



# The Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant

## ***Additional Directions***

*The liturgy for the Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant is **not** intended for use in the context of a regularly scheduled Sunday Service.*

*The liturgy **may not** be altered or adapted from this form in any way, with the exception of readings from Scripture, other than the suggested readings, may be used as appropriate and with the permission of the Priest.*

*Personally written vows **may not** be incorporated into this liturgy.*

*Music may be added where appropriate.*

## **The Word of God**

*At the time appointed, the community gathers with the couple standing before the Presider; there is no processional.*

*The Presider says the following, the people standing*

Dear friends in Christ, we have gathered together today to witness *N. N.* and *N. N.* publically committing themselves to one another and, in the name of the Church, to bless their union. Let us pray, then, that they may be strengthened for the promises they make this day, and that we will have the generosity to support them in what they undertake and the wisdom to see God at work in their life together.

## **The Collect of the Day**

*Presider*           The Lord be with you  
*People*             And also with you.

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

## The Lessons

*The people sit. Then one or more of the following passages of Scripture is read. If the Holy Communion is to be celebrated, a passage from the Gospels always concludes the Readings.*

Ruth 1:16-17  
1 Samuel 18:1b, 3, 20:16-17, 42a;  
    *or* 1 Samuel 18:1-4  
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12  
Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 8:6-7  
Micah 4:1-4

Romans 12:9-18  
1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13 2  
Corinthians 5:17-20  
Galatians 5:14, 22-26  
Ephesians 3:14-21  
Colossians 3:12-17  
1 John 3:18-24  
1 John 4:7-16, 21

*When a biblical passage other than one from the Gospels is to be read, the Reader announces it with these words*

*Reader* A Reading from \_\_\_\_\_.

*After the Reading, the Reader may say*

*Reader*           The Word of the Lord.  
*People*           Thanks be to God.

*Between the Readings, a Psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sung or said. Appropriate Psalms are:*

Psalm 65  
Psalm 67  
Psalm 85:7-13  
Psalm 98  
Psalm 100  
Psalm 126  
Psalm 127  
Psalm 133  
Psalm 148  
Psalm 149:1-5

*All standing, the Deacon or Priest reads the Gospel, first saying*

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to \_\_\_\_\_.

*After the Gospel, the Reader says*

                  The Gospel of the Lord.  
*People* Praise to you, Lord Christ.

*Appropriate passages from the Gospels are:*

Matthew 5:1-16  
Mark 12:28-34  
Luke 6:32-38  
John 15:9-17  
John 17:1-2, 18-26

*A Homily may follow and should be included if there is to be a celebration of the Holy Eucharist*

## **Commitment**

*The couple stands, facing the Presider.*

*Presider*        *N. and N., I invite you now, illumined by the Word of God  
and strengthened by the prayer of this community,  
to make your covenant before God and the Church.*

*Each member of the couple faces the other and says*

In the name of God,  
I, *N.*, give myself to you, *N.*  
I will support and care for you by the grace of God:  
enduring all things, bearing all things.  
I will hold and cherish you in the love of Christ:  
in times of plenty, and in times of want.  
I will honor and love you with the Spirit's help: forsaking all others,  
as long as we both shall live.  
This is my solemn vow.

*The Presider addresses those present, saying*

*Presider*  
Will all of you here gathered support and uphold this couple in the covenant they make?

*People*    We will.

*If rings are to be exchanged, they are brought before the Presider, who prays using the following words*

Let us pray.

Bless, O God, these rings  
as signs of the enduring covenant  
*N. and N.* have made with each other,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*The two people place the rings on the fingers of one another, first the one, then the other, saying*

*N., receive this ring as a symbol of my abiding love.*

## **Pronouncement**

*The Presider says*

Inasmuch as *N.* and *N.* have exchanged vows of love and fidelity in the presence of God and the Church, I now pronounce that they are bound to one another in a holy covenant, as long as they both shall live. *Amen.*

## The Prayers

*Presider* Now, let us pray for *N.* and *N.* in their life together and for the concerns of this community.

*A Deacon or another leader bids prayers for the couple.*  
*A bar in the margin indicates a bidding that may be omitted.*

*Leader* For *N.* and *N.*, seeking your blessing and the blessing of your holy people;  
Lord, in your mercy

*People* Hear our prayer.

*Leader* For a spirit of loving-kindness to shelter them all their days;  
Lord, in your mercy

*People* Hear our prayer.

*Leader* For friends to support them and communities to enfold them;  
Lord, in your mercy

*People* Hear our prayer.

*Leader* For peace in their home and love in their family;  
Lord, in your mercy

*People* Hear our prayer.

*Leader* For grace when they hurt each other, to recognize and acknowledge their fault,  
and to seek each other's forgiveness and yours;

Lord, in your mercy

*People* Hear our prayer.

*Leader* For the outpouring of your love through their work and witness;  
Lord, in your mercy

*People* Hear our prayer.

*Leader* For the wisdom to care and nurture the children you may entrust (*have entrusted*) to  
them;

Lord, in your mercy

*People* Hear our prayer.

*Leader* For the strength to keep our vows and commitments: Lord, in your mercy

*People* Hear our prayer

*The Presider concludes the Prayers with the following or another appropriate Collect*

Giver of every gift, source of all goodness,  
hear the prayers we bring before you  
for *N.* and *N.*, who seek your blessing this day.

Give them a share in the saving work of Jesus, who gave himself for us, and bring about the fullness of life he promised, who now lives and reigns forever and ever. *Amen.*

*If the Eucharist is to follow, the Lord's Prayer is omitted here.*

*Leader*

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

*People and Leader*

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

## **Blessing of the Couple**

*As the couple stands or kneels, the Presider invokes God's blessing upon them, saying*

Let us pray.

Most gracious God,  
we praise you for the tender mercy and  
unfailing care revealed to us in Jesus the Christ  
and for the great joy and comfort bestowed upon us  
in the gift of human love.  
We give you thanks for *N.* and *N.*,  
and the covenant of faithfulness they have made.  
Pour out the abundance of your Holy Spirit upon them.  
Keep them in your steadfast love;  
protect them from all danger;  
fill them with your wisdom and peace;  
lead them in holy service to each other and the world;  
And bless them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **The Peace**

*The Presider bids the Peace.*

*Presider*            The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People            And also with you.

*The service ends here unless Holy Eucharist follows.*

### **At the Eucharist**

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

*The following proper preface may be used.*

Because in the giving of two people to each other in faithful love  
you reveal the joy and abundant life you share with your  
Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

*The following post communion prayer may be used.*

God of our strength and joy,  
we thank you for the communion of our life together,  
and for the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ.  
Grant that in witness to the covenant made today by N. and N.,  
it may renew our hope and nourish us for the work you set before us,  
to witness to the presence of Christ in the world,  
through the power of your Spirit,  
and to the glory of your Name. Amen.