
POLICY: MARRIAGES AND WEDDINGS

1. Responsibility Centre: Worship/Christian Education Committee

2. Rationale or Purpose

This policy outlines procedures for weddings at Bells Corners United Church (BCUC).

3. Policy Statement

BCUC is a welcoming and inclusive congregation. We acknowledge that marriage is a covenant between two people, regardless of sexual orientation, who share a life-long commitment to love each other and who ask God's blessings to affirm this union. The wedding ceremony, in the form of a Christian liturgy, may take place in the church building or offsite.

4. Scope

This policy applies to weddings and marriages held at BCUC or offsite.

5. Procedures

Meeting with the Minister: Weddings are booked on a first-come, first-served basis. Be sure to consult with the minister before setting the day and time of your wedding. The couple is required to meet at least twice with the Minister to discuss details and to plan for the liturgy of the wedding service. Rehearsals prior to the wedding ceremony are encouraged but not required.

Marriage Preparation Course: The minister may encourage the couple to attend a marriage preparation course organized by the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council (United Church of Canada) or from a designated religious organization.

Marriage License: The couple is required to secure a marriage license in a city or town in the Province of Ontario, to be handed in to BCUC office at least two weeks prior to the wedding.

The Officiating Minister:

The Minister shall:

- be responsible to perform all weddings or will arrange for a substitute in his/her absence.
- meet at least twice with the couple to discuss details and the content of the wedding ceremony.
- conduct one rehearsal prior to the ceremony if required.
- recommend marriage liturgies that are in keeping (but not limited to) with the liturgies of the United Church of Canada.
- reserve the right to refuse to marry on the grounds of moral or professional ethics, or failure to agree to the guidelines established by BCUC or based on the Ontario law.
- records the marriage information in the BCUC Record of Marriages duly signed by the parties.
- mails a complete and signed marriage licence to Service Ontario to register the marriage.

Associate Clergy

On occasion, parties being married in BCUC may request to have a Minister or Clergy not directly associated with BCUC to preside or participate at their wedding.

Participation by associate clergy is permitted at BCUC, but only with prior approval from the minister at BCUC. The wedding must also be registered in the BCUC Church Records. Requests shall be made to the Office Staff, who will ensure consultation with the Minister so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

The Couple:

The couple is responsible for the following:

- provide the information to complete the BCUC Marriage Form (Attached)
- invite a clergy person that they may wish to be included in the ceremony to assist the officiating minister (see above).
- invite a musician. The church organist has the right of first refusal. The couple must contact the organist a minimum of three months before the wedding. All music selections must be made in consultation with the musician.
- print wedding bulletins.
- provide candles for the ceremony when needed (may be rented from BCUC).
- decorate the sanctuary with simple decorations without damaging the pews and other furniture. Confetti, rice, petals or bubbles are not allowed in the sanctuary of the church.
- make arrangements for someone to remove flowers/decorations immediately following the ceremony.
- ensure that photography and/or videography be used only at those permitted parts in the ceremony which will be discussed with the officiating minister.

The Organist or Musician:

The organist/musician of the church venue shall:

- play for the wedding service.
- have the right of first refusal to play in the service.
- be consulted by the couple regarding music selections.
- arrange for a substitute if and when, after accepting the task, he/she cannot perform duties in the service.

Fees:

- **Officiating Minister:** \$400 (onsite or offsite) with or without a rehearsal. is required. Cheque payable to the BCUC Minister (Rev. Kim Vidal or Rev. Lorrie Lowes)
- **Organist/Musician:** \$275 with or without a rehearsal. . Cheque payable to the BCUC Music Director (Mr. Abe TeGrotenhuis).

- **Administration & Utilities:** \$250. which includes the use of the sanctuary during rehearsal and the day of the wedding. Cheque payable to Bells Corners United Church.
- **Others:**
 - Candles - \$30 (If desired).
 - Pew Markers - \$ 25 (If desired).
 - Printing wedding bulletins - \$50 (if required).

All fees/balances due (cash or cheque payable to the designated person or the church) clearly marked in separate envelopes must be received two weeks prior to the wedding.

6. Roles/Responsibilities

The W/CE Committee is responsible for the maintenance and review of this policy.

The Office Staff is responsible for the registration of the marriage in BCUC records.

7. Definitions

8. References:

9. Approval authority: Church Board

10. Reviewed: W/CE Committee: June 2, 2021

Approved: Church Board: June 16, 2021

Replaces: October 28, 2015