

## Questions and Answers

### **Q: Does the Reformed Church consider marriage to be a sacrament?**

A: No, although it does maintain that it is a holy ceremony in which a covenant is established.

### **Q: Can we write our own vows?**

A: You can write your own vows, but you will also be taking the vows outlined in The RCA Marriage Service Booklet, included in your information packet.

### **Q: Can we choose the music for our ceremony?**

A: Yes. However the music should be in keeping with the nature, dignity, and joyful solemnity of the ceremony. The music director, organist, and minister of St. John's Reformed Church can help direct you in this regard.

### **Q: Can our guests take pictures during the ceremony?**

A: Yes, but we ask all people taking pictures to do so in a decorous manner.

### **Q: Can we throw rice when we exit the church?**

A: Rice, birdseed, bubbles, and even fruity pebbles are wonderful ways to celebrate. Food staples have a long history at weddings, and are intended to express wishes for fruitful lives of the newlyweds. There is no substance to the urban legend that rice harms birds. We only ask that you choose an environmentally friendly substance (i.e., no confetti).

## I Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. •

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

—The Apostle Paul—

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# MARRIAGE at St. John's Reformed Church



Policy and Theology  
for Weddings at  
St. John's Reformed Church



## **Christian Marriage in the Reformed Church**

Christian marriage is a joyful covenanting between two people, in which vows are made, not only between couple being wed, but also with God (RCA Liturgy). The vows that the couple make with each other are promises they pledge to God to keep. In Christian marriage, the couple understands that marriage is lived out with one another before the Church of Jesus Christ, the world, but most importantly before God, on whose help they must rely if their love is to be brought to perfection. Marriage is in this way a picture of the Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:33). Christian Marriage then is a special and unique calling from God in which the faithfulness and love of God for the church is expressed in a particular way. Christian marriage is also “a vocation to a life-partnership between a particular man and a particular woman. To this extent marriage is more than love.... Marriage of two persons on the basis of genuine love has to be understood by them as a work which they must take in hand consciously, advisedly, and with a sense of responsibility.” (*Church Dogmatics*) The totality of a Christian married couple’s unified lives — spiritual, economic, emotional, and sexual — are under the care and governance of the sovereign God, since there is no aspect of our lives to which God does not lay claim. Because of this divine claim, marriage is a sacred celebration. The presence of Jesus Christ at the wedding at Cana gives testimony to divine blessing of the marriage event. His miracle at Cana, changing the water into wine, gives testimony to the celebratory nature of the event. Because of this, St. John’s Reformed Church recognizes the necessity of a joyful attitude toward marriage while balancing this with appropriate expressions which point to the divine presence at marriage. Therefore, joyful expressions are encouraged which are in keeping with the dignity and solemnity of the ceremony.

## **YOUR WEDDING AT ST. JOHN’S REFORMED CHURCH STEP-BY-STEP**

-  Contact the church office at St. John’s about your interest
-  Read carefully the information the pastor provides regarding marriage at St. John’s Reformed Church
-  Decide if St. John’s is the right place for your ceremony
-  The pastor will take your request before the consistory for approval
-  Schedule your wedding and rehearsal dates with the church office
-  Schedule the dates for your pre-marital preparation program (if applicable) with the church office
-  Prepare for and attend all pre-marital program times
-  Make sure you obtain your marriage license in the correct time frame and bring it the day of your ceremony

For other questions and fee schedules, visit our website at: [stjohnsreformed.org](http://stjohnsreformed.org), or contact the church office at: 845-758-1184.

