

## **THE ENTRY OF THE BRIDE**

*'Bridal Chorus' from 'Lohengrin' by Richard Wagner (1850)*

*Music played by Allan Clowes*

## **THE WELCOME**

**Ti:** We meet together in the presence of God to witness the marriage of Neil Thomas Welch and Debra Susan Skade to ask God's blessing upon them, to support them with our prayers and to share their joy.

**Please be seated**

## **PRAYER**

Gracious God, your generous love surrounds us, and everything we enjoy comes from you. We confess our ingratitude for your goodness and our selfishness in using your gifts. Forgive and renew us, and fill us with Your Spirit, that in true thankfulness we may bear witness to your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

## POEM

### **These I can promise**

*read by Craig Rippe*

I cannot promise you a life of sunshine;  
I cannot promise riches, wealth or gold;  
I cannot promise you an easy pathway  
That leads away from change or growing old.

But I can promise all my heart's devotion;  
A smile to chase away your tears of sorrow;  
A love that's ever true and ever growing;  
A hand to hold through each tomorrow.'

*Mark Twain (1835-1910)*

## DECLARATION

### Bridal party stand

**Ti:** Neil and Debra, with your families and friends, we thank God on this day for the gift of marriage. It is the will of God that, in marriage, husband and wife should experience a unity of heart, body and mind; comfort and companionship; enrichment and encouragement; tenderness and trust. It is the will of God that marriage should be honoured as a way of life in which we may know the security of love and care. No one should enter into this lightly or selfishly for marriage involves the giving of a man and a woman wholeheartedly to each other. Christ in His self-giving comes to our help, for He loves us and gave himself for us.

Neil and Debra, you are now to share this way of life which God has created and, in Christ, has blessed. Today, we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen you, that you may fulfil God's purposes for the rest of your lives.

Neil and Debra are now to make the declarations which the law requires.

**Ti to Neil:** Are you, Neil Thomas Welch, free lawfully to marry Debra Susan Skade?

**Neil:** I am.

**Ti to Debra:** Are you, Debra Susan Skade, free lawfully to marry Neil Thomas Welch?

**Debra:** I am.

## THE VOWS

**Ti to Debra & Neil:** You have made the declarations required by law. I ask you now to affirm, in the presence of us all, your intention to marry each other.

**Ti to Neil:** Neil, are you willing to give yourself in marriage to Debra?

**Neil:** I am

**Ti to Neil:** Will you love her, comfort and honour her, be her companion through all the joys and sorrows of life, and be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

**Neil:** With God's help, I will.

**Ti to Debra:** Debra, are you willing to give yourself in marriage to Neil?

**Debra:** I am

**Ti to Debra:** Will you love him, comfort and honour him, be his companion through all the joys and sorrows of life, and be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

**Debra:** With God's help, I will.

## THE MARRIAGE

**All stand**

**Ti:** I ask you, the families and friends of Neil and Debra: Will you do all in your power to support and encourage them in their marriage?

**All:** With God's help, we will.

**Ti:** Who presents Debra to be married to Neil?

**Peter McCormick:** I do.

**All be seated except the bride and groom**

**Ti:** Gracious God, as you have brought Neil and Debra together in love and trust, enable them through the power of Your Holy Spirit to make and keep their vows; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

Neil takes Debra's right hand in his and says:

I Neil Thomas Welch, take you, Debra Susan Skade, to be my wedded wife, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, from this day forward, until we are parted by death; and this is my solemn vow.

Debra takes Neil's right hand in hers and says:

I Debra Susan Skade, take you, Neil Thomas Welch, to be my wedded husband, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, from this day forward, until we are parted by death; and this is my solemn vow.

## THE GIVING OF THE RINGS

**All stand**

**Ti:** Who has the rings?

Jon Bell places the rings on the book

**Ti:** Eternal God, bless these rings that they may be a symbol of love and trust between Neil and Debra.

**All:** Amen.

Neil places the ring on Debra's finger and says:

I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage. 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.

Debra places the ring on Neil's finger and says:

I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage. 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.

Ti joins the right hands of both together and says:

Neil and Debra, God so join you together that none shall ever part you.

Before God and in the presence of us all, Neil and Debra have exchanged vows, joined their hands, and given and received rings, binding themselves to each other in the covenant of marriage. I therefore proclaim that they are now husband and wife.

**Applause & kiss**

Ti joins the right hands of both together and says:

Neil and Debra, the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. May God be your protection and your wisdom, your guide and your peace, your joy, your comfort, and your eternal rest. **Amen.**

## HYMN

Let love be real, in giving and receiving,  
Without the need to manage and to own;  
A haven free from posing and pretending,  
Where every weakness may be safely known.  
Give me your hand, along the desert pathway,  
Give me your love wherever we may go.  
As God loves us, so let us love each other:  
With no demands, just open hands and space to grow.

Let love be real, not grasping or confining,  
That strange embrace that holds yet sets us free;  
That helps us face the risk of truly living,  
And makes us brave to be what we might be.  
Give me your strength when all my words are weakness;  
Give me your love in spite of all you know.  
As God loves us, so let us love each other:  
With no demands, just open hands and space to grow.

Let love be real, with no manipulation,  
No secret wish to harness or control;  
Let us accept each other's incompleteness,  
And share the joy of learning to be whole.  
Give me your hope through dreams and disappointments;  
Give me your trust when all my failings show.  
As God loves us, so let us love each other:  
With no demands, just open hands and space to grow.

*Michael Forster (b.1946) to the tune of Londonderry Air (Unattributed. Collected  
Jane Ross, first published 'Ancient Music of Ireland' ed. George Petrie, 1855)*

**All be seated**

## READINGS

A reading from Song of Solomon 8: 6-7 read by Charlotte Clowes

'Place me like a seal over your heart,  
like a seal on your arm;  
for love is as strong as death,  
its jealousy unyielding as the grave.  
It burns like blazing fire,  
like a mighty flame.  
Many waters cannot quench love;  
rivers cannot sweep it away.  
If one were to give all the wealth of one's house for love,  
it would be utterly scorned.'

A reading from the Gospel of John 15: 9-12

'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.'

## ADDRESS

Rev. Tiras Dainty-Share