

## **PLANNING YOUR WEDDING**

We at Eden wish to congratulate you on your decision to enter into marriage. We are pleased and honoured to share in this joyful event. Since you plan to be married in our church, here is some information which you may find helpful as you make your plans.

In Canadian life, the great majority of weddings are still performed at a church and by a minister. In our United Church tradition, marriage is an ordinance of the Church as well as a civil contract. The marriage service is a service of worship in which those gathered worship God and ask for God's blessing on their marriage and in which two people pledge themselves each to the other in married love. The focus of attention is upon God and not upon the couple. Your wedding, held in the church, is first and foremost a Christian service of worship. The ordering of the service should be consistent with the church's understanding of the Gospel.

Some florists, decorators, and caterers, would have us believe that the expense and a good wedding service are one and the same thing. The criteria for the wedding service should be consistent with the church's understanding of marriage. What does it mean to be married in a Church? Why not get married on a street corner, parachuting from an airplane, or on a television show? Why not get married at City Hall? Hopefully, couples are married in the church not because they believe they can have a more beautiful service, but because they want to affirm that as members of the church of Jesus Christ, the church is the place to celebrate marriage.

A wedding is a service of worship to God...just as it is on a Sunday morning. By marrying in the church, the bride and groom affirm that God joins them together and this for them is a most vital fact of life. A wedding is no time for glitter or gaudiness. It is a time for simplicity and good taste. To put it another way, a wedding service is not for entertainment, it is not a show. The focus of the attention then is not upon the bride...no matter how beautiful she may be...but upon God as Creator, Sustainer. The wedding service is worship that proclaims in word and deed, the Christian understanding of the couple's relationship to God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

With this understanding then, let us look at a number of topics related to the wedding service which you no doubt will be wondering about.

**THE INTERVIEW:**

It is our expectation that you will spend at least one hour with the Minister prior to the wedding day. An appointment can be arranged by calling the Church Office. This should be done several months in advance of your chosen date. He/she will want to complete the information forms, and discuss your expectation in marriage, and become acquainted with you. It is your wedding and he/she will want the service to be as personal and meaningful for you as possible.

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION:**

Out of concern for the increasing number of marriage failures in our society, several churches of different denominations in this community make regular marriage preparation courses available to brides and grooms. It is hoped that this will provide some "preventive medicine" for your marriage.

The subjects dealt with include: communication, role expectations, sexuality, legal and financial matters and the religious dimension. For your convenience, the session is scheduled on a weekend....Friday evening and all day Saturday. A course brochure will be provided.

**THE WEDDING CEREMONY:**

The service is simple, reverent and dignified. All that is said and done should help to enhance the sense of worship as you meet with your friends and families in God's presence. Weddings vary in formality and style, as well as size, though the essential meaning of the rite is the same for everyone. The minister will review the service with you, inviting you to make appropriate suggestions or changes.