

PORT STANLEY UNITED CHURCH  
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## **THE COVENANT OF MARRIAGE**

All couples legally eligible to be married in Ontario are eligible to be married at Port Stanley United Church. A marriage ceremony will be performed for two people who seek to affirm their relationship in the presence of God within the context of the Christian community. The ministry of marriage provides an opportunity for a spiritual encounter with people at a time of joy, celebration and transition in their lives. As a congregation of the United Church of Canada, we affirm that “life-long relationships need to be faithful, responsible, just, loving, health-giving, healing, and sustaining of community and self”. Our marriage service reflects the current policies and practices of the United Church of Canada.

## **WHERE TO BEGIN**

The church secretary or the minister is usually the first person contacted to make inquiries regarding a Marriage Covenant. We request that such inquiries be made at least two months in advance of your proposed marriage date. Couples are encouraged to visit the church and introduce themselves to the minister of the congregation. The church secretary will be able to advise you on the possible dates, church fees and pre-marriage requirements and is responsible for booking the date of the marriage. A date can be confirmed when a deposit has been made for the use of the church. The church sanctuary seats 200 people.

## **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

Most couples are married under a license issued at a town hall and that license must be obtained at least one week before the marriage. The license should be in the minister’s hands at least one week in advance. If you wish to be married under the publication of BANNs, the church will extend this privilege to you.

## **PRE-MARRIAGE PREPARATIONS and REQUIREMENTS**

We suggest that couples attend a marriage preparation course such as **The Marriage Project** which offers courses/workshops designed to enhance awareness of self, patterns of interaction, sources of potential conflict and methods of working through differences. Other courses are available and may be discussed with the minister prior to registration. It is beneficial to complete the course(s) at least one month prior to the marriage date so that you will have time to evaluate the experience and reflect upon the meaning of your anticipated marriage. If a pre-marriage course is not possible, we suggest meeting with the minister for a number of sessions.

The minister of Port Stanley United Church will officiate at the marriage ceremony and will arrange to meet with you to discuss the marriage covenant within the context of the Christian Church, and to explain the form of the marriage service. You will be invited to reflect upon your decision to marry, and to review your experiences from the marriage preparation course(s). In the absence of the minister of the congregation, the church will provide an alternate Minister of the United Church of Canada.

Special requests for a minister of your choice will be considered.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

The minister will announce the marriage to the congregation on the Sunday prior to the marriage covenant. Those being married are encouraged to be present in order to be introduced to the congregation and to share in a service of worship.

### **TIME**

The marriage service will begin at the designated time. The ushers should be present at the church at least 45 minutes before the marriage ceremony is scheduled to begin. It is their responsibility to see that all of the guests are seated before the bride enters the church. The bridegroom and best man should arrive 15 minutes prior to the ceremony and the bride and her attendants 10 minutes prior to the ceremony.

### **MUSIC**

The church organist will participate in the marriage ceremony. Special music may be requested in consultation with the organist. We recommend that you contact the organist at least one month in advance of your marriage date. If the organist is asked to rehearse with a soloist, an additional fee is required. Other organists may be used ONLY upon the permission of the Church organist. Music should be chosen with concern for the religious significance of the service.

### **THE MARRIAGE SERVICE and REHEARSAL**

In language and symbolic act, the marriage service seeks to honour the equality and mutuality of the marriage partners. We recognize that couples coming together to make A COVENANT OF MARRIAGE MAY REFLECT DIFFERENT CHURCH BACKGROUNDS. You will have the opportunity to discuss the style of the wording used in the marriage covenanting service, the selected prayers and the recommended readings. The options available, however, will reflect the traditions of the United Church of Canada.

The marriage rehearsal is usually scheduled for the Thursday evening prior to the day of marriage. The minister will conduct the rehearsal, which will offer all members of the wedding party the opportunity to become familiar with the marriage covenanting service. This is a time for the minister to meet all members of the wedding party, parents and other family members.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS and VIDEO TAPING**

Photographs may NOT be taken during the marriage service, but may be taken during the processional and recessional and during the signing of the marriage documents. The minister and the photographer retained for the marriage service can meet before the marriage ceremony to discuss possibilities for photographs.

A video camera may be used at the marriage service, but it must be placed in a stationary pre-determined position discussed with the minister before the service begins.

### **OTHER**

DECORATION – Flower arrangements, unity candles and/or pew bows are your responsibility. They may be placed on the night of the rehearsal or during the day of the service. Removal on the day of the wedding is also your responsibility unless previously arranged.

FLOWERS – Those for the bride, groom, attendants, ushers and soloist should be delivered to their respective homes. Only flowers used for decoration should be sent to the church. The florist should consult with the minister as to when the flowers should arrive.

Confetti, rice, birdseed, bubbles may NOT be used in or around the church building.

The marriage covenant is a civil concern. The presiding minister cannot perform the marriage service if any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol.

### **FEES**

The cost of the marriage service is:

	NON MEMBERS	MEMBERS
Sanctuary	\$250.00	(\$100.00 Donation Sug.)
Organist	\$100.00	\$100.00
Minister	\$275.00	\$275.00
Custodian	\$50.00	\$50.00

A non-refundable fee of \$100.00 is required in order to confirm a reservation for the church. The balance of the fees is to be paid one month prior to the date of the marriage and at the same time, the marriage license may be submitted to the church secretary.

**NOTE:** The member rule applies if the bride, groom or parents of the bride or groom are members of the Port Stanley United Church.

No one will be allowed to join the church for the purpose of lowering the fees.

Wedding reception at the Church is negotiable.