

# Service of blessing for registered partnership

## **Preliminary order**

Approved by the Central Board  
of the Church of Sweden  
December 6, 2006

### ***General instructions***

The blessing of a civil partnership is available to those who want to celebrate this occasion in a church service with the congregation, with prayers and a blessing for their life together.

As the service has no effect under civil law, there may be a certain amount of freedom regarding the form it takes. The service should be designed in consultation with the couple. Depending on the couple's wishes, the sections Affirmation of the vows and Prayer over the rings either may be used or they may be omitted.

This blessing service primarily involves a thanksgiving to God and a prayer asking God's help and protection for the couple. The following elements must always be included:

- Introductory words about the gift and responsibility of love
- Bible reading
- Intercessions
- The Lord's Prayer
- Blessing

The freedom and ability to formulate prayers according to local needs and to use other elements not included here, something which characterises the current book of worship (kyrkohandboken), also applies to this service.

### ***Notes***

P = Presiding minister, minister (präst)

(P) = Minister or other person

( ) Brackets around a heading in the order of service imply that the section may be omitted.

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The text on page 7 beginning "NN, I have (today) expressed my desire ...": Ninna Edgardh Beckman and Anna Karin Hammar.

## *Service of blessing for registered partnership*

### *Introductory music*

The service may open with organ music,  
other instrumental music and/or vocal music.

### *Hymn*

### *Act of Praise*

The Act of Praise begins with one of the following opening responses.

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

*or*

P Blessed are you, God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
from whom, through whom and to whom are all things,  
now and for ever more.

All Amen.

Then the Minister may say:

P Wonderful are your works, our God.  
Wonderfully you have created us in your image.  
We live out of your love.  
We give you thanks for the unceasing renewal of our life..

### *Introductory words*

The minister says the following or similar words.

P We have come together in the presence of God  
to pray for God's blessing on  
the partnership which you, NN and NN  
(or: these two women/men, NN and NN,)  
have entered into.  
We are here to pray for you  
and to share in your joy.

One of the following alternatives is used:

P Love is a gift from God.  
Faithful love strengthens community,  
grants help and a joy to us all,  
providing mutual support and deepened affection  
in good times and in bad.  
You have chosen to live in partnership,  
to live in trust and love,  
to be responsible for each other (for home and children)  
and to stand faithfully at one another's side.  
Therefore your union needs the help of God,  
and should be cherished in tenderness and care.

*or*

P Love comes from God.  
The ability to love is God's gift to humankind.  
Entering into partnership is a shared undertaking  
to preserve and deepen your love for each other,  
to share each other's lives in good times and in bad,  
to create a warm and welcoming home together,  
(where children receive the security they need).  
It means being faithful to one another,  
to live in trust and love.  
Therefore your union needs the help of God,  
and should be cherished in tenderness and care..  
In prayer and worship, in the word of God and the sacraments  
you will find strength for your journey together.

### ***Bible readings***

(P) Let us listen to the readings from the Scriptures about the gift and responsibility of love.

The minister and/or the couple's friends and relatives read some of the following or other readings from the bible.

A reading from the Gospel according to St. John:

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,  
just as the Father knows me and I know the Father."

John 10:14-15a

A reading from the Gospel according to St. John:

Jesus said: "As the Father 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 my Father's commandments and abide in his 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 my Father.  
You did not choose me but I chose you.  
And I appointed you to go and bear fruit,  
fruit that will last,  
so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.  
I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

John 15:9-17

A reading from the Gospel according to St. John:  
Jesus said: "I am the vine, you are the branches.  
Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit."

John 15:5a

St. Paul says:

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil,  
hold fast to what is good;  
love one another with mutual affection;  
outdo one another in showing honour.  
Rejoice with those who rejoice,  
weep with those who weep.

Romans 12:9-10, 15

St Paul says:

Love is patient; love is kind;  
love is not envious or boastful  
or arrogant or rude.  
It does not insist on its own way;  
it is not irritable or resentful;  
it does not rejoice in wrongdoing,  
but rejoices in the truth.  
It bears all things, believes all things,  
hopes all things, endures all things.  
And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;  
and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7,13

St Paul says:

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way  
you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

St Paul says:

As many of you as were baptized into Christ  
have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is no longer Jew or Greek,  
there is no longer slave or free,  
there is no longer male and female;  
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:27-28

St Paul says:

If then there is any encouragement in Christ,  
any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit,  
any compassion and sympathy,  
make my joy complete: be of the same mind,  
having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.  
Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,  
but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.  
Let each of you look not to your own interests,  
but to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:1-4

St John says:

There is no fear in love,  
but perfect love casts out fear;  
for fear has to do with punishment,  
and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.  
We love because he first loved us.  
Those who say, 'I love God',  
and hate their brothers or sisters,  
are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister  
whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen.  
The commandment we have from him is this:  
those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

1 John 4:18-21

A reading from the book of Ruth in the Old Testament:

Ruth said to Naomi:  
"Where you go, I will go;  
where you lodge, I will lodge;  
your people shall be my people,  
and your God my God.  
Where you die, I will die –  
there will I be buried.  
May the Lord do thus and so to me,  
and more as well,  
if even death parts me from you!"

Ruth 1:16b-17

Reading from the Song of Songs:

For love is strong as death,  
passion fierce as the grave.  
Its flashes are flashes of fire,  
a raging flame.  
Many waters cannot quench love,  
neither can floods drown it.

Song of Solomon 8:6b-7

Additional texts which can be read during the service:

Psalms 108:1-5, Psalms 139:14-18, Colossians 3:12-17.

***(Hymn)***

During the hymn the couple (and some of the couple's friends) may go forward to the altar rail.

***(\*Prayer over the rings)***

The couple may hold each other's hands wearing the rings while the Minister, with his or her hand in blessing over the couple's hands, says the following or a similar prayer. Alternatively the Minister may hold the rings during the prayer.

P O God, from whom and to whom are all things,  
bless NN and NN in their union.  
Let these rings be to them a symbol  
of their promises of mutual love and faithfulness.  
In the name of Jesus Christ.

All Amen.

***(\*Affirmation of the vows)***

In the presence of the congregation the couple may affirm the vows they made when registering their partnership. The vows may also be worked out by the couple together with the minister. The vows should express the desire of both to share their entire lives.

M Affirm now before God and before this congregation  
the promises of faithfulness and love you have made to each other:

Facing each other, each one says:

NN, I have (today) expressed my intention  
to love you for better or for worse.  
I will share my life with you  
in joy and sorrow,  
in good times and bad.  
I will share the gift of love with you  
until death parts us.

*or*

NN, I will love you,  
share joy and sorrow with you  
and be faithful to you  
until death parts us.

***(Hymn/Song)***

***Intercession***

The couple's friends or the minister say one of the intercessory prayers.

The prayers may instead be freely worded.  
The first prayer may be sung.

(P) Let us pray.

(P) Source of love, eternal God,  
creator of heaven and earth,  
when you created all things,  
you also created humankind to live in love.  
You gave us grace to be stewards  
of all you created by your love.  
In Christ you gave us an example  
of faithful love and friendship,  
and you are with us all days of our lives,  
Look mercifully upon this couple who stand before you  
and ask your blessing.  
Help them to live in love and peace,  
in faithfulness and companionship,  
and with respect for each other.  
Enfold them in your grace and power  
(that their children may live in safety)  
and grant them eternal glory in the life to come.  
Through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All Amen.

*or*

(P) Heavenly Father,  
we thank you for this day,  
for the joy and hope it brings.  
We pray for NN's and NN's union.  
Let their lives together be filled with trust  
and respect for each other.  
Help them to create a warm and welcoming home,  
Where (children can live safe and)  
friends and family find fellowship.  
In times of hardship,  
bring them closer to you and to each other.  
Help them to forgive one another  
and grant them day by day  
joy and strength from your hand.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

*(Hymn/song/music)*

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

M Let us together pray with the words Jesus taught us.

All 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.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

*or*

All 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.

### ***Sermon***

The sermon may instead be given after the blessing or after the Bible readings.

**\* *Blessing***

M        Receive this blessing

M        The Lord bless you and keep you,  
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy,  
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you peace.  
In the name + of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All        Amen.

***Hymn***

***Concluding music***

The service may conclude with organ music,  
other instrumental and/or vocal music.

***Communion in connection with the blessing of a registered partnership***

When the blessing of a registered partnership is celebrated with communion, the structure in the order of worship for Marriage with communion (Vigsel med mässa) may be used. The suggested preface and prayer after the communion below or one of the texts linked to the liturgical year may be used.

***The Thanksgiving (Preface)***

M        You have sent him as a sign of your love  
that our joy may be complete.  
Through the power of your love the world gains new life  
that we may live according to your will.

***Prayer after communion***

(M)        God of life, we thank you.  
In this sacrament you share your love with us.  
Let us as guests at your table  
bring your love to those we meet.  
In the name of Christ.

All        Amen.