

Sermon for the Marriage of Daniel Andrew Pike & Kristin Alicia Wilson  
Union Evangelical Lutheran Church / York, Pennsylvania  
Saturday, 22.vii.2006, 12:00, Provisional Rite of Marriage from Renewing Worship  
Proverbs 3:1-6; Psalm 100; I Corinthians 13:1-8,13; John 15:1-12

## Jesu Juva !

Grace to you and peace from Him Who is and Who was and Who is to come! ✠ Amen.

*“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”  
– John 15:12*

In the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, there is a beautiful prayer of thanksgiving which reads, “We give Thee thanks, O LORD, not as we ought, but as we are able.” Our Lord Jesus Christ gave His first Disciples, and us, a high standard in challenging them to ‘love one another as I have loved you,’ calling them, and us, to that same perfect love that is shared within the three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity, to that same perfectly and self-giving love of the Son and Word of God Incarnate, the Innocent One accepting the accusation and punishment of guilt pronounced and carried out by sinful men, all on our account and for our sake, all in obedience to the Father’s love that was and is so great that He would give and lose His only Child for the sake of the very ones who mistreated that Holy Child and put Him to death. And we are to love like that? Surely

under God's grace we can try, try to give thanks for God's great love by imitating it in our devotion towards God and in our compassion toward our fellow creatures, but that loving will always and continually be 'not as we ought, but as we are able.'

Kristin and Dan are here, before this Altar and before God and His Church Who stand as witness to what they will promise, because this man and this woman have a vocation of the heart to love one another, and because they understand that vocation, by faith, to be from God who is the measure of all love. They believe that they are called to this love, and they will dare to undertake it, not always and perhaps rarely as they ought, but as they are able, over the course of a whole lifetime together. That will be their thanksgiving to God for that special joy they have found in each other. That will be their way of saying thank you to each other for each measure of love and tenderness they receive from the other, cause for thanksgiving in all of its human imperfection.

Yet this is not their only vocation. In a society that tends to reduce every serious activity to a 'job,' these two follow two very different callings. Our groom is called to serve the health and humane treatment of those beings whom the Creator allowed our kind to name and for whom God made the first human beings and all of us after them

responsible. They are more challenging to treat than patients who can talk, and the vocation to their care requires not only scientific knowledge and skill but the empathy of a keen mind and a great heart. Though their guardians may find ways to show their gratitude for all the routine and emergency care these patients may receive in their short lifetimes, they themselves are the ones who would like to say thanks, not as we do but as they are able by gestures of companionship expressed in pattern of empathy that crosses species lines. But that would require a menagerie too large even for Breslau Farms, and so Dr. Dan and his colleagues must pass their days simply assuming a gratitude that others may not see.

Our bride is a herald of the truth, a writer of the facts and the causes of things, an investigator of the local community and an enquirer into both the human equation and the social causes of the way we live. As a journalist, she lives in a world of ephemera, writing reports on events that pass into a largely unremembered history day-by-day. Few will take the time or even think to offer their thanks for her part in upholding an informed electorate and, thus, the freedom to be a democratic society. Yet, she investigates and she discovers and she writes, casting her bread as much upon the waters as the man she has chosen for her husband. In their life's work, they both know what it is to give, first, and to receive

thanks, if at all, as a special grace. They will be able to accept the thanks of the other when and how it comes, not always as one might have wanted, but as the other is able, because they have learned to live their lives based on the other's need, based on the task and assignment that needs to be performed, and not on the gratification that comes from being thanked in proportion to the service they render.

There is a consistency between their professional life, their patient and understanding love toward each other and one other very important fact about this couple for which both Church and society ought to give thanks today. Kristin and Dan, you are the first couple at whose wedding I have officiated in nearly twenty years to choose, as part of the intercessory prayers for your marriage, to include a prayer that you may be blessed with children. Perhaps thanks is partly due to the new Lutheran marriage liturgy *which finally gives couples of child-bearing age the option to pray for this!* If so, then thanks be to God for this new liturgy. There is no way in which your love within marriage will come so close to Our Heavenly Father's love for His Son, and to the Son's love for His Father, as your open declaration of your willingness to take up your responsibility for the coming generation by giving life and nurture and guidance to that generation that may grow up around your table and

under your roof and amid the wonderful life to which we look forward with you, surrounded by God's creation and so many of His precious creatures.

Parenthood can be a thankless task, especially when those strange creatures you thought were the fruit of your loins do their best to test their freedom and your love. There are some here today who can attest to that fact, and perhaps even in your own case. But children can be a glorious crown to the companionship of marriage when you see them not only survive but thrive, and when you are able to complete your days together confident that your love will continue into a future as yet unborn. As the God who created you out of your parent's love has brought you together to unite your families this day, may this wish of your hearts be granted also! ✠ Amen.

Now to Him Who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, to Him be glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever. ✠ Amen.

**Soli Deo Gloria !**