

## Prelude

## Processional

*Please stand if you are able.*

## Trumpet Voluntary

Purcell

## The Gathering

*The Celebrant says:*

Dear friends and family, we have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the Covenant of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in a life-long commitment of love. This calling is a gift from God, in whose image we are created, and by whom we are called to love, to reason, to work, to play and to live in harmony with God and one another. In celebrating this Covenant, we are reminded that Jesus said to his disciples, "Love one another as I have loved you."

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are here to bear witness to their love for each other and to publicly acknowledge their Covenant with each other for a life-long commitment and union. Each has found the other to be a gift from God in the midst of a suffering world. We are now called to share in their happiness and to witness this exchange of vows because we believe God, who is love and truth, sees into their hearts and both accepts and blesses their offering.

From this union of love and friendship emerges a new family, a source of care for the world, the lonely, the lost; a sign for all who see them, that faithfulness and mutual affection triumph over selfishness, egotism, greed and violence.

The union of two persons in heart, body and mind is intended by God for their mutual healing and joy, for the help and comfort given to one another at all times, and for the manifestation of love in the lives of all whom they encounter. Therefore, this commitment is to be undertaken and affirmed seriously, reverently, deliberately and in accordance with God's intention for us.

## The Declaration of Intent

**Celebrant:** \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you have come here so that God may confirm and strengthen your love in the presence of this company. Therefore I ask you to declare the firm intention of your Covenant. Do you believe God has called you to live together in love?

**Response:** We do.

**Celebrant:** Will you remain faithful to each other, never allowing any other relationship to come before the one you are now to affirm?

**Response:** We will.

**Celebrant:** Will you nurture each other's ability to grow in maturity and wisdom within this relationship?

**Response:** We will.

**Celebrant:** Will you do all in your power to make your life together a witness to the love of God in the world?

**Response:** We will.

**Celebrant:** \_\_\_\_\_, will you take \_\_\_\_\_ to live together in a covenant of love as long as you both shall live?

**Response:** I will.

**Celebrant:** \_\_\_\_\_, will you take \_\_\_\_\_ to live together in a covenant of love as long as you both shall live?

**Response:** I will.

## The Charge to the Witnesses

**Celebrant:** We are here today to express the joy and approval we feel for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ as they make sacramental, and give public recognition to, their commitment and love for each other. Let me therefore ask those of you who have gathered here today this: do you who know and care for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ give them your blessings now as they enter into a new stage of their relationship, and do you promise to give them your deepest love, understanding, and support during both good times and bad?

**All:** **We will.**

## Music

### Come and Journey with Me\*

Haas

Come to the song, come to the dance.  
Bring all you are, bring all you be.  
Come with your voice,  
Come with your heart.  
Come and journey with me.  
Come and journey with me.

Come let the sun fill up your eyes.  
Take the time to look around,  
And love, just love  
And walk with each other.  
Come and journey with me.  
Come and journey with me.

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CCLI License # 1669341; verse three written by Judy Piserchia.

Come bring your hopes; come bring your dreams  
Look with new eyes; stand here with me  
Come to new life; circled by love  
Come and journey with me.  
Come and journey with me.

## The Ministry of the Word

**Celebrant:** May God be with you.

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

**Celebrant:** Let us pray.

O God, creator and lover of the world, we offer to you our lives, our words and deeds, our hopes and fears, and our love for each other. Accept us as we are. Make us what you would have us be. And by the power of your spirit enable us to be a sign of your presence in the world; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**People:** **Amen.**

## The Readings

### The First Reading

*Please sit.*

*The lector announces the reading:*  
A Reading from the book of Ruth.

But Ruth said,  
“Do not press me to leave you  
or to stop going with you!  
Where you go, I will go;  
where you live, I will live;  
your people shall be my people,  
and your God will be my God.  
Where you die, I will die—

there will I be buried.  
May our God bring unnamable ills on me,  
and worse as well,  
if anything but death parts me from you!"

*After the Reading the reader says:*  
Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

*The people respond:*  
**Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand, if you are able, for the following hymn.*

**Covenant Hymn, vs. 1& 2\***

**Daigle**

Wherever you go, I will follow,  
Wherever you live is my home.  
Though days be of blessing or sorrow,  
Though house be of canvas or stone,  
Though Eden be lost to the past,  
Though mountains before us be vast,  
Wherever you go, I am with you.  
I never will leave you alone.

Whatever you dream, I am with you,  
When stars call your name in the night.  
Though shadows and mist cloud the future,  
Together we bear there a light.  
Like Abram and Sarah we stand,  
With only a promise in hand.  
But lead where you dream: I will follow.  
To dream with you is my delight.

**The Second Reading**

*Please sit.*

*The lector announces the reading:*  
A Reading from "Two Trees" by Janet Miles.

A portion of your soul has been  
entwined with mine.

A gentle kind of togetherness, while  
separate we stand.

As two trees deeply rooted in  
separate plots of ground,

While their topmost branches  
come together,

Forming a miracle of lace  
against the heavens.

*After the Reading the reader says:*  
Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

*The people respond:*  
**Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand, if you are able, for the following hymn.*

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## Covenant Hymn, vs. 3, 4, & 5

Daigle

And though you should fall, you will find me,  
When no other friend can you claim,  
When foes beat you down or betray you  
And others desert you in shame.  
When home and dreams aren't enough,  
And you run away from my love, I'll raise you from where you have fallen.  
Faithful to you is my name.

Wherever you die, I will be there  
To sing you to sleep with a psalm,  
To soothe you with tales for our journey,  
Your fears and your doubts I will calm.  
We'll live when journeys are done  
Forever in mem'ry as one.  
And we will be buried together,  
And waken to greet a new dawn.

Wherever you go, I will follow,  
Behold! The horizon shines clear.  
The possible gleams like a city:  
Together we've nothing to fear.  
So speak with words bold and true  
The message my heart speaks to you.  
You won't be alone, I have promised.  
Wherever you go, I am here.

## The Third Reading

*Please sit.*

*The lector announces the reading:*

A Reading from "Touched by an Angel" by Maya Angelou.

We, unaccustomed to courage  
exiles from delight  
live coiled in shells of loneliness  
until love leaves its high holy temple  
and comes into our sight  
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives  
and in its train come ecstasies  
old memories of pleasure  
ancient histories of pain.  
Yet if we are bold,  
love strikes away the chains of fear  
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity  
In the flush of love's light  
We dare to be brave  
And suddenly we see  
that love costs us all we are  
and will ever be.  
Yet it is only love which sets us free.

*After the Reading the reader says:*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

*The people respond:*

**Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand, if you are able, for the following hymn.*

## The Water is Wide\*

The water is wide, I can't cross o'er.  
And neither have I the wings to fly  
Give me a boat that can carry two  
And both shall row, my love and I.

There is a ship and she sails the sea  
She's loaded deep as deep can be  
But not as deep as the love I'm in  
I know not if I sink or swim.

I reached my finger into some soft bush  
Thinking the fairest flower to find  
I pricked my finger to the bone  
And left the fairest flower behind.

But love is gentle and love is kind  
The sweetest flower when first it is new  
But love grows old and waxes cold  
And fades away like morning dew.

The water is wide, I can't cross o'er.  
And neither have I the wings to fly  
Give me a boat that can carry two  
And both shall row, my love and I.

## The Holy Gospel

*The Reader announces the Gospel:*

The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ, according to John.

*The people respond:*

**Glory to you, O Christ.**

As God has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept God's commandments and abide in that love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from our God. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that God will give you whatever you ask in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

*After the Reading the Reader says:*

The Gospel of the Lord.

*The people respond:*

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## The Sermon

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## Music

*Please stand, if you are able, for the following hymn.*

### Breathe on Me Breath of God, vs. 1 & 2\*

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what thou dost love,  
and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
until my heart is pure,  
until with thee I will one will,  
to do or to endure.

## The Union

In the presence of God and God's people,

I, \*\*\*, declare my love for you, \*\*\*, and take you to be my partner.

I promise you these things:

I will be faithful to you and honest with you.

I will respect you, trust you, help you, honor you, listen to you, laugh with you, and care for you.

I will consider your needs before my own, in good times and in bad.

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## Peace

I will share my life with you in plenty and in want.

I will rejoice when you are happy, and grieve when you suffer. I will share your interests and hopes for the future.

I will try to understand you even when I don't agree with you. I will help you to be your true self, no other than yourself.

Loving what I know of you, trusting what I don't yet know and in your love for me,

Through our years together and in all that life may bring us, I welcome you as my partner in life, for all my life.

*They loose their hands.*

*The Celebrant asks God's blessing on the rings as follows:*

Bless, O God, these rings as signs of \_\_\_\_'s and \_\_\_\_'s vows, by which they have bound themselves to each other in love.

People: **Amen.**

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

\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow; receive and treasure it as a pledge of my love for you. With all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you in the name of God.

\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow; receive and treasure it as a pledge of my love for you. With all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you in the name of God.

*Then the Celebrant wraps a stole around the right hands of the couple, signifying "the tying of the knot" as they commit themselves to each other, and says:*

Now that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have given themselves to each other by sacred vows, with the exchange of rings and the joining of hands, I declare that they are united to one another in a sacred covenant of love, in the name of God. Let us all uphold them in this Covenant.

People: **Amen.**

### **Music**

*Please stand, if you are able, for the following hymn.*

### **Breathe on Me Breath of God, vs. 3 & 4**

### **Peace**

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
until I am wholly thine,  
till all this earthly part of me  
glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
so shall I never die;  
but live with thee the perfect life  
of thine eternity.

### **The Prayers**

*The Person appointed says:*

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 especially upon \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, as they have committed themselves to one another.

People: **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.

People: **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.

People: **Amen.**

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

People: **Amen.**

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

People: **Amen.**

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

People: **Amen.**

Bless all persons who live in committed and loving relationships. Grant that all who have witnessed these vows may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties confirmed.

People: **Amen.**

Bless all who have died, especially those loved ones of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and bring them and us to the fulfillment of your will.

People: **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.

People: **Amen.**

## The Blessing of the Union

*The people remain standing.*

*The life partners kneel, and the Celebrant says the following prayer:*

Most gracious God, we give you thanks for consecrating the union of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in God's Name. By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessing upon these women. 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.

People: **Amen.**

*The life partners still kneeling, the Bishop adds this blessing*

May our God protect and defend you.  
May God always shield you from shame.  
May you come to be in paradise a shining name.  
May you be like Ruth and Naomi.  
May you be deserving of praise.  
Strengthen them, O God, and keep them from all dangerous ways.  
May God bless you and grant you long life.  
May God make you good partners for life.  
May our God protect and defend you.  
May our God preserve you from pain.  
Favor them, O God, with happiness and peace.  
O, hear our Sabbath prayer for them.

People: **Amen.**

## The Peace

*The Celebrant says:*

The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

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

## The Holy Communion

*Please stand if you are able.*

*The offerings of the people are presented. Bread and wine for communion are placed on the table as the following hymn is sung:*

## Here I am Lord\*

I, the Lord of sea and sky.  
I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin,  
My hand will save.  
I, who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

## Refrain

*Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.*

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*I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain.  
I have borne my people's pain.  
I have wept for love of them, they turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone,  
Give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them.  
Whom shall I send?

### Refrain

I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide.  
Till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them.  
Whom shall I send?

### Refrain

## The Great Thanksgiving

Celebrant: Our God is with you.  
People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.  
People: **We lift them up to our God.**

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to our God.  
People: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant: O eternal Wisdom,  
We praise you and give you thanks, for, as you revealed yourself of old in fire and storm and precious law, so you did not leave your followers comfortless, but came upon them on that day in thunder, wind and flame, filling them with clarity and power, and making them drunk with longing to utter your uncontainable word.

People: **And now, you have poured out your spirit upon all flesh, that your sons and daughters may prophesy, that old and young may share a vision, and even the slaves find a voice.**

Celebrant: Therefore, with Elizabeth who prophesied your birth, Mary who sang for the poor, John who announced your coming, Martha who confessed you as the Christ, the women who announced you risen from the dead, the twelve who spread your word, with all nameless and unremembered prophets who heard your call and inspired their people, and with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ who declared their commitment to each other today, we praise you, singing:

## The Sanctus\*

Holy, holy, holy God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God.  
Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

Celebrant: Blessed is our brother Jesus, who comes behind the doors we have closed, and breathes on our fear his fearful peace;  
People: **who, on the night that he was betrayed, took bread, gave**

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**thanks, broke it, and said:**

Celebrant: "Take, eat: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper

People: **he took the cup; gave thanks, and said,**

Celebrant: "Drink this, all of you: This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

*Please keep silent for a moment of meditation.*

All: **We remember Christ's death;  
we proclaim Christ's resurrection;  
we await Christ's coming in glory.**

Celebrant: Come now, spirit of integrity, of tenderness, judgment, and dance; make these gifts the body and blood of Christ,

People: **touch our speechlessness, kindle our longing,**

Celebrant: reach into our silence, and fire our words with your truth;

People: **that we may hear in our own language  
the mighty works of God.**

All: **Through Christ, yesterday, today, and tomorrow, in the unity  
of the Holy Spirit, honor and glory are yours, Ever-present  
God, now and forever, Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Celebrant: And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray:

All: **Our Father and Mother 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 forever. Amen.**

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

*The priest breaks the bread in silence and then says:*

Celebrant: Let us share this bread and wine as Jesus taught us,  
People: **knowing that our lives are forever changed by this and  
every breaking of the bread.**

### **The Invitation**

Celebrant: Come to the table.  
Bread and Wine.  
People: **Burn, breathe, speak in us.**

### **The Communion of the People**

**Everyone is welcome at the Communion Table.**

***The clear chalices have wine  
and the pottery chalices have consecrated grape juice.***

*The ministers of the day and the people receive communion.  
The minister says the following words to each person.*

The body of Christ, the bread of heaven;  
The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

*The communicant may respond each time*  
**Amen.**

### **Communion Hymn**

**Lord of the Dance\***

**Carter**

I danced in the morning  
when the world was begun,  
and I danced in the moon  
and the stars and the sun,  
and I came down from heaven  
and I danced on the earth  
at Bethlehem I had my birth.

**Refrain:**

*Dance then wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the Dance said He,  
and I'll lead you all  
wherever you may be,  
and I'll lead you all*

*in the dance said He.*

I danced for the Scribe  
and the Pharisee  
but they would not dance  
and they wouldn't follow me,  
I danced for the fishermen  
for James and John  
they came with me  
and the dance went on.

**Refrain**

I danced on the Sabbath  
and I cured the lame,  
the holy people said  
it was a shame,  
they whipped and they stripped  
and they hung me high,  
and they left me there  
on a cross to die.

**Refrain**

I danced on a Friday  
when the sky turned black,  
it's hard to dance  
with the world on your back,  
they buried my body  
and the thought I'd gone,  
but I am the dance  
and I still go on.

**Refrain**

They cut me down

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and I leapt up high,  
I am the life  
That'll never, never die,  
I'll live in you  
if you'll live in me,  
I am the Lord  
of the Dance said He.

### Refrain

### Communion Anthem

*Please sit.*

### The Post-Communion Prayer

*Please stand, if you are able.*

Celebrant: Let us pray.

All: **We thank you, God, for gathering us here to celebrate with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the beginning of their new life together, and for giving them the courage to live into the reality of your Holy City on earth, that place where all are welcome and none are excluded. Thank you also for nourishing us with the Bread of Life that eases our hunger, raises our hopes, heals our wounds, and calls us to live triumphantly as your family.**

**Exuberant Spirit of God, flame, wind, speech; burn, breathe, speak in us as you send us forth to be the Church Alive, to proclaim and to live your truth, this day and evermore.**

### The Blessing

*The bishop blesses the people.*

Celebrant: May the blessing of God go before you.  
May Her grace and peace abound.

May Her Spirit live within you.  
May Her love wrap you 'round  
May Her blessing remain with you always.  
May you walk on holy ground.

And may the blessing of God,  
Giver of life,  
Bearer of pain,  
and Maker of love,  
be upon you this day and always.

People: **Amen.**

### The Dismissal

Bishop's Chaplain: The Love of God burns in our hearts.  
People: **The wind of change blows through our lives.**  
Bishop's Chaplain: Let us go forth.  
People: **Thanks be to God.**

### The Recessional

The Horn Pipe

Handel