

A Service of Holy Union
for

June 3, 1989

(adapted from UCC order of worship for marriage)

Written by Ted Braun

Prelude *Exultate, Jubilee Motet* (K. 165) Mozart

Welcome

Invocation

L: O God, Source of all wonder,
 the eternal One of all that was and is and is to come,
 Revealer of truth, Gift giver of love,
 Friend and Sustainer,
 be among us to bless us and keep us,
 this day and in every moment of our lives.

P: Amen.

Opening Hymn *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You*

Introduction

Dear ones, we have come together in the presence of God to witness this holy union of _____ and _____, to surround them with our prayers and to share in their joy. . . .

(We know) God gives human love. Through that love, _____ and _____ have come to know each other with mutual care and respect.

Secondly, we are told in the scriptures that the test for goodness of anything is whether or not it bears good fruit. _____ and _____ continue to experience personal growth, good health, and much celebration in their lives together. Friends and family attest to the goodness in this relationship.

Thirdly, same gender relationships are uphill struggles in our society. There are the internal struggles of finding the joy with one's sexual identity; of turning off the messages of rejection, discrimination, and hatred; of frustration for the extraordinary care one must take to remain safe in the church, the neighborhood, at work, in extended families, here in _____ and in the larger world. And of course, there are the external struggles: legal, political, financial. . .

Sometimes these struggles are too enormous and relationships dissolve, often prematurely. But _____ and _____ have gathered us together to say that unlike any other time in their lives, they have found in each other a love that they believe is enduring.

Let us, then, enter into this celebration confident that through the Holy Spirit, Christ is present with us now.

We pray that this couple may fulfill God's purpose for the whole of their lives.

Prayer

Gracious God, always faithful in your love for us, we rejoice in your presence. You create love. You unite us in one human family. You offer your word and lead us in light. You open your loving arms and embrace us with strength. May the presence of Christ fill our hearts with new joy and make new the lives of your servants whose covenant we celebrate. Bless all creation through this sign of your love shown in _____ and _____ for each other. May the power of your Holy Spirit sustain them and all of us in love that knows no end. Amen.

Scripture

Isaiah 40: 228-31

Psalm 34: 1-5

John 15: 1-11

Homily

Declaration of Intention

Before God and in the presence of these witnesses, I ask you to affirm your willingness to enter this holy covenant and to share all the joys and sorrows of this new relationship, whatever the future may hold.

_____, do you wish to be _____ companion and partner, and do you in good faith desire to enter into this covenant? *I do.*

_____, do you wish to be _____ companion and partner, and do you in good faith desire to enter into this covenant? *I do.*

Pledges of Support

Will the families and extended families of _____ and _____ please stand and answer in support of this couple.

Do you offer your prayerful blessing and loving support to this covenant? If so, please say, "We do."

Will all other witnesses here pledge your support and encouragement to the covenant commitment that _____ and _____ are making together. If so, please say, "We do."

Solo

Vows of the Covenant

(Couple speak their promises to each other.)

Exchange of Symbols

By these rings of covenant promise, Gracious God, remind _____ and _____ of your encircling love and unending faithfulness that in all their life together they may know joy and peace in one another.

_____, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

_____, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

Signing of Covenant Certificate

_____ and _____ have asked that all present here come forward at this time to sign the witnesses' certificate. After you sign the document, they will give you a candle which they hope you will take home with you. Each time you light it, from the first to the last, they hope you will remember them in your thoughts and prayers.

Announcement

By this Rite of Holy Union, _____ and _____ you are united in the blessing of Christ's church. Be merciful in all your ways, kind in heart, and humble in mind. Accept life and be most patient and tolerant with one another. Forgive as freely as God has forgiven you. And, above everything else, be truly loving. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, remembering that as members of one body you are called to live in harmony, and never forget to be thankful for what God has done for you.

Blessing

The grace of Christ attend you;
the love of God surround you;
the Holy Spirit keep you
that you may grow in holy love.
find delight in each other always,
and remain faithful to this covenant.

Amen.

Closing Hymn

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Postlude