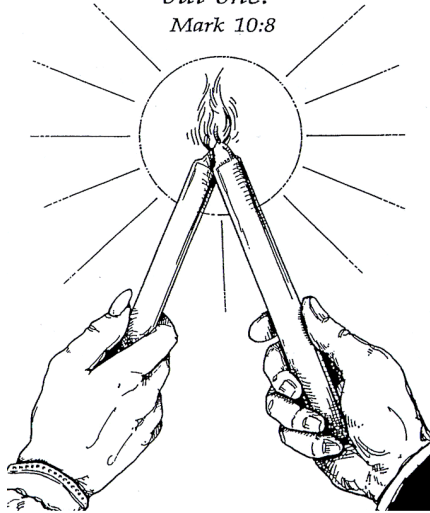


*"... they are
no longer two
but one."*

Mark 10:8



Wedding & Blessing Information Booklet



**UNION
CHURCH**

*Making
mature
followers
in all nations
for Jesus Christ,
through our
united lifestyle,
witness and
mission.*

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POLICY FOR WEDDINGS AND WEDDING BLESSINGS

Welcome to Union Church Hong Kong! We are happy that you are considering being married or having your civil marriage blessed here in Hong Kong. These policy guidelines are set down by the UCHK Deacons' Court and Committee of Management.

A. General Policy

1. All couples desiring to be married/blessed in UCHK must complete a general "Marriage/Blessing Service Application Form". Please complete it and return it to us at ucadmin@unionchurchhk.org, or fax 2524-0473, or 22A Kennedy Road, Hong Kong.
2. All divorced persons must also complete an "Application for the Marriage/Blessing of Divorced Persons". Normally, no marriage/blessing service involving a divorced person will be conducted less than one year after a divorce has been legally finalized and unless the person evidences sufficient healing and has either had professional counseling or is willing to undergo the same.
3. Normally, all applications must be submitted at least four (4) months in advance of the proposed wedding/blessing date.
4. Applicants must be eligible for marriage according to the laws of Hong Kong.
5. It is preferred that both applicants be confirmed Christians. One of the applicants MUST be an active confirmed member in good standing of a Christian church in Hong Kong. If that church is a church other than Union Church Hong Kong, a letter from the church stating the membership status of the applicant(s) must be received before the application can be approved.
6. A non-Christian applicant must be willing to explore the Christian faith by attending an "Alpha" course (or similar) in Union Church or the Church of your fiancée. This could lead to a confession of faith, a re-affirmation of faith or a decision to make a Christian commitment and join the church.

7. No same sex "marriages" or "blessings" will be performed at Union Church.
8. No weddings/blessings shall be performed on Sundays, Christian holidays or at any other times that shall conflict with scheduled church programs. Weddings/blessings shall only be performed between the hours of 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.
9. Applicants having previously been legally married, but who request a Blessing Service in UCHK shall be subject to the same requirements as those requesting a Marriage Service.
10. All applications for weddings/blessings in Union Church are subject to final approval by the Deacons Court.

B. Policy Regarding Members of Other Churches in Hong Kong Wishing to Be Married or Blessed in UCHK.

1. Active confirmed members in good standing of Christian churches in Hong Kong may be married or blessed in UCHK.
2. Such applicants shall go through the normal application procedure and shall be subject to the general policy as outlined above.
3. Requests by UCHK members for marriage/blessing service and rehearsal dates will take precedence over those from members of other churches. However, once a booking has been confirmed for a member of another church, it cannot be pre-empted.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the Church Office ucadmin@unionchurchhk.org ph 2523-7247, fax 2524-0473.

WEDDING/BLESSING CHECKLIST

A. THINGS YOU WILL NEED TO DO

1. Complete the appropriate application form and return it to the Church Office.
2. Upon being notified that your application has been approved, set a date to meet with the Union Church Minister who is to perform/participate in your wedding/blessing for a 1 hour orientation and arrangements session. We will also fix a date for the rehearsal.
3. If one party is not an active confirmed member in good standing of a Christian church in Hong Kong, begin attending at least one of the Sunday worship services at UCHK on a regular basis (9.30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.), or a service at the fiancée's home church.
4. Invite those who will be in your marriage/blessing party to participate in the wedding/blessing.
5. Arrange with the Pastor of your own Church to have some sessions of Marriage Preparation (Pre-marriage counseling). If you are from UCHK this can be arranged with the Pastor of Union Church.
6. Finalize the vows, readings, prayers, hymns, organ, music, etc., with the UCHK Minister. Decide what you want in your printed "Order of Service".
7. If you are having a "Blessing Service" the minister of UCHK will need to see your original Marriage Certificate to confirm you are married.
8. Register your marriage at the Marriage Registry Office, Government Offices, Queensway (or another such office). Notice will be posted for fifteen (15) working days and then a certificate will be issued. This certificate expires three months after being issued so make sure you apply only within three months of the proposed date for your marriage.

Note: once you have received this certificate from the Marriage Registry Office give it to the minister or office

secretary at UCHK as soon as possible so that the final documents can be prepared.

9. Send a draft copy of your marriage/blessing service, including the wording for the vows and the exchange of rings, to the Minister to check.
10. Fix a date for your rehearsal with the Minister and notify all those who will be in your wedding/blessing party.
11. Select a photographer, and person to decorate the church sanctuary.
12. Pay the applicable fees for your marriage/blessing service. Make the cheque out to 'Union Church' and write your names and the date of the wedding on the reverse side.
13. Send out invitations to friends and relatives.
14. Participate in a rehearsal conducted by the Minister.

B. ON THE DAY

1. The groom should be at the church with his best man at least one hour before the service is due to begin.
2. The bride and her maid of honour should arrive at the Church in plenty of time to complete all preparations. A "Bride's Room" is provided for the bride and her maids to get ready in.
3. All other preparations should be completed well in advance so that the marriage/blessing service can begin on time.

C. AFTER THE WEDDING DAY

1. Play an active role in the life and work of your church.
2. Make an on-going effort to deepen your love and grow in your relationship with one another and with God.

D. THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

Enjoy your life together!!!

GUIDELINES FOR MARRIAGES/BLESSINGS

A. FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

1. Please be sure to inform your florist of the guidelines regarding decorations inside the church. You may only use free standing flower arrangements and the brass hooks on the pew ends. No other fixing such as wire or adhesive tape is to be used.
2. No flowers or other decorations are to be placed on the Communion Table (but may be placed on the floor in front.) Beyond that, you can add pedestal bouquets at the front or in the entrance, and arrangements can be put on the table where the guest book is. Outside decorations may be added. The Church furniture may not be moved. There is a hook on the porch door if you wish to hang a flower bell.
3. If there is another wedding/blessing on the same day as yours, consider sharing the decorations. The minister can inform you of other bookings.

B. PHOTOGRAPHY

1. Your wedding day is one of the most important days in your life. It is a once in a lifetime event and we want you to have the best possible photographic record of this day.
2. No one other than the official photographer may take photos during the wedding service. No photos may be taken during the prayers.
3. Provided the photographer uses common sense and respects the occasion he may take photographs during the service. There is to be no disruption to the proceedings. There is a certain area where the photographer is not permitted to go and this will be explained on their arrival.
4. The Marriage Register will be signed on the platform area so that your guests can see you signing it. The photographer will be able to take close up photographs of the signing of the register.
5. A video can be taken of the whole ceremony.

6. Photographs may be taken inside and outside the sanctuary both before and after the ceremony.
7. If your photographer fails to comply with the direction of the Minister he may be asked to leave the sanctuary without taking any more indoor photographs.

C. MUSIC

Be sure to let the Minister know of your music requirements. He must be informed if you wish to use your own pianist or organist, or if you are bringing a choir, soloist, etc. If you use the Union Church organist she/he must have all music 2 months prior to the wedding day.

D. SOUND SYSTEM

Our speakers are set at a precise alignment for optimum performance. Please do NOT adjust them.

E. CHURCH GROUND AND FACILITIES

1. The Church grounds and facilities are smoke-free and alcohol-free. Please inform your guests accordingly.
2. No confetti or other goods may be thrown in the garden or on Church premises. Please inform your guests accordingly.
3. Parking at UCHK is very limited. Two spaces in the Church garage will be provided for the wedding/blessing party only. Please ask you guests to use the Pacific Place or Cheung Kong Building public car parks.

F. REHEARSAL

Make arrangements for your rehearsal through the Minister. The usual day and hour is Thursday at 6:30 pm or 7:30 pm. You have a maximum of a one hour rehearsal time, so please be prepared.

1. The following people need to be present at the rehearsal:

- Bride and Bridegroom
 - Master of Ceremony
 - Pianist
 - The person who will walk the bride down the aisle
 - Best Man
 - Bridesmaids
 - Groomsmen
 - Any children taking part in the procession e.g. flower girls, ring bearer.
 - The two witnesses who will sign the register
 - Your own organist/pianist
2. Make sure you bring the Order of Service to the rehearsal. Please make sure everyone arrives on time. The time allocated for your rehearsal is between 45 minutes and one hour, and because of multiple uses of the church, you may not be able to remain in the church after your rehearsal booking.
 3. The rehearsal will be conducted by the U.C.H.K Minister.

G. PAYMENT

The fee for non-U.C.H.K. members is HK\$11,000. This covers the use of facilities only. If you need an organist, there is an additional charge of \$1,500. Please pay at least eight (8) weeks before your wedding/blessing date. Make your crossed cheque payable to "Union Church" and write your names and the date of wedding on the reverse side. Post the cheque to our Church office, 22A Kennedy Rd, Hong Kong. Please note that an additional charge will be made for the repair of any damage done to Church property.

H. DOCUMENTS

We must receive the Registrar's Certificate and attachments at least three (3) weeks before the Wedding in order to prepare the Marriage Certificate. In the case of a Blessing, we must receive a copy of your Marriage Certificate.

A TYPICAL ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR MARRIAGE/BLESSING

The following is a basic format for a wedding service. You may add into it other parts that make your wedding unique to you on your wedding day. The hymn or hymns are an optional element that should only be included when the majority of your guests are familiar with hymn singing.

Prior to the service starting all those who are taking part in the leading of the service are to go to the stage area and be seated on the chairs provided. This includes the M.C. (or chairman), the preacher, the Bible reader/s, the person praying, etc.

COMMENT / EXPLANATION

PRELUDE	This may be organ, piano, or special music such as a soloist. This takes place as guests are arriving.
ENTRANCE	When the bride is ready the Minister, groom and groom's party walk to the front and stand in position. Then the bride's party enters and then the bride who is usually escorted by a senior male relative or friend.
GREETING	The Minister or chairperson greets the congregation and makes a brief statement about the significance of the ceremony.
HYMN	You should not have a hymn unless your congregation is familiar with it and will sing it with some joy.
PRAYER	This is a brief and general prayer committing to God the union of the bride and groom.
SCRIPTURE(S)	One or more appropriate scriptures are read. They may be from the Old or New Testament. Occasionally special readings suggested by the couple may be used at the discretion of the Minister.
MESSAGE	If your own Minister is preaching these remarks

should be about 5-8 minutes.

VOWS

The bride and groom share their vows.

* EXCHANGE OF SYMBOLS

Rings may be exchanged by the bride and groom.

* ANNOUNCE- MENT OF MARRIAGE

The Minister pronounces the couple husband and wife to the congregation.

* SIGNING OF CIVIL REGISTER

The bride and groom, the UCHK Minister and two witnesses sign the Civil Register.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND BLESSING

As the Minister (or the Minister from your own church) prays this prayer, the couple continue to stand, or if they prefer, they may kneel.

HYMN

You should not have a hymn unless your congregation is familiar with it and will sing it with some joy.

INTRODUCTION OF COUPLE

The Minister introduces the couple.

** Note: in the blessing of a civil marriage these are omitted, although the Pastor of Union Church has designed a Certificate of Blessing if you want to sign that.*

If required the full service can be in Cantonese or Mandarin, except for the parts that the minister of UCHK is required by law to take.

VOWS

Option A

Groom says:

(Bride's name)

I give myself to you to be your husband.

I promise to love and sustain you in the covenant of marriage, from this day forward,

in sickness and in health,

in plenty and in want,

in joy and in sorrow,

for as long as we both shall live.

Bride says:

(Groom's name)

I give myself to you to be your wife.

I promise to love and sustain you in the covenant of marriage, from this day forward,

in sickness and in health,

in plenty and in want,

in joy and in sorrow,

for as long as we both shall live.

Option B

I,, now take you,,
to be my wife/husband.

In the presence of God and before these witnesses I promise to be a loving, faithful and loyal husband/wife to you for as long as we both shall live.

Option C

I,, in the presence of God, take you,, to be my wife/husband.

All that I am I give to you,

and all that I have I share with you.

Whatever the future holds I will love you and stand by you for as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

Option D

I,, take you,, to be my wedded

wife/husband, and I promise before God and these witnesses to be your holy and faithful husband/wife; for richer, for poorer, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, for as long as we both shall live.

Option E

I,, take you,, to be my wedded wife/husband. I will be yours in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow. I will cherish and respect you, comfort and encourage you, loving you as no other, all the days of my life.

Option F

I,, take you,, to be my wife/husband for as long as we both shall live, loving you now and in your growing and becoming. I will love you when we are together and when we are apart; when life is peaceful and when it is in disorder; when I am proud of you and when I am disappointed in you; in times of leisure and in times of work. I will honor your goals and dreams and help you fulfill them. From the depth of my being I will seek to be open and honest with you. I say these things believing that God is in the midst of them all.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

Sometimes couples do not want to say anything while they exchange the symbols of their commitment to each other.

However, if you do want to say something then the following are some ideas as to what you could say.

The exchanging of rings will be introduced with a few words of explanation by the Minister.

Option A

I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and commitment to you.

Option B

As each places the ring on the finger the Minister shall say:

By the signs of these rings you take each other, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, for as long as you both shall live.

Option C

The Minister prays:

God of steadfast love, by your blessing let these rings be to and symbols of the vows that they have made today, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As each places the ring on the finger the following can be said:

....., I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage and of the vows that we have made today.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

You may want to choose what the Pastor says to you when he declares you husband and wife, or you may wish to leave that decision to him. Here are some examples of what could be said.

Option A

..... and, you have committed yourselves to each other in the joyous covenant of marriage.
Become one together. Fulfill your promises.
Love and serve God. Honor Christ and each other.
Rejoice together in the power of the Holy Spirit.
Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.

I now declare you to be husband and wife.

Option B

..... and

Today you have stood in the presence of God and before us as your family and friends.

You have made promises to live together in marriage for the rest of your lives.

It gives me great pleasure to pronounce you to be husband and wife.
May God truly bless your union together.

WEDDING/BLESSING SCRIPTURE READINGS

Here is a list of appropriate and often used scriptures for reading as part of the marriage ceremony. You are free to choose one or more scriptures to be read during the service. It is a good idea to get a family member or friend to read the scriptures.

OLD TESTAMENT:

Genesis	1:26-28,31; 2:18-24
Psalms	23; 33; 34; 37:3-7; 67; 100; 103; 112; 117; 121; 127, 128; 136; 145; 148; 150
Song of Solomon	2:8-13; 8:6-7
Jeremiah	31:31-34
Isaiah	54:5-8
Hosea	2:16-23

GOSPELS:

Matthew	5:1-12; 5:13-16; 7:21, 24-29; 19:3-6; 22:35-40
Mark	10:6-9, 13-16
John	2:1-11; 15:9-17

EPISTLES:

Romans	8:31-39; 12:1-2, 9-18
1 Corinthians	6:15-20; 13:1-13
Ephesians	3:14-21; 5:2, 21-33
Colossians	3:12-17
1 Peter	3:1-9
1 John	3:18-24; 4:7-16
Revelation	19:1, 5-9

HOW TO APPLY FOR MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

(as set down by the Hong Kong Government)

A. Giving notice

When two people wish to marry, it is essential that a written Notice of Marriage on the prescribed form is given in advance at the Marriage Registry or in a licensed place of public worship. There are no residential requirements and the two people may be of any nationality. However, a party to a marriage must not be under 16 years of age (European reckoning).

The notice, except for an overseas notice (mentioned later), is given by one or both of the parties to the proposed marriage attending personally the Marriage Registry with their identity cards or passports or some other identifying documents. At the time the notice is given, the following personal particulars of the parties must be provided: full names; whether bachelor or widower, spinster or widow; whether a divorced person or previously married by any form of marriage; rank or profession; age; dwelling places; the full name and occupation or profession of the father of each of the parties and, in the case of a party under the age of 21, the name and address of the person consenting to the marriage, and also the capacity of this person—that is, whether as father, mother or legal guardian of the minor. Proof of relationship with parent or legal guardian is required.

The notice will be exhibited at the Marriage Registry where it is given and also at the Marriage Registration & Records Office for at least 15 clear days. During this period any person who is authorised by law to object to the proposed marriage may do so by notice in writing addressed to the Registrar of Marriages. If the Registrar of Marriages considers that the person is not in fact authorised by law to object, he may allow the marriage to proceed. If, however, he considers that the objection is valid, either of the parties may appeal against his decision by petition to the High Court to determine the matter. The High Court's decision is final.

If no objection is received after the period of 15 clear days, the marriage may take place. The exact date and time for the celebration of the proposed marriage should be fixed in advance in consultation with the Registrar in charge of the Marriage Registry where the marriage is to take place or with the officiating minister if the marriage is to take place in a licensed place of public worship.

After a Notice of Marriage is given, the marriage must take place within a period of three months, otherwise the notice becomes void and fresh notice must be given before the marriage can take place. Appointments for marriage ceremonies are given on a first-come-first-served basis. Reservations by telephone are not entertained to ensure that every member of the public will have a fair chance to choose a desired day for marriage.

B. Minors, divorcees and widower/widow

If either party is under the age of 21 but above the age of 16 (European reckoning) and not a widower or a widow, the consent in writing of the father or, if he is dead, of the mother, or, if both are dead, of the legal guardian-must be produced to the Registrar of Marriages. If there is no parent or legal guardian of the minor legally capable of consenting, the Registrar of Marriages may give his consent in writing to the marriage if on enquiry the marriage appears to him to be proper, and his consent shall be as effectual as if the father, or mother, or legal guardian had consented. Forms for giving such consent are available at any of the Marriage Registries.

In the case of a divorced person, proof of the dissolution of the former marriage by decree pronounced by a competent court is required; and before the marriage takes place, a sealed, certified copy of the court's final decree must be produced to the Registrar. The question of whether or not a particular decree is recognized in Hong Kong is too complicated to be summarized here and reference should be made to the detailed provisions of Part IX of the Matrimonial Causes Ordinance, Cap. 170.

In the case of a widower or a widow, proof of former marriage and death certificate of former spouse are required.

If the divorce documents or death certificates are not written in English, certified translations of them are required. Photostat copies of the documents should also be produced for record purpose.

C. Overseas notices

In the event of both parties living abroad, they should write direct to the Hong Kong Marriage Registration & Records Office at 3/F, Low Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, for a copy of Notice of Marriage Form for completion. This form, when completed, should be returned to the office by registered airmail as soon as possible. The parties' signatures on the form should be authenticated by a British Consul or a Notary Public of the

country where they reside. The prescribed fee for giving of notice is \$245. Payment should be made by bank draft payable to 'Hong Kong Government' which should be dispatched together with the completed Notice of Marriage. The notice period starts from the date immediately after the date of receipt of the notice at the office.

