

Wedding Policy

St Andrew's United Church, Georgetown

Overview:

St Andrew's United Church is an open and welcoming community of faith!

We describe the covenant of marriage as one of "our ministries" because we believe the Church is called to support and nurture all marriages. We also believe that to be married in God's sanctuary is a privilege and not a right. Since it is a sacred place of worship, we affirm that the wedding service will be Christian in its tone, reflecting the attitudes, the beliefs, and the principles of faith in Jesus Christ.

For Christians, our relationship with God and with each other is rooted in our understanding of covenant. We know God as faithful, loving, compassionate and just. We are called to embody this in our relationships with each other.

Policy:

In the United Church, covenants of marriage are part of the worship life of the pastoral charge and come under the responsibility of the Church Board and Worship Leadership Team.

Wedding services will:

1. Include the ritual act of making a covenant of marriage, which will take place in the context of Christian worship and in the presence of family, friends and God.
2. Include the couple exchanging vows to each other, in the presence of the community and God, promising to be faithfully committed to each other for as long as they both shall live. Couples should enter this covenant with faith, hope, and great joy, trusting in God's grace and faithfulness to help them in this unique relationship.
3. Treat both partners in this covenant as equals, and the words of the service will reflect this.
4. Be performed for members and non-members of St Andrew's, in the sanctuary or at off-site locations as requested. An individual does not need to be baptized, to be married at St Andrew's.
5. Be performed inclusively for individuals of all genders, and as deemed legal by the laws of Canada.

At St Andrew's we want to help couples celebrate their wedding day in a way that is meaningful, as life-changing vows are made before family, friends and God.

The Board of Directors at St Andrew's provides the following information to assist couples with their preparations and provide answers to many of the questions they might have.

Initial Arrangements

Couples should call our Church office to discern possible wedding dates and times. Our Office Administrator will refer the request to our minister who will confirm his/her availability to conduct the service or suggest alternatives. Times will also be suggested for the rehearsal and pre-wedding meetings. Weddings can be on any day of the week (including Sundays) as long as the church and minister are available.

Weddings can be booked up to two years in advance. Please feel free to pre-book your wedding at your earliest convenience to minimize conflicts with the minister's busy schedule and other church activities that might require use of the sanctuary.

Preparation

When the wedding date has been confirmed by the Office Administrator, meetings will be set up for you to meet with our minister. It is requested that you meet with the minister a minimum of two times, with the first meeting scheduled at least 90 days prior to the wedding. At these meetings you will discuss the meaning of a Christian marriage, and to decide on the details of the wedding service and rehearsal. Sample services will be provided for you to review to assist you in your planning.

There is sufficient flexibility to allow each couple to express their preferences and to develop the liturgy and vows in a personal way within the context of United Church guidelines. Those with a desire for ecumenical or interfaith expressions should discuss this with our minister. The service will be officiated by our minister, although a guest minister may be invited to assist. Arrangements for a guest minister (relative or friend) must be made in consultation with the officiating minister.

We strongly recommend that couples attend marriage preparation courses. These sessions are both informative and enlightening, as you prepare to embark on this new journey together. Our Office Administrator will advise you of courses being offered in our community. If preparation courses are not available, our minister will provide resources and guidance in this area.

Legal Documents

License – To be married, you are required to purchase an Ontario Marriage License at the Town Civic Centre (on Maple Avenue across from the North Halton Golf and Country Club). It is valid for three months, and must be obtained at least three days before the wedding. It is requested that you complete items 1-27 on the license and bring it to the Church office at least two weeks prior to your wedding date (or before if this is convenient).

Banns – If both of you are church members and are in the habit of attending worship, marriage banns may be published in place of purchasing a license. The banns

(intention to marry) must be proclaimed during the worship service at the church of the bride and of the groom for the three Sundays prior to the wedding.

Music

Our Office Administrator will provide you with the name and phone number of our organist should music service be required. You should contact the organist upon booking your wedding date to check availability, and also one month prior to the service to discuss your choice of music. You may also wish to have another musician play for your service (friend or relative) and this is not discouraged. They should be made aware that there is an organ and an upright piano in the sanctuary at St Andrew's, which are regularly maintained.

If you wish to include a vocal or instrumental solo in your wedding, this is most welcome. Arrangements should be made directly with these individuals to book their time and discuss any applicable fees. Our minister/organist should be made aware of these arrangements to ensure solos are placed in appropriate places in the service and that the organist is aware if additional practice time is required with the soloist.

All types of music are welcome in the marriage ceremony to make it uniquely yours, however, our minister has been given the right to disallow a piece if it is deemed to be inappropriate for use in the sanctuary or not befitting the sanctity of the wedding service.

Bulletins

If you would like a bulletin (Order of Service) to be printed for your guests, our Office Administrator will gladly assist in the bulletin preparation, and a fee will apply (see Fees schedule). Special paper can be personally purchased.

Wedding Rehearsal

If you are planning a formal wedding, then you will likely wish to have a rehearsal. If so, it is desirable to have all members of the wedding party present, including the parents of the bride and groom. You will walk through the ceremony from start to finish and it is a good opportunity for those who are not familiar with St Andrew's to feel more at home in our church building.

Photographs

To maintain the dignity and sanctity of worship in your wedding, we do not permit the taking of photographs during the religious service (the minister will announce this after the bride processes to the front of the sanctuary).

Photographs may be taken as you sign the register, are announced as husband and wife and as you recess down the aisle to greet your guests.

Videotaping of the wedding ceremony is permitted.

Arrangements for positioning of your official photographer/videographer will be made with the minister, so that movement and distraction are minimized during the wedding ceremony.

Communion

You may request that communion be served at your wedding as part of the service. This may be offered to the bride and groom, the entire wedding party or all guests attending the service. Please advise the minister if you wish to celebrate communion so arrangements can be made with our Worship team to prepare the elements.

Church Hall and Kitchen Usage

Our church hall and kitchen facilities are available for rental if you wish to have your reception in the same building as your service. Please understand that outside catering would be required and the church does not have a license to serve alcoholic beverages. Our Office Administrator will be able to provide you with more information regarding fees, decorating, contracts, etc. upon request.

Decorations

Flowers – Arrangements should be made to have flowers delivered to the church 1 hour before the service (if fresh) or may be placed in the sanctuary at the rehearsal (if artificial). Flowers can be moved to the reception hall or may remain in the sanctuary for Sunday worship. If you wish to leave your flowers in the sanctuary, please notify the Church Office so we can acknowledge this in our weekly church announcements.

Candles – We have two candelabras (7 candles each) that can be used during your wedding service. The Christ Candle is also available for your usage. Kindly contact the Church Office to arrange to see these candles prior to your wedding date. Selected candles can be purchased by the couple for these holders.

Pew Markers/Bows – Bows and pew markers are welcome, however, no adhesive materials are to be used in the process of fastening bows or other decorations in the sanctuary.

Seasonal Weddings – Please note that on festive occasions such as Easter, Thanksgiving or Christmas, special decorations will already be in place in the sanctuary. We request that you do not remove decorations without prior approval.

Confetti

Your guests are not permitted to throw confetti or rice anywhere inside or outside the church building, or on church property.

The Wedding Day

We request that ushers arrive at least thirty minutes prior to the wedding or earlier if guest from out-of-town are expected. Attendants should arrive ten minutes before the wedding is to commence. We will allocate adequate space for your entire wedding party to meet in the church for last minute preparations.

Fees

The fees for your wedding at St Andrew's will be:

Sanctuary rental \$250.00
Office \$ 30.00 if bulletins are requested

These fees are payable to St. Andrew's United Church and may be paid by cheque.

Honoraria

The following honorariums will be paid as applicable:

Minister \$275.00
Organist \$125.00
Custodian \$ 90.00
Office Administrator \$ 90.00

These amounts are payable by cash currency and placed in separate envelopes clearly marked as follows: "Minister", "Organist", "Custodian" and "Office Administrator" as required.

We ask your co-operation in the following ways:

- 1) A deposit of \$100.00 **(NON-REFUNDABLE)** is required when your wedding is confirmed to secure the services of the minister and to book the sanctuary. Once our Office Administrator has confirmed your wedding date and time, this fee should be paid to ensure the selected date/time has been booked for your wedding. This fee will be deducted from the sanctuary rental fee.
- 2) All remaining fees and honoraria should be at the Church office **no later than one week before the wedding** (earlier if you wish).

As a Christian community, St Andrew's United Church is delighted to welcome you, your family and friends into our fellowship. We are honoured to participate in your wedding service as an expression of your faith and God's love.

In conclusion:

The staff at St Andrew's wish to help you as much as possible with your wedding arrangements. Please feel free to call the Church when you have questions and/or concerns. Contact people and phone numbers are listed below.

If you are not a member at St Andrew's, it is our hope that our church might become a place where you can connect to our Christian faith community. We invite you to join us for worship each Sunday at 10:00 am or to participate in the many small group ministries and programs we offer each week!

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APPROVED BY: St. Andrew's Board Chair: Bill Elgie	DATE OF APPROVAL: Sept. 22, 2016
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