How to Properly Do Weddings by Banns

What you need to know:

1. Wedding by Banns is an older practice still allowed by the Marriage Act. Rather than getting a marriage license at city hall the "Marriage by Banns" form is a blank form acquired from the Marriage Office (no cost). It looks very similar to the marriage license. To use it <u>a public announcement (called "publication of banns") during a regular service</u> must happen from 90 to 5 days before the wedding date. You'll need to fill out and sign a "Proof of Publication of Banns" and submit it with the completed "Marriage by Banns" form after the wedding has happened.
2. Wedding by Banns can only be done with couples <u>for whom this is their first wedding</u>. Divorcees would have to get a marriage license. As well each party <u>must</u> be in regular attendance in their church(es).

How to marry by banns:

1. Acquiring Banns: If you can't "borrow" or "beg" a copy from someone else you must contact the publication department requesting whatever number of banns you wish. They'll only receive requests by mail or Fax. MAIL: Thunder Bay Production and Verification Services Branch, P.O. Box 4600, 189 Red River Rd., Thunder Bay, ON, P7B 6L8. ATTENTION MARRIAGE OFFICE. FAX: 1-807-343-7284. You MUST include your <u>name</u>, <u>marriage registration number</u>, <u>address</u>, and <u>daytime phone number</u>. You should request "Marriage by Banns" forms as well as additional copies of "Proof of Publication of Banns" (see number 3 below)
2. The procedure is to publicly and verbally announce in a regular service the intention of marriage of the named couple. The announcement needs to be done only <u>once</u> sometime between 90 days and 5 days before the wedding day. The announcement should look something like this: *"As required by the Ontario Marriage Act for the publication of Banns we are pleased to announce the wedding of <groom> and <bride> on the <date> at <location>. Any known reason why this marriage should not happen should be reported to <name of pastor>. We wish <groom> and <bride> God's blessing as they unite as husband and wife!"* Word it as you wish, containing this essence. <u>Note</u>: This must be in an **audible voice** during a **regular Sunday church service**. (During the COVID-19 pandemic we believe that the 'spirit of the law' allows for this announcement to be done during on-line service either recorded or live.)
3. If both persons are attending the same church, then the one announcement is enough. If one person attends a different church on a regular basis, Banns must also be announced (published) in the other church. The license by Banns form has a part called "Proof of Publication of Banns" where the person who announces the Banns affirms ("Proof") that it has been done in the one church. If it is also announced in another church, there is an extra "Proof of Publication of Banns" that needs to be also filled out by the one who announces in the second church and that form included in the envelope when sending in the "Marriage by Banns."
4. <u>Caution</u>: Carefully read the instructions and information required on the "Marriage by Banns" and the "Proof of Publication of Banns." It is easy to misunderstand the information required.
5. At the time of the wedding all parties sign the "Marriage by Banns" exactly the same as is done in a marriage by license. ALSO, as with a marriage by license, the details of the wedding and signatures of all parties MUST be recorded in a "Marriage Register". The church should have such a register. If your church does not, GET ONE (free) from the address listed above. This is <u>required</u> by the Marriage Act.
6. As is done with a marriage by license: 1) Tear off the short marriage certificate to give to the couple. 2) Mail to the Marriage Office in the envelope provided, the completed and signed "Marriage by Banns" (which includes one "Proof of Publication of Banns") and a second "Proof of Publication of Banns" if Banns were announced in two different churches. You must provide the necessary postage.
7. You've done it. Congratulations!