

Renewal of Wedding Vows Service Order of Worship

Written & compiled by Ana Gobledale

Procession *(if desired by couple)*

Welcome: *(With everyone still standing)*

Friends, family and friends of Bill & Val, I welcome you, for a second time for some of you who attended their wedding here 15 years ago. Today we celebrate their love.

Everyone who truly loves is a child of God and knows God. Let us love one another, because Love comes from God.

To congregation: Please be seated.
(couple and any party remain standing.)

Introduction

Bill & Val, we rejoice to celebrate with you the renewal of your marriage covenant, as you re-commit yourselves as wife and husband [*partners in marriage; using the two terms chosen by the couple*]. This year you celebrate 15 years of marriage, your anniversary coming up on date.

In this post-modern world, a world some would call post-marriage, your on-going commitment, your steadfast love, and your desire to continue being coupled into the future, provide a strong witness of the possibilities of love. Love that can withstand all storms and overcome all obstacles. We celebrate the delight you have found in each other and thank you for being a sign of God's love among us.

Prayer

Pray with me: Source of Life, we gather to celebrate your gift of love and its physical presence among us embodied in the love of Bill & Val. We rejoice that they have kept their wedding vows to one another and choose to re-commit

themselves to continuing a life of loving faithfulness and fidelity. We praise you, God, for the ways you have touched *our* lives with a variety of loving relationships.

We give you thanks that we have experienced your love through the life-giving love of Jesus and through the care and affection of other people who have loved us.

At the same time, we remember and confess that we often have failed to be loving, that we have taken for granted the people for whom we care most. We selfishly neglect and strain the bonds that unite us with others. We hurt those who love us and we withdraw from the community that encircles us. Forgive us.

Renew within us an affectionate spirit. Enrich our lives with the gracious gift of your love so that we may embrace others with love. May our participation in this celebration of love and re-commitment give to us a new joy-and-responsiveness to the relationships we cherish. May the power of your Spirit sustain Bill and Val and all of us in love that knows no end. Amen

Please be seated. *(everyone)*

Reading: *I Corinthians 13: 1-13 selections*

Reflection

Friends, marriage is a gift from God, sealed by the vows and promises of those who come before God and community, and pledge themselves to one another. God shares the gift of love with us and through that love, two people come to know each other with mutual care and companionship. God gives joy. Through that joy, [two people/ *wife and husband; two terms chosen by the couple*] may share their new life with others as Jesus shared new wine at the wedding in Cana.

There are three rules of thumb in a good marriage, according to research and experience.

The first is Communicate. And the second...*[encourage congregation to guess]*... communicate! And the third... *[encourage congregation to guess]*... communicate! Do not become strangers to one another. At 15 years you may be tempted to say, “What he or she doesn’t know won’t hurt him or her.” To here and there sweep a matter under the carpet, to leave a red hot ember unattended hoping it will burn itself out.

Today is a good time to remember, a strong marriage is built on truth, trust and honesty. And open communication is the proof of that strength. Keep talking. Keep trusting. Keep loving.

There’s a song by Elvis Presley that includes a good question to ask from time to time, “Are you lonesome tonight? Am I lonesome tonight?” In a strong marriage loneliness and darkness are replaced by the brilliance of a trusting love. May these lyrics from Elvis be your guiding lights now:

*I will spend my whole life through
loving you, loving you.
Winter, summer, spring-time, too,
loving you, loving you.
Makes no difference where I go or what I do.
You know that I'll always be loving you.
I'll be faithful I'll be true;
always true, true to you.
There is only one for me, and you know who.
You know that I'll always be loving you.*

Val & Bill, as you move into the next 15 years, may these words be true for you.

Family and friends gathered here, as Val & Bill consider their relationship, I would like to propose two things for each of you to consider today.

First, pat yourselves on the back for the good friends you have been to Val and Bill over the years.

And secondly, pledge to continue to help them maintain the integrity of their love and their marriage. Continue to strengthen and encourage them when winds blow and the earth shakes, *[or should I say, with all you Fire Brigade folks present, come to their assistance when searing fires blaze, or neglected coals continue to glow menacingly beneath the timbers./ insert a line relevant to the couple and congregation. Bill is a firefighter.]* Help them weather the gales that lay ahead and douse the flames of disharmony. Help them keep their love strong. This is your job because you love them.

For as we heard read: Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Val and Bill, may this, always, be true for you. Amen.

Thank You’s

I am going to give Bill and Val a chance to express some thank you’s to those who have been especially supportive to them in their times of need. They have needed and appreciated your help over the years. You have been there for them, and they are grateful. Val/Bill...

(Have flowers ready to distribute to special people being thanked by the couple at this time)

Words to one Another

Over the past few months, Bill & Val have been thinking about words to say or another way to express their feelings for one another. Now we will hear from each of them. Who would like to go first?

Song dedicated to Bill & Val, sung by a friend

Renewal of Vows - explanation:

Bill & Val, 15 years ago you affirmed your willingness to enter into the covenant of marriage and to share all the joys and sorrows therein, whatever the future may hold. You exchanged your vows, your covenant promises, before witnesses, some of whom are here again today.

Today you face one another again, in the presence of God and all these witnesses, to re-commit yourselves to those vows. To look back with gratitude and to look forward with hope. Please come forward.

There is actually a third thing for all of you witnesses to do today. When Val & Bill take hands and say their vows to one another, I invite you to take the hand of the one you love, if they are here with you – your spouse, your partner, or perhaps the one you **want** to take vows with – and renew these promises of faithfulness and love in your own heart.

Renewal of Vows:

Face one another and take both hands. On this fifteenth anniversary of your marriage, as you recommit yourselves to each other, I invite you to renew your marriage vows. Repeat after me. (*Decide with the couple what words they would like to use. These might be the words they used at their wedding, or new vows.*)

Val, you first:

Bill, I am blessed to be your wife/spouse/partner,
And I promise anew
to love and sustain you
in the covenant of marriage,
in sickness and in health,
in plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow,
as long as we both shall live.

Bill:

Val, I am blessed to be your husband/spouse/partner,
and I promise anew
to love and sustain you
in the covenant of marriage,
in sickness and in health,
in plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow,
as long as we both shall live.

Blessing of Rings:

Bill & Val, in 1999 you exchanged rings as a symbol of your love. You have worn them to remind you of your vows, your union and your unending love for one another. May they continue not only to adorn your fingers, but to adorn your hearts, shining in to your hearts the reminder of your love for one another, and God's love for you both.

Pray with me: Eternal God of Love, may these rings, symbols of their vows and love, continue to remind Bill & Val of your encircling love and unending faithfulness that in all their life together they may know joy and peace in one another. Amen.

Place my hands over their joined hands:

Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate.

Bill & Val, you have spoken again your covenant of love.

God grant you grace to fulfil, in your life together,
the solemn promises you made in the springtime of your
love, and renewed today,
in the presence of all those gathered here,
and in the presence of the church.

Blessing

Bill & Val, may the God of Sarah and Abraham, who
watches over all the families of the earth, continue to bless
your family and home in peace and steadfast love.

And may the two of you always be held in the palm of God's
hand. You may embrace or kiss one another as a sign of
your promises.

Peace of Christ

In celebration and joy, I invite you all to greet one another,
sharing the peace of love of Christ. Bill and Val will move
among you that you all may greet them.

Prayer *(when everyone is seated)*

Pray with me.

Merciful God, thank you for your love that lives within
us and calls us from loneliness to companionship. Thank
you for all who have gone before us, those whose lives are
shared in the Bible, and for countless parents whose names
we do not know.

Thank you for our own parents, and for all, whether
married or single, who have been mother or father to us, as
we have grown and continue to grow to the fullness of who
you want us to be.

Continue to bless Bill & Val, that they may have the
grace to live out the promises they have renewed today.
Let their love for each other be a seal on their hearts, a
mantle about their shoulders, and a crown on their heads.
Continue to bless their daily lives together, their sleeping
and their waking, their coming and their going.
Bring them to old age, rejoicing in love's winter even more
fully than in its springtime. Amen.

Directions: After the benediction, rather than leave
straight away, Bill & Val will be signing a renewal
certificate and then there will be a time for posed group
photographs. Then the wedding party will head outside and
on to the pub for the reception. You are welcome to wait
inside or proceed outside after the benediction.
Please stand.

Benediction:

And for all of us:

Go forth in love, hope and joy,
knowing that God is with us always.

[May God's peace which passes all understanding
keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge of God,
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and the love of Christ.]
Amen.

Signing Certificates