



# Augustine United Church Wedding Planning

Congratulations on your decision to get married!

Augustine United Church takes joy in enabling people to mark significant moments in their lives with Christian worship and ceremonies.

We welcome all people regardless of gender identity, ability, race, sexual orientation. We celebrate the passing of the Equal Marriage Bill in Scotland and can offer weddings for couples of all gender identities.

In this document we will take you through the preparation for holding a Wedding Ceremony at Augustine United Church. If you would like to know more about AUC please visit our website at [www.augustine.org.uk](http://www.augustine.org.uk)

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## 1. Considering the Big Picture

Even if you have already been living together for some time, you are still two separate individuals with different backgrounds, personalities, experiences, hopes and fears who have arrived at a point in your lives when you have decided to commit to each other in marriage.

Your wedding is an opportunity for you to make promises and vows to each other before your family & friends and before God, so as part of the preparation for your wedding ceremony we would encourage you to find space and time together to consider what you hope your marriage will be.

*Questions to discuss and consider together before you do anything else:*

- 'Will you love, comfort, honour and keep...'

*How will we cope with disagreements so that we will protect our love and respect for each other for a lifetime?*

- 'For richer for worse for better for poorer...'

*How will we share our possessions and finances?*

- 'Forsaking all others, be faithful only to Name as long as you both shall live...'



*How will we remain faithful throughout our marriage and how will we invest in our sexual relationship throughout our whole marriage?*

- Your family: 'Will you, the family and friends of (your names), support and encourage their marriage now and in years to come?'

*What are our attitudes towards our future in-laws and other family members which the marriage will bring together?*

- Over the years of our marriage, how will we ensure we communicate well with each other?
- Marriage may or may not involve having children. Have we discussed our dreams and hopes about this and what are our thoughts about parenting?

## **2. The Legal Process in Scotland – The Registrar**

In Scotland the legal administration for marriages happens at the Registrar. For information about the legal process please visit:

<http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/registration/marriage-in-scotland-information-leaflet-rm1a.pdf>

## **3. Basics**

The challenge of booking a wedding celebration is getting every service you hope for available on the right day. Services essential to book well in advance are:

- Wedding venue,
- Celebrant,
- If desired, Reception venue.

Booking for weddings at Augustine United Church are initially done by contacting our Administrator ([administrator@augustine.org.uk](mailto:administrator@augustine.org.uk)). Please let our administrator know if you require the use of the Church building only, or if you would also like one of our Clergy to officiate at your wedding ceremony. If you would like to use your own celebrant, please give our administrator the celebrant's name. Please also let the Administrator know if you would like an organist.

The cost of using the AUC Church building for a wedding plus rehearsal space, is between £300 and £600, depending on the length of time you would like the building reserved for and the complexity of your service/reception.

The cost of the services of an AUC Clergy person to prepare with you, plan and officiate at your wedding ceremony at AUC or elsewhere is £250.

The cost of the services of an organist are £50

If you wish to have an AUC Clergy person to officiate at your Wedding Ceremony, this will involve you as a couple meeting with the Clergy person twice before the ceremony to discuss the material outlined in this document and to plan your ceremony. You will find it helpful to have read through this document before you meet with the Clergy Person.



## 4. Choreography

How a wedding ceremony is choreographed expresses a lot of what we understand our marriage to be. Please consider:

- Do we wish to have a best wo/man or bride/groom's maids, flower girls / boys / children?
- Do we wish to exchange rings – one or two?
- If we have children, how might we wish to involve them in the ceremony?
- Do we choose to enter the ceremony together or separately?
- What music would we like playing while we enter and exit?
- Do we wish our guests to be seated on separates sides (traditionally the bride's side and groom's side) or mixed together?
- 2 witnesses are required to sign the marriage certificate – who might these be?
- Would we like family or friends to do readings?

## 5. The Ceremony

A wedding service takes about 30 minutes. This is an example of a frequently used order of service with notes following on to explain each item.

### Wedding Ceremony – Order of Service

- Arrival & Procession
- Welcome
- Hymn
- Statement about the purpose of marriage
- Reading – *this reading aims to be a statement about love and marriage*
- Prayer
- Promises
- Vows – these are written by the couple and spoken to each other (*repeated after the minister*)
- Rings
- Declaration of Marriage (i.e. *I now pronounce you...*) & Kiss (*if you wish*)
- Reading – *this reading is a word of encouragement/commissioning/inspiration to the couple for their marriage*
- Prayer & Blessing for the Marriage
- Hymn
- Benediction
- Signing of Certificate (*musicians can play during this and often photographers want shots*)
- Departure & Recession



## **Ceremony Notes**

### **Arrival & Departure**

How do you as the couple wish to enter the ceremony and how do you wish to leave?  
What is the music you would like to have for this time?

### **Hymns**

There is a tradition within hymn writing that many hymns are written to meters which can be set to different tunes. Consider the words of a hymn and if they express something which you want to be said. There may be a variety of tunes which could be used for it.

At Augustine United Church we use the Scottish Hymn Book called Church Hymnary 4, within which there are some wedding hymns (amongst others) in the hymns numbered from 684-701. You can view some of the words through <http://www.hymnary.org/hymnal/CH4?page=36>

But these are not the only hymns suitable for a wedding ceremony, a more general list can be found through the wedding planning site <http://www.yourchurchwedding.org/hymns-media-player.aspx>

Unfortunately, not all of these hymns use inclusive language or reflect relationships of couples of the same gender. Speak with one of the AUC clergy about this.

### **Organist**

If you wish for the AUC organist to accompany the hymns and to play any other music during your ceremony, please let the AUC administrator know.

### **Orders of Service**

Many wedding couples choose to print an order of service which includes the words of the hymns. This needs to be done in advance of the ceremony and is up to the couple to arrange.



## Statement about the Purpose of Marriage

This is the statement used about the Purpose of Marriage:

*We are gathered together, for the Marriage of A & B to share their joy and to promise them our support. In Christian marriage, two people make vows to each other and declare before their family & friends and before God, that they intend to live faithfully together. To love each other with respect, tenderness and delight. To offer each other companionship, friendship and comfort as they journey together throughout their lives.*

## Readings

This order of service uses 2 readings which have 2 different functions.

The first is to express what marriage and the power of love is all about.

The second, which comes after the couple have made their promises and vows, is a word of encouragement / commissioning / inspiration to the couple for their marriage.

The readings offer the opportunity to involve family and friends as readers.

As you are choosing a Christian wedding ceremony it could be appropriate for at least one of your readings to come from the Bible. Here are some possible suggestions, but this is not an exclusive list:

- *Love, actually! The number 1 most popular reading for weddings is (1 Corinthians Chapter 13)*
- *A love poem between two lovers (Song of Solomon, Chapter 2, verses 10-13; Chapter 8, verses 6&7)*
- *Jesus teaches how to live a life that brings true happiness (Matthew, Chapter 5, verses 1-10)*
- *What happens when Jesus attends a wedding reception (John, Chapter 2, verses 1 - 11)*
- *Seeing the good side... (Philippians Chapter 4, verses 4 - 9)*
- *Getting the perfect relationship (Colossians Chapter 3, verses 12 - 17)*
- *Being a good lover! (1 John Chapter 4 verses 7 - 12)*

There are many readings from other faith traditions and from the wealth of literature around us which could work well as part of your wedding ceremony. Start this search by googling readings for a wedding. From Shakespeare to Burns to Kahlil Gibran - the possibilities are endless. As you search through possible readings consider the purpose of your readings, the part they play in your ceremony and have a word limit of about 350 words.

Example -This poem works well as the second reading in a wedding ceremony. It was written by a member of Augustine United Church some years ago for the wedding of his daughter. The family are happy for it to be used by other couples.



## Marriage by Alexander Donaldson Reid

How then should marriage be?  
 A mating of two bodies, a merging of two souls?  
 Yes, these, and more, for though they join  
 Yet are the wo/man and wo/man two,  
 Each with a need for love and for respect,  
 And looking for the outward signs of both.  
 For feelings kept within, and ne'er expressed  
 May seem as absent to the other,  
 Or else to be less warm than one would wish.  
 So show them then, in word and deed,  
 And where some differences arise,  
 Seek well to find a way to reconcile  
 The wishes and opinions of each other.  
 Remember that, though close you run together,  
 Your moods, your hopes, your fears and dreams do not.  
 Be generous, be patient, be aware,  
 Think always what the other may have needs of,  
 And seek to understand their thoughts and cares.  
 This done, then shall all go as well's it can –  
 But enough of counsel; this to be the finis,  
 Love one another. And enjoy your life!

## Promises

Promises offer a basic understanding of Christian Marriage. Each of the marriage partners is asked separately by the clergy person to undertake the Marriage Promise below. Some couples also choose to ask their family & friends to promise their support for the couple's Marriage.

These are the Promises:

*Each marriage partner is asked: [Name], do you take [Name] to be your wedded [husband/wife/spouse] to live together in marriage. Do you promise to love, comfort, honour and keep [him/her/other]. For better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health. And forsaking all others, be faithful only to [him/her/other] so long as you both shall live?"*

Which is answered by "I do."

*The family & friends present are asked: Do you as Name & Name's family and friends promise to support and encourage their marriage now and in years to come?*

Which is answered by "We do."





## Vows

We encourage every couple to write their own vows and through these words to pledge to each other what they hope their marriage will be.

Marriage is a very old institution which has held a variety of meanings, implications, understandings and legal consequences over time and geography. It is important that you are not signing up to external expectations, but creating a healthy, growing and sustainable relationship, which is relevant to your lives and the world around.

Take time to discuss and consider together:

*Why it is you want to be married?*

*What it is you hope to offer and receive from your partner in marriage?*

*What do you hope your marriage/relationship will be like in 5 years, 10 years, 40 years?*

From this discussion consider what vows you want to make to each other?

Vows are generally repeated after the minister and spoken to each other. (No memorising required!) We would strongly suggest they are between 80-130 words. The following examples are from weddings we have taken over the years and from other sources. There are many examples of vows on wedding websites and it may be helpful to have a look to get a flavour of what you might like to say to each other. Once written one of the clergy team will meet with you again to go over your vows to ensure they read easily as part of the ceremony.

.....  
*In the presence of God, my Family and Friends, I (Name) declare my love for you (Name) and choose you before all others as my companion, soul mate, lover and friend.  
 I choose to journey with you through laughter and tears, wealth and poverty, sickness and health.  
 I promise to listen to you and to be honest with you, to challenge you as well as affirm you, to give you space and freedom as well as comfort and security.  
 I promise to treasure your uniqueness and help you to be your true self, made in the image of God.  
 I love you with all my heart and will love you for the rest of my life.  
 This I promise with the help of God, our families and friends.*

.....  
*I (name), take you (name) to be my friend, my lover, the (mother/father) of our son and to be my (husband/wife.)  
 I will respect and be proud of you in your successes and in your failures. I will care for you in sickness and in health. I will nurture and grow with you and our son through the seasons of our family lives until death do us part.*

.....  
*"Today I choose you, (name), to be my life partner. I promise to sleep by your side, to be the joy of your heart, the food of your soul and the best person I can be for you. I promise to laugh with you when times are good, and to suffer with you when they are bad; I promise to wash away your tears with my kisses and to hold you sweetly and gladly until our days on earth are over.*



.....  
*Today, (name), I join my life to yours, not merely as your (husband/wife/spouse), but as your friend, your lover, and your confidant. Let me be the shoulder you lean on, the rock on which you rest, the companion of your life. With you I will walk my path from this day forward.*

## **Rings**

The unending shape of a ring is a great symbol for your vows of unending love. Worn on a hand it is a visual reminder every day in all that we do of the vows which we have made, and a sign to the world of our pledge of love to another. Do you want to exchange rings? For one partner to wear or both?

## **Prayers & Blessing**

The Prayers & Blessing will be led by the Clergy person unless you wish an alternative arrangement.

## **Signing of the Certificate**

This requires 2 witnesses who will have been registered with the Registrar when the marriage certificate was applied for. While the certificate is being signed many couples like to have music playing for the congregation to enjoy. Please consider this.

## **6. Rehearsal**

A wedding rehearsal can be very helpful to ensure all key participants in your wedding ceremony know where to stand, how the logistics of the service will work and to alleviate anxiety. A rehearsal tends to take around 30 minutes.

It is helpful if it can include the couple, best wo/man, bride/groom's maids, Bible readers, anyone involved in the entrance procession or exit recession. If you are being married by an AUC clergy person please discuss a rehearsal time with them, if you are using another celebrant please arrange the rehearsal time with the Church administrator.

