March 10, 2020

This is a story about a chance meeting, a growing connection to the Bishop’s Garden, a wedding, and a commitment to each other and to working to keep the cathedral grounds as beautiful as they were on their wedding day.

Aaron Polacek and Rachel Noteware were married in the Bishop’s Garden four years ago. Asked how they met, how is this for serendipity? “We met at a bus stop near the Capitol while we were both interning at government agencies during graduate school. It was a rainy day and we had both waited for a break in the rain to go to the bus stop. Aaron struck up the conversation with a bit of teasing and we were immediately bantering for the rest of the bus ride, which in true WMATA fashion ended up lasting over an hour. “

Aaron and Rachel were drawn to the Bishop’s Garden because Aaron lived in Glover Park in grad school and it was a nearby “cheap date” to visit the Garden.

They noted how beautiful and peaceful it feels there; as if you’ve left the city somehow. “Because we come from different faith traditions, choosing a wedding location that felt like a neutral but sacred space was important to us and holding our wedding in the Bishop’s Garden had the added benefit of allowing us to share one of our special DC spots with our close friends and family.

Wanting an intimate wedding, we had about 40 of our closest friends and family in attendance. Almost everyone had a part to play in the ceremony or reception. We asked one of our friends to officiate the ceremony, so she became a DC civil celebrant for us! She came up with a theme for the wedding based on the Parable of the Sower and we incorporated advice and stories from our family and friends.



Rachel and Aaron immediately after their vows

A week before the wedding a hurricane was forecasted!

Fortunately for our wedding, the storm did not materialize into much for DC, but it was raining during the day and when we were doing pictures. We met on a rainy day though so it seemed like a good omen for our marriage. At one point during the ceremony, the officiant noticed the colors of the sky when clouds parted, and we were reminded of the beautiful setting we were a part of.

The reception was at Open City at the National Cathedral. We think it may have been the first wedding reception they hosted but you would never have guessed it based on how smoothly things ran and how lovely everything looked! That made it easy for us to plan and remain nearby.”

Their connection to the Bishop’s Garden continues: “When we stop by the

Garden on the weekends we make sure to pause right on the spot where we recited our vows and reenact our first kiss as a married couple. It will always be ‘our spot’.”

Rachel and Aaron have continued their connection by volunteering for All Hallows Guild work. They help out pulling ivy in the Olmsted Woods and working at Premier Plants at Flower Mart. Volunteering helps the Garden to feel a little more like “their own” as well. And they continue to find renewal and serenity here, visiting most Saturdays, sitting on a bench in the garden and listening to the cathedral bells.


HELLO
HELLO

Aaron and Rachel working at Premier Plants at Flower Mart

Rachel and Aaron, All Hallows Guild salutes your attachment to our gardens, and is grateful for your continuing work to help our mission. Cheers to you!