A Form of Benediction for Married Persons

A Form of Benediction of Married Persons

1 Greeting

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

2 Introduction

One of the following introductions is used.

Either

2.A

May be read by the president and two others, or by the president alone.

President We have come together in the presence of God with N. and N., to celebrate their love for each other, and to ask God's benediction upon their marriage.

2nd Voice Through the ages, people on great journeys have stopped at important places, and at decisive moments, to build cairns at the roadside to which they and others can always return.

3rd Voice Our life consists not only in being but also in becoming, it is a journey in which we grow and are transformed.

President The great stories of God's people and the coming of Jesus proclaim the faithfulness of God's covenant and promise. God as Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) reveals to us the very nature of love in relationship. Relationships give human life its purpose and direction.

2nd Voice N. and N.'s relationship is a great journey that, in different ways, we have travelled and will continue to travel with them. Today we pause along the way to gather at a decisive and important moment for us all. They have been married.

Cont'd

3rd Voice We mark this decisive moment in N. and N.'s journey now, adding to the cairn the stones of our love, our support and our prayers for them as they make their promises.

President Creating and Redeeming God,
it is your love which draws us together.
Through the love which we have for one another,
may we also grow in love for you.
Walking with Christ as our companion on the way,
may we come to share the joy
which you have prepared for all who love you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen. *New Zealand, adapted*

Or

2.B

We have come together in the presence of God with N. and N., to share their joy in getting married and to promise them our support and our love.

Marriage is a gift of God and a sign of God's grace. In the life-long union of marriage, we can know the love of God, who made us in the divine image, man and woman.

Marriage finds its origin in God's own being. God is Love, and so spouses, giving themselves to one another in love throughout their lives, reflect the very being of God.

Marriage cannot exist on its own. God's call to live faithfully together, to love one another with respect, tenderness and delight, is part of the call to love all people. This love empowers them to care for others [and to nurture children]. By this love human dignity will flourish and deepen.

Cont'd

This is the life that N. and N. have begun, and in which we will support and strengthen them. We pray that God's presence may surround and enfold them, today and in the years to come.

Gracious God,
in Christ you reveal your love, your power and your joy.
May that love draw us closer to you,
that power strengthen us in service,
and that joy pervade our whole being.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen. *Adapted from a traditional blessing*

Or

2.C

We have come together in the presence of God, to rejoice in the marriage of N. and N., to ask his blessing on them, and to share their joy. Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and through his Spirit he is with us now.

The Scriptures teach us that marriage is a gift of God in Creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which two people become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as a couple give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.

Marriage is given, that a couple may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given, that they may have children and be blessed in caring for them and bringing them up in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.

In marriage two people belong to one another, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life which all should honour; and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

Cont'd

This is the way of life, created and hallowed by God, that N. and N. have begun. Now they will each give their consent to the other; they will join hands and exchange solemn vows, and in token of this they will give and receive a ring.

Therefore, on this day we pray with them, that, strengthened by God, they may fulfil his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

God our Father,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law.
Grant to your servants
that, loving one another,
they may continue in your love
until their lives' end;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen. *Alternative Service Book, 1980*

3 Declarations of Intention

The president addresses one of the persons to be married

Forasmuch as you have been joined together in marriage and have come now to ask for the blessing of the Church, I ask you both whether you are willing to promise by the help of God to fulfil the obligations which Christian marriage demands.
N., do you give yourself to N.?
I do.

Will you love him/her, respect him/her,
and be for ever faithful to him/her?
I will.

The president addresses the other

N., do you give yourself to N.?
I do.

Will you love him/her, respect him/her,
and be for ever faithful to him/her?
I will.

The president addresses the families

Will you, the families of N. and N.,
uphold and care for them in their life together?
We will.

The president addresses the congregation

Will all of you support and encourage N. and N. in their marriage?
We will.

May God, who gave you the will to declare these intentions,
give you also the grace to fulfil them.
Amen.

4 The Liturgy of the Word

*Readings are selected from **one** of the following sets of readings, which are arranged by theme.*

Between the reading(s) and the prayer a hymn, psalm or song may be sung or a sermon may be preached, but the prayer at the end of this section should lead immediately into Section 5, The Promises.

4.A Journey

Ruth 1.16-18	Where you go, I will go
Tobit 8.5b-8	May we grow old together
Ephesians 3.14-19	May Christ dwell in your hearts
Luke 12.22-31	Do not worry about your life
Luke 12.32-34	Simple treasure

Those who are to be married stand in front of the president.
The president says one of the following prayers, which leads directly into Section 5, The Promises.

Either O God, whom to follow
is to risk our whole lives:
as Ruth and Naomi
loved and held to one another,
abandoning the ways of the past,
so may N. and N. not be divided,
but travel together
into that strange land where you will lead us
through Jesus Christ.
Amen. *All Desires Known*

Or Generous God,
may we journey always along your way,
touched by your love,
humbled by your constancy
and gladdened in heart
by Christ's indwelling,
our richest, abiding treasure;
for his sake.
Amen.

Go to Section 5, The Promises.

4.B Love

Song of Songs 2.8-14	My love, my fair one
Song of Songs 8.6-7	Many waters cannot quench love
1 Cor. 12.31-13.13	The greatest is love
Colossians 3.12-17	The love which binds together
1 John 4.7-16	Love is from God
Luke 7.36-48	Love and gratitude

Those who are to be married stand in front of the president.
The president says one of the following prayers, which leads directly into Section 5, The Promises.

Either Merciful and forgiving God,
grant that N. and N.,
their families, and all who care for them,
may accept your generous love.
Heal their memories, comfort them,
and send them from here
renewed and hopeful;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen. *New Zealand, adapted*

Or Creator God,
before the world was brought into being,
your love reached out to establish it.
Before you made us in your image and likeness,
you humbled yourself to make room for us.
Open our eyes to glimpse your beauty
in all whom you give us to love,
and guide our love to find its perfection
in reflecting your compassion, your forgiveness;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Go to Section 5, The Promises.

4.C Joy

Sirach 26.1-4	A good wife
Philippians 4.4-9	Joyful in God
John 2.1-11	A wedding feast

Those who are to be married stand in front of the president.
The president says one of the following prayers, which leads directly into Section 5, The Promises.

Either God of faithful love,
be to N. and N. a strong consolation,
an ever-present help,
and give them your joy in its fulness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen. *New Every Morning, adapted*

Or Loving God,
in the joy of intimate companionship
we sense your presence and your faithfulness.
Help us to rejoice in all that you have given,
and to welcome what you still have in store for us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Go to Section 5, The Promises.

4.D Companionship

Genesis 2.4-9,15-24	Man and woman
Ecclesiastes 4.9-12	Two have a good reward
Romans 12.4-13	Sharing in love
Ephesians 4.1-6	The bond of peace
Mark 10.6-9,13-16	The new home

Those who are to be married stand in front of the president.
The president says one of the following prayers, which leads directly into Section 5, The Promises.

Either Holy Creator Spirit, you made us and you change us.
Let your loving wisdom work with N. and N.,
deepening and developing their desire,
moulding and freeing their generosity.
May they achieve stability
and sweetness in their daily lives
until their lives shall end;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen. *New Zealand*

Or God of peace and of unity,
you have made us for one another and for you.
As you draw us closer together in love,
so make us more truly ourselves;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Go to Section 5, The Promises.

4.E God

Genesis 1.26-29a,31a	Made in God's image
Jeremiah 31.31-34	I their God, they my people
Ephesians 5.1-2,21-33	Love as Christ loved
Philippians 1.9-11	Love that overflows
John 15.1-8	Bearing fruit

Those who are to be married stand in front of the president.
The president says one of the following prayers, which leads directly into Section 5, The Promises.

Either Look on your servants N. and N.,
and teach them to care for one another,
for you alone, our God,
are love's source and secret;
we ask this for Jesus' sake.
Amen. *New Zealand, adapted*

Or God of life,
giving yourself without limit,
enter our hearts and set us free
to love as you have loved us
and be fruitful as you have commanded;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Go to Section 5, The Promises.

4.F Faith

Ecclesiastes 3.1-8	A time for everything
1 John 3.18-24	Love in truth and action
Revelation 19.6-9	The celebratory feast
Matthew 5.2-11	The truly blessed
Matthew 7.21,24-27	Hearing and doing

Those who are to be married stand in front of the president.
The president says one of the following prayers, which leads directly into Section 5, The Promises.

Either God our Father,
you call us to ventures
of which we cannot see the ending
and by paths as yet untrodden.
Give N. and N. faith to go out always with good courage,
knowing that in your power alone they are made strong
and that your love will never fail them;
we ask this in Christ's name.
Amen. *New Every Morning, adapted*

Or God of truth and integrity,
you assign to everything its time.
Help us so to live the good news of your love
that in our times of affliction we may raise our eyes
and see beyond the Cross of suffering
the joy of the Resurrection feast;
in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Go to Section 5, The Promises.

4.G Family

Genesis 12.1-3	The families of the earth
Ephesians 3.14-19(20)	Every family in heaven and on earth
Colossians 3.12-20	Bear with one another
Mark 10.6-9(10-12)13-16	What God has joined together

Those who are to be married stand in front of the president.
The president says one of the following prayers, which leads directly into Section 5, The Promises.

Either

Heavenly Father, tender and compassionate,
create in N. and N. a love so deep and true,
that in this broken world they may be a sign of unity.
May they nurture, support and inspire
the children with whom you may entrust them
to enjoy your blessing and to serve your world;
through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen. *New Zealand, adapted*

Or

God of all patience and compassion,
your blessing brings strength from frailty.
Give us such a measure of the love of Christ
that we may bear with one another in humility.
Through the children whom you set in our midst
may we discover the secret of your kingdom
and learn what it means to trust;
in the name of Jesus Christ.

Go to Section 5, The Promises.

5 The Promises

Either

5.A

N. and N. face each other.
One of them takes the other's right hand and says

Before God and our friends,
in our loving and lifelong marriage,
I, N., give myself to you, N.
I promise to be with you,
in sorrow and in joy,
in need and in plenty,
in frailty and in strength.
God keep me
always true to this promise.

They loose hands. The other takes the first's right hand and says

Before God and our friends,
in our loving and lifelong marriage
I, N., give myself to you, N.
I promise to be with you,
in sorrow and in joy,
in need and in plenty,
in frailty and in strength.
God keep me
always true to this promise.

They loose hands.

Or

5.B

N. and N. face each other.
One of them takes the other's right hand and says

I, N., take you my wife/husband/spouse N.
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,
according to God's holy law;
and this is my solemn vow.

They loose hands. The other takes the first's right hand and says

I, N., take you my wife/husband/spouse N.
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,
according to God's holy law;
and this is my solemn vow.

They loose hands.

6 The Giving and Receiving of Rings

A blessing of the rings, if desired, is provided in the Notes for Guidance.

Either

6.A

N. and N. face each other and, in silence,
each in turn places a ring on the other's finger.

Or

6.B

N. and N. face each other.
One of them places a ring on the other's finger, saying

N., I give you this ring
as I give you myself,
all that I have,
and all that I am.

The other places a ring on the first's finger, saying

N., I give you this ring
as I give you myself,
all that I have,
and all that I am.

Or

6.C

N. and N. face each other.
One of them places a ring on the other's finger saying

N., 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,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The other places a ring on the first's finger, saying

N., 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,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Or, if only one ring is given, the one who receives it says

N., I receive this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

7 The Proclamation

As N. and N. continue to face each other, joining hands, the congregation says

Either

We have witnessed the promises of N. and N..
As they are pledged to each other in love,
so we promise, in hope,
to be a living sign of love in the world.

Or

We have witnessed the promises of N. and N..
Together we now handsel them.
As they are pledged to each other in love,
so we promise, in hope,
to be a living sign of love in the world.

This is followed by

Either

The president says to N. and N.

N. and N., having been married according to the law of the land
I now declare that you have made your vows
before God and before those gathered here,
The peace of the Lord be with you.

Or

The president says to the congregation

N. and N. having been married,
have come to this place seeking the blessing of the church.
I now declare they have made their promises
before God and before those gathered here,

8 The Peace

The president says to the congregation

We meet in Christ's name.

The congregation responds

Let us share his peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

9 The Registration

The service may be recorded in an appropriate service register of the church in the sight of the people.
If papers relating to the marriage are available an annotation may be added noting the details of the service of Benediction either at this time or at a later date.

10 The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Blessing

When the Eucharist is celebrated Section 10.D (Eucharistic form) is used.

When the Eucharist is not celebrated one of the forms 10.A (full form), 10.B (shorter form), or 10.C (simple form) is used.

If others join in leading the petitions in 10.A and 10.B, the president should say the final blessing.

After the Blessing in 10.A, 10.B and 10.C the Lord's Prayer is said.

Cont'd

Either

10.A (full form)

Give thanks to our gracious God:
whose mercy endures for ever.

God, holy and constant,
the First, the Last, the Living One:
To you we give worship and praise.

God, mysterious and eternal,
hidden, yet everywhere present:
To you we give worship and praise.

God, source of all life,
creation's goal and protector:
To you we give worship and praise.

In your love you formed N. and N.,
a gracious gift to their families,
whose love in turn has nurtured them,
releasing them to love one another:
we offer them now to your care.

In the journey that is each of our lives,
you have brought us all to this point,
sharing with N. and N. their hopes,
and committing all our futures to your love:
we offer them now to your care.

In the love they have declared to one another
you show us what it means to trust,
exulting and delighting in each other
with the joy which was yours when you made us:
we offer them now to your care.

Lord of the ages, we bless you,
for you formed us human beings:
Lord of the ages, we bless you.

Lord of the ages, we bless you,
for you cause us to rejoice in our children:
[*or:* to rejoice in one another]
Lord of the ages, we bless you.

May N. and N., in their marriage,
be upheld in your faithful love:
Lord of all kindness, guard them.

May your peace enfold them for ever
and their home be free from all evil:
Lord of all kindness, guard them.

May your wisdom and understanding surround them
and sustain them in sickness and in sorrow:
Lord of all kindness, guard them.

May they learn, throughout their life together,
the power of your promise, "You are blest:"
Lord of all kindness, guard them.

May they, and all in their household,
be a living temple of your glory:
Lord of all kindness, guard them.

[May their children be guided in your way
and know that your blessing is upon them:
Lord of all kindness, guard them.]

Give thanks to our gracious God:
Whose mercy endures for ever.

Cont'd

Either

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

Or

N. and N.,
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, NRSV*

Or

N. and N.,
God the Holy Trinity
bless, preserve and keep you;
grant you such riches of grace
that you may please God in Body and soul,
live faithfully together in love,
and receive the blessings of eternal life.
Amen. *Alternative Service Book 1980, adapted*

Or

N. and N.,
the blessing of God be upon you,
that good may come to you;
the blessing of Christ be upon you,
that good be done to you;
the blessing of the Holy Spirit be yours,
that good may be the course of your life,
each day of your arising,
each night of your lying down,
for evermore.
Amen. *From the Gaelic*

Cont'd

Either

As our Saviour has taught us,
so we pray:

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.
Do not bring us
to the time of trial
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Or

As our Saviour Christ has commanded
and taught us, we are bold to say:

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

Go to Section 11, Conclusion.

Or

10.B (shorter form)

Give thanks to our gracious God:
whose mercy endures for ever.

God, holy and constant,

the First, the Last, the Living One:
To you we give worship and praise.

In your love you formed N. and N.,
a gracious gift to their families:
we offer them now to your care.

In the journey that is each of our lives,
you have brought us all to this point:
we offer them now to your care. *Cont'd*

In the love they have declared to one another
you show us what it means to trust:
we offer them now to your care.

Lord of the ages, we bless you,
for you formed us human beings:
Lord of the ages, we bless you.

Lord of the ages, we bless you,
for you cause us to rejoice in our children:
[*or:* to rejoice in one another]
Lord of the ages, we bless you.

May N. and N., in their marriage,
be upheld in your faithful love:
Lord of all kindness, guard them.

May your peace enfold them for ever
and their home be free from all evil:
Lord of all kindness, guard them.

May your wisdom and understanding surround them
and sustain them in sickness and in sorrow:
Lord of all kindness, guard them.

Give thanks to our gracious God:
Whose mercy endures for ever.

Either

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

Or

N. and N.,
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, NRSV*

Or

N. and N.,
God the Holy Trinity
bless, preserve and keep you;
grant you such riches of grace
that you may please God in Body and soul,
live faithfully together in love,
and receive the blessings of eternal life.
Amen. *Alternative Service Book 1980, adapted*

Or

N. and N.,
the blessing of God be upon you,
that good may come to you;
the blessing of Christ be upon you,
that good be done to you;
the blessing of the Holy Spirit be yours,
that good may be the course of your life,
each day of your arising,
each night of your lying down,
for evermore.
Amen. *From the Gaelic*

Either

As our Saviour has taught us,
so we pray:

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.
Do not bring us
to the time of trial
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Or

As our Saviour Christ has commanded
and taught us, we are bold to say:

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

Go to Section 11, Conclusion.

Or

10.C (simple form)

God of love and faithfulness,
uphold N. and N. in their marriage
and enfold them in your peace.
Give them wisdom and understanding
and sustain them in sickness and sorrow.
Teach them, throughout their life together,
the power of your promise, "You are blest."

Either

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

Or

N. and N.,
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, NRSV*

Or

N. and N.,
God the Holy Trinity
bless, preserve and keep you;
grant you such riches of grace
that you may please God in Body and soul,
live faithfully together in love,
and receive the blessings of eternal life.
Amen. *Alternative Service Book 1980, adapted*

Or

N. and N., the blessing of God be upon you,
that good may come to you;
the blessing of Christ be upon you,
that good be done to you;
the blessing of the Holy Spirit be yours,
that good may be the course of your life,
each day of your arising, each night of your lying down,
for evermore.
Amen.

From the Gaelic

Cont'd

Either

As our Saviour has taught us,
so we pray:

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.
Do not bring us
to the time of trial
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Or

As our Saviour Christ has commanded
and taught us, we are bold to say:

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

Go to Section 11, Conclusion.

Or

10.D (Eucharistic form)

Bread and wine are placed on the altar.
The words at Section 6 of Scottish Liturgy 1982 may be used.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

God, holy and constant,
the First, the Last, the Living One,
to you we give worship and praise.

Out of your very self,
you brought forth our human race,
fashioning us in your likeness,
imaging your nature in ours.

Out of your very self,
expressed in a man from Nazareth,
you own our joys and our sorrows
and take them to yourself in sacrifice.

Out of your very self,
your creative, renewing breath
brings life to things that were dead,
showing promise beyond all our hopes.

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,
one God whose power is compassion,
you invite us to share your own life,
for love is your nature and your name.

As children of your redeeming purpose,
with N. and N. and their loved ones,
we offer you our praise,
with angels and archangels
and the whole company of heaven,
singing the hymn of your unending glory:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Receive our praise and thanksgiving for Jesus Christ, your Son.
In him your eternal Word took flesh and lived among us.

Your love poured out in him hallows our love and our longing.
His is the life lived for others,
the sign of your reconciling power.

On the night when he was given up to death,
knowing that his hour had come,
having loved his own, he loved them to the end.
At supper with his disciples
he took bread and offered you thanks.
He broke the bread,
and gave it to them, saying:
'Take, eat. This is my Body: it is broken for you.'
After supper, he took the cup,
he offered you thanks, and gave it to them, saying:
'Drink this, all of you.
This is my Blood of the new covenant;
it is poured out for you, and for all,
that sins may be forgiven.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

Cont'd

We now obey your Son's command.
We recall his blessed passion and death,
his glorious resurrection and ascension;
and we look for the coming of his Kingdom.
Made one with him, we offer you these gifts
and with them ourselves,
a single, holy, living sacrifice.

Hear us, most merciful Father,
and send your Holy Spirit upon us
and upon this bread and this wine,
that, overshadowed by his life-giving power,
they may be the Body and Blood of your Son,
and we may be kindled with the fire of your love
and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

May N. and N. in their marriage
be upheld in your faithful love.
May your peace enfold them for ever
and their home be free from all evil.
May your wisdom and understanding surround them
and sustain them in sickness and in sorrow.
May they learn, throughout their life together,
the power of your promise, "You are blest."

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be to you,
Lord of all ages,
world without end.

Amen.

The president leaves the altar to stand before the couple for the Marriage Blessing, and then returns to the altar for the Fraction and Lord's Prayer.

Benediction of the Couple

The president says

Either

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

Or

N. and N.,
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, NRSV*

Or

N. and N.,
God the Holy Trinity
bless, preserve and keep you;
grant you such riches of grace
that you may please God in Body and soul,
live faithfully together in love,
and receive the blessings of eternal life.
Amen. *Alternative Service Book 1980, adapted*

Or

N. and N.,
the blessing of God be upon you,
that good may come to you;
the blessing of Christ be upon you,
that good be done to you;
the blessing of the Holy Spirit be yours,
that good may be the course of your life,
each day of your arising,
each night of your lying down,
for evermore.
Amen. *From the Gaelic*

The service continues with Scottish Liturgy 1982, Section 19, the Breaking of the Bread, Section 20, Lord's Prayer, and Section 21, Communion.

After Communion

Give thanks to our gracious God,
whose mercy endures for ever.

Go to Section 11, Conclusion.

11 Conclusion

The president says

God of all the world,
as you have called together N. and N.,
so we have come together in your love.

As in your presence,
N. and N. have promised to love each other,
so we have promised to support them.

Either

N. and N. say

N. As we have declared
our love for each other,
N. May we declare your love
for all the world.

Or

The president says

As N. and N. have declared their love for each other,
may they declare your love for all the world.

The president continues

As you have blessed
N. and N. in their marriage,
bless us now in our lives.
Make us, like them,
a blessing to one another and to you.

Christ go before us to guide our steps
Christ be within us to kindle our vision
Christ shine from us to give joy to the world.

The newly-married lead the congregation from the church.

Sources

A Form of Benediction of Married Persons – Scottish Prayer Book 1929

Marriage Liturgy 2007 – Scottish Episcopal Church

Notes for Guidance

Hymns
Hymns or songs could be sung at the following places in the Liturgy:

- *before Section 1, Greeting, Introduction, and Declarations of Intention.*
- *after Section 3, Declarations of Intention, especially where Sections 1, 2 and 3 are conducted near the entrance of the church. The hymn may then accompany the procession into the church, before the service continues at Section 4, Liturgy of the Word.*
- *Between, or after, the readings in Section 4.*
- *Before or after Section 9, the Registration.*
- *Before Section 10, Conclusion.*

Sections 1, 2, 3, Greeting, Introduction, and Declarations of Intention
The Greeting, Introduction, and Declarations may take place near the entrance of the Church, and be followed by a hymn, during which the president may lead the couple and their attendants to the Sanctuary or Chancel for the Liturgy of the Word.

Section 3, Declarations of Intention
'The president addresses the families' - *For pastoral reasons the question addressed to the families may be omitted, or 'Families' may be interpreted as 'Friends'.*

Section 4, Liturgy of the Word
Readings are selected from one of the sets of readings, which are arranged by theme. Non-scriptural readings may be included, in addition to at least one of the scriptural readings provided.
If the Eucharist is to be celebrated, one of the readings must be from the Gospels. Between the reading(s) and the prayer a hymn, psalm or song may be sung or a sermon may be preached, but the prayer at the end of this section should lead immediately *into Section 5, The Promises.*

Sections 5 and 6, The Promises, and The Giving and Receiving of Rings
It is very desirable that the couple turn and face each other to take each other by the hand during the Promises and the Giving and Receiving of Rings.

Section 6, The Giving and Receiving of Rings
If a specific blessing of the rings is desired here, the president says

Either
N. and N.,
may God bless your giving and receiving of these rings.
May your hearts and minds be strengthened
by wonder in creation, patience in suffering, and generosity in love.
Amen.

Or
Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let *these rings* be to N. and N.
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness,
to remind them of the vow and covenant
which they have made
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

If desired, the couple may exchange gifts, other than rings, which carry comparable symbolic significance.

Section 7, The Proclamation
'Handsel' - *an old Scots word, meaning 'a gift bestowed to commemorate an inaugural occasion, event or season', or 'to give or offer such a gift to mark some special occasion such as the wearing of new clothes.' (Grant and Murison, eds, 'Scottish National Dictionary', Edinburgh 1960, pp 32-33).*
'Handsel Monday is the first Monday of the year, when pennies are given to handsel the New Year.' (James Nicol Jarvie, 'Lallans', London 1947). 'Handsel' *is used in this liturgy to mean the support and prayers of friends and family, often signified by gifts to the newly married.*

Alternative proclamations provide for either the couple or the congregation to be addressed.

The traditional sign of joining the hands of the couple with the president's stole, may be used to accompany the Proclamation.

Section 8, The Peace
The president may introduce the Peace with appropriate explanatory words.

Section 10, The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Blessing
The president may introduce the Prayer of Thanksgiving and Blessing with explanatory words.

God's blessing is the divine response to our thanksgiving. Here we are giving thanks for the married couple, and God responds in blessing them. The litany form (10.A or 10.B) allows for the active participation of all the people in the Prayer of Thanksgiving and Blessing. Like all litanies it requires lively expression, with no pauses between the petitions.

When the Eucharist is celebrated, the Eucharistic Prayer (in 10.D) includes intercession for the newly-married, and concludes with their Blessing.

We give thanks (the meaning of 'eucharist') for bread and wine, for the people of God, for all life, and for the newly-married couple. God responds in blessing everything for which we give thanks.

In 10.D (Eucharistic form) the president should leave the altar at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, stand before the couple for the Blessing of the Couple, and return to the altar for the Breaking of the Bread.