

## **Wedding Policy for Rabbi Susan Bulba Carvutto**

Officiating at a wedding is one of the greatest pleasures a rabbi has, yet the rabbi's right to officiate is an indication of attesting to the ceremony fitting in the parameters of Jewish tradition. In every instance Rabbi Susan reserves the right of judgment as to which weddings she will officiate, notwithstanding the policies in this document.

### **Times**

It is important to check with the rabbi before committing to a time with caterers, musicians or venues. She is often previously committed for major holiday weekends such as Memorial Day, July Fourth and Labor Day. With enough advance notice she will make every effort to be available for members' families.

Jewish weddings do not take place on Shabbat, as the ceremony is regarded as a legal procedure effecting a change of personal status. Rabbi Susan does not officiate at weddings on Friday evenings or Saturdays until sundown or 7:30pm whichever comes first depending on the time of year.

Jewish weddings also do not take place on major Jewish holidays: Rosh Hashanah (2 days) and Yom Kippur, the first evening and day of Sukkot, Simchat Torah/Shemini Atzeret (we follow the Reform calendar), the first and second evening, first day and sixth evening and seventh day of Passover, and Shavuot (evening and day). Because of food restrictions it would be advisable not to hold a wedding during the week of Passover.

Rabbi Susan also does not officiate on Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) and Tisha B'Av (the Ninth of Av) as they are days of mourning. She does officiate during the Omer period between Passover and Shavuot and during the three weeks preceding Tisha B'Av, during which Orthodox Jews do not hold weddings.

### **Interfaith weddings**

Rabbi Susan does not officiate weddings with clergy of any other faith. She does not officiate at interfaith weddings for any couples from out of state who are not part of member families. She does officiate at some weddings for interfaith couples who are part of the greater Augusta community and are part of or will be joining our temple community, or whose families are members of the temple where one partner is not Jewish but does not actively practice another religion.

## **Premarital Counseling**

Rabbi Susan asks couples to meet with her several times preceding the wedding so that she can get to know them and understand them as individuals and as a couple, and plan the kind of ceremony they will prefer. She recommends that all couples read The New Jewish Wedding Book by Anita Diamant to become familiar with the various aspects of Jewish wedding ceremonies.

Ideally she asks that the couple go through The Alef-Bet of Marriage, a Reform guide to the major issues involved in marriage. The rabbi is not a trained couple's counselor and does not attempt to intervene with any major issues a couple is having. However if she believes that there are serious relationship problems which have not been addressed she may recommend that the wedding be postponed.

## **Fees**

The rabbi normally charges \$500 for weddings of member families which includes as many as six or seven counseling sessions, a rehearsal and the wedding itself. She may ask for additional compensation for travel to a distant location. Weddings in the sanctuary at Temple Beth El are restricted to those between two Jews and we ask an additional building use fee of \$250 to the Temple for non members.

## **Same sex & non legal ceremonies**

Rabbi Susan is willing to perform same sex commitment ceremonies under the same conditions as other weddings. However couples should be aware that same sex weddings do not yet have legal status in the state of Maine. It is important to note that the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) bars its members from performing non legal ceremonies for heterosexual couples who would be legally eligible for marriage but do not wish to be legally married.