

## St John's Wedding Information & Policy

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So you're planning a wedding! Congratulations and thank you for considering St. John's United Church of Georgetown and Glen Williams as the venue for the sharing of your marriage vows. We celebrate your love for each other and pray that your marriage will provide an opportunity for you to continue to grow in love.

As a United Church we believe that the union of two people by marriage is a creation of God and is greater than two individuals. This unity creates holy ground on which the two, and all others, must walk carefully and gently, yet forthrightly and with courage. It has boundaries, between the couple and with others, that may not be trespassed. It takes precedence over other relationships. It calls for the kind of caring which heals hurt and tends growth.

The people of St. John's share an approach to faith that is open and accepting. We strive to live our Mission Statement of "welcoming all with open doors, open hearts, and open minds". We invite all to share in our journey, regardless of race, gender, age, economic status, sexual orientation or any other aspect of life that might in other places form a wall of division. Whoever you are and wherever you are on your faith journey, you are welcome here! You need not be members of our congregation, nor do both of you need to be of the Christian faith, in order to be married at St. John's. We would, however, like to meet you and invite you to join us Sunday morning for worship and fellowship. Many find strength, hope, compassion and community within these walls...perhaps you will too. We are a family ready to support you in your married life as well as on your wedding day.

Below you will find some of the answers to questions you might have as you begin your planning process.

### *Initial Steps & Preparation*

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Step One: Find a lovely person to marry.

Step Two: Call the office to make an appointment with our Minister.

The Minister will meet with you to discuss your relationship and help you prepare for your ceremony. It is usual to meet with the minister a few times to discuss your current and future plans.

We do, of course, require some advance notice to ensure your date is available for both your chosen venue and pastoral needs. Please note that we don't generally perform weddings on Sunday mornings or holidays such as Christmas Eve/Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday or Easter Sunday.

### *The Ceremony*

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In the tradition of the United Church, a marriage celebrated in the church is primarily a service of worship in which those gathered ask for God's sacred blessing on their marriage. We believe God plays an important role in your married life as a whole, not just in your wedding ceremony. Thus, the tone of the wedding service is one of joy, reverence and wonder and includes readings, prayers and music appropriate to worship.

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We are a contemporary congregation at St. John's and our worship services reflect that. You are welcome to attend a few services before you discuss your needs and thoughts with the Minister. Our Minister will guide you to create a service that is both meaningful to you and respectful to all.

### *Our Venues*

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St. John's United Church is fortunate to have two beautiful sanctuaries. The Georgetown sanctuary is the larger of the two, seating about 175 within some of the most gorgeous architecture in town. The building is fully accessible. We also have a complete service kitchen and several areas of the building that might be appropriate for the reception of your guests. If you would like more details on this option, please contact our Office Manager at (905) 877-2531.

The Glen Williams sanctuary seats about 75 people and is situated in a beautiful part of the village right beside the Credit River. What it lacks in size is more than made up for in heart and atmosphere.

The choice is yours to make! If you are considering another venue please feel free to discuss your plans with the Minister.

### *Music*

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Our Church is the home of many talented musicians and we invite you to come out and hear them on a Sunday morning before you make your musical selections. The Georgetown sanctuary has a grand piano and a large electric pipe-style organ; either may be used within your ceremony. The Glen sanctuary has an upright piano.

Members of our Music Ministry Team are available to provide their services or you may choose to include someone special to you. We recognize that the power of music is intensely personal and thus leave the selection of hymns and songs up to you. The Minister and musician would be happy to guide you in making selections appropriate for use in your ceremony.

Our Georgetown sanctuary, while an acoustic marvel on its own, is also equipped with state of the art audio and visual equipment. Our group of church volunteers, the EZWorship Tech Team, must be present if you would wish to make use of any of this equipment. As volunteers, their services cannot be guaranteed. The request for Tech support should be made at the time of confirming your wedding with the Minister, so that date availability by a volunteer can be determined.

### *Our Fees*

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Please find attached a copy of our current Wedding Ceremony Fee Structure.

It is the policy of St. John's that no persons shall be refused services within this community due to a financial inability to pay. If this is your case, please discuss this with the Minister at your first meeting.

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### *Legal Requirements*

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Your wedding will be performed according to the laws of the Province of Ontario and the Dominion of Canada. The legal requirements include a valid marriage license or, in the special case of long-time members of St. John's, the publishing of banns. There are many government websites that can provide you with all of the information you require, or you may speak with the Minister for guidance.

Beyond the legalities, the Minister has the right to refuse to marry a couple if he/she judges that either or both parties are not ready for marriage, are not able to enter into marriage of their own free will and/or would not be sincere in making the vows and promises required within the service. The Minister will also not proceed with a service of marriage when either or both of the parties are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

### *Photography & Decorations*

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Photography (either still or video) is welcome in the sanctuary. We ask that flash photography not be used during the body of the worship service so as to not distract from the sanctity of the service.

Candelabras are available for use. Dripless tapers and/or unity candles must be provided by the wedding party. Pew bows and other decorations are quite welcome as long as they are affixed to the pews using tape or ribbon. Please do not move or remove any items in the sanctuary without the prior permission of the Minister.

Please be aware that St. John's tries very hard to be sensitive to those with nut and scent allergies. Help us by not bringing nuts or seeds into the building and by using low-scent flower options when available.

For environmental reasons we ask that no confetti, rice or birdseed be used on our property. Bubbles are welcome outside the church.

We look forward to sharing this journey with you.

Blessings!

The people of St. John's United Church of Georgetown and Glen Williams