

## THE MARRIAGE

### FIRST READING

A reading from Song of Solomon 2.10-13; 8.6,7, by Olivia Barrett

My beloved speaks and says to me:  
'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;  
for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has  
come, and the voice of the turtle dove  
is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs,  
and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.'  
Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm;  
for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave.  
Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.  
Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.  
If one offered for love all the wealth of one's house,  
it would be utterly scorned.

## HYMN

I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,  
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love;  
The love that asks no questions, the love that stands the test,  
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;  
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,  
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.

And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,  
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know;  
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King;  
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;  
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,  
And her ways are ways of gentleness, and all her paths are peace.

## SECOND READING

Adapted from Tao Te Ching - Lao Tzu - Chapter 8,  
by Charlie Bickerton

Love, like water, is supreme in its simplicity,  
It flows without effort, nourishing all it touches.  
It doesn't strive for acknowledgment, rather it exists in its humble  
essence,  
Sustaining life and embracing the world with its purity.

So let us dwell with one another in honesty,  
Let our thoughts and words remain simple and true.  
In disagreement, let us be fair and generous,  
Striving not to control but to understand.

In work, let us find joy, pursuing what our hearts enjoy.  
And in our life together, let us be fully present,  
In every moment, seeing each other as we are,  
Ever-changing, yet ever constant, like the water that sustains us.

## THE PRAYERS

Ending with

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

## THE REGISTRATION OF THE MARRIAGE

Witnesses – Heidi Bickerton, Christine Barrett

Music by Georgia Bickerton