**Bill No 3**

**(2016 Bill No 15 lies on the table)**

**The Rt Rev’d H-A Hartley / The Rt Rev’d D Tamihere**

**A Bill to Adopt as Formularies two Liturgies for blessing the relationship
of those who have entered a civil marriage, 2018**

**Whereas**, General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui 2014 passed ‘Motion 30’ and established ‘A Way Forward Working Group’ to bring and recommend to the 62nd General Synod/ Te Hīnota Whānui ‘A proposal for a new liturgy to bless right ordered same-gender relationships,’ and

**Whereas**, General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui 2016 has received the report of ‘A Way Forward Working Group,’ including the said proposal,

**The General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui enacts as follows:**

**1. Title.**  The Title of this Statute is *The blessing of the relationship of those who have entered a civil marriage (Form 1), and (Form 2)’, Liturgies Statute, 2018.*

**2. Purpose.**  To adopt as Formularies the Liturgies in the schedule below.

**3. The Liturgies.** ‘The blessing of the relationship of those who have entered a civil marriage (Form 1)’ and ‘The blessing of the relationship of those who have entered a civil marriage (Form 2)’ are added to the Formularies of this Church.

**4. Clause 3 of this Statute** is the adoption of a specific proposal in terms of Part B, Clause 6(a) of the Constitution/ te Pouhere, and Section 4 (a) of the Church of England Empowering Act 1928, and shall be made known to Te Runanganui o Te Pīhopatanga o Aotearoa, the Synod of the Diocese of Polynesia, and the several Diocesan Synods in New Zealand.

**Schedule (over page):**

*The blessing of the relationship of those who have entered a civil marriage (Form 1)*

**The Gathering of the People**

*All standing, the presiding priest or bishop says*

Grace to you and peace from God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of Life,
the love at our beginning and without end,
in our midst and with us.
**God is with us,
here we find new life.**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;
**everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God.**

God’s love was revealed among us in this way:
**God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have abundant life.**

God is love,
**Those who live in love, live in God, and God in them**.

E ōku hoa aroha (Dear friends),
we have gathered in the presence of God
to recognise the marriage of N. and N. before Christ’s church,
to pray God’s blessing on them,
to share their joy,
and to celebrate their love.

In the beginning, when God created the first human,
God declared that it is not good for us to remain alone.
Out of compassion, God created a companion
flesh of flesh and bone of bone,
so that two people could comfort and care for each other,
and thereby a pattern of mutual support and faithful partnership
was established from the very beginning.

[In God’s love for creation,
God made a covenant with all people,
saying to Noah, “When I see the bow in the clouds I will remember my everlasting covenant between me and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”

God promised descendants to Abraham and Sarah, as numerous as the stars,
and led the chosen people out of bondage into freedom.
Ever faithful in love, God gave the law,
taught, and warned Israel by the holy prophets.

God showed the help and blessing
that can come to us in the best of friendships
Ruth and Naomi, Jonathan and David brought great blessing to each other.
Christ said to his disciples, “No longer do I call you servants but I call you friends.”

God’s faithful love was manifest in fullness
in the redemption of the whole world by our Lord Jesus Christ.
In Christ a new covenant has been established
by the laying down of his life for his friends.
In Christ the poor are invited to the heavenly marriage feast.
In Christ our humanity is wedded to God forever.]

With God’s faithful purpose in mind
we have come together to ask God to bless N. and N.,
who have made binding commitments of love and faithfulness to each other,
in accordance with civil law.
We will pray that the Holy Spirit may comfort, guide and strengthen them,

that they may remain faithful to God and to each other
through the promises they have already made,
and that, by God’s help and with the support of the Church,
they may fulfil God’s purposes
for the whole of their earthly life together.

Let us pray.

*Silence may be kept*

Most loving God, creator and redeemer,
we love because you first love us.
you remain faithful to us through all our life,
even when we turn our faces from you.
In your mercy, pour your blessing on N. and N.,
who come this day to seek your guidance and protection for their life together.
Bestow upon this couple, who have been joined together in lawful union,
the gifts of peace, trust, and steadfast love.
And grant to us all the knowledge of your grace,
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may know we are bound to you, whatever life may bring;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
**Amen.**

**The Ministry of the Word**

*A suitable reading (or readings) follows here.*

*After the reading a minister may speak to the people.*

**The Declarations**

*The priest or bishop asks the couple*

Do you attest to God’s blessing in your life?
**God has blessed us richly.**

What do you ask of God? **We ask for God’s blessing on our life together.
We ask for God’s help to remain faithful to our promises.
We ask for God’s gifts of constancy and love.**

What do you ask of the Church and from each of us gathered here?
**We ask for your prayers, your love, and your support.**

*The priest or bishop continues*

You have made promises (and given a ring/ rings) in token of your love for each other.
Do you attest before God and before this congregation that you are duly and legally married and that you honour the promises you made to each other in accordance with civil law?

**We do.**

*The congregation stands. The couple faces their family and friends.*

E ōku hoa aroha (Dear friends), do you recognise this lawful marriage? **We do .**

Will you uphold and support this couple now and in the years ahead?
**We will.**

*The priest or bishop asks the couple to declare their commitment to each other before the congregation.*

N. and N., in the sight of God and of this congregation, I invite you to declare your commitment to each other and to God.

**N., I have committed my whole life to you
and seek now to grow in love for you and for God.
May God keep me faithful to the vows we made
that as we live together we may be strengthened
in our ever deepening love and trust
and daily show forth love and joy in our lives.**

**N., I have committed my whole life to you
and seek now to grow in love for you and for God.
May God keep me faithful to the vows we made
that as we live together we may be strengthened
in our ever deepening love and trust
and daily show forth love and joy in our lives.**

*The priest or bishop addresses the people*

In the presence of God, and before this congregation
N. and N. have given testimony of their lawful marriage
and have now affirmed the commitments they made.

**The Prayers**

*The priest or bishop or lay person leads the prayers:*

Let us pray:

Faithful God,
holy and eternal,
hear us as we pray for N and N.

May their union be life-giving and life-long,
enriched by your presence and strengthened by your grace;
may they bring comfort and confidence to each other
in tenderness, faithfulness, respect, and trust.

God of love / E te Atua aroha
**Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou īnoi.**

May the hospitality of their home
bring refreshment and joy to strangers and friends alike;
may their love for each other
in good times and bad
overflow to neighbours in need.

May they celebrate with the joyful,
befriend the lonely
and comfort those in sorrow.

God of love / E te Atua aroha
**Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou īnoi.**

By your word and sacraments
may they be filled with your grace
and may your Holy Spirit
grant them insight and patience to discern your will
the courage and the strength to follow it.
May they come to know the joy that you have prepared for all people when,
at the end of this life, you receive us all into your eternal kingdom.

God of love / E te Atua aroha
**Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou īnoi.**

May their life together be a sign of your love for this broken world,
so that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt,
and joy triumph over despair.

God of love / E te Atua aroha
**Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou īnoi.**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

*or*

Kua akona nei tātou e tō tātou Ariki,
ka inoi tātou

**E tō mātou Matua i te rangi
Kia tapu tōu Ingoa.
Kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga.
Kia meatia tāu e pai ai
ki runga ki te whenua,
kia rite anō ki tō te rangi.
Hōmai ki a mātou āianei
he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.
Murua ō mātou hara,
Me mātou hoki e muru nei
i ō te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
Āua hoki mātou e kawea kia whakawaia;
Engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino:
Nōu hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha,
me te korōria,
Āke ake ake.    Āmine.**

*or*

**Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and for ever.
Amen.**

**The Blessing of the Couple**

*The couple kneels. The priest or bishop prays one of the following blessings:*

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of the universe,
for you have created all things
and you surround us with signs of your faithfulness.
Pour now the abundance of your blessing on N. and N.
who have committed their lives to each other.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts
and a crown upon their heads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
awake and asleep,
in joy and in sorrow,
in life and in death.
Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that heavenly marriage feast,
where your saints feast for ever more.
Through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
**Amen.**

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve, and keep you;
God grant you abundant grace
that, living together in faith and love,
you may be a blessing to each other
and may receive the blessings of eternal life.
**Amen.**

*or*

Most gracious God,
we praise you for the gift of human love.
We give you thanks for N. and N.,
and the promises of faithfulness they have made.
Pour out the abundance of your Holy Spirit upon them.
Keep them in your steadfast love;
protect them in all danger;
fill them with your wisdom and peace;
and lead them in service to each other and the world.

May the blessing of God the Father
God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit,
be with you and remain with you,
that you may always be a blessing to each other
and to all whom you meet. **Amen.**

*Or*

Eternal God,
you create us out of love
that we should love you and one another.
Bless N. and N., each made in your image,
whose commitment to each other
is a sign of your faithful love to us
in Christ our Lord.
**Amen**.

By your Holy Spirit,
fill them both with wisdom and hope
that they may delight in your gift of love
and enrich one another in love and steadfast faithfulness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
**Amen.**

Bring them to that table
where your saints celebrate forever in your heavenly home;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, forever and ever.
**Amen.**

*or*

May God who has made covenant with us
keep you in love with each other
so that you will be a sign
and an example of God’s never-failing love.

May God give you friends and family
to help you live in peace with all people.

May you always bear witness to the love of God
so that the afflicted and the needy will find welcome in your home.

And may the Almighty God bless you: Father , Son and Holy Spirit.
**Amen.**

**The Dismissal**

*The priest or bishop may give a blessing*

*The service may be concluded with the following or other appropriate words*

Grace be with you.
**Thanks be to God.**

Go in peace.
**Amen. We go in the name of Christ.**

*This service may only be conducted for a couple that is legally married in a prior civil marriage or in a prior ceremony of another religious tradition.*

*If the Eucharist is included it occurs after the Prayers and before the Blessing of the Couple. If that is the case the Lord’s Prayer may be omitted after the Prayers and be in the usual places in a Eucharist.*

**Some Suggested Readings**

Genesis 9:12-17

Ruth 1:16-17

1 Samuel 18:1b, 3, 20:16-17, 42a;

*or* 1 Samuel 18:1-4 Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 8:6-7

Micah 4:1-4

Romans 12:9-18

1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

Galatians 5:14, 22-26

Ephesians 3:14-21

Colossians 3:12-17

1 John 3:18-24

1 John 4:7-16, 21

Matthew 5:1-16

Mark 12:28-34

Luke 6:32-38

John 15:9-17

John 17:1-2, 18-26

*The blessing of the relationship of those who have entered a civil marriage (Form 2)*

**The Gathering of the People**

*All standing, the presiding priest or bishop says*

Grace to you and peace from God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of Life,
the love at our beginning and without end,
in our midst and with us.
**God is with us,
here we find new life.**

Beloved let us love one another, because love is from God;
**everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God.**

God’s love was revealed among us in this way:
**God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have abundant life.**

God is love,
**Those who live in love, live in God, and God in them**.

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was established between a man and a woman from the very beginning.

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and led the chosen people out of bondage into freedom.
Ever faithful in love, God gave the law,
taught, and warned Israel by the holy prophets.

God showed the help and blessing
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Ruth and Naomi, Jonathan and David brought great blessing to each other.
Christ said to his disciples, “No longer do I call you servants but I call you friends.”

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we have come together to ask God to bless N. and N.,
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in accordance with civil law.
We will pray that the Holy Spirit may comfort, guide and strengthen them,
that they may remain faithful to God and to each other
through the promises they have already made,
and that, by God’s help and with the support of the Church,
they may fulfil God’s purposes
for the whole of their earthly life together.

Let us pray.

*Silence may be kept*

Most loving God, creator and redeemer,
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you remain faithful to us through all our life,
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In your mercy, pour your blessing on N. and N.
who come this day to seek your guidance and protection for their life together.
Bestow upon this couple, who have been joined together in lawful union,
the gifts of peace, trust, and steadfast love.
And grant to us all the knowledge of your grace,
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may know we are bound to you, whatever life may bring;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**The Ministry of the Word**

*A suitable reading (or readings) follows here.*

*After the reading a minister may speak to the people.*

**The Declarations**

*The priest or bishop asks the couple*

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**God has blessed us richly.**

What do you ask of God? **We ask for God’s blessing on our life together.
We ask for God’s help to remain faithful to our promises.
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**N., I have committed my whole life to you
and seek now to grow in love for you and for God.
May God keep me faithful to the vows we made
that as we live together we may be strengthened
in our ever deepening love and trust
and daily show forth love and joy in our lives.**

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In the presence of God, and before this congregation
N. and N. have given testimony of their lawful marriage
and have now affirmed the commitments they made.

**The Prayers**

*The priest or bishop or lay person leads the prayers:*

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hear us as we pray for N. and N..

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may they bring comfort and confidence to each other
in tenderness, faithfulness, respect, and trust.

God of love / E te Atua aroha
**Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou īnoi.**

May the hospitality of their home
bring refreshment and joy to strangers and friends alike;
may their love for each other
in good times and bad
overflow to neighbours in need.
May they celebrate with the joyful,
befriend the lonely
and comfort those in sorrow.

God of love / E te Atua aroha
**Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou īnoi.**

By your word and sacraments
may they be filled with your grace
and may your Holy Spirit
grant them insight and patience to discern your will
the courage and the strength to follow it.
May they come to know the joy that you have prepared for all people when,
at the end of this life, you receive us all into your eternal kingdom.

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**Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou īnoi.**

May their life together be a sign of your love for this broken world,
so that unity may overcome estrangement,
forgiveness heal guilt,
and joy triumph over despair.

God of love / E te Atua aroha
**Grant our prayer. / Whakarongo mai ki tā mātou īnoi.**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

*or*

Kua akona nei tātou e tō tātou Ariki,
ka inoi tātou

**E tō mātou Matua i te rangi
Kia tapu tōu Ingoa.
Kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga.
Kia meatia tāu e pai ai
ki runga ki te whenua,
kia rite anō ki tō te rangi.
Hōmai ki a mātou āianei
he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.
Murua ō mātou hara,
Me mātou hoki e muru nei
i ō te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
Āua hoki mātou e kawea kia whakawaia;
Engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino:
Nōu hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha,
me te korōria,
Āke ake ake.    Āmine.**

*or*

**Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and for ever.
Amen.**

**The blessing of the couple**

*The couple kneels. The priest or bishop prays one of the following blessings:*

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of the universe,
for you have created all things
and you surround us with signs of your faithfulness.
Pour now the abundance of your blessing on N. and N.
who have committed their lives to each other.
Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts
and a crown upon their heads.
Bless them in their work and in their companionship;
awake and asleep,
in joy and in sorrow,
in life and in death.
Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that heavenly marriage feast,
where your saints feast for ever more.
Through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
**Amen.**

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve, and keep you;
God grant you abundant grace
that, living together in faith and love,
you may be a blessing to each other
and may receive the blessings of eternal life.
**Amen.**

*or*

Most gracious God,
we praise you for the gift of human love.
We give you thanks for N. and N.,
and the promises of faithfulness they have made.
Pour out the abundance of your Holy Spirit upon them.
Keep them in your steadfast love;
protect them in all danger;
fill them with your wisdom and peace;
and lead them in service to each other and the world.

May the blessing of God the Father
God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit,
be with you and remain with you,
that you may always be a blessing to each other
and to all whom you meet.
**Amen.**

*Or*

Eternal God,
you create us out of love
that we should love you and one another.
Bless N. and N., each made in your image,
whose commitment to each other
is a sign of your faithful love to us
in Christ our Lord.
**Amen**.

By your Holy Spirit,
fill them both with wisdom and hope
that they may delight in your gift of love
and enrich one another in love and steadfast faithfulness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
**Amen.**

Bring them to that table
where your saints celebrate forever in your heavenly home;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, forever and ever.
**Amen.**

*or*

May God who has made covenant with us
keep you in love with each other
so that you will be a sign
and an example of God’s never-failing love.

May God give you friends and family
to help you live in peace with all people.

May you always bear witness to the love of God
so that the afflicted and the needy will find welcome in your home.

And may the Almighty God bless you: Father , Son and Holy Spirit.
**Amen.**

**The Dismissal**

*The priest or bishop may give a blessing*

*The service may be concluded with the following or other appropriate words*

Grace be with you.
**Thanks be to God.**

Go in peace.
**Amen. We go in the name of Christ.**

*This service may only be conducted for a couple that is legally married in a prior civil marriage or in a prior ceremony of another religious tradition.*

*If the Eucharist is included it occurs after the Prayers and before the Blessing of the Couple. If that is the case the Lord’s Prayer may be omitted after the Prayers and be in the usual places in a Eucharist.*

**Some Suggested Readings**

Genesis 9:12-17

Ruth 1:16-17

1 Samuel 18:1b, 3, 20:16-17, 42a;

*or* 1 Samuel 18:1-4 Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 8:6-7

Micah 4:1-4

Romans 12:9-18

1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13

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Galatians 5:14, 22-26

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1 John 3:18-24

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