



# Marriage Guide for the Berkeley Benefice Family of Churches

All Saint's, Stone with Woodford, St Andrew's, Sharpness with St John's, Purton, St Mary the Virgin, Berkeley with Breadstone, Wick & Newport, and St Michael's, Hill

## Welcome

Many congratulations on your engagement, and we are delighted to welcome you to one of our churches for your marriage services. A wedding in church is personal, meaningful, spiritual and beautiful, just as you want it to be. An exciting and happy time lies ahead and there will be much to think about.

This guide is intended to help you prepare for your big day, not to become engrossed in planning the smallest details, but to help you enjoy a relaxed and happy moment as you move into a new stage in your life together. It includes a sample Order for a marriage and a blessing service, together with suggested hymns and readings. You will also find details on the charges for Weddings for the current year, 2024.

Weddings and blessings are normally taken by the Priest in Charge, or a retired clergy person from the benefice. In this guide the person taking the service is referred to as "the Minister". If you have any questions relating to this guide or about marriage in the Church of England, please contact the Benefice Priest in Charge:

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(January\_2025\_v1)

## How can I be married in church?

You should receive this with an application form for marriage or blessing, or you can download a copy from our website ( <https://www.berkeleybenefice.co.uk/weddings--blessings.html> ). Please contact then contact the Priest in Charge to book a meeting to confirm ID and secure the date.

There are certain things which must be in place for a church wedding to ensure that the marriage complies with both UK civil and church law. You can be married in the Berkeley Benefice if you 18 years old or over (16 years old and over with parental consent), and can qualify under one of the following three conditions:

(1) You live in one of our three parishes - Please check with the minister that you live within the parish boundary.

(2) You have a "qualifying connection" - this is specifically

- Through Baptism - either applicant was previously baptized in the parish
- Through Confirmation - either applicant was previously prepared for confirmed in the parish and their confirmation was entered into the parish confirmation book
- Through Marriage of Parent or Grandparent - a parent or grandparent of either applicant had been previously married under the rites of the Church of England in the Parish.
- Through a Parent's habitual worship - a parent or grandparent of either applicant had habitually worshipped in the Parish for at least 6 months during the applicant's lifetime.

(3) Or you commit to building a connection though regularly attending worship - If you do not have a connection under one or more of the above, we can only marry you in a church in the Parish if you build a connection through regular worship. The expectation of regular worship would be an attendance at worship at least monthly for a minimum of 6 consecutive months.

It will be our Benefice policy to require applicants for the Blessing of a Marriage to have or establish the same connection as a couple applying to be married. If you cannot confirm or establish your connection as above, we will not be able to continue with your marriage or blessing. Please contact the minister immediately if this is the case.

## Marriage in church after divorce

Your church wishes you a lifetime of love that grows within God's protection. But we recognise that some marriages do fail for all sorts of sad and painful reasons. So in certain circumstances the Church of England accepts that a divorced person may marry again in church and this has been the case since 2002.

The first step is to make an enquiry with the Minister of the church where you'd like to marry. If you wish to proceed, both of you should complete the Marriage after Divorce application form and return it to the Minister. You will also need to bring with you written legal proof that the divorce decree is absolute. (A decree nisi will not be sufficient.)

We may need to hold more than one confidential interview with you, and in some cases, we may need to consult with the Bishop, or their advisors, before making a decision. Even if it is not possible to do your wedding, we may offer a blessing service after a civil wedding.

## **Banns of Marriage**

It is a legal requirement that "banns" are read before a marriage. This means the names of the couple are read during the main church service on three consecutive weeks during the three months prior to your wedding. People are asked to declare if they know any reason why you should not marry. It is also an opportunity for our church congregations to pray for you as you prepare for your wedding. The minister will confirm the dates when your banns will be read, and do please join us on those Sundays if you can.

If you live in the parishes of Berkeley with Breadstone, Wick & Newport, Stone & Woodford, or Hill: we will read your banns in the church in which you will be married. If you live outside the parishes of Berkeley with Breadstone, Wick & Newport, Stone & Woodford, or Hill are marrying by "qualifying connection": we will read your banns in the church in which you will be married. BUT you must also have your banns read in the parish church(es).

We must have the Banns Certificates prior to the wedding otherwise it cannot go ahead. It is very simple, but absolutely essential – and it is easily forgotten.

There may be occasion due to your circumstances when we will be unable to read Banns of Marriage but may require an additional process such as a Common License, the Minister will be able to guide you through this process, however, there may be additional cost you will be required to pay such as a Diocesan Registrars fee.

## **Planning your service, and your life together**

Between booking your wedding date and the day itself we would like to invite you to find time to think about the future of your marriage and life together. Couples are invited to join in with the monthly Saturday Zoom drop in sessions or to make individual appointments with the minister. If there are individual issues or areas of concern, the minister will be more than happy to meet and discuss these as they arise.

## **What happens next?**

Read this guide together, and discuss the choices you can make about the service and arrangements for your wedding day. Also read the order of service carefully, and talk about what the declarations and vows will mean to you both.

You can also go online to look at the resources on the Church of England Wedding Project website: <http://www.yourchurchwedding.org/>

There is a list of the current fees at the back of the booklet, please be aware that fees change at the beginning of each year, and you will be notified of the fees which apply to you at the beginning of the year of your special day.

## **Service booklet**

You will probably want to produce a service booklet ("order of service") for your guests. The minister will supply you with a copy of the outline order of service. You can then fill in the details of the music, hymns, readings etc. You should show a draft copy of the completed booklet to the minister before printing. Please print enough for all your guests and also welcome but uninvited friends, and for the choir if needed. Please bring all the service booklets to the rehearsal, so we have them in church ready for your wedding day. If someone is writing you a poem, then please send a copy for the Minister to see beforehand.

## **9 Steps to your wedding day**

- Step 1 Application for Marriage & paying a deposit, to book the date.
- Step 2 First Conversation with the Minister
- Step 3 Decide the keys roles
- Step 4 Attend the Wedding preparation day & confirm the extras for your big day.
- Step 5 Write your service order
- Step 6 Arrange any necessary Banns of Marriage
- Step 7 Meet with the Minister to check your service order and detail
- Step 8 Attend services when your Banns of Marriage are being read
- Step 9 Arrange your wedding rehearsal

## **Rehearsal**

The minister will arrange a rehearsal in the church just before the wedding. You will need to check with the minister who, besides yourselves, should attend. Please bring the printed orders of service to the wedding rehearsal.

## **Photography & Video Recording**

We will do our best to help your photographer produce a memorable record of the day, but it is essential that they consult with the minister performing the wedding service. Usually they are allowed to take photographs during the service but not during the declarations, vows or address. Flash photography is not permitted at any time within the church building.

We permit video-recording of the service, provided we are notified in advance. The recordist will have to sign the disclaimer, and must comply with the instructions given by the minister. They must be static throughout the service. We strongly recommend that you hire a professional recordist, but whoever does it, an additional fee is payable to comply with copyright law. Please ensure that the recordist has a copy of the disclaimer form and has completed and returned it to the minister before the wedding.

## **Flowers**

You are welcome to arrange of your choice of floral decoration in the church for your service. We can arrange access for you on the evening before your service as long as the building is not being used for any other event or service. Please check with the minister for times of access. We ask that all floral decorations, and other items used in the service are removed before the end of the day of the service.

## **Confetti**

Confetti may be thrown at the church gate in the case of All Saints' Stone, St Andrew's Sharpness, St John's Purton & St Michael's Hill. At St Mary's Berkeley, couples will leave by the west end door and confetti may be thrown out side of this doorway. **No confetti, flowers or other items may be thrown or scattered inside of our church buildings.**

## The day of the service

We aim to provide for you, your family and your friends the very best experience of a wedding or blessing in church. The minister and team will do their utmost to help you with planning and preparation, however, there is some things you can begin to think about.

### Timings

Please ensure you plan the day so that the groom arrives at least 45 minutes before the service and the bridal party arrives promptly. Late arrival causes considerable inconvenience to guests, the officiating minister and to all those supporting you on your wedding day. If there is a delay of more than 30 minutes due to a late arrival we will have to allow the organist, choir and bell ringers to leave but will continue with the legal service. A delay of more than 45 minutes without good reason will lead to the cancelation of the service.

A wedding service usually lasts around 45 minutes but should you require the addition of Communion or a Baptism, please allow an extra 30 minutes to your schedule for the day.

### Vergers

Our Vergers are very experienced and are there to help your Ushers or Groomsmen, and assist the minister. Any weddings with 150 guests or more, will need two vergers on duty (and you will be charged accordingly).

### Witnesses

Choose two people to be witnesses, to sign the marriage document with you. The minister will need a note of their forename and surname before the day. There are no requirements about the gender or age of witnesses, or their relationship to you, but preferably over the age of 18.

### Ushers

The ushers will be supported by our "Wedding Verger" (s/he is a member of our church community who is experienced in providing help and support at weddings). The Verger will be in the church 45 minutes before the start of the service, and the ushers should also arrive at the church at least 45 minutes before the service begins. They should make themselves known to the Verger. At the end of the service, the ushers should make sure that all guests' belongings are taken out of the church, spare Orders of Service are removed and the church is tidy.

### Marriage Document & Marriage Certificates

Following the rule changes on May 4th 2021, we no longer issue you with your wedding certificate. You will no longer sign a marriage register or be given a Marriage Certificate during the ceremony instead you will sign a Marriage Document and copy. This is a one-page document which contains the details of both people getting married which are needed to register a marriage.

The Marriage Document will be issued by the Minister at the Church where your marriage is taking place and will contain all the details required to complete a marriage registration. In addition to your fathers details, other parent details will be able to be recorded ie mother, step-parent. **Please keep us up to date with your details. The registrar has asked me to let you know of the complexity and £90 fee for applying for a correction at a later date.**

**Couples will be able to apply for certificates online: Marriage certificates can be ordered online at the Gloucestershire Registration Service website [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/births-marriages-deaths-and-civil-partnerships/order-certificates/](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/births-marriages-deaths-and-civil-partnerships/order-certificates/) for dispatch within 7 calendar days. Certificates will be sent via Royal Mail 2nd class delivery service.**

**Please note that the minister has 21 days in which to send the marriage document to the Registration Service, who then have 10 days to process the registration.**

## **Fees for current year weddings**

Please note:

- ◆ Once you have made all the arrangements for the day with the minister, we will confirm the fees due and payment details
- ◆ Your deposit and Banns fee will be held on account.
- ◆ Fees must be paid at least 1 month prior to the wedding.

<b>Compulsory Fees</b>	
Marriage Service	£544
Publication of banns	37.00
Verger	£70.00
Organist - Berkeley	£150.00
Organist - Hill, Stone, Purton or Sharpness	£100.00
Heating (October to April)	£70.00
Grass cutting (May to September)	£70.00
<b>Optional Costs</b>	
Choir (Not available weekdays or during the month of August) at Berkeley only.	£200.00
Video PR License - Musician's & Church fee*	£150.00
Bell ringing may be available on request (not weekdays or during the month of August) at Berkeley or Stone only.	£250.00

**Fees apply to weddings taking place in 2025. Fees are liable at the date of the wedding service and will be charged at the prevailing rate at this time. If you have any questions relating to the charging of a particular fee, please address this with the minister.**

# Sample Marriage Service

*The Welcome*

*The minister welcomes the people using these words*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**All and also with you.**

*A Hymn is sung*

*Preface*

In the presence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we have come together to witness the marriage of *N* and *N*, to pray for God's blessing on them, to share their joy and to celebrate their love. Marriage is a gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace of God. It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the Church.

The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together in the delight and tenderness of sexual union and joyful commitment to the end of their lives. It is given as the foundation of family life in which children are [born and] nurtured and in which each member of the family, in good times and in bad, may find strength, companionship and comfort, and grow to maturity in love.

Marriage is a way of life made holy by God, and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty which all should uphold and honour. It enriches society and strengthens community. No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God.

*N* and *N* are now to enter this way of life.

They will each give their consent to the other and make solemn vows,  
and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring.

We pray with them that the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen them,  
that they may fulfil God's purposes for the whole of their earthly life together.

*The Declarations*

*The minister says to the congregation*

First, I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

*The minister says to the couple*

The vows you are about to take are to be made in the presence  
of God, who is judge of all and knows all the secrets of our hearts; therefore if either of  
you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, you must declare it now.

*The minister says to the bridegroom*

*N*, will you take *N* to be your wife?

Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and, forsaking all others,  
be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

*He answers*

**I will.**

*The minister says to the bride*

*N* will you take *N* to be your husband?

Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him, and, forsaking all others,  
be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

*She answers*

**I will.**

*The minister says to the congregation*

Will you, the families and friends of *N* and *N*, support and uphold them in their marriage now and in the years to come?

**All We will.**

*The Collect*

*The minister invites the people to pray, silence is kept and the minister says the Collect*

God our Father, from the beginning, you have blessed creation with abundant life. Pour out your blessings upon *N* and *N*, that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship, in holiness and commitment to each other. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**All Amen.**

*Readings*

*(One reading from the Bible, and possibly one additional reading if required)*

*Address by the minister*

*A Hymn is sung*

*The Marriage*

*The couple stand before the minister.*

*The Vows*

*The minister introduces the vows*

*N* and *N*, I now invite you to join hands and make your vows, in the presence of God and his people.

*The bride and bridegroom face each other holding each others hands. The bridegroom says*  
I, *N*, take you, *N*, to be my wife, 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, till death us do part; according to God's holy law.  
In the presence of God I make this vow.

*The bride says*

I, *N*, take you, *N*, to be my husband, 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, till death us do part; according to God's holy law.  
In the presence of God I make this vow.

*They loose hands.*

*The Giving of Rings*

*The minister receives the rings, and says*

Heavenly Father, by your blessing, let these rings be to *N* and *N* a symbol of unending love and faithfulness, to remind them of the vow and covenant which they have made this day through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All Amen.**

*The bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand and, holding it there, says*

*N*, I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage. With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you, within the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*They loose hands and the bride places a ring on the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand and, holding it there, says*



*N*, I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage. With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you, within the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*The Proclamation*

*The minister joins their hands together and says*

In the presence of God, and before this congregation, *N* and *N* have given their consent and made their marriage vows to each other. They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands and by the giving and receiving of rings. I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife. Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

*The Blessing of the Marriage*

*The husband and wife kneel, and the minister says*

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for you have created joy and gladness, pleasure and delight, love, peace and fellowship. Pour out the abundance of your blessing upon *N* and *N* in their new life together. 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 banquet where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home. We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**All Amen.**

*The minister says to the couple*

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve and keep you; the Lord mercifully grant you the riches of his grace, that you may please him both in body and soul, and, living together in faith and love, may receive the blessings of eternal life.

**All Amen.**

*Prayers*

*The prayers conclude with the Lord's Prayer.*

**All Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and glory,  
for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

*Registration of the Marriage*

*Hymn*

*The minister says*

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

**All Amen.**

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## **Music in your wedding**

In choosing to be married in one of our churches in a traditional Church of England wedding, music can be an important and wonderful part of your marriage service. Here is information about the organist, choir and hymns.

### **Musical Director**

The Musical Director for all parishes is Mr David Furnival (01453 819128 or david\_furnival@btinternet.com ). If he is unavailable, we have deputies who are also talented and capable musicians. An organist will be supplied for each service to play for hymns and any incidental music.

### **Choir**

A choir maybe available by special arrangement and subject to availability in St Mary's, Berkeley only. If you are considering having a choir, please inform the Minister as soon as possible

### **Choosing hymns**

It is usual to have three hymns at a wedding. Try and choose hymns that will be familiar and also reflect what is happening during the service: a cheerful, bright hymn to start and end with and a gentler, reflective hymn in the middle of the service before you make your solemn vows. There are some suggestions at the end of this guide, these are the first lines of the hymn which you can use to google the words and tunes.

### **Suggested hymns for weddings and blessings**

Bright well-known hymns to start the service

- ◆ Praise my soul the king of Heaven
- ◆ Now thank we all our God
- ◆ All things bright and beautiful
- ◆ Morning has broken
- ◆ For the beauty of the earth
- ◆ Love divine, all loves excelling

Reflective, gentle hymns for the middle of the service

- ◆ Dear Lord and Father of mankind
- ◆ Father, hear the prayer we offer
- ◆ Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us
- ◆ Be still, for the presence of the Lord
- ◆ Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy
- ◆ The King of Love, my shepherd is
- ◆ The Lord's my shepherd (I will trust in you alone)
- ◆ The Lord's my shepherd
- ◆ Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
- ◆ Make me a channel of your peace
- ◆ Amazing grace

Uplifting, thankful hymns for the end of the service

- ◆ And did those feet in ancient times ("Jerusalem")
- ◆ Great is thy faithfulness
- ◆ Guide me, O thou great Redeemer
- ◆ Immortal, invisible, God only wise
- ◆ Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
- ◆ Now thank we all our God
- ◆ O Jesus, I have promised
- ◆ Shine Jesus Shine
- ◆ O worship the King, all glorious above

### **Suggested Readings**

These readings are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, but you can choose other versions—and one additional readings if you wish.

### ***1 Corinthians 13: The Gift of Love***

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. And 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. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

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

Love 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. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When 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. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, 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. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

### ***Song of Solomon 2 v 10-13 & Song of Solomon 8 v 6,7 A love poem***

My beloved speaks and says to me: 'Arise, my love, my fair one, come away; for now the winter is past, rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, come away.'

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love the wealth of one's house, it would be utterly scorned.

### ***John 2 v 1-11: Jesus at the Wedding at Cana***

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it.

When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.'

Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

### ***Colossians 3 v 12-17: Building a loving relationship***

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

***Ephesians 5 v 21-33: Committing to each other***

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish.

In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body.

'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

***Philippians 4 v 4-9: Seeing the good side***

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

***1 John 4 v 7-12: God Is Love***

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.