

You now wish to affirm your desire to live as followers of Christ, and you have come to him, the fountain of grace, that, strengthened by the prayers of the Church, you may be enabled to fulfil your marriage vows in love and faithfulness.

Let us keep silence and remember God's presence with us now. God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.

*We pray together*

All

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

### **Prayers of Penitence**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.  
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All. Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden,  
to ask for his forgiveness and peace.

Lord, in our weakness you are our strength.

Lord, have mercy.

All. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord, when we stumble, you raise us up.

Christ, have mercy.

All. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, when we fail, you give us new life.

Lord, have mercy.

All. **Lord, have mercy.**

*The minister says*

May God in his goodness forgive us our sins,  
grant us strength in our weakness,  
and bring us to eternal life,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All. **Amen.**

## **The Collect**

*The minister invites the people to pray, silence is kept and the minister says the Collect*

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 your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
All. **Amen.**

## **Readings**

First reading  
Verity Brearley  
**Song of Solomon**  
Chapter 2 Verses 10-13, Chapter 8 Verses 6 and 7

Henry Brearley sings  
**Silent Noon** from the The House of Life  
by Ralph Vaughan Williams

Second reading  
Mark Brearley  
**1 Corinthians** Chapter 13 Verses 1-7

## The Dedication

*The husband and wife face the minister, who says*

John and Beth, you have committed yourselves to each other in marriage,

and your marriage is recognised by law.

The Church of Christ understands marriage to be, in the will of God,

the union of a man and a woman,

for better, for worse,

for richer, for poorer,

in sickness and in health,

to love and to cherish,

till parted by death.

Is this your understanding of the covenant and promise that you have made?

John and Beth. It is.

*The minister says to the husband*

John, have you resolved to be faithful to your wife, forsaking all others,

so long as you both shall live?

John. **That is my resolve, with the help of God.**

The minister says to the wife

Beth, have you resolved to be faithful to your husband, forsaking all others,

so long as you both shall live?

Beth. **That is my resolve, with the help of God.**

*The minister says*

Heavenly Father, by your blessing  
let these rings be to John and Beth  
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness  
and of the promises they have made to each other;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All. **Amen.**

*The minister says to the congregation*

John and Beth have here affirmed  
their Christian understanding and resolve  
in the marriage which they have begun.  
Will you, their families and friends,  
support and uphold them in their marriage,  
now and in the years to come?

All. **We will.**

*The congregation remains standing*

The husband and wife say together  
Heavenly Father,  
we offer you our souls and bodies,  
our thoughts and words and deeds,  
our love for one another.  
Unite our wills in your will,  
that we may grow together  
in love and peace  
all the days of our life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The minister says*

Almighty God give you grace to persevere,  
that he may complete in you  
the work he has already begun,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All. **Amen.**

The Lord bless and watch over you,  
the Lord make his face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you,  
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace  
all the days of your life.

All. **Amen.**

### **Prayers**

Almighty God, you send your Holy Spirit  
to be the life and light of all your people.  
Open the hearts of these your servants to the riches of his grace,  
that they may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit  
in love and joy and peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All. **Amen.**

For families

Father of all life,  
whose promise is to be the God of all the families of your people,  
give your grace to John and Beth in their new life together  
and bless those for whom they care.

Enfold them in your love  
as they share in their new family,  
that they may grow up in all things into Christ,  
who gave himself that all humanity might be made one in him.

All. **Amen.**

*Concluding prayer*

Eternal God, true and loving Father,  
in holy marriage you make your servants one.  
May their life together witness to your love in this troubled world;  
may unity overcome division,  
forgiveness heal injury  
and joy triumph over sorrow,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
All. **Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer is said*

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us  
All  
**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.**

*We sing together*

Chorus:

All things bright and beautiful  
all creatures great and small,  
all things wise and wonderful,  
the Lord God made them all.

2 Each little flower that opens,  
each little bird that sings,  
he made their glowing colours,  
and made their tiny wings:

3 The purple headed mountain,  
the rivers running by,  
the sunset, and the morning  
that brightens up the sky:

4 The cold wind in the winter,  
the pleasant summer sun,  
the ripe fruits in the garden,  
he made them every one:

5 The tall trees in the greenwood,  
the meadows where we play,  
the rushes by the water  
we gather every day:

6 He gave us eyes to see them,  
and lips that we might tell  
how great is God almighty,  
who has made all things well: