

Greeting and Declaration:

Beloved, we gather here today to celebrate and renew all the various ways God calls us into loving relationships. Each of us responds to this call in different ways. Some among us have heard the call to be committed to one person as a spouse or faithful partner. Others among us have responded to a call to be committed to a beloved community. And some others are discerning their call in this season of life. No matter who we are or where we are at in our life's journey, we recommit ourselves to the call of love which has guided us here today.

As Christians we hold that marriage and a commitment to beloved community are sacred covenants which were established by God, who created us to be with one another as committed partners in life and faithful members of Christ's body, the church. Jesus, in his sacrificial love, gave us the example of the love of a spouse for another and the love we live out together in the church. All of us, celebrate and renew our covenant to God and one another this day.

Hear these words from 1 Corinthians 13.

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,^[a] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly,^[b] but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

A Homily or Reflection may be offered

I invite each married couple to turn and face one another and to take one another by the hand.

I invite you to take a moment to figure out which spouse will begin the renewal.

Please repeat after me.

In the name of God, and with a thankful heart

I, once again declare that

I, Take you

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.

In the name of God, and with a thankful heart

I, once again declare that

I, take you

To have and to hold

From this day forward

For better, for worse

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This is my solemn vow.

For those among us who have heard God's call to be faithful in your commitment to a beloved community, let us all reaffirm and renew these commitments together.

As a member of Jesus' universal church will you faithfully participate in your local United Methodist Church, doing all in your power to strengthen and uphold its ministry of inclusive love and unconditional grace?

I will.

As members of this church community, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness?

I will.

As part of this community we are bound to one another in Christian love. I commend each person here to your love and your care. Do all in your power to encourage one another in this journey, to confirm our hope, and perfect us in love.

We give thanks for all that God has given us as a beloved community. As members together in the body of Christ and in this congregation of the United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant to faithfully participate in the ministries of the church that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As we come to a time of intercessory prayer, our prayers will be in the form of the prayers of the people, meaning that I will offer intercessions on our behalf of the gathered community. I will close each intercession with "Loving God, in your mercy" and we will all respond **Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray:

Almighty and ever loving God, creator and giver of life and love, as we celebrate your love made real among us in the marriage of these beloved persons and in the lives of all who have recommitted themselves to Jesus' way of love, hear these the prayers of our community this day.

We pray for the gathered community and extended community who are not with but are here in spirit. Inspire us to renew within our hearts a commitment to lives of love and service. Breathe into us the same Spirit which was in Christ Jesus, a spirit of humility, honesty, faithfulness, hope and unconditional love. Loving God, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

We pray and give thanks for those who we love but no longer see, our family and friends who have gone in faith to be with you. We also pray for those among us who are grieving the death of a spouse. Enable us to feel your abiding presence with us along with the presence of those who are part of the great cloud of witnesses. Loving God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We celebrate and pray for all the various ways you call us into relationship with one another. We pray for all who are married, for all who are engaged and preparing for marriage, and all who are called to singleness. May you renew all these covenants among us that we might be made whole in your grace and be a channel of your mercy and peace to all in our lives. Loving God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray as we enter into this new season in the life of our denomination, we do so with hope that you are with us. This is the miracle and truth of this season of Epiphany, that you have entered into all things through the mystery of Christ's birth, to redeem all things in your love. Guide us by the light of your love for us and all creation. Loving God, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

We pray these things in his name, by the power of your holy spirit as we join our voices together to pray the prayer Christ taught us to pray, saying:
Lord's Prayer.

Now receive this blessing:

Eternal God, creator and preserver of all life, author of salvation and giver of all grace: bless and sanctify with your holy spirit all who have reaffirmed their marriage covenant and all who have recommitted themselves to beloved community. Enable us all to grow in love and peace with you and with each other all the days of our lives, that we may reach out in concern and service to the world. In the name of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit we pray, amen.

As we prepare to go forth, go forth in love, to be love for this world, go forth with the blessing of our God who created you and is always redeeming and sustaining you. Amen.