

# Marriage at St. Mark's



Those whom God has joined together  
let no one put asunder

Marriage enhances life together, provides deep joy and offers life-sustaining strength in the relationship between husband and wife.

## **What is marriage?**

In marriage, people give and find respect, comfort, help, delight and tenderness. They may have children. Marriage means commitment and care in good times and in bad. Each is linked to the family of the other. Marriage is a gift from God.

## **What are the requirements for marriage?**

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador requires a licence to marry. Each party to the marriage must be 19 years of age. Neither partner may be currently married, or too closely related to the other. To be married in the Anglican Church of Canada, at least one of the couple must have been baptized in a Christian church (not necessarily Anglican).

## **What marriage preparation is required?**

All couples married by the Anglican Church undergo marriage preparation. This is an important time to examine issues such as communication, how you will handle money and whether you will have any children. Any successful long-term relationship takes work. You will have the opportunity not only to talk about things that might challenge your marriage, but also to identify and celebrate what will make your relationship strong.

At St. Mark's we use the Prepare/Enrich program from Enrich Canada. Led by a priest you will complete an in-depth online inventory that generates a report which becomes the starting point for more conversation and directed sessions. Each report is tailored to your needs, as a couple, and presents timely information on possible strengths and work areas in your relationship. There is a \$100 fee for this to cover the cost of materials.

## **Do the couple have to be members of the Anglican Church?**

Membership in the Anglican Church of Canada is not required by church bylaws (canons). You are certainly invited to join if you are not part of our parish community.

**What if one or both are divorced?**

Although the church views marriage as a lifelong commitment, it recognizes that sometimes marriages cease and relationships break down. The church offers support to persons seeking remarriage after divorce. Part of the marriage preparation will help you evaluate what went astray in the earlier marriage, and what you have learned about yourself from the breakdown. Through this process, the church will do all it can to ensure that the new relationship will be life-giving.

**Must an Anglican marriage take place in a church building?**

No, but couples are encouraged to consider marrying in church. Marriages in other places may be allowed for certain pastoral reasons at the discretion of the priest involved, but please keep in mind that Anglican marriage is a public ceremony and done in a dignified manner (No bungee-jumping).

**What is the marriage service?**

The service includes a statement of Christian marriage, readings from scripture and sometimes a sermon. Family members may take part in the service by reading scripture or leading prayers. Then comes the vows made to each other, and prayers. The couple signs church and civil registers, as do two witnesses and the priest. The service may conclude with Holy Communion, or simply with a blessing.

**Must there be a Holy Communion service?**

The marriage service is a joyous time of thanksgiving. Holy Communion (often called the Eucharist) acknowledges that the source of love in this marriage is God. This is especially meaningful when many of the guests are Christian. However, Holy Communion is not always required – discuss this with your priest.

**Is there a fee for a marriage service?**

At St. Mark's there are no fees for marriage, though couples may wish to consider a gift in light of the priests' time and the use of our space. If you are using our organist or soloist, it is expected that they be compensated appropriately.

**How do we go about arranging a marriage?**

The first step in moving toward marriage is to contact the church office for an interview with a priest. It is best to arrange this meeting at least three months in advance of the desired date of the marriage service. Please call 709-726-3213 or email [st.marks@nf.aibn.com](mailto:st.marks@nf.aibn.com).

**Does the Anglican Church of Canada marry gay or lesbian couples?**

No, it does not, though we are engaged in a long, honest discussion on where God is leading us as a faith community on this issue.

**How does the church support marriage following the marriage ceremony?**

The church is a caring community in which both the joys and struggles of life are shared and celebrated. The weekly worship times offer focus for your lives, connection with people with common values, a time for families to be together and a source of spiritual strengthening and renewal.