

POLICY ON WEDDINGS / INTERFAITH CEREMONIES

INTERFAITH CEREMONIES:

[From the CCAR Code of Ethics for Rabbis: “Members of the congregation who have by their dues contributed to the rabbi's support, have a right to rabbinic services in time of need for lifecycle rites and pastoral functions, provided that performance of such services shall not be contrary to the convictions of that rabbi” (Section IV.A.1)]

Spiritual leader/religious officials will officiate at interfaith ceremonies as long as one of the couple is Jewish, either within or without the synagogue walls. They will perform weddings at Am Shalom **under the following conditions:**

- Weddings **may occur** on synagogue property on Shabbat or Jewish festivals as long as a suitable amount of time has passed after services according to Am Shalom.
- The ceremony may be conducted either by Am Shalom’s religious official(s); rabbi or a Jewish judge or Justice of the Peace or Jewish Religious Official approved by the Government of Ontario.
- A non-Jewish clergy person **may not** co-officiate.
- As a potential clergy guest to the synagogue, the individual who will be officiating at the ceremony must be invited by Am Shalom to conduct a ceremony on synagogue property. This rule - and the CCAR policies – would apply to religious officials, judges and JPs as well (**see Appendix A** for a statement about this from the CCAR Code of Ethics for Rabbis) The couple and the guest Rabbi, Judge or Justice of the Peace will work together to plan the ceremony **in consultation** with the Rabbi of the congregation (Am Shalom)
- No liturgy/symbolism/readings from other religions/practices be present in the ceremony.
- Every effort should be made by the officiant and the marrying couple to respect the sanctity of the synagogue (and sanctuary) space.
- The marrying couple are members of Am Shalom.
- Same sex couple marriages, either both persons Jewish or Interfaith, are approved by Am Shalom and may be performed by Am Shalom’s Religious Official.
- The marrying couple is encouraged to embrace Judaism for themselves and their (future) children, creating a Jewish home and engaging with synagogue life. The marrying couple be encouraged to take some sort of Introduction to Judaism class (through the RRG or Kolel, for example) and educate themselves through conversations, books, websites, etc. Applicable Fee to be discussed with couple.

APPENDIX A

CCAR Code of Ethics for Rabbis, Section II.C.1:

Relationships Between Rabbis in Different Congregations or in Organizations

All CCAR rabbis, including e.g. Hillel rabbis and military and civilian chaplains, regardless of their specific placement, are bound by the following provisions. The principles herein contained are applicable also in our relationships with rabbis who are not members of the CCAR and with student rabbis.

1. A rabbi should occupy a colleague's pulpit, officiate in the synagogue, or speak at any function of the congregation or of any auxiliary only at the invitation of the incumbent rabbi.
2. A rabbi who is asked to officiate at a lifecycle event should inquire whether the individual involved is a member of another congregation. A rabbi should agree to officiate for a member of another congregation only with appropriate notice to the rabbi of that congregation at the time the request is made.
 - a. If the child of a member is an unaffiliated young adult (out of school and not a member of any congregation) and chooses a rabbi other than the family's rabbi, the family's rabbi should be informed by the officiating rabbi in advance of the event.
 - b. Where, in the event of a prospective marriage, the families of bride and groom belong to different congregations, it is incumbent upon the officiating rabbi to inform the other rabbi.
 - c. In other lifecycle situations, where various members of the family belong to other congregations, the officiating rabbi should urge the individuals involved to notify their own rabbis of the event.

“The synagogue is the entry point into the Jewish community for people searching for a place in the Jewish world. The synagogue and its clergy are usually the first contact that is made by young couples contemplating marriage as well as for parents of young children seeking pre-school experiences or other programs for young families. How these engaged couples and new parents are greeted and welcomed, or insulted and turned away, can have an enormous impact on the future Jewish choices these people will make. The first place to start in accepting these couples is by welcoming them into the Jewish world through the wedding ceremony which is so important to them. Rabbis are the key people in this effort. I believe that we need to nurture a culture of rabbinic acceptance.”