

The Celebration and Blessing of a Civil Marriage in the Diocese of Huron
(within the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist)

The Gathering of the Community

The people stand. The couple stand before the celebrant.

Celebrant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 and the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
 be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Almighty God,

People to you all hearts are open, all desires known,
 and from you 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.

The Glory to God or some other act of praise is then said or sung.

Then shall follow the Collect

Celebrant: Let us pray.
 Almighty God,
 who has shown us selfless love
 through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus;
 grant us so to live in holiness and peace,
 that your life might shine through
 the lives that are bound together
 in the bond of selfless love

through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end.

People **Amen.**

The Proclamation of the Word

One or more readings, including a Gospel reading, shall normally be read. Members of the family and friends of the couple may read lessons. A psalm, canticle, hymn, anthem, or period of silence may follow the lessons. The readings and the response. At the conclusion of readings from the Old Testament and the New Testament writings other than the Gospels, the reader says,

The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

*Silence may be kept. A psalm, canticle, hymn, or anthem may follow.
All stand for the Gospel.*

Reader The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Reader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to ...

People **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

At the conclusion of the Gospel, the reader says,

The Gospel of Christ.

People **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

A sermon may follow.

The Eucharist proceeds as normal, following the Gospel and sermon, the Presider continues with the following exhortation

The Scriptures tell the story of God's enduring covenant with all humankind and indeed with all of creation. God's covenant with Israel was the source of their law and their love for one another. This covenant set them apart to bless and to be a blessing to all creation. This covenant took flesh in the person of Jesus and has brought us into a new community where there is no male nor female, Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, but one people united in Christ, to the Glory of God. We have gathered today to acknowledge and celebrate a covenant already made. The public declaration of commitment which binds these two persons in an enduring relationship is now to be set apart by prayer and by their deep desire to invite God into the midst of their love for one another. Our prayer is that this covenant, between N. and N., will reflect the glory of the One who came not to be served, but to serve, and who gave his life as a ransom for many. By word and example, N., and N., proclaim to us the love which sets us free to be children of God, inheritors of his kingdom and signs of the new creation.

The Presider addresses one member of the couple

Presider N., do you freely and unreservedly offer yourself to N.?

Answer I do.

Presider Will you live together in faithfulness and holiness of life as long as you both shall live?

Answer I will.

The Presider addresses the other member of the couple

Presider N., do you freely and unreservedly offer yourself to N.?

Answer I do.

Presider Will you live together in faithfulness and holiness of life as long as you both shall live?

Answer I will.

The assembly stands, the couple faces the people, and the Presider addresses them, saying

Presider Will all of you here gathered uphold and honor this couple and respect the covenant they have made?

People We will.

Presider Will you continue to pray for them in times of trouble and celebrate with

them in times of joy?

People

We will.

Prayers of the People

Let us pray.

Grant Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Strengthen N and N in their life together. Give them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their common life that each may be to the other a strength in need, a help in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give them grace, when they hurt one another, to recognize and acknowledge their fault and seek forgiveness from one another and from you. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Make their life together be a sign of Christ's love to a sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt and joy conquer despair. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give them such fulfillment of their mutual affection that they may reach out in love and concern for others. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Strengthen all those whose lives are in Christ and grant that we may serve Christ in all persons, loving one another as he loves us.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Commitment

The people sit. 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 reaffirm this covenant before God and the Church.*

Each member of the couple, in turn, takes the hand of 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, 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.

If the two have previously given and worn rings as a symbol of their commitment, the rings may be blessed on the hands of the couple, the Presider saying

Let us pray.

By these rings *N. and N.* have shown to one another and the world their love and faithfulness. Bless these rings, Holy God, that they may now be signs of the covenant *N. and N.* have made this day, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Presider says

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

The Presider continues with the following

God the Father, God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you,
and mercifully grant you rich and boundless grace,
that you may please God in body and soul.
God make you a sign of the loving-kindness
and steadfast fidelity manifest in the life, death,
and resurrection of our Savior,
and bring you at last to the delight of the heavenly banquet,
where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

The Peace and the Eucharist follow in usual order

Preface for Eucharistic Prayer 3

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 is to be used if Eucharistic Prayer 3 is the Canon.

Blessed are you, gracious God,
creator of heaven and earth;
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.

Therefore we raise our voices to you in praise
to proclaim the glory of your name

The following postcommunion prayer may be used.

God our strength and joy,
we thank you for the communion of our life together,
for the example of holy love that you give us in *N.* and *N.*,
and for the Sacrament
of the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ.
Grant that 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,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.