

# The Episcopal Prayer Book

St. David's Episcopal Church

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# Course Outline

- 9/12: The History of Christian Liturgy and the Development of the Book of Common Prayer
- 9/19: Opening Items and the Calendar of the Church Year
- 9/26: The Daily Office: Morning Prayer, Part I
- 10/3: The Daily Office: Morning Prayer, Part II
- 10/10: The Daily Office: Noonday Prayer, An Order for Evening, and Evening Prayer
- 10/17: Compline, Daily Devotions and The Great Litany
- 10/26: *Trunk or Treat*
- 10/31: Proper Liturgies for Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday
- 11/7: Proper Liturgies for Holy Week
- 11/14: Holy Baptism
- 11/21: *Thanksgiving*
- 11/28: The Holy Eucharist: the History of the Eucharist
- 12/5: The Holy Eucharist: Rite II: The Liturgy of the Word
- 12/12: The Holy Eucharist, Rite II: The Eucharistic Prayer
- 12/19: The Holy Eucharist, Rite II: The Prayers of the People and Additional Practices
- 1/16: **Pastoral Offices: Confirmation and Marriage**
- 1/23: Pastoral Offices: Ministration to the Sick and Reconciliation of a Penitent
- 1/30: Pastoral Offices: Ministration at the Time of Death and Burial of the Dead
- 2/6: Episcopal Services: Ordination, New Ministry, and the Consecration of a Church
- 2/13: Prayers and Thanksgivings
- 2/20: The Catechism, the Historical Documents of the Church, Finding Holy Days and the Letionary.
- 2/27: The extra liturgical books: The Book of Occasional Services 2003; Contemporary Office Book, A Great Cloud of Witnesses.

# Pastoral Offices

## Confirmation

*With forms for Reception and for the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows*

### Concerning the Service

In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop.

Those baptized as adults, unless baptized with laying on of hands by a bishop, are also expected to make a public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism in the presence of a bishop and to receive the laying on of hands.

When there is no Baptism, the rites of Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows are administered in the following form.

If desired, the hymn *Gloria in excelsis* may be sung immediately after the opening versicles and before the salutation “The Lord be with you.”

The Nicene Creed is not used at this service.

It is appropriate that the oblations of bread and wine be presented by persons newly confirmed.

The stand alone confirmation liturgy is to be used when there is an episcopal visitation and no one to be baptised, but there are persons who want to make an affirmation or reaffirmation of their faith, or to be received into the church



# Why confirmation?

In the early church, only adults were baptised, there was no confirmation

When after the Constantinian enfranchisement in 4th century infants began to be baptised, the need for adult affirmation emerged

In the Roman baptismal rite in the 5th century a second post-baptismal anointing by the bishop emerged, which later became called 'confirmation'

In the 13th century certain local church councils decreed 'confirmation' (the bishop's anointing) and first communion should be deferred until a child learned certain texts

Reformers put an emphasis on the integrity of the baptisms, and offered no 'confirmation' rite

John Wycliffe called confirmation a 'frivolous rite' and Martin Luther called it 'mumbo-jumbo', John Calvin denounced the use of the chrism

Yet the Reformers were in agreement that there once was and should be again a time for children to receive instruction and make a public confession of faith with the laying on of hands

In the 1549 BCP, in addition to baptism, Cranmer provided a rite titled 'confirmation', drawn from German liturgies

It was not to be administered until the child could say the Creed, 10 Commandments and the Lord's Prayer

It was a prerequisite to receive communion, and was limited much more strictly to the bishop

It began with a catechetical exam, and included a prayer for the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit

Both the 1552 and 1662 Prayer Books made revisions, as did the American books

Although there is a stand alone rite in the 1979 BCP, it is still folded into the primacy of baptism

*A hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung*

*The people standing, the Bishop says*

**Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**  
*People* **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

*In place of the above, from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost*

**Alleluia. Christ is risen.**  
*People* **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

*In Lent and on other penitential occasions*

*Bishop* **Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.**  
*People* **His mercy endures for ever.**

*The Bishop then continues*

**There is one Body and one Spirit;**  
*People* **There is one hope in God's call to us;**  
*Bishop* **One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;**  
*People* **One God and Father of all.**

*Bishop* **The Lord be with you.**  
*People* **And also with you.**  
*Bishop* **Let us pray.**

### **The Collect of the Day**

*People* **Amen.**

*At the principal service on a Sunday or other feast, the Collect and Lessons are properly those of the Day. At the discretion of the bishop, however, the Collect (page 203 or 254) and one or more of the Lessons provided "At Confirmation" (page 929) may be substituted.*

### **The Lessons**

*The people sit. One or two Lessons, as appointed, are read, the Reader first saying*

**A Reading (Lesson) from \_\_\_\_\_.**

*A citation giving chapter and verse may be added.*

*After each Reading the Reader may say*

**The Word of the Lord.**  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*or the Reader may say*

**Here ends the Reading (Epistle).**

*Silence may follow.*

*A Psalm, hymn, or anthem may follow each Reading.*

*Then, all standing, the Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel, first saying*

**The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**  
**according to \_\_\_\_\_.**  
*People* **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

*After the Gospel, the Reader says*

**The Gospel of the Lord.**  
*People* **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

### **The Sermon**

This is the same opening as the baptismal liturgy

*The Bishop then says these or similar words*

## **Presentation and Examination of the Candidates**

*The Bishop says*

**The Candidate(s) will now be presented.**

*Presenters*

**I present *these persons* for Confirmation.**

*or*

**I present *these persons* to be received into this Communion.**

*or*

**I present these persons who *desire* to reaffirm their baptismal vows.**

*The Bishop asks the candidates*

**Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil?**

*Candidate*

**I do.**

*Bishop*

**Do you renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?**

*Candidate*

**I do, and with God's grace I will follow him as my Savior and Lord.**

*After all have been presented, the Bishop addresses the congregation, saying*

**Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support *these persons* in *their* life in Christ?**

*People*

**We will.**

Three types of presentation: confirmation, reception, reaffirmation

Followed by an abbreviated 'renunciation/affirmation'



# The Baptismal Covenant

*Bishop* Do you believe in God the Father?  
*People* I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

*Bishop* Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?  
*People* I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*Bishop* Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?  
*People* I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

*Bishop* Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and  
fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the  
prayers?  
*People* I will, with God's help.

*Bishop* Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever  
you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?  
*People* I will, with God's help.

*Bishop* Will you proclaim by word and example the Good  
News of God in Christ?  
*People* I will, with God's help.

*Bishop* Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving  
your neighbor as yourself?  
*People* I will, with God's help.

*Bishop* Will you strive for justice and peace among all  
people, and respect the dignity of every human being?  
*People* I will, with God's help.

From New Testament times to be baptised  
meant to confess the faith

The perfect summary of Christian faith

The 1979 BCP not only restores the traditional  
affirmation of faith, it adds for the first time the  
five questions about the meaning of faith: how we  
are to 'keep God's holy will and commandments'.



## Prayers for the Candidates

*The Bishop then says to the congregation*

Let us now pray for *these persons* who have renewed their commitment to Christ.

*The petitions on pages 305-306 may be used.*

*A period of silence follows.*

*Then the Bishop says*

Almighty God, we thank you that by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you have overcome sin and brought us to yourself, and that by the sealing of your Holy Spirit you have bound us to your service. Renew in *these your servants* the covenant you made with *them* at their Baptism. Send *them* forth in the power of that Spirit to perform the service you set before *them*; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*



The same prayers as in the baptismal liturgy

*A Person appointed leads the following petitions*

*Leader* Deliver *them*, O Lord, from the way of sin and death.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Open *their hearts* to your grace and truth.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Fill *them* with your holy and life-giving Spirit.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Keep them in the faith and communion of your holy Church.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Teach *them* to love others in the power of the Spirit.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Send *them* into the world in witness to your love.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Bring *them* to the fullness of your peace and glory.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*The Celebrant says*

Grant, O Lord, that all who are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ your Son may live in the power of his resurrection and look for him to come again in glory; who lives and reigns now and for ever. *Amen.*

It is appropriate for the prayers, new in 1979 and likely to have been written by Marion Hatchett, to be led by one of the sponsors

The concluding collect, (Louis Weil) brings out the symbolic death and resurrection of baptism as well as the eschatological implications

## For Confirmation

*The Bishop lays hands upon each one and says*

**Strengthen, O Lord, your servant *N.* with your Holy Spirit; empower *him* for your service; and sustain *him* all the days of *his* life. *Amen.***

*or this*

**Defend, O Lord, your servant *N.* with your heavenly grace, that *he* may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more, until *he* comes to your everlasting kingdom. *Amen.***

## For Reception

***N.*, we recognize you as a member of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, and we receive you into the fellowship of this Communion. God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you. *Amen.***

## For Reaffirmation

***N.*, may the Holy Spirit, who has begun a good work in you, direct and uphold you in the service of Christ and his kingdom. *Amen.***

*The Bishop concludes with this prayer*

**Almighty and everliving God, let your fatherly hand ever be over *these* your *servants*; let your Holy Spirit ever be with *them*; and so lead *them* in the knowledge and obedience of your Word, that *they* may serve you in this life, and dwell with you in the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.***

*The Peace is then exchanged*

*Bishop*            **The peace of the Lord be always with you.**  
*People*            **And also with you.**



*The service then continues with the Prayers of the People or the Offertory of the Eucharist, at which the bishop should be the principal celebrant.*

*If there is no celebration of the Eucharist, the service continues with the Lord's Prayer and such other devotions as the bishop may direct.*

*The bishop may consecrate oil of Chrism for use at Baptism, using the prayer on page 307.*



# A Form of Commitment to Christian Service

*This form may be used when a person wishes to make or renew a commitment to the service of Christ in the world, either in general terms, or upon undertaking some special responsibility.*

*It is essential that the person seeking to make or renew a commitment prepare in advance, in consultation with the celebrant, the Act of Commitment, which may be in the form either of a statement of intention or of a series of questions and answers, but which should include a reaffirmation of baptismal promises.*

*Before the Offertory of the Eucharist, the person comes forward at the invitation of the celebrant, and, standing before the congregation, makes the Act of Commitment.*

*After this, the Celebrant says these or similar words*

**May the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen you, that in this, and in all things, you may do God's will in the service of the kingdom of his Christ. Amen.**

**In the name of this congregation I commend you to this work, and pledge you our prayers, encouragement, and support.**

*The Celebrant then says this or some other appropriate prayer*

**Let us pray.**

**Almighty God, look with favor upon *this person* who has now reaffirmed *his* commitment to follow Christ and to serve in his name. Give *him* courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world, and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

As early as the 2nd century, in the Acts of Peter, there is a rite of commissioning for new ministry with the laying on of hands

Historically these rites have also been used for those outside the church and its orders: for civic leaders, soldiers or those assuming other responsibilities

The 1979 BCP is the first Prayer Book to contain such a rite

Many parishes will use a rite or a variation of it from the Book of Occasional Services to commission lay leaders, pilgrims or those going on mission trips



# The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

Most societies have a series of rites and customs surrounding marriage

Ancient Jewish marriage included vows and a written contract, a blessing over wine, and feasting that could last up to fourteen days

It is likely that early Christian marriage ceremonies followed the Jewish pattern

There is no hint of a wedding rite in the New Testament, but there are teachings on the duties of husbands and wives and married couples within the community

Pagan Roman marriage rites were a complicated mixture of a civil contract, ceremonies in the Temple of Juno, followed by a banquet and elaborate domicile and bedding customs

Gentile Christians followed similar patterns although pagan sacrifices and prayers were replaced by the Eucharist, Christian prayers and often an episcopal blessing

When liturgical books developed they contained lections, psalms and prayers for the Eucharist, and a special marital blessing

In medieval times, marriage rites were completely under the church's purview, published banns were required and the ceremony was abbreviated

Reformed marriage rites were even simpler, usually folded within the Sunday liturgy, with betrothal questions asked the couple before entering the church for prayers and a blessing



The 1549 BCP drew its marriage rite from Sarum and the Consultation of Hermann

It was to be preceded by publication of banns for three Sundays, and was conducted within the Sunday liturgy after Morning Prayer and the Litany but before the Eucharist

An Exhortation listed three reasons for marriage:  
the procreation of children,  
‘a remedy against sin and to avoid fornication’,  
‘mutual society, help, and comfort’

Vows of betrothal are followed by a prayer for grace, a proclamation of the marriage, and a blessing

The couple was required to receive communion

Later Prayer Books made steady revisions, eliminating such sayings as, ‘with my body I thee worship’ and the woman’s promise to ‘obey’

The 1979 BCP sets marriage in the context of word and sacrament, and gives options for prayers and lections instead of a single set of propers



## *Concerning the Service*

Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God. In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties must be a baptized Christian; that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conform to the laws of the State and the canons of this Church.

A priest or a bishop normally presides at the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, because such ministers alone have the function of pronouncing the nuptial blessing, and of celebrating the Holy Eucharist.

When both a bishop and a priest are present and officiating, the bishop should pronounce the blessing and preside at the Eucharist.

A deacon, or an assisting priest, may deliver the charge, ask for the Declaration of Consent, read the Gospel, and perform other assisting functions at the Eucharist.

Where it is permitted by civil law that deacons may perform marriages, and no priest or bishop is available, a deacon may use the service which follows, omitting the nuptial blessing which follows The Prayers.

It is desirable that the Lessons from the Old Testament and the Epistles be read by lay persons.

In the opening exhortation (at the symbol of *N.N.*), the full names of the persons to be married are declared. Subsequently, only their Christian names are used.

Additional Directions are on page 437.

The first paragraph defines Christian marriage, and states the canonical requirements

Liturgical roles are clearly defined



## The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

*At the time appointed, the persons to be married, with their witnesses, assemble in the church or some other appropriate place.*

*During their entrance, a hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.*

*Then the Celebrant, facing the people and the persons to be married, with the woman to the right and the man to the left, addresses the congregation and says*

**Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony. The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.**

**The union of husband and wife 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, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.**

**Into this holy union *N.N.* and *N.N.* now come to be joined.**

**If any of you can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, speak now; or else for ever hold your peace.**

*Then the Celebrant says to the persons to be married*

**I require and charge you both, here in the presence of God, that if either of you know any reason why you may not be united in marriage lawfully, and in accordance with God's Word, you do now confess it.**

The title is new to the present book, replacing 'The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony'

The rubric on where to stand comes from Sarum: 'she was formed out of a rib in the left side of Adam'

Everybody loves our wedding liturgy

The exhortation crafted from Sarum, Luther, Hermann of Cologne and the King's Book

Two visions: Christian and secular

Double theological ground: God's intention in creation, and in redemption

Change in order of godly reasons for marriage:

mutual joy,

help and comfort in prosperity and adversity,

the procreation of children

The two enquiries





Declarations are cast as a contemporary form of the man's pledge to the woman in the 1549 BCP

The woman's promise 'to obey' dropped in 1928 BCP

Declarations highlight the theology of free choice

The pledge of support recognises the cruciality of the support of friends and family in the success of a marriage

The presentation is optional, because the old form of 'giving' reflected English Common Law of a woman as property

## The Declaration of Consent

*The Celebrant says to the woman*

**N., will you have this man to be your husband; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?**

*The Woman answers*

**I will.**

*The Celebrant says to the man*

**N., will you have this woman to be your wife; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?**

*The Man answers*

**I will.**

*The Celebrant then addresses the congregation, saying*

**Will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?**

*People*

**We will.**

*If there is to be a presentation or a giving in marriage, it takes place at this time. See page 437.*

*A hymn, psalm, or anthem may follow.*

## **The Ministry of the Word**

*The Celebrant then says to the people*

**The Lord be with you.**

*People* **And also with you.**

**Let us pray.**

**O gracious and everliving God, you have created us male and female in your image: Look mercifully upon this man and this woman who come to you seeking your blessing, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep the promises and vows they make; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

*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.*

[Genesis 1:26-28](#) (Male and female he created them)

[Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24](#) (A man cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh)

[Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7](#) (Many waters cannot quench love)

[Tobit 8:5b-8](#) (*New English Bible*) (That she and I may grow old together)

[1 Corinthians 13:1-13](#) (Love is patient and kind)

[Ephesians 3:14-19](#) (The Father from whom ever family is named)

[Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33](#) (Walk in love, as Christ loved us)

[Colossians 3:12-17](#) (Love which binds everything together in harmony)

[1 John 4:7-16](#) (Let us love one another for love is of God)

*Between the Readings, a Psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sing or said. Appropriate Psalms are 67, 127, and 128.*

*When a passage from the Gospel is to be read, all stand, and the Deacon or Minister appointed says*

**The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to \_\_\_\_\_.**

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

[Matthew 5:1-10](#) (The Beatitudes)

[Matthew 5:13-16](#) (You are the light...Let your light so shine)

[Matthew 7:21,24-29](#) (Like a wise man who built his house upon the rock)

[Mark 10:6-9,13-16](#) (They are no longer two but one)

[John 15:9-12](#) (Love one another as I have loved you)

*After the Gospel, the Reader says*

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

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

*A homily or other response to the Readings may follow.*

The wedding collect, based on themes in the Sarum rite, was composed by Charles Guilbert

The 1979 BCP includes a full liturgy of the word, since marriages now rarely take place within the Sunday liturgy

Make the homily short and to the point

# The Marriage

*The Man, facing the woman and taking her right hand in his, says*

**In the Name of God, 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 and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.**

*Then they loose their hands, and the Woman, still facing the man, takes his right hand in hers, and says*

**In the Name of God, 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 and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.**

*They loose their hands.*

*The Priest may ask God's blessing on a ring or rings as follows*

**Bless, O Lord, *this ring* to be a sign of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The giver places the ring on the ring-finger of the other's hand and says*

**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 the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (or in the Name of God).**

*Then the Celebrant joins the right hands of husband and wife and says*

**Now that N. and N. have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, with the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring, I pronounce that they are husband and wife, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

**Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.**

*People Amen.*

The symbol of joining hands is in the Jewish, Greek and Roman marriage rites

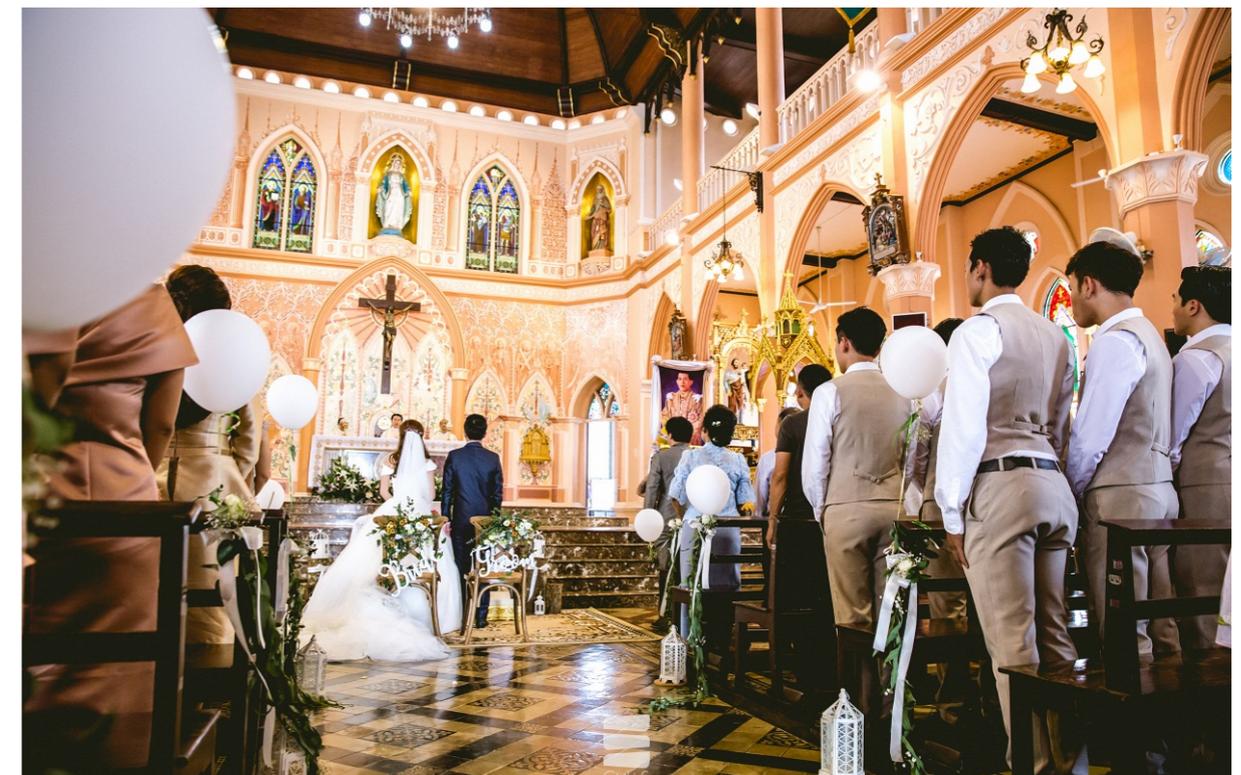
In the Sarum rite the woman promised to be gentle and obedient in bed and at the table

In the 1549 vows, the man said, 'I plight thee my troth', and the woman said, 'I give thee my troth'

Because of the Reformers distaste for blessing inanimate things, blessing the ring did not appear in a Prayer Book until 1928

The 1979 BCP has a fuller ring ceremony than in earlier Prayer Books

With the declaration, the couple is married in the eyes of the state, but not the church



## The Prayers

*All standing, the Celebrant says*

Let us pray together in the words our Savior taught us.

### *People and Celebrant*

<b>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, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.</b>	<b>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, 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 for ever. Amen.</b>
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*If Communion is to follow, the Lord's Prayer may be omitted here.*

*The Deacon or other person appointed reads the following prayers, to which the People respond, saying, Amen.*

*If there is not to be a Communion, one or more of the prayers may be omitted.*

**Let us pray.**

**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 for which your Son gave his life, and especially upon this man and this woman whom you make one flesh in Holy Matrimony. Amen.**

**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. Amen.**

**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 life. Amen.**

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

**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. Amen.**

**Bestow on them, if it is your will, the gift and heritage of children, and the grace to bring them up to know you, to love you, and to serve you. Amen.**

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

**Grant that all married persons who have witnessed these vows may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed. Amen.**

**Grant that the bonds of our common humanity, by which all your children are united one to another, and the living to the dead, may be so transformed by your grace, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven; where, O Father, with your Son, and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign in perfect unity, now and for ever. Amen.**

The prayers are new for the 1979 BCP, many written by Virginia Harbour

## The Blessing of the Marriage

*The people remain standing. The husband and wife kneel, and the Priest says one of the following prayers*

**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. We thank you, also, for consecrating the union of man and woman in his Name. By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessing upon this man and this woman. 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 Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.***

*or this*

**O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage 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 each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.***

*The husband and wife still kneeling, the Priest adds this blessing*

**God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favor look upon you, 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. *Amen.***

The first blessing, written by Boone Porter, sets marriage in context of the incarnation and atonement

The second prayer is revised from the 1928 BCP

The final blessing is from the 1552 BCP



## The Peace

*The Celebrant may say to the people*

**The peace of the Lord be always with you.**

*People* **And also with you.**

*The newly married couple then greet each other, after which greetings may be exchanged throughout the congregation.*

*When Communion is not to follow, the wedding party leaves the church. 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 newly married couple may present the offerings of bread and wine.*

*Preface of Marriage*

*At the Communion, it is appropriate that the newly married couple receive Communion first, after the ministers.*

*In place of the usual postcommunion prayer, the following is said*

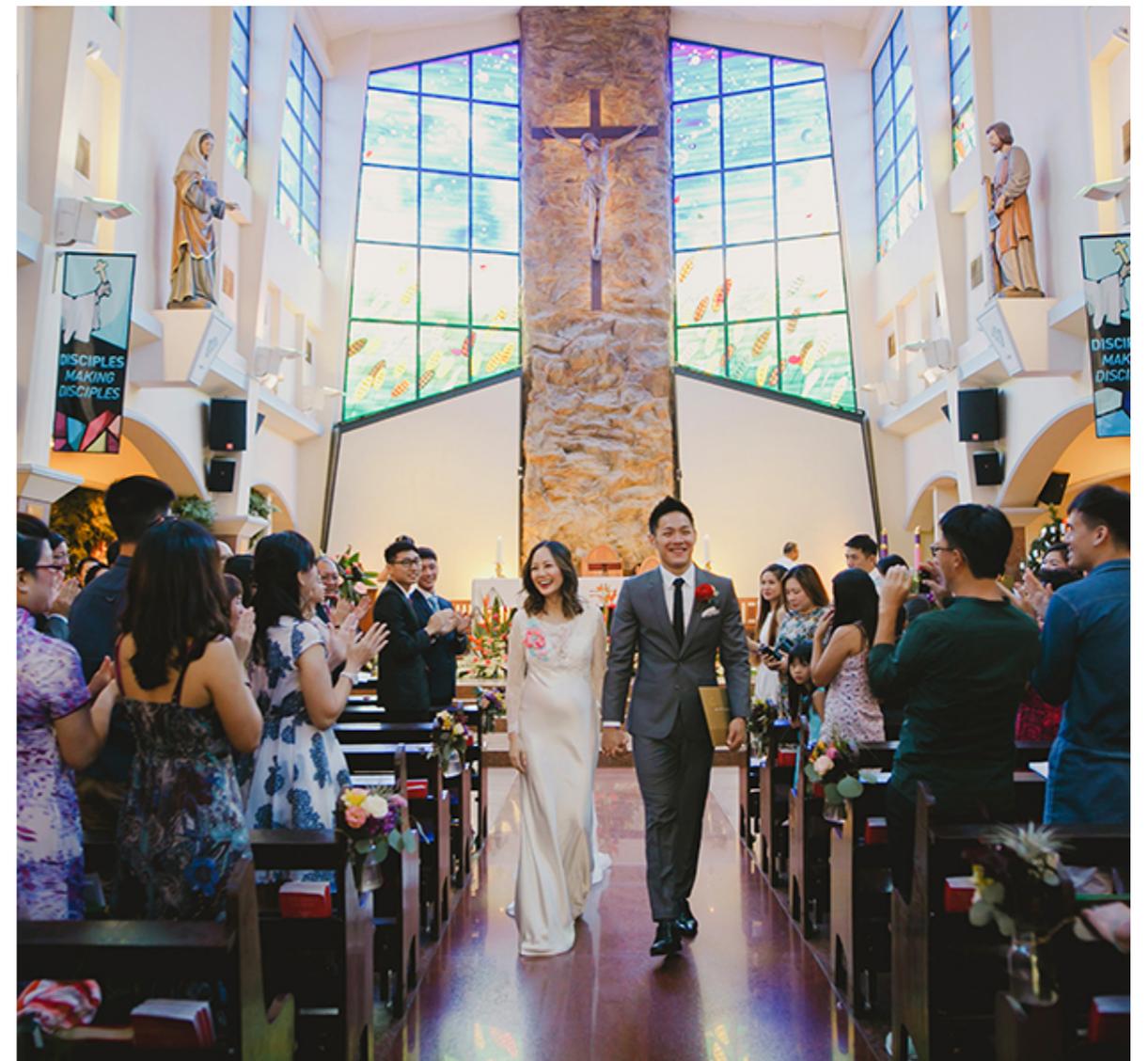
**O God, the giver of all that is true and lovely and gracious:  
We give you thanks for binding us together in these holy  
mysteries of the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Grant that by your Holy Spirit, N. and N., now joined in Holy  
Matrimony, may become one in heart and soul, live in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

*As the wedding party leaves the church, a hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.*

It is appropriate for the wedding couple to kiss at the peace

If a Eucharist does not follow, the wedding party leaves the church

If a Eucharist follows there is a wedding proper preface and post-communion prayer written by Massie Shepherd



# The Blessing of a Civil Marriage

*The Rite begins as prescribed for celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, using the Collect and Lessons appointed in the Marriage service.*

*After the Gospel (and homily), the husband and wife stand before the Celebrant, who addresses them in these or similar words*

**N. and N., you have come here today to seek the blessing of God and of his Church upon your marriage. I require, therefore, that you promise, with the help of God, to fulfill the obligations which Christian Marriage demands.**

*The Celebrant then addresses the husband, saying*

**N., you have taken N. to be your wife. Do you promise to love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?**

*The Husband answers*    **I do.**

*The Celebrant then addresses the wife, saying*

**N., you have taken N. to be your husband. Do you promise to love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?**

*The Wife answers*        **I do.**

*The Celebrant then addresses the congregation, saying*

**Will you who have witnessed these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?**

*People*        **We will.**

*If a ring or rings are to be blessed, the wife extends her hand (and the husband extends his hand) toward the Priest, who says*

**Bless, O Lord, *this ring* to be a sign of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The Celebrant joins the right hands of the husband and wife and says*

**Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.**

*The Congregation responds*    **Amen.**

*The service continues with The Prayers on page 428.*



# An Order for Marriage

*If it is desired to celebrate a marriage otherwise than as provided on page 423 of this Book, this Order is used.*

*Normally, the celebrant is a priest or bishop. Where permitted by civil law, and when no priest or bishop is available, a deacon may function as celebrant, but does not pronounce a nuptial blessing.*

*The laws of the State and the canons of this Church having been complied with, the man and the woman, together with their witnesses, families, and friends assemble in the church or in some other convenient place.*

- 1. The teaching of the Church concerning Holy Matrimony, as it is declared in the formularies and canons of this Church, is briefly stated.**
- 2. The intention of the man and the woman to enter the state of matrimony, and their free consent, is publicly ascertained.**
- 3. One or more Readings, one of which is always from Holy Scripture, may precede the exchange of vows. If there is to be a Communion, a Reading from the Gospel is always included.**
- 4. The vows of the man and woman are exchanged, using the following form**

**In the Name of God, I, *N.*, take you, *N.*, to be my (wife) (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 and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.**

*or this*

**I, *N.*, take thee, *N.*, to my wedded (wife) (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 and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I (plight) (give) thee my troth.**

- 5. The Celebrant declares the union of the man and woman as husband and wife, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**
- 6. Prayers are offered for the husband and wife, for their life together, for the Christian community, and for the world.**
- 7. A priest or bishop pronounces a solemn blessing upon the couple.**
- 8. If there is no Communion, the service concludes with the Peace, the husband and wife first greeting each other. The Peace may be exchanged throughout the assembly.**
- 9. If there is to be a Communion, the service continues with the Peace and the Offertory. The Holy Eucharist may be celebrated either according to Rite One or Rite Two in this Book, or according to the Order on page 401.**





## ***Additional Directions***

*If Banns are to be published, the following form is used*

**I publish the Banns of Marriage between N. N. of \_\_\_\_\_ and N. N. of \_\_\_\_\_. If any of you know just cause why they may not be joined together in Holy Matrimony, you are bidden to declare it. This is the first (or second, or third) time of asking.**

*The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage may be used with any authorized liturgy for the Holy Eucharist. This service then replaces the Ministry of the Word, and the Eucharist begins with the Offertory. After the Declaration of Consent, if there is to be a giving in marriage, or presentation, the Celebrant asks*

**Who gives (presents) this woman to be married to this man?**

*or the following*

**Who presents this woman and this man to be married to each other?**

*To either question, the appropriate answer is, "I do." If more than one person responds, they do so together.*

*For the Ministry of the Word it is fitting that the man and woman to be married remain where they may conveniently hear the reading of Scripture. They may approach the Altar, either for the exchange of vows, or for the Blessing of the Marriage.*

*It is appropriate that all remain standing until the conclusion of the Collect. Seating may be provided for the wedding party, so that all may be seated for the Lessons and the homily.*

*The Apostles' Creed may be recited after the Lessons, or after the homily, if there is one.*

*When desired, some other suitable symbol of the vows may be used in place of the ring.*

*At the Offertory, it is desirable that the bread and wine be presented to the ministers by the newly married persons. They may then remain before the Lord's Table and receive Holy Communion before other members of the congregation.*

# Blessing and Marriage Liturgies for Same Gender Couples

A resource book and five liturgies for same gender marriage have been approved by General Convention:

The Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant (revised)

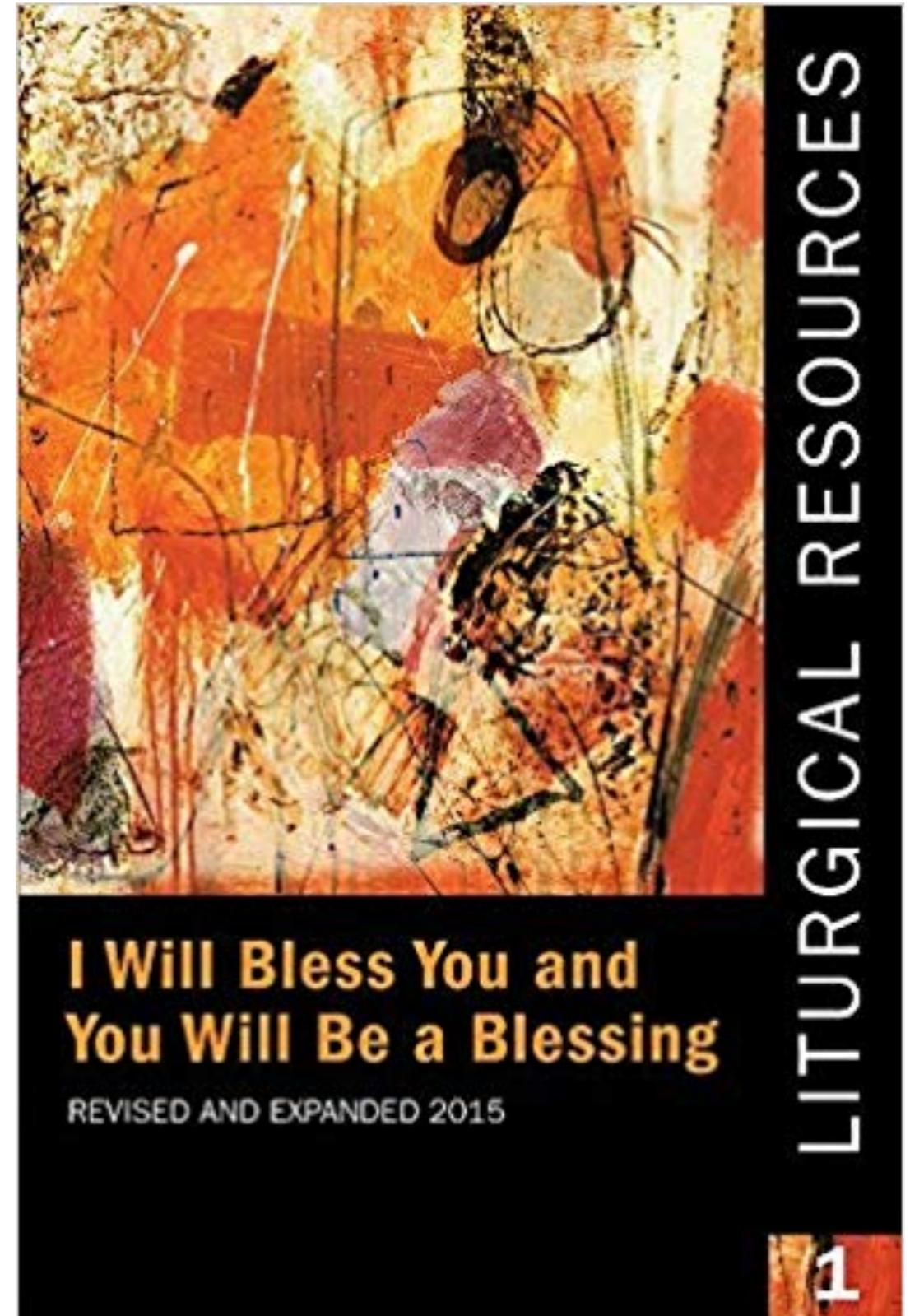
The Witnessing and Blessing of a Marriage

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage (2)

The Blessing of a Civil Marriage

An Order for Marriage

“I Will Bless You, and You Will Be a Blessing”  
by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music



# Next Week

## Pastoral Offices: Ministration to the Sick and Reconciliation of a Penitent

