

WEDDING POLICY AND AGREEMENT

First Congregational United Church of Christ

5 Main Street. PO Box 66

Berlin Heights, OH 44814-9321

(419) 588-2102

GETTING READY FOR THE WEDDING:

The wedding ceremony is the beginning of a life-long commitment to one another. Therefore, it is important for us here at First Congregational UCC to assist a couple in the preparation for their wedding so as to do all that we can to insure that their life together gets off to a good start. We seek to model the limitless love of Christ here at First. While it perhaps seems contradictory to that free and gracious love to publish a list of rules and restrictions, it is necessary for us to conduct all the affairs of this congregation in a manner that exhibits responsible stewardship. Furthermore, it is essential that we protect the integrity of the mission and witness of this church by conducting all wedding ceremonies within the context of appropriate forms of Christian worship.

THE DATE:

Before a couple sets the date of the wedding, it must first be cleared with the church office. Church events shall come first. This is also true with the rehearsal. Couples must fill out the information sheet that will be placed in our church file. A non-refundable deposit of \$50.00 must be paid at this time to reserve your date. This deposit will be applied to the Sanctuary fee in the case of non-church members and to the Wedding Coordinator fee in the case of active church members. The remaining fees must be paid 3 months before your wedding date: _____. PLEASE DO NOT HAVE ANNOUNCEMENTS PRINTED WITHOUT FIRST HAVING CLEARED THE DATE WITH THE CHURCH OFFICE.

WEDDING FEES:

The following fees pertain to use of the building only. In the event the wedding is cancelled for any reason, the fees will be refunded excluding the initial \$50.00 deposit.

1. Sanctuary.....\$250.00
(this fee includes the rehearsal and wedding)

Active members of First Congregational UCC will not be charged for the use of the Sanctuary.

2. Social Hall.....\$100.00 per event

1. You may use your own pastor to perform your wedding, or our pastor. Our pastor receives a fee for performing the wedding, regardless of whether or not the bride and groom are members of the church. This fee also includes the mandatory 3 pre-marital sessions.

2. You may use our organist or a pianist of your choosing. Our organist will play the Roland Electronic piano or the grand piano. A pianist of your choosing is welcome to use the grand piano.

3. Wedding Coordinator – A member of our Diaconate will be present for your rehearsal and wedding to give assistance and answer any questions you may have.

4. There is a mandatory fee for custodial services. In addition, you will be assessed to cover any damages done to church property.

The following fees will be paid by separate checks:

1. Pastor.....\$200.00

2. Church Organist.....\$150.00

3. Wedding Coordinator\$50.00

4. Custodian.....\$50.00

PRE-MARITAL PREPARATION:

Pre-marital counseling is required by the Pastor. The bride and groom will each complete a pre-marital questionnaire, which will form the basis of the discussions held during the 3 one and one half hour long sessions. The two questionnaires must be returned to the church no later than one week prior to the first premarital session: _____. The session will have to be rescheduled if the questionnaires are not returned by this date. The pastor will contact you if the questionnaires are not received in the allotted time. The wedding service itself will also be planned during these sessions.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT:

Marriage is a sacred covenant made in the presence of God and a company of witnesses. It is intended to model the faithfulness between God and God's people. The couple will ask for God's blessing upon their marriage because it is realized here at First Congregational UCC that "unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Psalms 127:1).

This stresses the importance of keeping the wedding in the context of Christian Worship because it is a witness to the fact the love of God through Christ "binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14). Therefore, the partners commit their faithfulness to each other even as they recognize the foundation of God's love as well as the significance of the assistance of the faith community, either here at First Congregational UCC or at the couple's home church.

We invite couples without church homes to participate in the worship and overall congregational life of First Congregational UCC. It is not our intention to place conditions on the unconditional love of God by making membership in this congregation a requirement in order to be married here. However, we would be remiss if we did not offer the love of a caring Christian community such as is found here at First Congregational UCC. This network of support is a vital component in the success of the life-long promise that you make before God in the marriage covenant.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. While on church property, all people are asked to be respectful of God's house in language and action.
2. NO confirmed date or time will be scheduled on the congregational calendar until the Church office confirms the availability of that date, the information sheet has been received, and the deposit has been paid.
3. Our sanctuary will seat about 170 adults comfortably.
4. No tacks, nails or tape is to be put on the pews or on the walls anywhere in the building.
5. If the church is already decorated for a special event (such as Advent, etc.) the decorations are not to be removed for the wedding.
6. Limited parking is available behind the church in the parking lot. Some street parking is available on Main Street, as well.
7. Birdseed may be thrown outside of the building in the parking area. Nothing is to be thrown inside the church building or within the sidewalk areas outside of the building. **NO RICE IS TO BE THROWN UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**
8. Smoking is not permitted in the building. By Ohio law, any smoking outside must be six feet from a closed door, and 20-25 feet from an open door, regardless of weather conditions. Please dispose of extinguished butts in the receptacle provided by the outside stairs on the west side of the church.
9. No alcohol, wine or beer is allowed inside the building, on church property, or in private vehicles located on church property.
10. No flash cameras permitted during the service! Unobtrusive use of still photography must receive prior permission. Use of video cameras may be approved if mounted on a tripod. Professional photographers are requested to share their photo plans with the pastor before the service begins. The reason for these restrictions is not to lessen the joy of the wedding service, but it is to respect the sanctity of the wedding ceremony.

WEDDING CONTRACT

I, _____, have read the Wedding Policy of First Congregational UCC. We are planning the following:

Rehearsal: Date _____ Time _____

Rehearsal Dinner: Date _____ Time _____

Wedding: Date _____ Time _____

Fee Schedule:

A. Sanctuary - \$250.00 (includes \$50.00 deposit) _____

B. Social Hall - \$100.00 per event _____

The following fees are to be paid by separate checks to the participants.

- 1. Pastor.....\$200.00
- 2. Church Organist.....\$150.00
- 3. Wedding Coordinator\$50.00
- 4. Custodian.....\$50.00

Bride or Groom

Parent or Guardian

Pastor

Date

Street address of Bride or Groom

(bride)

(groom)

Contact telephone numbers