

# Christian Marriage Policy at Richmond Hill United Church

## What is a Christian Marriage?

While marriage is a civil contract, we believe that Christian marriage is more. A Christian marriage is a lifelong process - a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. A Christian marriage is not merely a wedding to which God is invited. It is a relationship between two people formed and lived out in God's presence and in the discernment of God's will. God's provision for a couple to spend life together in a committed relationship can be one of life's highest blessings. The wedding ceremony is the liturgical expression of that relationship. It is first and foremost a worship service of joy and thanksgiving. It is the public exchange of vows and the proclamation of God's blessing.

## Who may be married at Richmond Hill United Church?

Weddings are conducted at the discretion of the minister. The minister meet with the couple to ensure that commitment, responsibility, maturity and Christian understanding are present in the relationship. We understand that some couples, at this time in their lives, are simply interested in a secular wedding. In these situations, a Justice of the Peace at another site or other arrangements would probably best serve the couple's needs. Our minister, or designate, will officiate at all weddings. If you wish another member of the clergy to participate, the invitation will be considered and extended by our minister if appropriate.

## How to arrange a wedding at Richmond Hill United Church

The church should be booked as far in advance of the wedding date as possible. More than one wedding may take place on the same date, however weddings will not be booked less than two hours apart. An appointment with the minister is required before the date is confirmed. At that appointment, the wedding form and a deposit of \$250.00 are received. Once a mutual agreement has been made, the non-refundable deposit and completed form will confirm the date and time of the service.

## Fees

- The following fee should be submitted, by cheque, to the church office not later than two weeks before the service, excluding deposit.
- Cheques should be made payable to "Richmond Hill United Church".
- Fees paid later than two weeks before the wedding will be accepted only in cash.
- Total wedding fee: \$1400\*\*

*\*\*The fee may be adjusted at the minister's discretion.*

## Marriage Preparation

- The marriage preparation program focuses on the marriage relationship and is not intended as a religious indoctrination program. Its purpose is to help you know each other better, consider potential problem areas of family life, establish effective ways to resolve conflicts, improve communication, understand how to keep love growing after the wedding, and build a solid spiritual foundation for your home.
  - Couples, including those who are not members of the congregation, are invited to worship regularly prior to their wedding service.

- For information about Marriage Preparation options, visit [www.MarriagePrep.com](http://www.MarriagePrep.com) or [morethanfriends.live](http://morethanfriends.live)

## Music

- Music is an important part of the service. Because a wedding is a worship service, the music for the wedding should be appropriate for worship. Various instruments are appropriate, but if the organ or piano is to be used, our Director of Music, or designate, will play for the service.
- The Director of Music has final approval of all music for the wedding. You should contact the Director of Music early to discuss the music.
- If you want a soloist, the church can suggest names, or you can secure your own soloist. Financial arrangements are between the soloist and you. The soloist should furnish the Director of Music with a copy of any music to be sung. It may be necessary to schedule additional rehearsal time for the soloist and the organist, at an additional cost.

## Decorations

- In decorating the sanctuary, simplicity is best. The church will be opened one hour before the scheduled time of the wedding, and flowers may be delivered then. Candelabra (including candles) are available to be used in the sanctuary.
- No nails, thumbtacks, or tape are to be used; however, florist's wire may be used to hold decorations in place.
- Please be aware that there may be seasonal decorations in the church at the time of any wedding.
- The throwing of rice, confetti, or bird seed is not permitted on church property.

## Photography

- Flash photographs may be taken during the processional, the signing of the register, and the recessional only. During the ceremony, non-flash photographs may be taken from the back of the sanctuary by the wedding photographer only.
- Pictures may be taken in the sanctuary in the half hour following the service. If it is necessary to have additional photographs taken in the church following that half hour, arrangements must be made with the church office ahead of time. An additional fee of \$55.00 per hour will be charged.
- Video recordings may be made as long as the camera remains stationary throughout the service and uses existing light only. It is your responsibility to instruct your photographer on these policies.
- The photographer should confer with the minister just prior to the wedding.

## Rehearsal

- A one-hour rehearsal is scheduled for weddings. The date of the rehearsal will be arranged with the officiating minister. The entire wedding party should attend.

## Punctuality

- Many church personnel are involved in the preparation of your wedding. Please treat them respectfully by being on time for your appointments, rehearsal and, of course, for the wedding ceremony.

## Licence

- You must have a valid Ontario marriage licence to be married, and it must be given to the officiating minister no later than two weeks prior to the rehearsal time.