
MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

St. Andrew's Scots Kirk, Colombo, Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, there are two types of wedding. There is a religious wedding conducted by an approved Pastor and witnessed by the Registrar, who issues a certificate. Or, there can be a civil wedding before the Registrar who, upon completion of the legal requirements, issues the marriage certificate.

Religious Wedding:

Weddings in the Church of Scotland are celebrated by an ordained Minister in a religious ceremony. Before God, and in the presence of the Minister and at least two competent witnesses, the parties covenant together to take each other as husband and wife as long as they both shall live, and the Minister declares the parties to be husband and wife.

Before conducting a wedding, a Minister must be assured that the necessary legal requirements are being complied with and that the parties know of no legal impediment to their marriage. Following the service, the now married couple present themselves to the Registrar in the Vestry, who will complete the marriage certificate and present it to them.

Couples should contact the Registrar of Marriages before the wedding date to complete the 'Notification of Intended Marriage'. We recommend that contact be made at least six months ahead. Both parties must be at least 18 years of age at the date of marriage.

Blessing of a Civil Marriage:

When a couple has already registered its marriage with the Registrar outside the Church, the Church can offer a service to bless this Civil Marriage, which has already taken place.

Ministers/Pastors/Priests:

Ministers/Pastors/Priests from other denominations are welcome to conduct services of Christian marriage within St. Andrew's, according to their own rites.

Remarriage of Divorced Persons:

A Minister of the Church of Scotland may lawfully solemnise the marriage of a person, whose former marriage has been dissolved by divorce and whose former spouse is still alive. Legal documents demonstrating a valid divorce will need to be shown.

Mixed Marriages:

To be married in the Church, one partner must be Christian. The other partner's faith will be fully respected and, if possible, a shared wedding may take place. Should that not be the case, it must be understood that within the Church it is a Christian wedding that is celebrated, following which the couple may well seek the blessing of the other partner's faith.

Compliance with other Christian Churches:

At St Andrew's, we have a tradition of welcoming couples to celebrate their marriage. Often they come from different branches of the Christian Church, which have their own rules and regulations. These rules we seek to honour and respect. To clarify the situation, a couple who have no connection with St. Andrew's must provide a letter from the Minister/Pastor/Priest of the Church/Churches which they attend giving the reason why they wish to be married at St. Andrew's and by whom (for example: lack of space in their own Church).

If a couple has been refused by a Minister / Pastor / Priest, the reasons for that refusal must be clearly stated in writing. It should be understood the Minister may contact the other member of the clergy before agreeing to a wedding. St. Andrew's is free to conduct or permit the conduct of weddings in its sanctuary even if there is objection from another Christian church or minister.

If the marriage involves the remarriage of a divorced person or persons, then all legal papers must be shown to the Minister/Pastor/Priest conducting the wedding and the Minister of St. Andrew's prior to the wedding taking place.

SAINT
ANDREW'S

SCOTS KIRK
COLOMBO SRI LANKA

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Church Officer:

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