
You're getting married..... Congrats!

a guide for getting married

Congrats on looking to be married! Whether it's a legal or spiritual union, we are so excited for you. Whatever your ceremony is going to be, we're here to help make it meaningful and beautiful.

This will give you an idea of the kind of conversations we'll have as we begin to plan and create your ceremony. It's not prescriptive but a way to introduce you to what's possible and the kinds of things to think about. If you have any questions as you go along, please reach out or ask when you meet with our minister.

we're affirming!

We believe God loves and accepts everyone. We are proud and honored to provide weddings for everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, faith or background. This will be baked into everything we create together. Marriage will not be defined as between "a man and a woman" and no hateful, racist or patriarchal rituals or language will be used. The ceremony doesn't need to be overtly Christian or religious either. We'll do our best to ensure that the reverence of this is communicated in a way that is conducive with your spirituality.

a wedding should never be a fill-in-the blank kind of ceremony!

We believe a wedding ceremony should not only convey who the couple is, but also help them courageously enter into this thing we call marriage: a life rooted in a very special kind of love, the kind of love we'd say that God is - a love that is just, strong, faithful, and deep. Our goal isn't just to help you create something that's beautiful, meaningful and memorable to you, but something that makes everyone say as they leave "now *that was their* wedding." Whether that's traditional or contemporary, big or small, laid back or formal, or some mix of them all, you deserve a ceremony that's uniquely yours. We will help you create a ceremony that reflects your values and story and celebrates this beautiful thing you are doing together.

how it works:

We start by getting to know each other. At this point, no commitment is necessary. If we do decide we're a good fit, we'll go from there. At that point we will begin to work together to create the right tone, flow, and elements for your wedding. After we put it all together, you'll sign off on it so there's no anxiety about what could happen on the wedding day. Our goal is for you to show up and get married, not worry about what is happening and who is doing what. If things change just before the big day, cool, we'll be here to help find something that works.

some things to consider as you create your ceremony:

flow

There is no right or wrong way to do a wedding. That said, there is a flow to them. There will be an order that feels right. There are certain things that work well together, and there are things that don't. There is a time for people to laugh and clap, and there is a time for people to be reflective and quiet. Throughout our discussions we'll talk about the flow you'd like to have and what you want it to achieve.

the vows

The vows are the most important thing in the wedding. Regardless of whether you write your own, opt for traditional vows, or use some provided, this is what the wedding ceremony and your marriage will revolve around. The vows act as your foundation, articulating the kind of love we're not only celebrating at your ceremony, but the kind of love you will be sharing: a love that persists, works, and endures. These are not empty promises or platitudes, but commitments you are making to each other and together.

Below are some questions and examples to help you begin finding the vows that work for you (Don't stress. This may feel super heavy, but we are here to help!).

questions to help you find your vows:

do you want to do these together? do you want them to be a surprise?

what do you want to commit to together?

what makes these vows uniquely yours?

what do you need to say to the other person?

what do you need to hear from the other person?

what's the mixture of funny and serious you want to have?

when you think of the kind of relationship you want to have, what images, adjectives and verbs come to mind?

examples:

1) I, _____, take you _____
to be my partner/wife/husband/etc.
to have and to hold
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and health,
in joy and sorrow,
in good times and hard times,
to love and to cherish,
and to be faithful to you alone.

2) _____, I believe in you, the person you will grow to be and the couple we will be together.
With my whole heart, I take you as my partner/wife/husband, acknowledging and loving your faults and strengths, as you do mine.
I promise to be faithful and supportive and to make our love and happiness my priority.
I will be yours in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, in failure and in triumph.
I will dream with you, celebrate with you and walk beside you through whatever our lives may bring.
You are my love and my life, today and always.

rituals

'Ritual' is just a word for actions that have deep meaning. These are actions that symbolize something important, that root you in truth and meaning, and enact something more meaningful than the action itself. Think making coffee in the morning - it's not just about the coffee - it's about the process of centering yourself and starting your day right. Think prayer - it's more than just words, it's about recognizing there's something bigger you're connected to.

Or think of saying gratitude's each day - it's more than just saying 'thank you,' it's also about being open and practicing joy and generosity. Weddings are full of rituals: the exchange of rings, the speeches, the kiss, and the toasts are all rituals that carry the meaning of unity, intimacy, community, and celebration.

Part of our job is to, if you'd like, help create rituals that can bring meaning and depth to your wedding ceremony. These may be traditional and/or popular ones like lighting candles and pouring sand, or they may be ones that we create together from scratch. Below are some questions that will help us gain a sense of how we can bring meaning to your ceremony:

what meaningful things do you do together?

what things have you seen in other weddings that you'd like to adopt to your own?

what is life-bringing to each of you personally and to you as a couple?

what values and beliefs are at the center of your relationship and world?

do you have loved ones that you need to name and remember during your ceremony?

are there religious/spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, healing, etc., that you may want to observe?

is your community and/or family important to you and your marriage?

what would help you feel strengthened, hopeful, and loved?

what's your love language?

music

Music can be a wonderful part of your ceremony. It's a way to bring out all the feelings we can never really put into words, and it's a way to fill in some awkward gaps. That said, it doesn't need to be a part of your ceremony. This is something we'll discuss as we discover the kind of ceremony you both want.

In the meantime, here are some questions to consider:

do you want music? if so, what kind of music would you like? name 3 songs.

if walking down an aisle, what song would you each want?

do you have musically gifted friends/family members you want in the ceremony?

what music do you play at home?

do you like the same music? if so, what? what song would "define" your relationship?

do we have to _____?

We often do a lot of stuff at weddings because we think we're supposed to. But just because it's always been done doesn't mean we have to do it. The only things you *have* to do are the 'I dos' and the vows. Other than that, it's all up to you. Yes, *you*. Not your parents, aunt, grandmother, best friends or us. A big part of our work is designing your service from the ground up and not simply filling in the blanks. Below are some common questions about traditions, conventions, and common wedding practice.

do you have any rules?

Yes. Just three.

- 1) You cannot be "given away." You can be walked with down the aisle, but because you're not property, we will not ask anything like "Who gives this woman to this man?"
- 2) No surprises. If you'd like to surprise your partner by doing something during the ceremony, please talk to me privately so I can be in the loop.
- 3) At no point during the ceremony, will marriage ever be defined as "between a man and a woman."

do we have to use the language of 'marriage,' 'husband,' 'wife,' 'marry,' etc.?

No. We'll use the language you identify with and create new language where we need to.

do we need to dress up?

Wear whatever you want. Weddings can be as casual or formal as you'd like them to be.

can my community/family participate in the service?

Of course! We'll talk about the ways that can look.

we're not into rings.

That's ok. Rings don't need to be part of this if you choose not to.

do weddings need to take place within a church of sorts?

No. They certainly can be in a church, but we'll work with whatever venue you choose.

Rehearsal

Our job is to make sure you can show up on your special day and have nothing to worry about other than getting married. At the rehearsal, we will go through the entire service and answer any questions you may have. Everyone who is involved in the ceremony is encouraged to attend.

Decorating

How you want to decorate the sanctuary is up to you. Don't feel you need to decorate too much; many couples like our sanctuary left just as it is. It is your responsibility to decorate & remove all decorations after the ceremony.

Photographs

We know you want to have special pictures of this important day. We simply ask that your photographer respect the ceremony and not be a distraction. We trust we can work together to give you the best ceremony possible.

other questions?

Just ask.

welcome & announcements - We'll welcome everyone, let them know what to expect, and pass on any announcements you may have for them.

processional - The wedding party arrives.

welcome #2 - We officially begin with another welcome and a centering ritual (like a breath or prayer) to help us be present.

I do's - The legal questions we must ask.

commitments from family & community - Asking your family and community if they will love and support you now and, in the years to come.

readings - If you have readings, this is where they'd be.

reflection - The minister will say something here.

vows & rings - The most important part!

proclamation & the kiss - You kiss, we cheer, you're married!

documents - If you are getting legally married, you can choose to sign the documents now.

introduction & recessional - We officially introduce you as whatever you'd like to be called and you head off to whatever is next.



red deer lake
united church

administration

booking your date

At your initial meeting with the minister, the wedding date will be confirmed.

After your first meeting with the minister, a non-refundable \$100 deposit is required to confirm and book your wedding date at Red Deer Lake United Church (RDLUC). This will be arranged with our administration manager.

meetings with the minister

After the initial meeting with the minister, there will be subsequent meetings arranged to plan your service. These meetings will typically be three months prior to the wedding date.

church records

Scheduling, contact information for yourself, parents and witnesses will be discussed with the administrative manager.

marriage fees

Fees differ depending on the location and amount of support you require for your service. This will also be discussed with the administrative manager.

marriage license

The marriage license can be purchased at any registry office in Alberta. It can be issued within 90 days of the wedding date.

Once you have your marriage license, drop it off at the church office at least two weeks before the wedding date, where the remainder of the required information will be completed and it will be safely stored until the wedding.

After the wedding, the administrative manager will review the document to ensure completion and will then forward it to Alberta Registry.

marriage certificate - official

To obtain your official wedding certificate, you can apply for it through Alberta Registry.

For more information, visit <https://www.alberta.ca/order-marriage-certificate.aspx>
