



Your Wedding Day



“As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you” (Isaiah 62:5)

Congratulations on your engagement and forthcoming wedding!

We appreciate your desire to have a wedding in the church. A church wedding is an indication that a couple realizes that marriage is a divine institution, regulated by the Word of God. As a congregation, myself as the Minister, and the Kirk Session would like to express the hope that God will guide, bless and enrich you with every spiritual blessing.

Marriage is one of the biggest commitments we make and since it is life-long it is probably the most important thing we will do in our lives. While we fulfil the requirements of the law in Scotland we believe Christian Marriage adds a deeper dimension to what we do.

In order to have a worshipful wedding ceremony, many important decisions must be made. We, at Blackhall St. Columba's Church of Scotland are here to help you prepare for this special day. Please read very carefully this booklet.

Do remember that, the happiness contemplated by this union is realized only by those who fully appreciate its sacredness and are faithful in the performance of the mutual obligations growing out of it, and who see daily God's blessing. May you, by His grace, do so.

Yours warmly,
Rev Gordon Farquharson
Minister



What is Christian Marriage?

Christian Marriage, according to the Marriage Service, is a gift from God and given for the life long companionship, help and comfort which husband and wife ought to have for each other. It is provided by God as the right and proper setting for the full expression of the natural instincts and affections God has implanted within us. It is provided by God for so that there can be a supportive setting for family life, where children, who are God's gifts to us, may enjoy being brought up in a secure and loving environment. And where the parents are Christian their children can learn about the Faith from them. It

was provided for the well-being of the human society which benefits from the stability of relations. Because Christian Marriage is such an important commitment, we ask those seeking it to think carefully about what they are doing.

Marriage Preparation

Marriage is undoubtedly a gift of God. It is amazing to reflect on how two people can meet each other at a church youth club, workplace, college or university, on their holidays or through mutual friends. They can be next door neighbours, childhood friends or from opposite ends of the world. They can be in their twenties or in their sixties. Somehow there is mutual attraction and a sense of chemistry, which draws them closer and brings them to that place where they fall in love. The relationship deepens and they come to this place of wanting to spend the rest of their lives together.



No matter how well a couple may know each other, all kinds of adjustments will need to be made once they are married. We all bring issues from our past, have bad habits or attitudes that can make us irritating, and we can be selfish and uncaring towards others.

Marriage preparation is about helping couples learn how to live and grow together over a lifetime. Time out during your engagement, so that you can deepen your understanding of each other, is an excellent investment in your future.

If you have any concerns about preparation, please share them with the Minister! Engaged couples might feel slightly apprehensive about signing up for such classes, not knowing what to expect. We would ask you to put any preconceptions to one side. Good marriage preparation will give you the opportunity and the tools to discuss any areas that couples might otherwise find difficult to address, from in-laws to handling finance and everything else in-between.

In marriage preparation the subjects most often included are:

- Communication
- Understanding each other
- Handling Conflict
- Commitment
- Adjusting to families
- Keeping love alive
- Finances
- Distinctive of Christian marriage

PRACTICAL DETAILS

Arranging the Date



According to the Marriage (Scotland) Act, 1977, as from 1st January 1977, the posting or proclamation of banns is no longer legally necessary, although you can still have them proclaimed in church if you so desire.

The preliminary procedure is now as follows: -

1. Forms for giving notice of your intention to marry must be obtained from any Registrar of births, deaths and marriages in Scotland. Each party to the marriage must complete a separate form. In the case of marriages solemnised in Blackhall St. Columba's Church, the Registrar concerned is available at:-

Lothian Chambers, 59-63 George IV Bridge
Leith Office, 30 Ferry Road

Tel: 0131 529 2600 or
Tel: 0131 554 8452

2. The completed forms should then be returned to the Registrar along with birth certificates – you will need to contact the appropriate office to make an appointment to lodge your Marriage Notice form. In the case of a divorcee, a copy of the decree of divorce or annulment, or in the case of a widow or widower, a death certificate of the former spouse, must be produced. These should be taken to the Registrar 28 clear days prior to the marriage or in the case of either divorcee or widow or widower, six weeks should be allowed. To allow the Registrar to ask questions, it is advisable that parties attend together when handing in forms
3. When the Registrar is satisfied that there is no legal impediment to the marriage, he will prepare the 'Marriage Schedule'. This schedule will be issued not earlier than seven days before the marriage and is valid for the date stated on it. It must be produced at the marriage ceremony. The wedding cannot take place without the schedule being within the minister's possession and you should make sure it is handed in to the Church Office a few days before the wedding or at the latest, to the Minister at the Rehearsal.
4. When one of the parties is resident outside Scotland, it is advisable that the Registrar be consulted as to procedure.

Witnesses to a wedding must be aged 16 or over. The best man or the bridesmaid may be under 16, but an independent witness must sign on their behalf.

It is absolutely essential that the form which you have been given from Blackhall St Columba's is completed and returned to the Church Office **immediately** to confirm the date you have chosen in order to make a definite booking for your wedding. It is only then that the date can be confirmed.

Rehearsal Evening

Every care is taken here at Blackhall St Columba's Church to ensure that your Service of Marriage will be a happy and memorable time for you both. These notes are offered so that you can help us ensure everything goes well on the 'day'.

At the Wedding rehearsal, usually a few days before the wedding (late afternoon or early evening), you are both asked to be present with your Bridesmaid/s, Best Man, Bride's Father or person 'giving you away', and any children in attendance. At this time the Minister will go over the Order of Service with you. He will also meet with you and check over the details for the Wedding and should you have any questions you should ask him then.

The Choice of Music for the Service



The choice of music is yours. The hymns should be ones that your guests will be able to sing. There are many hymns which are suitable for marriage services within the Church Hymnal. You might like to consider the suggestions on the back of this leaflet.

Together with your choice of hymns, we also sing the blessing which should be printed on your wedding hymn sheet. The blessing is also recorded within the hymn book at number 796 (CH4).

**"The Lord bless you and keep you:
The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be
gracious unto you:
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and
give you peace."**

Anything unusual in the way of professional music will make it necessary that you tell the Organist in advance and obtain a copy of the sheet music for him if he does not already have one.

The Director of Music is Mr Donald Cameron - email donalddcameron2010@gmail.com whom you must consult at least **three months in advance** of the Wedding concerning all aspects of the music for the service, including your choice of hymns. He will be happy to advise you any Sunday morning after worship and he should also be consulted if a recording and/or video is required.

Flowers

The Flower Convener is Mrs Alison Hewat, rajahewat1@btinternet.com with whom you should be in **touch at least two months before the date** as to your arrangements for the wedding flowers in the Church, even if she, personally, is not arranging them for you. It would be useful for us to have a note of the name and telephone number of your florist in case of any special arrangements we may have to make regarding access to the Church.



Please contact the Church Office (0131 332 4431) at least two weeks before the ceremony with regard to delivery of flowers, hymn sheets, etc. so that arrangements can be made for the premises to be open.

If access is required to the Church premises for any of the above reasons (outwith normal hours) or e.g. for soloists to rehearse immediately before the time of the wedding service, arrangements must be made at least two weeks in advance with the Church Office.

Photographs and Video Recording

Please note that photographs are generally only permitted before and after the ceremony, and during the signing of the register. A video recording of the service may be taken from a fixed position. The photographer and video operator should consult with the minister before the service begins.



Fees (To be reviewed)

The Congregational Board has laid down the following fees: -

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|---|------|
| Church <i>(If neither party is a member or adherent of Blackhall St Columba's Church there is a fee for the use of the building)</i> | £300 |
| Organist: Basic Fee for a Wedding | £85 |
| Choir (If requested) | £50 |
| Church Officer | £60 |

If the wedding is being conducted outwith the confines of the Church, a monetary donation would be appreciated.

There is no set fee for the services of the Minister.

Fees should be paid in advance of the Wedding. They should be put in separate envelopes marked accordingly and handed in to the Church Office. **If you pay by cheque and are a taxpayer and kindly sign a declaration form, we can claim Gift Aid on this at no**

further cost to you.

Your Vows of Marriage

You might like to be aware of the vows that are exchanged at a traditional Church of Scotland wedding:



The man says:

In the presence of God
And before these witnesses,
I
give myself to you
to be your husband,
and take you now
to be my wife.
I promise to love you,
to be faithful and loyal to you,
for as long as we live.

The woman says:

In the presence of God
And before these witnesses,
I
give myself to you
to be your wife,
and take you now
to be my husband.
I promise to love you,
to be faithful and loyal to you,
for as long as we live.

The Minister will prompt you phrase by phrase - you don't need to learn the words by heart! But think about them, for they sum up the deep commitment you will make to each other on your wedding day.

The Wedding Day – General Guidelines

Alcohol or **smoking** is not permitted in any of the church facilities.

Mobile phones and other electronic devices must be turned off or placed in silent mode during the wedding. Guests will be reminded as they enter the sanctuary.

The Ushers



The Ushers should arrive at the Vestibule of the Church about 1 hour or 45 minutes before the time of the wedding to give out the Order of Service sheets and direct guests to their seats.

Bridegroom

The Bridegroom and Best Man should come to the Vestry about 25 minutes before the service is due to begin. They may want to welcome guests at the door, but should make their way to the Vestry at least 10 minutes before the service to wait with the Minister until the Bride arrives at the Church.

Bride

The Bride will enter the Church at the main door. After all photographs have been taken, the Church Officer will inform the Minister, who will lead the Bridegroom and Best Man to the foot of the Chancel steps facing the Communion Table. The Minister will then go to the vestibule to meet the Bride. The processional voluntary will then be played. The Bride will be on the right arm of her father or guardian. When the bride reaches the front of the Church, her father or guardian will leave her and take his place in the front pew. The Bridesmaid(s) and Flower Girl(s) stand to the left and slightly behind the Bride.

Signing the Marriage Schedule

This takes place following the marriage ceremony (see Order of Service on following pages). After a short pause the Minister will move from the Chancel followed by the Bride and Bridegroom, Best Man and Chief Bridesmaid. Any other Bridesmaids and Flower Girls will bring up the rear of the procession, and may be escorted by Groomsmen or Ushers. The parents of the Bride and Groom will follow the procession into the Vestry where the Marriage Schedule is signed.



Leaving the Church

After the signing of the Marriage Schedule and the taking of any photographs, the organist will play processional music and the Bridal Party, lead by the Bride and Groom will process across the Church and down the Aisle and then back across the Church to the door so that everyone has a chance to see you.

The Reception

You needn't feel under any obligation to invite your minister, or minister and spouse, to the reception. However, should you wish to do so, please signal this at the earliest opportunity. If this is left until nearer the time, the minister may already have made other commitments.

Sunday Worship

If you do not normally attend Sunday morning worship, it is most advisable that you do attend to get a sense of the church building before your wedding day. Also, in these days of many broken marriages, it would be good to feel you could return to church or to the Minister, if in any need. You will never know if the church can be of any help to you if you do not attend.

Those getting married are encouraged to consider becoming communicant members of Blackhall St. Columba's Church as a means, amongst other things, of maintaining a link beyond the date of your wedding and this too is something you can discuss with the Minister. In the meantime, you would be warmly welcome at our 11am Worship Service any Sunday.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Minister.



Suggested Outline of Service

We are suggesting the following order of service. You may wish to have family members or friends participating in the readings or prayers. This will need to be agreed with the Minister who will also need to sign off the order of service before it goes to the printers.

Bridal processional

Welcome

Call to worship

Hymn

Statement on marriage

Prayer for God's blessing on the couple

Exchange of vows

The exchange of rings

The declaration of marriage

(Hymn)

The blessing of marriage – prayers for the couple as they begin married life.

Scripture reading(s)

Address

Hymn

The Benediction

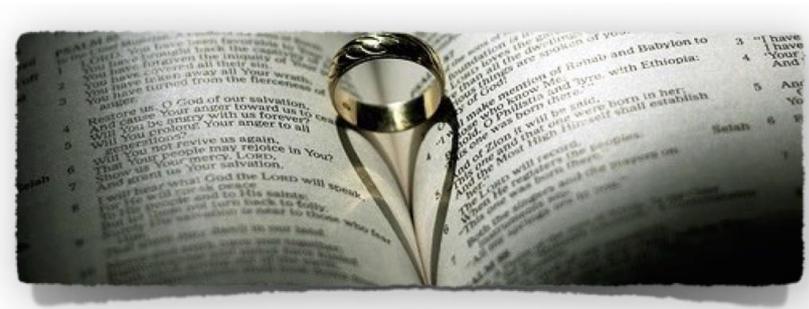
Signing of the register

Recessional



The Church Hymnal (Fourth Edition):

| | |
|-----|--|
| 63 | All people that on earth do dwell |
| 124 | Praise to the Lord |
| 127 | O worship the King |
| 132 | Immortal, invisible, God only wise |
| 147 | All creatures of our God and King |
| 153 | Great is thy faithfulness |
| 159 | Lord, for the years |
| 160 | Praise, my soul, the King of heaven |
| 166 | Lord of all hopefulness |
| 167 | Guide me, O thou great Jehovah |
| 181 | For the beauty of the earth |
| 182 | Now thank we all our God |
| 189 | Be still, for the presence of the Lord |
| 200 | Christ is made the sure foundation |
| 212 | Morning has broken |
| 213 | Every new morning |
| 214 | New every morning is the love |
| 336 | Christ is our light! the bright and morning star |
| 462 | The King of love my shepherd is |
| 519 | Love Divine, all loves excelling |
| 528 | Make me a channel of your peace |
| 555 | Amazing grace |
| 562 | Through the love of God our Saviour |
| 598 | Come Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire |
| 696 | We come, dear Lord, to celebrate |
| 697 | Let's praise the Creator |
| 698 | The grace of life is theirs |
| 699 | God beyond glory |
| 700 | As man and woman we were made |



Suggested Scripture Readings

Old Testament

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Genesis 2:18-25 | The principles of marriage |
| Psalms 23 | The Lord's my Shepherd |
| Psalms 67 | A prayer for God's blessing |
| Psalms 121 | God's help and guidance |
| Psalms 127 and | |
| Matthew 7:21, 24-27 | Unless the Lord builds the house.... |
| Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 | Three strands in marriage |
| Song of Songs 8:6-7 | Many waters cannot quench love |
| Jeremiah 29: 4-13 | God's plans |
| Jeremiah 31:31-34 | God's new covenant |

New Testament

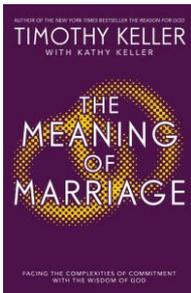
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|-----------------------------|---|
| Matthew 5: 3-10 | The Beatitudes |
| John 2: 1-12 | Jesus was a guest at the wedding in Cana of Galilee |
| John 15: 1-9 | Abiding in Christian love |
| 1 Corinthians 13 | Arguably the finest words on the subject of love ever written! |
| Romans 12: 1-2, 9-13 | Love, patience, prayer, generosity, hospitality; a good description of the Christian home |
| Ephesians 3: 14-21 | A prayer that we would know the full dimensions of Christian love |
| Ephesians 5: 22-33 | The marriage relationship |
| Colossians 3:12-17 | God's new wardrobe |
| 1 Peter 3:1-12 | Wives and husbands |
| 1 John 4:7-13 | Love God, love one another |

Some Concluding Thoughts

Marriage is a wonderful adventure of growing togetherness and deepening love.

It is a wonderful gift when two people trust and understand each other totally, reading each other's thoughts and finishing each other's sentences. We need to remember also that marriage is about two selfish and stubborn people now living under the same roof.

It is true that no two people are totally compatible. We are bundles of contradiction, as changeable as the weather. We can be completely together, or we can miss one another completely.



Tim Keller in his book, **The Meaning of Marriage**, observes that

“The primary challenge of marriage is learning how to love and care for the stranger to whom you find yourself married.”

We might add that marriage is a place where we make many discoveries about ourselves as well.

He continues,

“The reason that marriage is so painful and yet wonderful is because it is a reflection of the Gospel, which is painful and wonderful at once. The Gospel is – we are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared to believe, and at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.

This is the only kind of relationship that will really transform us. Love without truth is sentimentality; it supports and affirms us but keeps us in denial about our flaws. Truth without love is harshness; it gives us information but in such a way that we cannot really hear it. God's saving love in Christ, however, is marked by both radical truthfulness about who we are and yet also radical, unconditional commitment to us. The merciful commitment strengthens us to see the truth about ourselves and repent. The conviction and repentance moves us to cling to and rest in God's mercy and grace.”



Further questions and Contact details

We hope that this leaflet has helped you as you prepare your Wedding Day. If you have any further questions, please contact the Minister, the Rev Gordon Farquharson, or the church office, who will be able to assist you further.

Blackhall St. Columba's Church of Scotland, Edinburgh
Church Office: Columba Road, Edinburgh, EH4 3QU Tel: 0131 332 4431
(Tuesday – Fri 10am – 12:30pm)
Email: secretary@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk
Webpage: www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk
Scottish Charity No. SC008756



It is imperative that you contact the Minister at least 4 weeks before the wedding, even if you have spoken to him prior to that, in order to make sure everything is organised correctly.

***May God bless your marriage together
with lots of love and joy.***