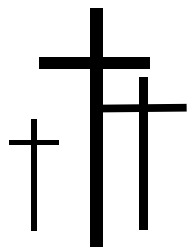


The
Service of
CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Guidelines for Weddings



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Congratulations on your engagement!

The people of Eastminster Church wish you happiness and want to help make your wedding day both meaningful and memorable.

We are not in the *business* of marrying people. We participate in marriage services as a function of our mission to provide spiritual and personal support to our members and others in the community. This marriage policy expresses our desire to provide the best possible assistance to couples who have decided to get married.

While marriage is not a sacrament in our church, it has a sacramental value which should be reflected in the planning and conduct of all marriage services. For this reason, weddings are normally held in the church sanctuary or chapel. One of our ministers will officiate unless other arrangements are made at the time of your application.

The purpose of these *Guidelines* is to inform you of our policies concerning weddings and what we require of couples who choose to be married at Eastminster. We have tried to answer the questions you may be asking.

What we believe about marriage

† We affirm that marriage is a gift of God through which Christians make a covenant with one another and with God. In marriage we offer one another the promise of lifelong companionship and commitment, rich expression of human affections and sexuality, and if there are children, to provide for their love, nurture and care.

† We affirm the value of marriage and that the church must work both to redeem and care for the institution and to support those entering into a covenant relationship with each other.

† We acknowledge that marriage can also be destructive. Marriage as an institution is shaped by cultural attitudes that have at times been patriarchal and oppressive; these attitudes have found expression in exploitation, abuse and violence. Marriage is not to be idealized or idolized as an end in itself.

† We affirm that this unity is a creation of God and is greater than the two individuals. It creates holy ground that needs to be nurtured and cherished.

What we believe about marriage

- † We affirm that sexual intercourse in marriage is intended to be
 - a profound expression of the whole person
 - a yearning for total union with the other
 - a creative and holy expression in and with the other.
- † We acknowledge that sexual intercourse may be exploitive, using the other for one's gratification.
- † We affirm that marriage from a Christian perspective is based on faithfulness expressed through
 - choosing each other above all others
 - risking and being vulnerable in the relationship
 - willingness to put into the relationship the patience, understanding and work required to help it grow
 - accepting and nurturing the other for his or her unique gifts; putting the other before one's own interests in a lifelong commitment that is spiritual, emotional and physical.and that these intentions are most fully achieved and symbolized when sexual intimacy in marriage is exclusive.
- † We recognize the commitment that is present in many relationships other than marriage, and that the church is called to minister to people in these relationships as in others.
- † We affirm that the church is called to emphasize and work for the essential values in marriage and family that contribute to the wholeness of people, and to challenge those forms and attitudes that limit and degrade personal worth, even when the culture supports them.

What we ask of you

That you be in essential agreement with these affirmations.

Do these affirmations reflect your own understanding of Christian marriage and the qualities of faithful, healthy relationships?

That you acknowledge your spirituality.

What we ask of you

We urge you to recognize your spirituality and the extent to which religious upbringing shapes our values and attitudes. We encourage you to claim the benefits of association with a church family and, if you live in Belleville and are not now active in a church, we invite you to attend our worship services.

That you participate in the planning of the service.

Since the marriage service should reflect the beliefs, personalities and circumstances of the couple, we will expect you to help plan the details of the service, including music, readings and the wording of your vows. The minister is responsible for ensuring that the service is 'worshipful' and includes all elements essential to a Christian marriage. You will be given a workbook which outlines the structure of the service and provides a variety of readings and other options for your consideration.

That you acknowledge the need to work at making marriage work.

Neither the love you feel for each other nor what happens on your wedding day guarantees the success of your relationship. 'Good' marriages are built by the efforts of partners who are willing to do what is necessary to make them good. For this reason we urge all couples, regardless of age or experience, to consider and discuss the dynamics of healthy relationships. We will advise you of marriage programs offered at Eastminster.

For your information:

Application and Confirmation

Arrangements for marriage services will normally be made at least three months in advance and no less than five days. As soon as possible after receiving your signed application, the minister will issue a written notice of confirmation and request a personal interview.

If more than one wedding is held in a day, they are separated by a minimum of ninety minutes. Unless other arrangements are made in advance with the caretaker, wedding parties and guests leave the building by no later than thirty minutes following the end of the service.

***You
were
asking ...***

Licence or Banns?

According to the laws of the Province of Ontario, you may be entitled to have the Banns of your marriage published instead of buying a Marriage Licence. If both of you are regular in attendance at a place of worship, and if this is the first marriage for both of you, the publication of Banns may save you the cost of a licence. At your request, the Banns may be read without the authority of legal publication.

Normally, Banns are read at all services on the Sunday immediately prior to the wedding day. Other 'publication' may be arranged with the minister.

The Rehearsal

A rehearsal is usually desirable as a chance to test the plans you have made for the service and to help reduce stress for members of the wedding party. The rehearsal is normally held the night before the service and lasts thirty minutes.

All members of the wedding party should attend. Since there may be several rehearsals in the same evening, it is important that everyone arrive on time.

The Fee

The officers of Eastminster Church are resolved that its fee for marriage services be fair to its staff and to couples seeking marriage. To that end, the fee is regularly reviewed in comparison with payments required by other area churches.

***What
it
costs***

The current fee for marriage services is **\$550.** which includes payments to staff and a contribution to the cost of maintaining the church facilities. For those who are regular supporters of Eastminster Church, this amount is reduced.

The fee should be paid, in cash, to the church's Administrator prior to the rehearsal.

Income tax receipts are available *upon request* for the contribution portion of the fee.

For '*private*' services and services away from the church building, the fee may be adjusted according to arrangements made with the officiating minister.

The Music

Unless other arrangements are made with her/him, the Organist at your wedding will be the church's designated Organist.

She/he should be contacted at least *one full month* before your wedding date to discuss the selection of appropriate music. If she/he does not have the music for selections you choose, it is your responsibility to provide it at least two weeks before the wedding.

Arrangements for soloists or other special music are your responsibility, in consultation with the Organist.

Receptions in the Church

Arrangements for wedding receptions held at the church may be made through the church's office staff. An additional fee is payable to the caretaker for extra work associated with a reception in the church building.

Decorations

The sanctuary seats may be decorated with bows or flowers attached with ribbon or tape. Unless part of a *unity candle* arrangement, flowers should not be placed on the communion table but may be tastefully placed elsewhere in the chancel area. Candelabra are available and may be lit at your request. Plans for decorations in the sanctuary should be made in advance with the caretaker.

Photography and Videotaping

Planning the details ...

For your sake and to protect the sanctity of the service, every effort should be made to minimize the disruption or distraction of inappropriate photography and videotaping. You are encouraged to choose a photographer to create a record of the service. The minister will introduce him/her at the beginning of the service and request that others refrain from taking pictures during the ceremony. Photographs will normally be taken from behind the congregation and without flash. Before the service, your photographer should meet with the minister.

There is accommodation in the sanctuary for anyone whom you hire or ask to videotape the service. Videographers should consult with the caretaker who will assist them to do the filming with minimal impact on the service.

Confetti

No confetti is allowed inside or near the church building. You may be charged for additional clean-up time or damages caused by confetti. Be advised that most reception halls charge a fee for confetti clean-up.

Bulletins

If requested, printed orders of service will be provided. You are required to buy the bulletin covers (available at Christian bookstores). Printing will be provided by the church staff.

A Planning Check-list

Have you sent in your application?

The Application Form should be completed in full and returned to the Church Office. Be sure to answer all the questions.

Have you received your confirmation?

Once the Application Form is received, we will act as quickly as possible to confirm the date and time of your service and send you a notice of confirmation. Remember that the details have not been confirmed until that notice is given.

Have you met with the minister?

A first appointment should be made following the confirmation. If you prefer, you may meet with the minister in advance of the application to discuss your plans or any aspect of these guidelines. Further appointments will be arranged closer to your wedding day to plan the details of the service.

Have you registered for a marriage event?

Information about events offered at Eastminster will be sent to you when it is available. Our programs are open to all engaged and married couples regardless of any association with Eastminster Church so feel free to share the information with others.

Have you contacted the Organist?

Remember to contact her/him at least one month before your wedding day to begin planning the music for your service.

Have you bought your licence?

If you need to buy a licence, be sure to apply early enough to allow for delays caused by the need for additional documents. If either of you has been divorced, you will need to show your final decree. The minister must have your licence **at least five days** before the day of your service.