

MARRIAGE POLICY

Last Updated: January 19, 2019

Introduction:

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! We celebrate with you both as you explore the possibility of solemnizing your marriage within a church context. It is our hope that this policy will give you a better sense of our beliefs and understandings of Christian marriage within both the United Church of Canada and Trinity United Church, Cannington. It also outlines for you the process of getting married in our community of faith, from your point of initial contact with us, to the big day itself and beyond!

This policy applies equally to all members, adherents and non-members of Trinity United Church.

Our Core Beliefs:

At Trinity United Church:

We see each and every person as a unique, loved creature of God.

We see God as faithful, loving, compassionate and just.

We are called to embody and model this in our own relationships with each other.

At Trinity United Church:

We believe that God intends loving relationships to be faithful, responsible, just, healing and sustaining for all.

We believe that such relationships require preparation and nurturing.

We believe that relationships grounded in inclusivity, openness, respect and equity, will be caring and loving.

At Trinity United Church:

We believe that marriage is an act of worship and is a lifelong covenant between two people and before God.

We believe that when one person turns to another and promises to love them, there is an opportunity to feel and participate in the Divine mystery and presence. Wherever there are those gathered in the name of true love, God is there also.

We believe that marriage is a union in which two people can find their richest fulfillment of life, body, mind and spirit.

At Trinity United Church:

We celebrate marriage as both a civil ceremony and a religious rite.

We celebrate marriage in the context of a Christian community of faith that is broad, diverse and affirming.

We celebrate the marriages of those who have been previously divorced, annulled, or widowed.

We celebrate the marriages of those who have children, have no children, or have children from previous relationships.

We celebrate the marriages of those who regularly attend worship and those who do not.

We celebrate the marriages of inter-faith and multi-faith couples

We celebrate the marriages of couples of all sexual orientations, gender identities and races.

Important History and Background:

In 1962, the United Church of Canada confirmed that divorce was not a barrier to marriage, but also confirmed the need for couples to be prepared prior to marriage.

In 1988, the General Council affirmed:

1. that marriage is a gift of God through which Christians make a covenant with each other and with God;
2. that in marriage we offer each other the promise of lifelong companionship, the rich expression of human affections and sexuality, and nurture for the children;
3. that marriage as an institution can under gird each relationship and provide stability for society;
4. 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.

In 1984, the General Council affirmed the church's acceptance of all human beings as persons made in the image of God, regardless of their sexual orientation. Additionally, it noted that all human relationships should be "faithful, responsible, just, loving, health-giving, healing, and sustaining of community and self."

In 2000, the meeting of the General Council committed itself to work towards the civil recognition of same-sex partnerships, and in 2003 moved to focus on recognition of same-sex marriages. When same-sex marriage became legal, it was possible for individual clergy and congregations to begin celebrating same-sex marriages. However, as all services of worship are under the joint authority of the local governing body and the clergy, a congregation must decide.

On June 4th, 2006, after two workshops, and months of discussion, Trinity United Church voted to support and perform marriages for same-sex couples, at the discretion of the Minister in consultation with the Board, as is the case with opposite-sex couples. This vote passed with 66% approval, and was subsequently recognized and ratified at the following meeting of the Official Board.

In February 2018, Trinity United Church further voted to intentionally enter an affirming process and seek membership within Affirm United/S' Affirmer Ensemble, a group within the United Church of Canada that works for the full inclusion of all peoples and helps congregations become truly welcoming, safe, sacred spaces. As part of this process, we have further articulated and clarified our marriage policy so that it honours, affirms and celebrates the marriage of all couples, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, culture or circumstance.

Marriage Preparation

You do not have to be a member of the church to be married at Trinity United Church. We do ask, however, that you approach the ceremony with reverence, respecting the convictions of both the church and yourself. We invite you to attend any of our worship services which are held on Sunday mornings at 11:00 a.m. This will give you the opportunity to experience the worship life of our congregation, and to understand better your marriage as an act of Christian worship. We encourage you, when possible to continue worshipping with us, so that you may come to a greater awareness of the ways God is present in your lives.

We, at Trinity United Church, commit to supporting you in your marriage, and part of that commitment involves intentional discussion about your relationship, and your hopes and dreams for married life. Therefore, each couple is required to meet with the minister at least twice in preparation for the wedding ceremony.

Couples will be encouraged to engage in some intentional conversation and reflection on their understandings of marriage, using a United Church of Canada video resource entitled, "*More than Friends*". This resource acknowledges that you, the couple, are the experts on your own relationship. It also acknowledges that healthy, loving, mature relationships require strong and clear communication, and a deep understanding of one another. This resource aims to help you strengthen and develop meaningful habits that will deepen your relationship, reflect on your understanding of spirituality within married life, and compel you to think honestly about the two biggest "thorny" issues in marriage – finances and sexuality.

For more information on this resource, visit www.morethanfriends.live

Marriage Ceremony

All marriages conducted through Trinity United Church must follow the governing laws of Ontario and Canada, and the policies of the United Church of Canada. A marriage ceremony performed by a Christian Minister is both a civil contract and a religious ceremony. The minister of Trinity United Church is a registered religious official, certified to solemnize marriages within the province of Ontario. They are responsible for seeing that all legal requirements are met and

that the policy and belief of the United Church of Canada is upheld. Couples who feel uncomfortable with this should consider a civil ceremony. Civil ceremonies are officiated by a judge, justice of the peace or authorized municipal clerk.

Our minister is available to perform weddings both within the church building and at off-site locations. Regardless of location of the ceremony, all Trinity weddings will be conducted by our minister, except when they are away or otherwise unavailable.

Other ministers may share in the service, or in extraordinary circumstances, conduct the marriage ceremony themselves, but this must first be approved by both the Official Board and the minister of Trinity United Church.

All wedding requests are approved by the Official Board of Trinity United Church, at the recommendation and discretion of the minister. All wedding ceremonies will be officiated by the minister of Trinity United Church.

Marriage Application and License

All couples, upon initial meeting with the minister, will be asked to complete a marriage application form. Upon receipt of this form, the wedding and rehearsal dates will be scheduled through the church office. It is the couple's responsibility to apply for a marriage license. They may be obtained from the Township of Brock municipal office, 1 Cameron St. E, Cannington. Please call (705) 432-2355 to book an appointment. Please deliver it to the church or minister no later than 2 weeks before the date of the ceremony.

Elements of a Marriage Ceremony

There are many different styles of marriage ceremony and they can be as simple or as unique as you desire. All aspects of the ceremony need to be discussed with and agreed to by the minister, and must comply with this marriage policy. In all Christian marriages, God is praised as the source of love and the initiator of covenant, Gospel values of love, justice, and compassion made known to us in Jesus, are expressed. Scripture is read and proclaimed in some form; witnesses in the legal sense are acknowledged, as well as the presence and support of family, guests, and congregation, and promises are made between the couple and before God. Each wedding ceremony is a reflection of the couple being married. We will work hard with you to make sure that your big day is a faithful and meaningful reflection of who you are.

Music

Music is an important element in the wedding of many couples. At Trinity United, we have the capacity to play pre-recorded music through our sound system, and can accommodate most special music requests (soloists, duets, performances by outside musicians). If you would like to enlist the services of our music director, David Litt, you can contact him at (705) 953-9931 or dhlitt@yahoo.ca. For a fee, with the assistance of our music director, you can discuss options such as having him play organ or piano during the ceremony, the possibility of having a choir, congregational singing, or something else that is appropriate and meaningful to you. David is very adaptable and helpful.

Decorations and Flowers

Decorations and/or flowers are the responsibility of the couple to arrange. Please be aware that we do not permit the use of rice or confetti at any time in the sanctuary or anywhere else on church property. You, or a family member, are encouraged to bring decorations and flowers to the church on the date of the rehearsal. If you would prefer to do this at another time, you may contact the minister or the church office to make suitable arrangements. All seasonal decorations and furniture within the sanctuary will remain in place, and all wedding decorations must be easily removable. It is not the responsibility of Trinity United Church to remove decorations and flowers. Please ensure someone is designated to do this following the ceremony and/or reception.

Photography and Multimedia

Photographs are a wonderful way of celebrating and capturing the joy of your wedding day. Friends, family and other guests are certainly invited to take pictures before and after the ceremony, however are asked not to use the flash during the ceremony itself. If you are hiring a professional photographer or videographer, please inform them that they are welcome to take pictures and video in the sanctuary and the church grounds before and after the ceremony, however no flash photography is permitted during the ceremony itself. Out of respect and reverence for the worship service, please remind your photographer/videographer that any use and placement of tripods and equipment must be discussed with and agreed to be the presiding minister and all photography during the wedding ceremony must be discreet.

We do have the capacity for projection and the use of video within our sanctuary, if you are interested, however this must be discussed beforehand with the minister to ensure it is used appropriately.

Bulletins

It is the couple's responsibility to purchase and print bulletins if they are desired. After finalizing the order of service, the minister will provide you with a copy of this information for you to distribute to the guests and the wedding party.

Involvement of Family and Friends

Your friends and family play a big role in helping you celebrate your marriage. We, at Trinity, encourage family members and friends to be involved in the ceremony in whatever way you would like. We recognize that there are many different family configurations and are happy to work with you, the couple, to include children in the ceremony, if you wish. Honouring and remembering those who have passed away or are unable to present with us may also be something for you to consider.

If you have a friend or family member who is a minister, you may wish for them to be involved in the service. Any requests like this must be discussed with the minister of Trinity United Church and, ultimately, approved by our Official Board.

As required by law, every marriage must be witnessed by two persons over the age of 18. These are most often close friends or family members of the couple, such as the best man and the maid of honour. Please make sure to let the minister know who you have chosen for this role.

Unity Candles, Sand Ceremonies and other Rituals

Some couples like to include rituals within their wedding ceremony that reflect the coming together of their families and lives. These might include the lighting of a unity candle, the blending of coloured sand or something similar. Please feel free to ask the minister about these rituals and they will provide resources to help you find something that is meaningful to you both.

Occasionally, couples also like to include a service of Holy Communion within the wedding ceremony. This is a sacrament of the church that acknowledges the transformative and living presence of God within our lives. In the United Church of Canada, we celebrate an open table, which places no barriers upon the receiving of communion. Anyone who feels called to partake is invited to consume the bread and wine. If you are interested in including communion as part of your ceremony, please let the minister know.

Wedding Rehearsal

Once a date for the wedding has been agreed upon, the rehearsal date will be scheduled. Typically this happens a day or two before the ceremony. All members of the wedding party are required to attend, and you may invite any other guests you wish. The wedding rehearsal is an opportunity to do a dry-run of the ceremony to make sure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities and to help relieve some of the last-minute jitters that appear at times like this. We want you to be relaxed and able to fully enjoy your wedding. We hold the rehearsal so that you can let go of your stress and rest assured that everything will go according to plan.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Cannabis

Please be advised that Trinity United Church does not permit the consumption of alcohol, tobacco or cannabis on the property. We understand that you may be nervous during the rehearsal or before the wedding ceremony, but please wait until the wedding reception. According to Canadian law, a couple must be completely sober during their marriage ceremony. If the minister has any suspicions that anyone in the wedding party is not, they will postpone the marriage.

Marriage Certificates – Post-Ceremony

There are three pieces of paper that need to be completed during the wedding ceremony – the marriage license, the Trinity United Church marriage register, and the Record of Solemnization of Marriage. Following the ceremony, the minister will mail the completed marriage license to the provincial government to be registered. The marriage register is kept at Trinity United as a secondary record of the marriage, and the Record of Solemnization will be given to the couple as their personal record of the marriage. Please designate someone, typically a close friend or parent, who can hold on to this important paperwork for you so that you can celebrate your day.

The Record of Solemnization is accepted by the province as legal proof of marriage. You will need this for tax purposes and to assist in other updates of information, such as any name changes. After the ceremony, you may contact ServiceOntario if you wish to apply for a formal, permanent marriage certificate, which will then be mailed to you within 4-6 weeks.

For more information, visit: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/getting-married>

**Trinity United Church, Cannington
Wedding Application**

Date of Wedding _____ **Time:** _____

Place: _____ **Rehearsal Date & Time:** _____

Reception: _____

Applicant:

Name in full _____

Address in full _____ **Phone #** _____

Cell Phone # _____ **E-mail** _____

Marital Status: Never Married ____, **Widowed** ____, **Divorced** ____; **Age** _____

Birthplace _____ **Date of Birth** _____ **Citizenship** _____

Occupation _____

Religious Affiliation _____ **Home Church** _____

Parent's Name in Full _____

Parent's Name in Full _____

Birthplaces: (1st parent) _____ **(2nd parent)** _____

Joint Applicant

Name in full _____

Address in full _____ **Phone #** _____

Cell Phone # _____ **E-mail** _____

Marital Status: Never Married ____, **Widowed** ____, **Divorced** ____; **Age** _____

Birthplace _____ **Date of Birth** _____ **Citizenship** _____

Occupation _____

Religious Affiliation _____ **Home Church** _____

Parent's Name in Full _____

Parent's Name in Full _____

Birthplaces: (1st parent) _____ **(2nd parent)** _____

Names of Children: _____

Address after wedding: _____

Additional Information

Number in Wedding Party _____

Attendants in Waiting _____

Other Attendants _____

Flower Bearer _____

Ring Bearer _____

Scripture Readers: _____

Musicians/Soloists: _____

Other Participants: _____

Preferred Readings and Music: _____

Unity Candle: YES/NO

Members involved: _____

Sand Ceremony: YES/NO

Members involved: _____

Communion: YES/NO

Personnel Fees

Minister: \$250.00 (plus mileage at \$0.39/km if at another venue)

Marriage Preparation Course: \$29.00 (paid to the Prayer Bench. See note below.)

Music Director: \$175.00

Facilities Manager: \$175.00

Facilities Fees

Sanctuary: \$200.00

Lower Hall: \$100.00

Sanctuary & Lower Hall: \$250.00

***All fees are due in full 2 weeks prior to the date of the ceremony.*

***Visit <https://prayerbench.ca/product/friends-couple-purchase/> to pay marriage prep fees.*

Notes

- *We request that no confetti or rice be thrown on the premises.*
- *Please no smoking or consumption of alcohol on the property.*
- *It is the couple's responsibility to apply for a marriage license. They may be obtained from the Township of Brock office. Please call (705) 432-2355 to book an appointment. Please deliver it to the church no later than 2 weeks before the date of the ceremony.*