

The Wedding Customary

Your Wedding at Good Shepherd

The community of Good Shepherd shares your joy at your upcoming wedding, and is delighted you desire to celebrate and bless your marriage at our church. We consider marriage a sacrament, and as such, we take its preparation very seriously.

This customary is designed to support the planning of your wedding in the Anglican tradition. We hope that you find it useful as you plan dates and details, and seek to learn more about Christian marriage.

Who may be married at Good Shepherd?

All couples who are legally permitted to marry may seek to have that marriage solemnized in the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton. This includes couples of the same sex.

The Anglican Church of Canada affirms that “marriage is a lifelong union in faithful love, and that marriage vows are a commitment to this union, for better or for worse, to the exclusion of all others on either side.”

We believe that Christian marriage is not private for the couple alone, but takes place within the Christian community. If you are not a member of Good Shepherd, we recommend that you participate in our branch of Christian community prior to your marriage here. This participation takes the form of time spent in worship and fellowship, talent contributed to the service of the community, and treasure invested in God’s mission as carried out by Good Shepherd.

Good Shepherd is also happy to celebrate marriages for our neighbour Christians whose churches may be unavailable at the desired time.

Good Shepherd is a part of the Anglican Church of Canada, which intends for its rites to be used to solemnize Christian marriage. Our expectation is that those seeking marriage will be baptized Christians. If one or both of you are not baptized, please let the rector know immediately.

Should there be a divorce in the history of either party seeking to be married, that is not necessarily a barrier. However, certain canonical requirements must be met prior to the celebration of the marriage.

Preparing for the Wedding

Step One: Visit with the Rector

No wedding will be considered scheduled at Good Shepherd prior to both parties meeting with the rector and the rector confirming the date. **The parish administrator cannot schedule your wedding.** The rector will not schedule your wedding with intermediaries, such as parents or wedding coordinators. Until your meeting with the rector, your date is not confirmed. **Good Shepherd is not responsible for any non-refundable deposits put down on reception venues, etc., prior to confirmation of your wedding date.**

Weddings are usually not scheduled during the penitential seasons of Advent or Lent, absent extenuating circumstances. There are also days in the life of our parish when no weddings will be celebrated. Weddings are never scheduled for later than 7:00pm.

The canons of the Anglican Church of Canada require a minimum of 60 days notice to schedule a wedding; at Good Shepherd, a minimum of 6 months is more typical.

Step Two: Satisfying the Canons (Church Laws)

As previously discussed, there are a number of canons (church laws) that must be satisfied prior to your marriage at Good Shepherd. We require that all those intending to be married here sign the following declaration:

We, _____ and _____, hereby declare that we intend to enter into marriage which we acknowledge to be a union in faithful love, to the exclusion of all others on either side, for better or for worse, until we are separated by death.

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

We intend to strive thereafter to fulfill the purposes of marriage: the mutual fellowship, support, and comfort of one another, the procreation (if it may be) and the nurture of children, and the creation of a relationship in which sexuality may serve personal fulfillment in a community of faithful love.

All persons seeking to be married in Alberta must have obtained a valid marriage licence. No wedding will be performed at Good Shepherd absent that licence.

Should there be a divorce in the history of either party seeking to be married, application must be made to the diocese prior to proceeding. This application must include:

- the full name and place of residence and religious affiliation, if any, of each applicant
- the date, place, and solemnizing officiant of the former marriage(s)
- the present marital status of the applicant (which is to say, proof that any previous marriage has been fully, properly, and legally dissolved)
- the full name, and the place of residence (if known) of the other party
- the ages of the parties immediately before the previous marriage(s)
- full name, age, place of residence, and present marital status of any children resulting from the previous marriage(s)
- if any such children are minors or otherwise dependent, a custody statement regarding responsibility for the care and maintenance of said children, and future plans for the same
- a statement showing provision for the present and future maintenance of the former spouse(s), or an explanation why there is no such provision
- any other facts relevant to the application

Step Three: Preparing for Marriage

All couples seeking to be married in the Anglican Church of Canada must receive adequate counseling as part of their marriage preparation. At Good Shepherd, a typical outline of preparation is:

1. An initial interview with the rector and the determination that the couple may or may not continue the process of being married here.
2. A series of discussions covering the Christian understanding of the purpose of marriage and a practical understanding of the realities of marriage, including but not limited to:
 - a. money
 - b. sex
 - c. religion
 - d. children and the raising thereof
 - e. in-laws
 - f. Domestic housekeeping
3. Planning the actual service as set forth in an authorized liturgical source (typically the Book of Common Prayer or the Book of Alternative Services).
4. If necessary, particularly if there is a history of divorce in the life of either party, the rector may require the couple to meet with a licensed couples' therapist and release that therapist to share their opinion as to the couple's readiness for matrimony with the rector.
5. A final meeting within a week of the scheduled wedding at which all outstanding fees will be paid.
6. A one hour rehearsal of the marriage service, conducted by the officiating priest, with all participants present, on time, and participating.

The Wedding Service

Good Shepherd most often uses the Book of Alternative Services for its worship, weddings included. The Book of Common Prayer is also an option, as well as a few other liturgical resources authorized by the diocesan bishop. All weddings at Good Shepherd will conform to the regular practice of the Diocese of Edmonton. This means that no parties will be invited to write their own vows.

The Holy Eucharist is customarily celebrated at weddings as, throughout the centuries, couples have begun their married life together by offering that life in context of Holy Communion, strengthened and nourished with God's grace to meet the challenges and demands that lie ahead. As marriage is primarily an act of Christian worship, all baptized Christians present who receive Holy Communion in their own church will be invited to participate and receive Holy Communion at your wedding. Interfaith couples, couples whose families are not Christians, or who otherwise prefer not to celebrate the Eucharist during their wedding service should speak with the rector during their initial meeting.

The service typically takes 45 minutes – 1 hour, depending on the couples' choices regarding readings, music, and number of guests. A short sermon based on the readings chosen by the couple is preached at weddings at Good Shepherd. The service cannot and will not be rushed.

The priest who has helped the couple prepare for their marriage is the appropriate priest to solemnize the marriage. The rector's permission must be obtained if the desired officiant is not currently serving on Good Shepherd's staff. Guest clergy are invited from time to time to read lessons, lead prayers, and/or preach.

Music

There is a wealth of beautiful and appropriate sacred music that is suitable for use in the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage. Following the Anglican tradition, such music includes hymns, psalms, anthems, and instrumental music. As the wedding is a service of worship designed to involve the entire congregation, congregational singing is encouraged.

Good Shepherd's Music Director will assist you in selecting beautiful and appropriate music for your wedding and will hire and supervise any other musicians involved in the service. After the initial consultation with the rector when the wedding date is set, a meeting should be set with the Music Director at the earliest mutually convenient time.

The diocesan bishop has authorized a number of musical resources to be used in worship in this diocese. The rector has final authority for the music used in any liturgical setting at Good Shepherd.

Flowers and Decorations

Any flowers and candles used in decorating the church become the property of the church and, when the wedding is on Friday or Saturday, may be used during Sunday services.

Delivery from any outside florists must be arranged with the parish administrator during regular business hours of the church, well in advance of the wedding. Flowers may not be placed on the altar, or in such a place as prevents the view of any of the congregation, or impedes movement during processions or the distribution of Holy Communion.

The color for altar hangings and clergy vestments is always white for weddings.

The use of rice, rose petals, confetti, bird seed, and other such items creates serious ecological, practical, logistical, theological, and disposal concerns and may not be used at Good Shepherd.

Recordings and Photographs

Good Shepherd is happy to stream your wedding over Zoom, YouTube or Facebook. Please speak with the rector 2+ months prior to your wedding to ensure a trained volunteer is available. **Untrained volunteers may not access our equipment.**

Photographs may only be taken by the professional photographer you have hired. We have strict rules by which these photographers must abide, to ensure that your guests get the best view and experience of your wedding.

1. No portraits may be taken during the service. Such pictures are appropriately taken before the wedding, and completed at least 30 minutes before the service is to begin. The service begins with the playing of the prelude. The service ends with the conclusion of the music after the bridal party and ministers have left in procession.
2. Photographers may not take pictures from any vantage point where they block the view of the congregation. They may access the aisles, but may not enter the sanctuary (behind the altar rail) or climb on any surface.
3. Flash photography is not allowed during the service. All camera noises must be silenced.

Your photographer is required to contact the parish administrator no fewer than 3 weeks before the date of the wedding and make an appointment to walk through the church and go over our expectations.

Service Leaflets

Since the wedding is a liturgy of the Church, we always prepare any materials for the service, such as a leaflets or slides. Our purpose is to enhance your guests' participation in the liturgy without distracting from its solemnity. The use of outside printers for this part of the service is not permitted.

Receptions

Good Shepherd is not equipped or staffed to host wedding receptions on its campus.

Alcohol and Intoxication Policy

The marriage service is not only a solemn liturgy of the Church, it is also a legally binding event. No degree of intoxication whatsoever will be tolerated in any member of the wedding party. The officiating priest has sole discretion to cancel your wedding without warning or apology and without rescheduling if in their opinion the participants are under the influence of any mind-altering substance, including legal ones. It is the sole responsibility of the couple to communicate this policy to the wedding party.

Required Paperwork

To ensure that Good Shepherd is prepared for all aspects of your wedding, it is critical that the couple fill out all required paperwork. This paperwork should be obtained at your initial meeting with the rector.

The following forms must be turned in four months prior to the date of your wedding: the Declaration of Intention, Information Questionnaire, and Authorization to Release Information.

The following forms must be turned in two months before the date of your wedding: Scripture Selection Form, Marriage Ceremony Service Leaflet Information, and the Photographer Agreement.

The Cost of Your Wedding

Good Shepherd parishioners may be married in the church at no charge for the wedding itself. However, we do ask you to pay for ancillary parts of the preparation and service and to make a thank offering for the parish's ministry. As we wish your wedding day to be free from any unnecessary preoccupations, we ask that you pay

all of these fees no later than the final meeting with the rector the week of your wedding.

Christian neighbours seeking to be married at Good Shepherd are asked to pay a fee in addition to these ancillary costs.

List of Fees

Fee for being married at Good Shepherd	
Members	\$0
Non-members	\$350
Counselor (if necessary)	Variable
Music Director	\$250
Additional musicians	Variable
Cleaning Fee	\$150
Suggested thank offering	\$200
Rehearsal deposit	\$250*
Wedding Day deposit	\$500*

Non-members are asked to pay a \$200 deposit at time of booking. All wedding parties are asked to pay the full remaining balance no later than your week-of meeting with the rector.

*Rehearsal and Wedding day deposits are collected with your fees at your week-of meeting with the rector in the form of three cheques: two made out to Good Shepherd Anglican Church for \$250 each, and one made out to your musician for \$250. These deposits are intended to respect the time of the clergy, music director, and vounteer(s) who may be assisting with your wedding. Absent an unexpected emergency (to which we are timely alerted), if the wedding party is more than 15 minutes late to the rehearsal, or is not ready to begin the wedding within 15 minutes of its scheduled start time, these deposits will be cashed. If the wedding party arrives on time, they will be returned to the person of your choice or voided and shredded.