**WEDDINGS AT EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH**

**MARRIAGE POLICY**

**Preamble:**

“Faith, hope and love abide; these three. And the greatest of these is love.” (I Corinthians 13: 13)

1. Weddings in the sanctuary of East Plains are set in the context of Christian worship. We see marriage

as a couple’s beginning together in the way of faith, hope, and love.

2. We believe that God calls us all into relationships that are life-giving, faithful, responsible, just and loving, and we affirm faithful, committed relationships between two persons as “one flesh,” with the intention of permanence.

3. We believe that all people have the right to enter such relationships. We support the current legislation of the province of Ontario, which permits same-sex marriage.

4. Divorced persons are by no means excluded from the blessings of marriage; new relationships are welcomed and celebrated.

5. We concur with the teaching of The United Church of Canada, which affirms the rights and equality of all people to enter into mutually supportive, committed relationships of love.

6. You do not need to be a member of the congregation to be married at East Plains United Church. We are a faith community ready to support you throughout life, not just on your wedding day.

7. A marriage which takes place in the church is considered a service of worship in which those present seek God’s blessing on the marriage. We believe that God plays an important role in your married life. Consequently, the tone of the wedding service is one of reverence, joy, and wonder and it includes readings, prayers and music appropriate to worship. The minister will assist you to create a service that is meaningful and respectful to all.

**Marriage Policy:**

1. The minister of East Plains United Church will officiate at marriage ceremonies, in keeping with the laws of the province of Ontario, for couples of all sexual orientations and gender identities, who seek God’s blessing on deeply committed relationships of love.
2. The minister will be available to discuss any questions or concerns you might have.
3. These celebrations may occur either within or outside our sanctuary.

**Guidelines for Weddings at East Plains United Church**

**Our Venue:**

The sanctuary at East Plains United Church seats 252 people.

**Initial Steps:**

Weddings which take place in the sanctuary at East Plains United Church must be arranged with the minister. Weddings are subject to the minister’s discretion and must be approved by the governing body of the congregation: the Official Board.

Please contact the church office to arrange an appointment with the minister.

**Marriage License:**

Couples secure a licence from a municipal office and bring this to a meeting with the minister or leave it in the church office two weeks before the wedding day.

**Music:**

The East Plains Director of Music will meet with the couple at a mutually arranged time to discuss music options. The church’s organist/pianist normally performs at the ceremony and may assist in finding a singer or additional instrumentalists as requested.

**Bulletins:**

The church office can prepare a wedding bulletin that lists the wedding party and order of service.

**Fees:**

1. Use of the Church: $200

2. Minister: $250

3. Music Director: $200

4. Custodian: $100

5. Preparation and Printing of the Bulletin: $50

**Wedding Rehearsal:**

It is recommended that a rehearsal take place prior to the wedding day. It is desirable to have all members of the wedding party present, including the parents of the couple to be married. The ceremony will be reviewed from beginning to end. This is a good opportunity to settle fears and anxiety, and to help those who are not familiar with East Plains United church to feel more comfortable in the church environment.

**Decorations and Flowers:**

Flowers may be delivered to the church the day of the ceremony at a time arranged through the church office. It may be possible to place decorations at the time of the rehearsal, usually the day or evening before the ceremony. Any seasonal decorations (e.g., Christmas, Thanksgiving) will remain in place. The use of confetti or rice is not permitted.

**Photography and Videography:**

In order to minimize distractions from the solemnity of the occasion, designated photographers or videographers may take pictures or videos but must be discrete. Other guests are discouraged from taking pictures during the ceremony itself. Photographers/videographers should check with the minister prior to the ceremony.

**Receptions:**

Rental of Peart Hall at East Plains may be possible for receptions, and arranged through the office. We do not offer catering services. See our website for information on rental spaces.

If alcohol is to be served at the reception it is the responsibility of the organizers to obtain a liquor license and to adhere to the guidelines outlined in the rental agreement.

*Our church family and staff pray that God will richly bless your wedding day and your marriage with much joy, laughter, and love.*

**Review**

This Marriage Policy was approved by the Worship and Sacraments Committee of East Plains United Church on November 23, 2022 and by the Official Board of East Plains united Church on November 29, 2022.

Review in five years or as required.