, AB, do take you (thee), CD,
to be my wedded wife:*
in accordance with God's holy will,
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.
This is my solemn vow.

*I, CD, do take you (thee), AB,
to be my wedded husband:*
in accordance with God's holy will,
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.
This is my solemn vow.

Text B

***I, AB, do take you (thee), CD,
to be my wedded wife.***

I declare my love for you.

**I give myself to you
as your husband in Christian marriage.**

From this day,

I will share with you

in sorrow and joy,

in poverty and prosperity,

in sickness and health.

I will love you and honour you.

**I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.**

This is my vow.

***I, CD, do take you (thee), AB,
to be my wedded husband.***

I declare my love for you.

**I give myself to you
as your wife in Christian marriage.**

From this day,

I will share with you

in sorrow and joy,

in poverty and prosperity,

in sickness and health.

I will love you and honour you.

**I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.**

This is my vow.

Text C

***I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, AB,
do take thee, CD,
to be my lawful wedded wife:
in accordance with God's holy will,
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.
This is my solemn vow.***

***I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, CD,
do take thee, AB,
to be my lawful wedded husband:
in accordance with God's holy will,
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.
This is my solemn vow.***

Text D

***I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, AB, do take thee, CD,
to be my lawful wedded wife:***

I declare my love for you.

**I give myself to you
as your husband in Christian marriage.**

From this day,

**I will share with you
in sorrow and joy,
in poverty and prosperity,
in sickness and health.**

I will love you and honour you.

**I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.**

This is my vow.

***I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, CD, do take thee, AB,
to be my lawful wedded husband:***

I declare my love for you.

**I give myself to you
as your wife in Christian marriage.**

From this day,

**I will share with you
in sorrow and joy,
in poverty and prosperity,
in sickness and health.**

I will love you and honour you.

**I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.**

This is my vow.

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