Hymns for the Wedding service


1. Our God, our help in ages past,
   our hope for years to come,
   our shelter from the stormy blast,
   and our eternal home:

2. under the shadow of your throne
   your saints have dwelt secure:
   sufficient is your arm alone,
   and our defence is sure.

3. Before the hills in order stood,
   or earth received its frame,
   from everlasting you are God
   to endless years the same.

4. A thousand ages in your sight
   are like an evening gone:
   short as the watch that ends the night
   before the rising sun.

5. Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
   bears all of us away;
   we fly forgotten, as a dream
   dies at the opening day.

6. Our God, our help in ages past,
   our hope for years to come,
remain our guard while troubles last,
and our eternal home.

Isaac Watts
1674–1748 alt.

If a shorter hymn is required, a selection of verses may be sung, e.g. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7; 1, 4, 5, 7

1. All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing
alleluia, alleluia!
O burning sun with golden beam,
and silver moon with softer gleam,
O praise him, O praise him,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2. Swift-rushing winds that are so strong,
and clouds that sail in heaven along,
O praise him, alleluia!
Fresh-rising morn, in praise rejoice,
and lights of evening, find a voice:
O praise him ...

3. O flowing water, pure and clear,
make music for your Lord to hear,
alleluia, alleluia!
O fire, so masterful and bright,
providing us with warmth and light,
   O praise him ...

4.  Dear mother earth, who day by day
    unfold rich blessings on our way,
    O praise him, alleluia!
All flowers and fruits that in you grow,
let them his glory also show;
   O praise him ...

5.  And everyone of tender heart,
    forgiving others, take your part,
    O praise him, alleluia!
All who long pain and sorrow bear
praise God and on him cast your care;
   O praise him ...

6.  And you, most kind and gentle death,
    waiting to hush our latest breath,
    O praise him, alleluia!
You lead to heaven the child of God,
and Christ our Lord the way has trod:
   O praise him ...

7.  Let all things their Creator bless,
    and worship him in humbleness;
    O praise him, alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:
   O praise him, O praise him,
   alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Based on *Laudato sia Dio mio Signore*
the ‘Canticle of the Sun’ of Francis of Assisi 1182–1226
by William Henry Draper 1855–1933 *alt.*

Music from the English Hymnal
by permission Oxford University Press
1. Now thank we all our God
   with hearts and hands and voices,
   who wondrous things has done,
   in whom the world rejoices;
   who from our mothers’ arms
   has blessed us on our way
   with countless gifts of love,
   and still is ours today.

2. O may this bounteous God
   through all our life be near us,
   with ever joyful hearts
   and blessèd peace to cheer us.
   Lord, keep us in your grace,
   and guide us when perplexed,
   and free us from all harm
   in this world and the next.

3. All praise and thanks to God
   who reigns in highest heaven,
   to Father and to Son
   and Spirit now be given:
   the one eternal God,
   whom heaven and earth adore,
   who ever was, is now,
   and shall be ever more.
1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation;  
   O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation.  
   Come all who hear,  
   brothers and sisters draw near,  
   praise him in glad adoration.

2. Praise to the Lord who in all things is wondrously reigning  
   and, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining:  
   have you not seen  
   all that is needed has been  
   sent by his gracious ordaining?

3. Praise to the Lord, who will prosper our work and defend us;  
   surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend us:  
   ponder anew  
   what the Almighty can do  
   as with his love he befriends us.

4. Praise to the Lord, who when darkness of sin is abounding,  
   who, when the godless do triumph, our best hopes confounding,  
   sheds forth his light,  
   scatters the horrors of night,  
   saints with his mercy surrounding.

5. Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!  
   All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him.  
   Let the Amen
sound from his people again:
gladly for ever adore him.

Joachim Neander 1650–80
tr. Catherine Winkworth 1827–78 and others

**AMAZING GRACE 86.86**

1. Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)
   that saved a wretch like me!
   I once was lost, but now am found,
   was blind, but now I see.

2. As grace first taught my heart to fear
   so grace my fears relieved;
   how precious did that grace appear
   the hour I first believed!

3. Through many dangers, toils and snares
   I have already come:
   God’s grace has brought me safe thus far,
   and grace will lead me home.

4. The Lord has promised good to me,
   his word my hope secures;
   he will my shield and portion be
   as long as life endures.

John Newton
1725–1807 alt.
Arrangement © L. F. Bartlett
1. Praise, my soul, the king of heaven;  
   to his feet your tribute bring;  
   ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
   who like me his praise should sing?  
   Praise him, praise him, hallelujah,  
   praise the everlasting king!

2. Praise him for his grace and favour  
   to his people in distress;  
   praise him still the same for ever,  
   slow to chide, and swift to bless:  
   praise him, praise him, hallelujah,  
   glorious in his faithfulness!

3. Father-like he tends and spares us;  
   well our feeble frame he knows;  
   in his hands he gently bears us,  
   rescues us from all our foes:  
   praise him, praise him, hallelujah,  
   widely as his mercy flows!

4. Frail as summer’s flower we flourish,  
   blows the wind and it is gone;  
   but while mortals rise and perish  
   God endures unchanging on.  
   Praise him, praise him, hallelujah,  
   praise the high eternal one!
5. Angels, help us to adore him,  
you behold him face to face;  
sun and moon, bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space:  
praise him, praise him, hallelujah,  
praise with us the God of grace!

Harmony © C. L. Fouvy  
Henry Francis Lyte  
1793–1847 alt.  
based on Psalm 103

All things bright and beautiful,  
all creatures great and small,  
all things wise and wonderful —  
the Lord God made them all.

1. The wildflowers in their beauty,  
the mountain ranges tall,  
the billabongs and rivers,  
and friendly birds that call,  
All things bright and beautiful ...  
2. The cold wind in the winter,  
the bright, life-giving sun,  
the ripe fruits in the garden —
he made them every one.

*All things bright and beautiful ...*

3. The coloured walls of gorges,
   the gum trees green and tall,
   the rocks, and pools, and palm trees,
   the sparkling waterfall,

*All things bright and beautiful ...*

4. The many-coloured corals,
   the creatures of the sea,
   of bushland, field or desert,
   on farms, or roaming free,

*All things bright and beautiful ...*

5. He gave us eyes to see them,
   and lips that we might tell
   how great is God Almighty
   who has made all things well.

*All things bright and beautiful ...*

Cecil Frances Alexander 1818–95 (vv. 2 alt., 5, and refrain)
Brian Black 1926– (vv. 1 and 3)
Compilers (v. 4)
2. For the beauty of each hour
   of the day and of the night,
   hill and vale, and tree and flower,
   sun and moon and stars of light,

3. For the joy of ear and eye,
   for the heart and mind’s delight,
   for the mystic harmony
   linking sense to sound and sight,

4. For the joy of human love,
   brother, sister, parent, child,
   friends on earth and friends above,
   for all gentle thoughts and mild,

5. For each perfect gift divine
   to our race so freely given,
   graces all of your design,
   flowers of earth and buds of heaven,

6. For the church that evermore,
   lifting holy hands above,
   offers up on every shore
   the pure sacrifice of love,

Folliott Sandford Pierpoint
1835–1917 alt.
Music from the Revised Church Hymnary 1927 by permission Oxford University Press
1. Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious, your great name we praise.

2. Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,  
nor wanting, nor wasting, but ruling in might;  
your justice like mountains high soaring above,  
your clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

3. You give life to all, Lord, to both great and small,  
in all life now living, the true life of all;  
we blossom and flourish as leaves on a tree,  
then wither: but ever unchanged you will be.

4. Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,  
your angels adore you, all veiling their sight;  
of all your rich graces this grace, Lord, impart —  
take the veil from our faces, the veil from our heart.

5. All praise we would render: reveal to our sight  
what hides you is only the splendour of light;  
and so let your glory, Almighty, impart,  
through Christ in the story, your Christ to the heart.

Walter Chalmers Smith  
1824–1908 alt.

1. The king of love my shepherd is,  
whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am his  
and he is mine for ever.

2. Where streams of living water flow  
my ransomed soul he leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow
with food celestial feedeth.

3. Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home rejoicing brought me.

4. In death’s dark vale I fear no ill
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy cross before to guide me.

5. Thou spread’st a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and O what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

6. And so through all the length of days
thy goodness faileth never:
good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house for ever.

Henry Williams Baker
1821–77
based on Psalm 23
1. Joyful, joyful, we adore you,
   God of glory, God of love;
   hearts unfold like flowers before you
   opening to the sun above.
   Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
   drive the dark of doubt away;
   giver of immortal gladness,
   fill us with the light of day.

2. All your works with joy surround you,
   earth and heav’n reflect your rays,
   stars and angels sing around you,
   centre of unbroken praise.
   Field and forest, vale and mountain,
   flowery meadow, flashing sea,
   singing bird and flowing fountain
   call to praise you joyfully.

3. You are giving and forgiving,
   ever blessing, ever blest,
   well-spring of the joy of living,
   ocean-depth of happy rest.
   You our Father, Christ our brother,
   all are yours who live in love;
   teach us how to love each other,
   lift us to your joy above.

Henry Van Dyke
1852–1933 alt.
Arrangement © L. F. Bartlett

Alternative words to tune 152

1. Gracious Lord we ask your blessing,
   On these two who stand today
   As they make a new beginning,
   In a fresh and loving way.
   We, who love them bless and thank you
   For the memories we hold dear,
   For your love which planned their union.
   For your Grace which brought them here.

2. May they have the benediction
   Of your presence as they go,
   Comforting, sustaining, giving
   Quickened hearts that burn and glow;
And may gracious, deep devotion
Fill their lives with fragrance rare
Telling needy hearts around them
Of a love which all can share.

3. May their hopes and dreams and longings
Be transformed their whole life through
Into memories they will treasure
Bound with love undimmed and true.
We would wish them all the gladness
That this life can hold in store
Faith and hope, and joyful service.
We would ask for them and more.

[unknown]

ABBOT’S LEIGH 87.87 D

1. God is love, let heav’n adore him;
   God is love, let earth rejoice;
   let creation sing before him,
   and exalt him with one voice.
   God, who laid the earth’s foundation,
   he who spread the heavens above,
   and who breathes through all creation,
   God is love, eternal Love.
2. God is love, and gently enfolding
all the world in one embrace,
with unfailing grasp is holding
every child of every race.
And when human hearts are breaking
under sorrow’s iron rod,
then they find that selfsame aching
deep within the heart of God.

3. God is love, and, though with blindness
sin afflicts our human hearts,
God’s eternal lovingkindness
holding, guiding, grace imparts.
Sin and death and hell shall never
o’er us final triumph gain;
God is love, so love for ever
o’er the universe must reign.

Timothy Rees
1874–1939 alt.
Words by permission
Community of the Resurrection, UK
Music by permission
Oxford University Press

156

1. Morning has broken
like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken
like the first bird.
Praise for the singing,
praise for the morning,
praise for them, springing fresh from the word.

2. Sweet the rain’s new fall sunlit from heaven, like the first dewfall on the first grass. Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden, sprung from completeness where his feet pass.

3. Mine is the sunlight; mine is the morning born of the one light Eden saw play. Praise with elation, praise every morning, God’s recreation of the new day.

Eleanor Farjeon 1881–1965

Words and music from Enlarged Songs of Praise 1931 by permission Oxford University Press
Arrangement © L. F. Bartlett

Alternative words to tune 156

1. Come to a wedding, Come to a blessing, Come on a day when happiness sings! Come rain or sun, Come winter or summer, Celebrate love and all that it brings.

2. Thanks for the love, That holds us together, Parent and child, and lover and friend; Thanks to the God, Whose love is our centre, Source of compassion, knowing no end.

3. Love is the gift, And love is the giver, Love is the gold that Makes the day shine;
Love forgets self to care for the other,
Love changes life from water to wine.

4. Come to this wedding,
   Asking a blessing,
   For all the years that living will prove;
   Health of the body,
   Health of the spirit,
   Now to you both we offer our love.

Words: Shirley Erena Murray

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
   joy of heaven, to earth come down,
   fix in us thy humble dwelling,
   all thy faithful mercies crown:
   Jesus, thou art all compassion,
   pure unbounded love thou art;
   visit us with thy salvation,
   enter every trembling heart.

2. Come, almighty to deliver,
   let us all thy life receive;
   suddenly return, and never,
   never more thy temples leave:
   thee we would be always blessing,
   serve thee as thy hosts above,
   pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
   glory in thy perfect love.

3. Finish then thy new creation,
   pure and spotless let us be,
   let us see thy great salvation,
   perfectly restored in thee:
   changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

Charles Wesley
1707–88 alt.

1. Come down, O Love divine,
   seek now this soul of mine,
   and visit it with your own ardour glowing;
   O Comforter, draw near,
   within my heart appear
   and kindle it, your holy flame bestowing.

2. There let it freely burn,
   till earthly passions turn
   to dust and ashes, in its heat consuming;
   and let your glorious light
   shine ever on my sight
   and clothe me round, the while my path illumining.

3. Let holy charity
   my outer garment be,
   and lowliness become my inner clothing:
   true lowliness of heart,
   which takes the humbler part
   and for its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.
4. And so the yearning strong
with which the soul will long
shall far outpass the power of human telling;
for none can guess its grace
till we become the place
in which the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

Bianco da Siena d.1434
tr. Richard Frederick Littledale 1833–90 alt.
Music from the *English Hymnal*
by permission Oxford University Press
1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart, naught be all else to me, save that thou art thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

2. Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word; I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord; thou my great Father, thy child let me be; thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

3. Be thou my armour, my sword for the fight, be thou my dignity, thou my delight; thou my soul’s shelter and thou my high tower; raise thou me heaven ward, O Power of my power.

4. Riches I scorn and the world’s empty praise, thou my inheritance, now and always: thou and thou only the first in my heart; high King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

5. High King of heaven, after victory won, may I reach heaven’s joys, O bright heaven’s Sun! Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Words from The Poem Book of the Gael by permission Chatto & Windus, London
Harmony from the Revised Church Hymnary 1927 by permission Oxford University Press
1. Happy the home that welcomes you, Lord Jesus,
  truest of friends, most honoured guest of all,
  where hearts and eyes are bright with joy to greet you,
  your lightest wishes eager to fulfil.

2. Happy the home where man and wife together
   are of one mind believing in your love:
   through love and pain, prosperity and hardship,
   through good and evil days your care they prove.

3. Happy the home, O loving Friend of children,
   where they are giv’n to you with hands of prayer,
   where at your feet they early learn to listen
   to your own words, and thank you for your care.

4. Happy the home where work is done to please you,
   in tasks both great and small, that you may see
   your servants doing all as you would wish them
   as members of your household, glad and free.

5. Happy the home that knows your healing comfort,
   where, unforgotten, every joy you share,
   until they all, their work on earth completed,
   come to your Father’s house to meet you there.

Karl Johann Philipp Spitta 1801–59
tr. Honor Mary Thwaites 1914–93 alt.
Words © M. Thwaites
1. Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
   forgive our foolish ways;
   reclothe us in our rightful mind:
   in purer lives thy service find,
   in deeper reverence, praise.
   in deeper reverence, praise.

2. In simple trust like theirs who heard,
   beside the Syrian sea,
   the gracious calling of the Lord,
   let us, like them, without a word
   rise up and follow thee,
   rise up and follow thee.

3. O sabbath rest by Galilee!
   O calm of hills above,
   where Jesus knelt to share with thee
   the silence of eternity,
   interpreted by love,
   interpreted by love!

4. Drop thy still dews of quietness,
   till all our strivings cease;
   take from our souls the strain and stress,
   and let our ordered lives confess
   the beauty of thy peace,
   the beauty of thy peace.

5. Breathe through the heats of our desire
   thy coolness and thy balm;
   let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm,
O still small voice of calm.

John Greenleaf Whittier
1807–92 alt.

1. O perfect love, all human thought transcending,
   lowly we kneel in prayer before your throne,
   that theirs may be the love which knows no ending,
   whom you for evermore now join in one.

2. O perfect Life, be now their full assurance
   of tender charity and steadfast faith,
   of patient hope, and quiet brave endurance,
   with childlike trust that fears not pain or death.

3. Grant them the joy which brightens earthly sorrow,
   grant them the peace which calms all earthly strife,
   and to life’s day the glorious unknown morrow
   that dawns upon eternal love and life.

Dorothy Frances Gurney
1858–1932 alt.

Words and music by permission of Oxford University Press
1. Make me a channel of your peace.
   Where there is hatred let me bring your love;
   Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
   And where there's doubt, true faith in you.
O Master, grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.

2. Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there’s despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, let me bring your light;
and where there’s sadness, ever joy.

O Master, grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.

3. Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive,
and in dying that we’re born to eternal life.

Based on an anonymous prayer (French) c.1900
This version by Johann Sebastian Templehoff (‘Sebastian Temple’) 1928–
Words and music by permission of Oregon Catholic Press

1. Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy,
1. As man and woman we were made, 
that love be found and life begun; 
so praise the Lord who made us two, 
and praise the Lord when two are one: 
praise for the love that comes to life 
through child or parent, husband, wife.

2. Now Jesus lived and gave his love 
to make our life and loving new;
so celebrate with him today,
and drink the joy he offers you
that makes the simple moment shine
and changes water into wine.

3. And Jesus died to live again;
so praise the love that, come what may,
can bring the dawn and clear the skies,
and waits to wipe all tears away;
and let us hope for what shall be,
believing where we cannot see.

4. Then spread the table, clear the hall,
and celebrate till day is done;
let peace go deep between us all,
and joy be shared by everyone:
laugh and make merry with your friends,
and praise the love that never ends.

Words © 1983 by Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
Arrangement © 1919 Stainer & Bell Ltd, London, England
Brian Arthur Wren
1936– Words: Brian Wren
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

4. I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I’ll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we’ve seen this journey through.

5. When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we’ve known together
of Christ’s love and agony.

6. Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

Richard Gillard 1953–
Words and music by permission Integrity Music (Aust)
A new commandment I give unto you
that you love one another
as I have loved you,
that you love one another
as I have loved you.
By this will others know
that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another;
by this will others know
that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another.

Arrangement © Australian Hymn Book Co

And did those Feet (Jerusalem)

Tune below from TIS 416 (with different words) - for the words to ‘Jerusalem’ see words below
1. And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountain green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark satanic mills?

2. Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

Words: William Blake (1757-1827)
Music: Sir Hubert Parry (1916)

I Vow to Thee my Country

Tune Thaxted (unavailable)
Gustav Theodore Holst (1874 - 1934) from Jupiter in his Planets' Suite

1. I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love;
The love that asks no question, the love that stands the test,
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.

2. And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know;
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King;
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,
And her ways are ways of gentleness, and all her paths are peace.

Words: Cecil Spring-Rice (1908)
Music: Gustav Holst
Alternative words to Thaxted (above)

1. We pledge to one another, before the Lord above, entire and whole and perfect, this union of our love — a love that will be patient, a love that will be wise, that will not twist with envy, nor lose itself in lies; a love that will not falter, a love to hold us fast, and bind us to each other as long as life shall last.

2. We pray that God will guide us through all the years to be, our lives be shaped by courage, hope and serenity. Through joy and celebration, through loneliness and pain, may loyalty, compassion and tenderness remain, that those who share the blessing of love that cannot cease may walk the paths of gentleness into the place of peace.

Jill Jenkins (born 1937)