

Celebrating Christian Marriage at St. Thomas' Church



Introduction

We are delighted to learn of your interest in being married at St. Thomas' Parish Church and invite you to peruse at your leisure the contents of this brochure.

Marriage as Covenant

Christian marriage is a sign of lifelong relationship between man and woman. In contrast to *contract*, *covenant* involves the giving of ourselves unreservedly in love to one another. Husband and wife fulfill each other, and this love gives birth to new life in and through each other. This loving union and equal partnership is possible because Jesus Christ is the foundation and bond of unity. Marriage in the Church assumes this understanding, and in seeking God's blessing intends to actively live out a covenant relationship within the life of the Church supported by other men and women of faith.

This understanding originates from the Bible which affirms throughout that marriage is no mere social convention, but a part of the Creator's original design. We are made for relationship with one another. Jesus reiterates this doctrine when he quotes from the Book of Genesis: "from the beginning of creation God made them male and female." (Mark 10:6) This drive toward union is therefore one of God's greatest gifts (Genesis 1:26-31).

Marriage is also used extensively throughout the Scriptures to speak metaphorically of God's desire to be united with all of humankind. In the Old Testament, God is often spoken of as husband to Israel, while in the New Testament Jesus' relationship to the church is compared to that between a bridegroom and his bride. Likewise, St. Paul teaches in his letter to the Ephesians that the union of man and woman is symbolic of Christ's union with His Church. In the Book of Revelation the coming of the Kingdom of God is likened to a marriage feast.

Initial Interview

After reading the contents of this brochure you may want to contact one of our clergy to discuss in person your wedding plans. Not only will this provide an opportunity for getting acquainted, but will also enable you to begin

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to explore some of the practicalities involved in planning a wedding, and begin a process of reflection together about the meaning and commitment of Christian marriage. You may also at this time wish to fill out an application for marriage. A tentative date and time for the wedding can then be booked. An application form may be obtained online at www.st-thomaschurch.com. You can fill it out and then mail it to the parish office at 8 Military Road, St. John's, NL A1C 2C4. You can also email the form to office@st-thomaschurch.com.

Marriage Preparation

The idea of a life-long committed married relationship presents some obvious challenges. That is why we offer our *Marriage Preparation Course*. The evening dinner/dessert format over a five-week period is an especially attractive feature. (See *The Marriage Preparation Course* brochure on the church website for more details. Couples whose work habits or academic studies take them out of the St. John's area will be asked to seek out a clergy in their locale who can give them pastoral direction.

Church Involvement

Many of you will have an association with the Parish of St. Thomas'. Some of you may already be vitally involved in the life of the Church here. Others will not have an active connection with any Christian community, but may be open to and seeking a spiritual home. We would encourage you to check out firsthand the worship experience and wide variety of ministries that make up the overall Christian experience of our parish. (There are a growing number of ministries, parish events and functions that are designed to support and encourage marriage and family life within the parish family. Check out our website to get a fuller picture.)

The Marriage Service

Wedding services are conducted according to the rites provided in one of two Anglican worship books: the Book of Common Prayer (traditional language) and the Book of Alternative Services (contemporary), with provision for the celebration of Holy Communion in the liturgy. The clergy will be happy to acquaint you thoroughly with the depth of meaning contained in these liturgies, and will be available to discuss all particulars related to the planning of your wedding service, including the selection of Scripture lessons and suitable music, and the participation and involvement of family and friends in the ceremony.



Music

The music you choose as part of the celebration and blessing of your marriage will add much to the beauty of the occasion as an act of Christian worship. Our organist and music director, Ki Adams, will be pleased to assist you in all of your musical considerations. He may be reached at 753-9634 or at kiadams@mun.ca. Should you want to preview some music beforehand we recommend that you go to the following website: www.stclementchurch.org/worship/sacraments/weddings/music.php.

Rehearsal

A rehearsal lasting about 60 minutes usually takes place one or two evenings prior to the wedding with as many of the bridal party present as possible.

Photography

Because the wedding is a service of worship, it is important that care be taken during the ceremony. We would ask you to please observe the following:

- Use of video camera only without additional lighting in a stationary, inconspicuous place
- Pictures by photographer, family and friends permitted during the bridal process, the signing of the register and the recessional
- Optional photography may be arranged with the wedding party following the ceremony in the chancel of the church

Flowers and Other Decoration

The flowers which are normally in the church may be all you desire. However, should you wish to purchase additional flowers you will want to consult the clergy about appropriate arrangements. Flowers placed in the church in memory of loved ones shouldn't be removed following the ceremony. The church has per markers specially designed for weddings which will be placed by the sexton prior to the service. You may add your own decorations to the markers as long as no tacks or tape are used. *We asked that you ensure that no confetti, rice, bird seed, flower petals, bubbles, etc. be used anywhere on the church grounds.*

Wedding Bulletin

Should you wish to have a service bulletin or booklet the clergy will be happy to consult with you about style and content. You will be responsible for its publication.



Registration Requirements

You are required to obtain a Marriage License and Registration of Marriage document from the Registrar of Vital Statistics at the Government Service Centre, 5 Mews Place, St. John's, or any Provincial Marriage Registrar. You will need your birth certificates and, if divorced, your certificate of divorce and previous marriage certificate. The license is good for one month and should be delivered to the church office eight days before the wedding.

Fees

In order to provide services and support all those who seek to be married in the church, and to help cover facility operational costs of our historic building, St. Thomas' proposes the following fee structure:

Church \$250

Clergy \$125

Organist \$125 (*plus an additional \$50 if a music rehearsal is required **Organist fees MUST be paid even if you choose to use another musician for your service***)

Sexton \$50

Please place amounts in clearly identified, individual envelopes and give them to the clergy at the time of the rehearsal.

Officiating Clergy

Should a couple desire an additional Anglican or other clergy to assist at their wedding they will first need to consult with one of the parish clergy.

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Declaration of Intent

We, who are presently of our actively inquiring about membership in the Christian community of St. Thomas' Church, affirm our intent to enter into Christian marriage, which we understand is a union of faithful love, to the exclusion of all others, for better or worse, until we are separated by death.

We choose to prepare ourselves for the exchange of vows at our wedding, recognizing that by this mutual exchange our union in marriage will be established.

Man

Woman

Clergy

Date

Matrimonial Commission Required? Yes No

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Thank you for your enquiry about marriage at St. Thomas'. Please call 709 576 6632 or email us at office@st-thomaschurch.com to make an appointment with one of our clergy. For details about services, ministries and current happenings go to: www.st-thomaschurch.com.