
The marriage service

ST JOHN'S KNUTSFORD

Your service, word for word. Read it through before you come — the vows especially, since they are the words you will say to each other.

Where it says **a hymn** or **a reading**, that one is yours to choose.

Introduction

1 **A hymn** *may be sung, and Bible verses and a prayer may be read.*

2 *All sit as the minister reads this or a similar preface:*

We have come together in the presence of God, to witness the marriage of **N** and **N**, to ask his blessing on them, and to share in their joy.

The Bible teaches us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his people.

Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given as the foundation of family life in which children may be born and nurtured in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife belong to one another, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life that all should honour; and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

This is the way of life, created and hallowed by God, that **N** and **N** are now to begin. They will each give their consent to the other; they will join hands and exchange solemn vows, and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring. Therefore, on this their wedding day we pray with them, that, strengthened and guided by God, they may fulfil his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

First, I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

3 *The minister says to the couple:*

The vows you are about to take are to be made in the presence of God, who is judge of all and knows all the secrets of our hearts; therefore if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, you must declare it now.

Agreement to marry

4 *The minister asks the man:*

N, will you take **N** to be your wife? Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

*The man answers: **I will.***

5 *The minister asks the woman:*

N, will you take **N** to be your husband? Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

*The woman answers: **I will.***

6 *The minister asks:*

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

*The escort answers: **I do.***

The marriage

7 *All stand to witness the marriage vows.*

8 *The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his and says:*

**I, N, take you, N, to be my wife,
to have and to hold from this day forward;
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love, cherish, and serve,
till death us do part,
according to God's holy law;
and this is my solemn vow.**

9 *The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers and says:*

**I, N, take you, N, to be my husband,
to have and to hold from this day forward;
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love, cherish, and obey,
till death us do part,
according to God's holy law;
and this is my solemn vow.**

10 *On giving the ring or rings, these words are said:*

**I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you:
in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

11 *The couple kneel, and the minister prays for them:*

Eternal God, creator and preserver of all mankind, giver of all spiritual grace, author of eternal life, send your blessing upon **N** and **N**: that living together faithfully in love and peace according to your laws, they may fulfil and keep the vow and covenant they have made, of which these rings are a token and pledge; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

12 *The minister pronounces the couple to be husband and wife:*

In the presence of God, and before this congregation, **N** and **N** have given their consent and made their marriage vows to each other. They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands and by the giving and receiving of rings. I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

They are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate. *Mark 10.8–9*

13 *The minister blesses the newly married couple in these or other words:*

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve and keep you; the Lord mercifully grant you the riches of his grace, that you may please him both in body and soul, and, living together in faith and love, may receive the blessings of eternal life. Amen.

God's word

14 A hymn *may be sung.*

15 The Bible reading *and sermon follow.*

Our response

16 **A hymn** *may be sung.*

17 *All sit or kneel to say the Lord's Prayer:*

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.

18 *These or other prayers are said.*

19 *The minister pronounces the final blessing.*

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you into his truth and peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

20 *The marriage document is signed.*

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St. John's Knutsford

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