

The Anglican Church of Canada  
**Diocese of Athabasca**  
The Anglican Centre

From the Bishop:  
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Dear Clergy of the Diocese of Athabasca:

The question was recently raised regarding the celebration of matrimony outside a church building. The intent of this letter is to provide guidelines around which this may be possible.

First, please ensure you are familiar with Canon XXI of the National Church (the Canons can be found here: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/handbook-18th-ed.pdf>), which governs Marriage – this Canon is to be followed. Under XXI.II.12.c it states:

*“the body of the church is the appropriate place for the solemnization of a marriage but a marriage may be solemnized in another location if the incumbent, after consultation with the bishop, is satisfied that the solemnity and public nature of the occasion will be preserved and that the service will be conducted with dignity in godly and decent order.”*

Therefore, please abide by the following guidelines in considering this question:

- a.) It is worshipful: it reflects the glory, grandeur, majesty, and love of God, and helps the participants to realize that Christ is with them. Above all, we are embracing a worship service to our Lord, and the location and conduct of the service must lend itself to that.
- b.) It is open to the public: It must be possible for the public, especially any members of the community of the faithful who wish to attend, to do so.

In addition, the service is to be conducted with dignity in Godly and decent order: focusing on worship of our Lord, and not in a trivial or facetious direction.

As a wedding service is in many ways a gift of the people of God to the couple being married, if the wedding service is intended to be outside of the church centre the banns should be published as per XXI.I.7 to ensure that the congregation is aware of the wedding and may attend if they so desire.

In Christs' Name



David Greenwood, Bishop