

## **MARRIAGE POLICY**

### **Knox United Church, Brandon**

“For Christians, our relationship with God and with each other is rooted in our understanding of covenant. We know God as faithful, loving, compassionate, and just. We are called to embody this in our own relationships with each other.

Relationships cannot thrive and grow in isolation. They need the encouragement, nurture, support, and accountability of community. Thus, covenants of Marriage and Life Partnership are public. In the Church, we celebrate such covenants in the context of the public worship of God.

Relationships grounded in inclusivity, openness, respect, and equality will be caring and loving. When one person turns to another and promises to love them, there is an opportunity to feel the Divine mystery and presence. By promising to live in faithful human covenant with another, there is potential to know, in part, God’s faithful covenant with all God’s people.” \*\*\*

“As a faith community we are committed to sharing God’s love and grace and to proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through worship, study, work, action and fellowship.

As the people of Knox United Church we aim to provide a safe, nurturing environment where we accept and welcome all into the life and ministry of the Knox family: persons of any age, colour, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, marital status, social or economic circumstance.

We are dedicated to being good stewards of God’s world, working and living towards justice and freedom for all of God’s people.”

*Knox Mission Statement*

Living out of our commitment to “welcome all who come,” Knox United Church chooses to celebrate and affirm covenants of marriage for all couples who demonstrate relationships grounded in inclusivity, openness, respect and equality, regardless of age, ability, race, social status, creed or sexual orientation. Preparedness for marriage will be demonstrated by the couple through the completion of a marriage preparation program and several meetings with the minister.

#### **Please worship with us!**

The couple will be invited to come and worship with us before meeting with the minister to plan the wedding.

All marriages must be approved by the church council upon recommendation by the minister.

### **Meeting the minister**

The minister will meet with the couple several times before the wedding, hopefully over the period of several months. These meetings are separate from marriage preparation. These meetings are an opportunity for the couple and the minister to get to know each other, to build trust and relationship. The minister will talk to them about how they envision their service, what kind of spirituality they want expressed and who will be involved in the service. They will be provided with a number of resources to help choose readings, prayers and other symbolic rituals. The minister will encourage them to be creative and to make the service theirs.

### **Marriage Preparation**

It is Knox United Church policy that all persons planning to be married at Knox United Church attend a marriage preparation program. This will be discussed with the couple in the initial contact. Knox United Church supports the Marriage Preparation & Enrichment Program offered through The Counselling Centre.

### **The Wedding Ceremony**

The wedding ceremony is a service of worship. The minister will discuss with the couple the options the service may include in terms of wording, etc. The vows will include a statement of "life-long intent".

### **Fees**

The cost of a wedding includes the fees for the Minister, Organist, Caretaker and sound system, administration and rental. A *non-refundable* deposit of \$50 is required when booking the date and time for the wedding and the remainder must be paid to the church office one month before the wedding.

The wedding ceremony may be conducted in the church (sanctuary or chapel) or at another location chosen by the couple and agreed upon by the minister. If it does not occur within the church, the fee will reflect the use of secretarial/office time to make arrangements as well as caretaker time to have the church as a back-up in case of inclement weather.

Wedding costs sanctuary - \$500.00

Wedding costs chapel - \$225.00

Couples in circumstances of significant financial hardship may request assistance with wedding fees. The Minister will make recommendation to Council for a reduction in fees.

Honoraria are paid to the following people: Minister (\$150.00), Organist (\$85.00), Caretaker (\$50.00) and Sound system operator (\$50.00). When the Caretaker operates the sound system, honorarium will be \$75.00.

### **Presider**

It is the policy of Knox United Church that the Knox Minister is responsible for the vows and signing of documents. Another minister may participate in the service at the request of the couple. Additional remuneration for that person is the responsibility of the couple.

Weddings may be booked for times that the Knox United Church Minister is unavailable. In that case, Ministry and Personnel is responsible for finding suitable coverage.

### **Wedding Music**

The church organist is available to provide music for each wedding and will also offer some assistance in choosing suitable music. The wedding couple must contact the organist at least one month prior to the wedding. The wedding couple shall provide the organist with any special music at that time; otherwise, the organist will choose the music in keeping with the service. If the wedding couple is planning to use an alternate organist/pianist, the name of that accompanist shall be submitted to the organist. This person shall meet with the Knox organist. The Knox organist has the authority to decline requests for use of the church organ by outside accompanists if it is judged that insufficient familiarity with the instrument may result in improper use of it. The fee for the organist will be paid even if an outside organist is used. Should the couple choose to have a soloist, the music must be provided to the organist a minimum of a month prior to the wedding. Contact between the soloist and the organist must occur regarding appropriate times for rehearsal. If using music on a CD or tape the disc or tape is required one week before the wedding date for sound system cuing.

### **Photographs**

Pictures may be taken upon entering and leaving the Sanctuary and during the signing of the register. Video cameras are permitted.

### **Rehearsal**

The Rehearsal is normally the evening before the wedding

### **Decorations**

Depending on the time of year the sanctuary may be decorated for the Seasons of the Church Year and these decorations need to be left in place. Confetti, birdseed & rice may not be used. Bubbles may be used outside. Arrangements may be made through the church office to use the two candelabra. Candles are the responsibility of the couple.

Note:

As the marriage license constitutes a legal document, the wedding will *not* be performed if anyone of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol or other mind-altering substances.

*\*\*\* Celebrate God's Presence p376  
Worship resource from the UCC*

***Approved by Knox Council: March 18, 2008  
Updated by Knox Council:: Oct 20, 2015***