

CONSIDERATIONS
COVENANTAL RITES FOR SAME GENDER LOVING COUPLES
IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

Compiled by
That All May Freely Serve
A Mission of Downtown United Presbyterian Church, Rochester, NY
A Ministry of The Presbytery of Genesee Valley, Rochester, NY
121 Fitzhugh St N; Rochester, NY 14614-1214
914-217-4173 (Cell/Text) ray@tamfs.org www.tamfs.org
Ray Bagnuolo, Teaching Elder and Chaplain

Introduction:

The desire for Christian lesbian and gay couples to solemnize their commitment between one another within their communities of faith reflects the sacred depths of love that our church recognizes as a gift from God.

While growing numbers of faith traditions and civil authorities recognize marriage as a choice for same gender loving couples, there may be those who wish to have their relationship solemnized outside of the bounds of marriage. There may be instances, as well, where ecclesiastical bodies and their leadership have chosen to offer only blessings for same gender loving relationships. It is the purpose of this document to be helpful in offering some guidelines and resources for such conditions. This information is provided with the hopes that as marriage equality for same gender couples gains full acceptance, such couples will increasingly seek the ceremony of Christian marriage in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and that it will, one day, be universally available in the church.

Please be sure visit www.tamfs.org for additional resources, including a link for this document in Word format, so that you may easily adapt it to your needs.

Preparing for the Holy Unions:

The following assumes congregational support for those who seek to have their union blessed. A genuine desire by the congregation, its Session and the leadership to witness, bless and honor the love of the presenting couple must precede the decision to perform any holy union. It may be that a sanctuary is unavailable for use in same gender commitments; in such instances it is important that the couple understands the reasons why those and other restrictions may be in effect. These honest discussions will help determine the availability of the venue for all involved. It is always true that preparation for same gender unions is never a time for proselytization about the appropriateness of the lives of people who identify as lesbian or gay or the commitment they wish to have honored. A place where those are in question may not be the right place for a ceremony.

Whether this is the first or one of many holy unions that have been performed by the minister, he or she will find it helpful to confer with others who have traveled this path. Holy unions, as with marriages, will range from simple to elaborate. The pastoral staff and the couple will benefit from researching what others have done and spending the time needed with each other to assure that the expectations for the special day are observed.

In many cases, ministers will find preparation for holy union ceremonies a familiar process, based on previous planning activities. Pastors and officiants are encouraged to rely on their experiences, the guidance of the Spirit, and the support of others in designing ceremonies. Those interested are always welcome to contact us for any help we might provide. Also, be sure to review the many resources available on the websites of Covenant Network of Presbyterians at www.covnetpres.org and More Light Presbyterians at www.mlp.org.

A Christian Rite for the Blessing of Holy Unions:

Some denominations have developed marriage rites for same gender loving couples, as well as rites for holy unions and blessings. A search of the Internet will bring up many resources that provide examples and ideas for both. What follows in this document are two rites to consider:

The first example is adapted from the Episcopal Church's "A Rite for the Celebration and Blessing of a Holy Union." We have made only slight modifications in the interest of clarity. (Pages 4 – 12)

The second is an "Outline for the Rite of Christian Marriage – Part I" that we have adapted from the Book of Common Worship of the Presbyterian Church (USA), (Pages 13 – 26)

We hope that between these two examples and the others you may find, an order for the ceremony and celebration will emerge. Again, you are welcome to contact us for additional help or to share your own resources, so that we can pass them on to others. Contact: ray@tamfs.org or visit www.tamfs.org for more information.

A last comment: There will always be discernment of language and form in creating ceremonies that deepen our Christian tradition and the love of couples seeking to have their covenants solemnized. It is expected that from this process, wonderful rites for all who come to us will be created. It is with these prayers and blessings in mind that we extend this information and our willingness to be of help.

Sincerely,
Ray Bagnuolo, Teaching Elder and Chaplain
That All May Freely Serve
January 2015

A RITE FOR THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A HOLY UNION - EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The following is “A Rite for the Celebration and Blessing of a Holy Union.” It has been adopted by The Episcopal Diocese of Northern California, representing adaptations from the rites of the Episcopal Dioceses of Vermont, Washington D.C., and the Scottish Marriage Liturgy. It also can be found online on our “Marriage and Blessings” resource page at www.tamfs.org/weddings-blessings .

Note: Some minor changes to the rite have been made for purposes of clarity.



A RITE FOR THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A HOLY UNION

Welcoming

The Celebrant faces the people and the two persons to be joined in holy union, who stand before him/her.

Dear people of God, we have come together to witness and bless the covenant of love and fidelity, which N. and N. will make with each other.

Such a covenant shows us the mystery of the union between God and God's people and between Christ and the Church, and raises up the Holy Scriptures that point to the offering and receiving of love as the principal sign of God's presence.

Behold now the mystery of the union between N. and N., called by God to embody in their covenant that union between Christ and the Church.

The union of two people in heart, body and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and as a source of grace and blessing to all whom they encounter.

This solemn covenant is therefore not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and with the commitment to seek God's will for their lives.

The Declaration of Consent

The Celebrant addresses each member of the couple in turn:

N., will you give yourself wholly to N., to live together in the covenant of holy union?
Will you love him/her, comfort her/him, honor and keep him/her in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her/him as long as you both shall live?

N. answers: *I will.*

Sponsors/Family/Congregation:

If there is to be a presentation by sponsors/congregation/family it takes place at this time.

The Celebrant says to the sponsors:

You have been chosen to accompany N. and N. as they journey towards the fulfillment of their commitment, growing in love and faithfulness. Will you support them in their life together?

The Sponsors answer: *We will.*

In the following question to the witnessing congregation, the words "family in God" or "spiritual family" may be substituted if appropriate. The couple may also ask this question directly of the people or other groups gathered.

"As our family in Christ,
will you share our joy..."

Celebrant says to the People

As N. and N.'s family in Christ, will you share their joys, help them to bear their burdens, and do all in your power to uphold them in their life together?

People: *We will.*

The Ministry of the Word

Celebrant

The Lord be with you.

People:

And also with you.

Celebrant

Let us pray.

O gracious and everliving God,

you have taught us to love one another as Christ loved us:

look with favor on N. and N. who come to you seeking your blessing.

Assist them with your grace that with true fidelity and steadfast love

they may honor and keep the promises and vows they make.

Protect them from all trouble and danger, and bring them, with us,

to the heavenly feast of your eternal kingdom,

through Jesus Christ our Savior,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, in glory everlasting.

Amen.

Readings:

Then one or more of the following passages from Holy Scripture is read. If there is to be a Communion, a passage from the Gospel always concludes the readings.

First Reading

Ruth 1:16-17

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Micah 4:1-3, 6-8

Zephaniah 3: 14-20

Song of Songs 2:10-13, 8:6-7

I Samuel 18:16, 3, 20:16-17, 42a

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Second Reading

I Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Ephesians 3:14-19

Romans: 9-19

I John 4:7-16, 21

II Corinthians 5:17-20

Colossians 3:12b-16a

Between the readings, a psalm, hymn or anthem may be sung or said. Appropriate psalms are: 67, 65, 85, 111, 127, 133, 1-3, 149, 8:10-11

Gospel Readings:

John 15:9-12

Mark 12:38-34

John 2:1-11

Luke 6:32-38

Matthew 5:14-16

Luke 10:21-2

Matthew 7:24-27

Homily

The Making of Vows

The couple stands facing one another.

N2 (taking N1's hands in hers/his)

N., I join my life with yours, from this day forward.

In prosperity and in hardship, in health and in sickness, in joy and in sorrow,

I will love and cherish you as long as we both shall live.

This I vow before God.

N1 (taking N2's hands in hers/his)

N., I join my life with yours, from this day forward.

In prosperity and in hardship, in health and in sickness, in joy and in sorrow,

I will love and cherish you as long as we both shall live.

This I vow before God.

or

N2 (taking N1's hands in hers/his)

In the name of God, I bind myself to you N. in holy covenant; 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 until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

N1 (taking N2's hands in hers/his)

In the name of God, I bind myself to you N. in holy covenant; 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 until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

The Blessings and Giving of Rings

Celebrant

Bless, O God, these rings to be signs of the vows by which these two people have bound themselves to each other, through Jesus Christ our Lord

People *Amen*.

N1 places the ring on the hand of N2, saying

N, I give you this ring in token of my vow, in witness of my faithfulness and love and sign that all I have I share with you.

N2 places the ring on the hand of N1, saying

N, I give you this ring in token of my vow, in witness of my faithfulness and love and sign that all I have I share with you.

or

N1 places the ring on the hand of N2, saying

N, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am and all that I have I honor you; in the name of God.

N2 places the ring on the hand of N1, saying

N, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am and all that I have I honor you; in the name of God.

Celebrant

Now that N. and N. have given themselves to each other by solemn vows and the giving and receiving of rings, may the holy God who indwells heaven and earth bless this union. May God be seen in their life together; may the love between them grow and flourish; and may they be in unity and peace with themselves and with all of creation. Let us honor those whom God has joined and blessed.

People: *Amen*.

The Prayers

The prayers may be led by the Celebrant or a person chosen by the couple. At the end of each petition all respond: *Hear our prayer.*

Leader

Let us pray:

Eternal God, creator and preserver of all life, author of salvation and giver of grace: Look with favor on the world you have made, and for which your son Jesus gave his life and especially on these two persons whose covenant you bless. God, in your love,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader

Give them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their common life, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow and a companion in joy. God, in your love,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader

Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may grow in love and peace with you and one another all the days of their lives. God, in your love,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader

Make their life together be a sign of Christ's love to this broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt and joy conquer despair. God, in your love,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader

Give them such fulfillment of their mutual affection that they may reach out in love and concern for others. God, in your love,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader

Bless them according to your will, with the gift and heritage of children and the grace to bring them up to know you, to love you, and to serve you. God, in your love,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader

Bless N. [and N.], the child/children of N. and N., that this household may be a place of nurture and strength for him/them. God, in your love,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader

Grant that we who have witnessed these vows may find our lives strengthened and our loyalties confirmed. God, in your love,

People: Hear our prayer.

The Blessing of the Union

The Celebrant pronounces the blessing. The couple may stand facing the Celebrant or may kneel. The Celebrant may place his/her hands on the heads of the couple or hold their joined hands.

O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of holy union that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church. Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish one another in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

or the following

Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life. By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessings upon these two people. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death. Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Celebrant

May God Almighty, bless, preserve and keep you;
May Jesus look upon you with mercy and favor,
and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace;
that you may faithfully live together in this life,
and in the age to come have life everlasting.

People: *Amen.*

The Peace

Celebrant

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: *And also with you.*

The couple greet each other and the congregation.

When Communion is not to follow, the couple leaves the church followed by the ministers and the congregation. A hymn, psalm or anthem may be sung; or instrumental music may be played.

At the Eucharist

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

Preface

Because in the holy covenant of love between two people you have given us an image of the heavenly Jerusalem where we will at last be united with your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who loves us and gave himself for us to make the whole creation new...

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices...

At the Communion, it is appropriate that the newly united couple receive communion first.

In place of the usual post communion prayer, the following is said.

Celebrant

O God, giver of all that is true and lovely and gracious: We give you thanks for binding us together in these holy mysteries of the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that by your Holy Spirit, N. and N., now joined in holy union may become one in heart and soul, live in fidelity and peace, and obtain those eternal joys prepared for all who love you: for the sake of Jesus Christ who loves us all.
Amen.

As the couple and congregation leave the church, a hymn, psalm or anthem may be sung; or instrumental music may be played.

The ceremony is complete.

OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE: RITE I

A Service for General Use

Please note:

The intention of this resource is to provide a way of adapting the “Outline for Christian Marriage: Rite I,” as found in the Book of Common Worship on pp. 841-851, for use in same gender marriages, holy unions and covenantal commitments.

It is meant as a guideline and beginning point in discussions and planning with the couple.

Additionally, there are other changes that might be made, including the use of gender-neutral language (inclusive language), as well as the selection of other prayers and readings.

We welcome your comments and outlines for services that you use, so that we may share it with others.

We are available to assist you in any way we can. Feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Ray Bagnuolo, Teaching Elder and Chaplain
That All May Freely Serve
January 2015

OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE: RITE I

ENTRANCE

As the people gather, music appropriate to the praise of God may be offered. At the appointed time the couple and other members of the covenantal party enter and come and stand before the minister. The family of the couple may stand with them.

During the entrance of the covenanting party, the people may stand and sing a psalm, hymn, or spiritual. Or an anthem may be sung, or instrumental played.

SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE: (1 JOHN 4:16)

The minister calls the people to worship, either before or after the entrance, using the following, or another appropriate verse from scripture.

God is love,
and those who abide in love,
abide in God,
and God abides in them.

STATEMENT ON THE GIFT OF COVENANTAL COMMITMENT

The minister says:

We gather in the presence of God
to give thanks for the gift of marriage and covenanting relationships,
to witness the joining and blessing of this union of N. and N.,
to surround them with our prayers,
and to asks God's blessing upon them,
so that they may be strengthened for the life they share
and nurtured in their love for God.

God created us to not be alone,
giving us the company of one another
to share in marriage and committed unions,
so that loving couples may help and comfort each other,
living faithfully together in plenty and want,
in joy and in sorrow,
in sickness and in health,
throughout all their days.

God gave us covenants, such as the one before you today,
for the full expression of the love between two such people.
In marriage and in holy unions, loving people express their commitment to one another,
and with affection and tenderness
freely give themselves to one another.

God gave us loving covenants
for the well-being of human society,
for the ordering of family life,
and for providing for the care and nurture of children.

God gave us such unions and covenants as a holy mystery
in which two people commit themselves to one another,
becoming one,
just as Christ is one with the church.

N. and N. are called to a new way of life in this mystery,
created, ordered, and blessed by God.
This way of life must not be entered into carelessly,
or from selfish motives,
but responsibly, and prayerfully.

We rejoice that this is a gift is given by God,
blessed by Jesus Christ,
and sustained by the Holy Spirit.
Therefore, let these marriages, convenants, and unions be held in honor by all.

PRAYER

The minister says:

Let us pray:
Gracious God,
you are always faithful in your love for us.
Look mercifully upon N. and N.,
who have come seeking your blessing.
Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them
so that with steadfast love
they may honor the promises they make this day,
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

The congregation may be seated.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

The minister addresses the couple individually, using either A or B:

A

N., understanding that God has created, ordered and blessed the covenant you make this day, do you affirm your desire and intention to enter into this covenant?

Answer:

I do.

B

If both are baptized, the following may be used

N., in your baptism
you have been called to union with Christ and the church.
Do you intend to honor this calling
Through the covenant you make today in your (marriage/holy union)?

Answer:

I do.

AFFIRMATION OF THE FAMILIES

The minister may address the families of the couple:

N., N. [*Names of family members*],
do you give your blessing to N. and N.,
and promise to do everything in your power to uphold them in their commitment?

The families of the couple answer:

1

**We (I) give our (my) blessing
and promise our (my) loving support.**

Or

2

**We (I) give our (my) blessing
and promise our (my) loving support.**

The families of the couple may be seated.

AFFIRMATION OF THE CONGREGATION

The minister may address the congregation, saying:

Will all of you witnessing these vows
do everything in your power
to uphold N. and N. in their commitment/marriage/holy union.

Answer:

We will.

A psalm, hymn, spiritual or anthem may be sung.

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

The following, or a similar prayer for illumination may be said.

God of mercy,
your faithfulness to your covenant
frees us to live together
in the security of your powerful love.

Amid all the changing word of our generation,
speak your eternal Word that does not change.
Then may we respond to your gracious promises
by living in faith and obedience;
through the Grace of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

One or more scripture passages are read.

SERMON

After the scriptures are read, a brief sermon may be given.

A psalm, hymn, spiritual or other music may follow.

VOWS

The people may stand.

The minister addresses the couple.

N. and N.,
since it is your intention to commit to one another in this witness,
join your right hands,
and with your promises
bind/affirm yourselves to one another in this marriage/covenantal union/blessing.

The couple faces each other and joins right hands. They in turn then make their vows to each other using A
or B

A

One member of the couple says:

**I, N., take you, N., to be my spouse;
and I promise,
before God and these witnesses,
to be your loving and faithful partner;
in plenty and in want;
in joy and sorrow;
in sickness and in health;
as long as we both shall live.**

The other member of the couple says:

**I, N., take you, N., to be my spouse;
and I promise,
before God and these witnesses,
to be your loving and faithful partner;
in plenty and in want;
in joy and sorrow;
in sickness and in health;
as long as we both shall live.**

B

One member of the couple says:

**Before God and these witnesses,
I, N., take you, N., to be my spouse,
and I promise to love you,
and to be faithful to you,
as long as we both shall live.**

The other member of the couple says:

**Before God and these witnesses,
I, N., take you, N., to be my spouse,
and I promise to love you,
and to be faithful to you,
as long as we both shall live.**

EXCHANGE OR AFFIRMATION OF RINGS GIVEN (OR OTHER SYMBOLS)

If rings are to be exchanged, the minister may say to the couple:

What do you bring as the sign of your promise?

Or

What do you bring as the sign that affirms this promise?

When the rings or other symbols are presented; or if the rings have been worn preceding this covenanting service the couple may extend their hands with the rings worn for the blessing:

By your blessing, O God,
may these rings (continue to) be to N. and N.
sustaining symbols of unending love and faithfulness,
reminding them of the covenant they have made (this day)
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The couple exchanges rings using A, B or C or appropriate other words to affirm the symbols given or worn. The traditional Trinitarian formula should be omitted for the couple if one of the partners is not a professing Christian.

A

The one giving the ring says:

**N., I give you this ring as a sign of our covenant,
In the name of Our Creator God,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

The one receiving the ring says:

**I receive this ring as a sign of our covenant,
in the name of Our Creator God,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

B

As each ring is given, the one giving the ring says:

**This ring I give you,
as a sign of our constant faith
and abiding love,
in the name of Our Creator God,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit**

C

Spoken together or as one to the other

**This ring we have worn, continues to be
a sign of our constant faith
and abiding love, as it is has been, is today,
and will be all the days of our lives,
in the name of Our Creator God,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit**

PRAYER

The couple may kneel.

One of the following prayers, or a similar prayer, is said:

Let us pray:

I

Eternal God,
Creator and preserver of all life,
author of salvation, and giver of all grace:
look with favor upon the world you have made and redeemed,
and especially upon N. and N.

Give them wisdom and devotion
in their common life,
that each may be to the other
a strength in need,
a counselor in perplexity,
a comfort in sorrow,
and a companion in joy.

Grant that their wills
may be so knit together in your will,
and their spirits in your Spirit,
that they may grow in love and peace
with you and each other
all the days of their life.

Give them the grace,
when they hurt each other,
to recognize and confess their fault,
and to seek each other's forgiveness and yours.

Make their life together
a sign of Christ's love
to this sinful and broken world,
that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair.

Give them such fulfillment of their mutual love
that they may reach out in concern for others.
[Give to them, if it is your will,
the care and blessing of children,
and the wisdom to bring them up
to know you, to love you, and to serve you.]

Grant that all who have witnessed these vows today
may find their lives strengthened,
and that all who have shared in such covenants
may depart with their own promises renewed.

Enrich with your grace
all couples, parents and children,
that, loving and supporting one another,
they may serve those in need
and be a sign of your kingdom.

Grant that the bonds by which all your children
are united to one another
may be so transformed by your Spirit
that your peace and justice may fill the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. [794]

Amen.

2

Eternal God,
without your grace no promise is sure.
Strengthen N. and N.
with patience, kindness, gentleness,
and all other gifts of your Spirit,
so that they may fulfill the vows they have made/renewed.
Keep them faithful to each other and to you.
Fill them with such love and joy
that they may build a home of peace and welcome.
Guide them by your Word
to serve you all their days.

Help us all, O God,
to do your will in each of our homes and lives.
Enrich us with your grace
so that, supporting one another,
we may serve those in need
and hasten the coming of peace, love, and justice on earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. [795]

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

The minister invites all present to sing or say the Lord's Prayer.

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

All pray together.

Or

**Our Father/Mother in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
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 forever. Amen.**

**Our Mother/Father, who are 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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE COVENANTAL COMMITMENT

The minister addressed the congregation:

Before God
and in the presence of this congregation,
N. and N.
have made their solemn vows/reaffirmed their commitment to each other.
They have confirmed their promises by the joining of hands
[and by the giving, receiving, presenting of rings].
Therefore, I proclaim that they are now married,
(that this union is now blessed and holy as it has been)
Showered with grace be the Father/Mother and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and
forever.

**Those whom God has joined together (in this marriage or union) in this covenant,
let no one separate.**

CHARGE AND BLESSING

CHARGE TO THE COUPLE

The minister addressed the congregation:

1

See Col. 3:12-14

As God's own,
clothe yourselves with compassion,
kindness, and patience,
forgiving each other
as the Lord has forgiven you,
and crown all these things with love,
which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

2

Col. 3:17

Whatever you do, in word or deed,
Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
Giving thanks to God through him.

BLESSING

The minister gives God's blessing to the couple and the congregation, using one of the following:

1

See Num. 6:24-26

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord be kind and gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor
and give you peace.

Amen.

The grace of Christ attend you,
the love of God surround you,
the Holy Spirit keep you,
that you may live in faith,
abound in hope. And grow in love,
both now and forevermore.

Amen.

A psalm, hymn, spiritual, or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played, as the wedding party needs.

The ceremony is complete.
