

DALSTON – CROWN HILL UNITED CHURCH
POLICY: CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND OTHER LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

Policy

Dalston – Crown Hill United Church welcomes all adult couples who seek to exchange covenantal vows of love and fidelity before God and in accordance with the Marriage Act of Ontario. As such, we respect diverse definitions of marriage.

We believe that marriage is a sacred ceremony, a gift of God through which Christians covenant both with one another, and with God.

Loving adult relationships other than marriage are acknowledged and celebrated through Special Services of Blessing.

Intent

Church Policies are intended to uphold our Vision Statement which calls us to ‘grow spiritually while celebrating diversity’.

As such, we seek to honour and bless all of the diverse, unique, loving and sacred relationships that exist within our church family and within the larger community.

The Bible provides numerous references to loving one another, to loving God, and to loving ourselves.

Explanation

The Christian way of life is rich in relationship -- healthy, life-giving and sacred relationships where love, respect, and commitment are central. All loving relationships are grounded in the Holy, reflective of God’s abiding love within us.

Marriage:

The Civil Marriage Act extends the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples. The legal definition of marriage under the Act is as follows:

“Marriage, for civil purposes, is the lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others.”

Special Services of Services of Blessing:

Some adults may wish to have their union acknowledged and blessed through other than legal marriage. Others may wish to renew wedding vows. These are but two examples of what could be affirmed through a special service of blessing.

Such requests are at the discretion of the Minister, in consultation with the Worship Committee as required.

PROCEDURE

1. Requests for wedding ceremonies are received by the Minister.
2. The Minister meets with the requesting couple for discussion regarding their decision and their understanding of Christian marriage.
3. The proposed date, time, fee for service, expectations regarding use of building, etc. are also discussed at that meeting.
4. Where appropriate, the Minister recommends Marriage Preparation Courses and provides information re same.
5. The Minister can exercise his or her discretion in approving or declining the request
6. Upon approval, the Minister ensures that the Church building and musician are available on the requested date.
7. The approval of the Minister must be given if another person is to officiate at a ceremony in the church. It is also understood that our minister may co-officiate with a person of another faith at a wedding ceremony.
8. Marriage ceremonies may also be officiated off site, by the Minister, as requested, and as he or she is able to comply.
9. Requests for special services of blessing are received by the Minister and considered within the context of the preceding steps, as applicable.
10. Requests for special services of blessing are approved/denied at the Minister's discretion, in consultation with the Worship Committee as required.
11. The policy will be reviewed annually.

Approved October 2, 2011