



FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions about Weddings at CapChurch

Q. How does a couple actually get legally "married?"

A. In the Province of BC, a legal "marriage" must take place according to the laws of the Province in which the union takes place. It's where you get married that counts, not where you live. A couple is officially "married" when a legally authorized person performs an official ceremony uniting them in marriage, and signs the Provincial marriage license. The Province also requires the signature of witnesses as well as the signatures of the Bride and Groom. Legally authorized persons are all clergy (i.e. priests, ministers, rabbis, etc.) and certain other persons specifically authorized such as Judges, Justices of the Peace and Commissioners, etc. Vows of commitment are required to be exchanged by the couple but wedding rings are optional.

Q. Where is the best place to get married?

A. You can get married in the Province of BC anywhere within the legal boundaries of the Province. That includes all public and private buildings (not just churches), bodies of water (lakes, rivers, etc.), or even in an airplane or on the BC Ferries!

Having said this, most of the weddings that we lead at CapChurch are in various North Shore churches and public gathering places. As you may be aware, we do not have a church building appropriate for a wedding (we worship in a public use auditorium, the Lucas Centre). We have done weddings in public places as well: Stanley Park Rose Garden; Furry Creek Golf Club; Regent College atrium; Little Mountain Park as well as various restaurants.

If you are looking for churches that we normally use and the costs for renting a church for the wedding, please contact us at Life@CapChurch.ca and will let you know the options available.

Q. Where do I get the legal forms and find the facts about the rules of BC weddings?

A. Check out the BC Government website (<http://www.vs.gov.bc.ca/marriage/index.html>) for vital statistics for information on marriage licence issuers, ordering a marriage certificate, marriage commissioners and the like.

Q. I just got engaged. What do I do next?

A. Speak to one of the CapChurch pastors or contact us through email or telephone call. We will be delighted to speak to you and advise you about the next steps. If you are planning on your wedding in just a few months, please don't delay in contacting us. Both Paddy Ducklow and Mike Nichols officiate in CapChurch weddings.

Q. I understand that a requirement is premarital mentoring. Can you tell me a bit about that?

A. Sure. Home-Base Mentoring is matching you with another couple who are approximately your age and stage of life (or a bit older), who value marriage-making and are prepared to lead you through a process of guided conversation using an extensive questionnaire.

Most people when they hear the word "questionnaire" figure it must be a test of suitability. Wrong – it's a vehicle to ask and answer questions. That's all it is. The mentoring couple do not pass or fail you. The process is an opportunity for you to make a differentiated and thoughtful decision about your life and your future.

It is not really counselling – for that you would be charged a fee and our Home-Base Mentoring has no cost but your time and your energy.

You will meet 8-10 times in the mentors home and they will lead you and your intended in a series of guided conversations that explore all sorts of things related to marriage: in-laws, communication, handling frustrations, sexual expectations and history, faith values and the like. Note: you don't have to "do" all the questions. Your freedom to say "no" is respected throughout.

And you should know ... we have been doing the Home-Base Mentoring for more than 30 years with a marital success rate in the high 90s! Not bad.

Q. How do I connect to do premarital mentoring?

A. Carole Ducklow organizes our Home-Base Mentoring program and you can contact her at our home office (604-921-9542) or through the church office (604-980-8997). Don't wait too long to contact her for lining you up with a mentor. There are usually 8-10 sessions and we like to space them out over 3-4 months.

Q. Can we choose our mentors or at least be a part of the choice-making?

A. Yes you can participate in choosing your mentors. When you contact Carole, let her know who you would like to mentor you and your fiancé. However, she may recommend another couple for you and we hope that you will be open to her input. Our hope is to match you well and we have a lot of experience doing that.

Q. Can we write our own vows for the wedding?

A. First of all, let me explain something. Vows are not expressions of your love and commitment to each other! Didn't know that did you? Vows are an expression of God's love through you to each other. They are to reflect biblical meaning as well as covenantal commitment between you and God. They reflect a trinity of meaning: God's love for you, your love in response, and His creation of husband and wife into a creative unity.

This may sound a bit complicated. However, we encourage couples to prayerfully read through the covenants that we have crafted and find one that best "fits" for you and your marriage.

Having said that, we welcome your participation in creating a vow that you believe best expresses God's calling to the two of you.

Q. What do we do with the vows once the ceremony is over?

A. Write them in the cover of your bible. Or hire a calligrapher to paint them onto a canvas and frame it for your bedroom. This is a good beginning. Because, vows are not dead once said. They are living expressions of God's calling to you and they are to be repeated often to one another in God's presence. You will find that covenant-saying as an expression of your marriage is a "glue" in times of trouble and a joy in times of well being.

Q. Do you have any special "rules" about weddings?

Here are the values that we bring to the weddings that we conduct.

First, because we are Christian ministers we do Christian weddings. That means we do Christian prayers and worship as a part of what we do. If you wish another kind of service then contact us and we can recommend others that might be appropriate to what you are looking for.

Second, we ask that the bride and groom refrain from "stags" or other celebrations where excessive alcohol consumption and any kind of sexual activity is encouraged. Bride and groom celebrations need to be in the spirit of

the wedding and the faith of the church, rather than the unhappiness of society. This caution may not be necessary. However, some stags/showers are a mockery of the intent of God for the wedding and marriage. There certainly should be celebrations for the bride and groom that involve fun and honour and gift giving — but not licentious and degrading debacles. If this is unclear or offensive to you, please speak to us.

Third, all couples participate in Home-Base Mentoring or other form of face-to-face mentoring prior to the wedding (and following if desired). Groups, tests, book reading, pastoral visits and other educational experiences are important supplements to mentoring but they are not sufficient or in place of mentoring.

Those are the tangible expressions of our values.