

# WEDDING INFORMATION FOR FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

## INTRODUCTION

A church wedding is, first and foremost, a service of worship. It is a joyful expression of the love God has given us. It is a public recognition and celebration of the commitment two individuals make to each other and to God. We pledge to do everything we can to make this a day that will encourage and inspire you all the days of your marriage. We thank God for this gift of grace and love. In light of this, requests for theme weddings must meet prior approval.

*\* Note: should the fees and honoraria published in this booklet present a hardship to anyone, please let that person speak privately to the pastor so other arrangements can be made.*

## INITIAL PROCEDURES

To help make your wedding plans go smoothly, we request that you take the initiative to accomplish these arrangements. It is never too early to begin to lay the groundwork for a memorable day. Non-members cannot schedule until one year from wedding date.

- 1) Confirm the date of your wedding with the church secretary. A date is not considered "reserved" until the enclosed contracts are signed by the bride and groom and the appropriate deposit has been made. Dates not "reserved" as indicated could be taken by other events on a "first come, first served" basis.
- 2) Confirm the date of marriage with the pastor you are asking to perform the ceremony. (While someone other than the pastor of First Congregational Church may participate in or perform this service, it is expected, as a gesture of courtesy, to request permission of the current pastor of the church before these others are invited to participate.) Don't assume that since the church has been reserved for the date you seek that the pastor's schedule is clear for that date. Make the necessary contacts.
- 3) Arrange for an initial meeting with the pastor to discuss pre-marriage counseling and to begin preparation for your wedding.
- 4) If you plan to use the church's musicians, contact the church organist/musician to reserve the date on his or her calendar. Again, do this early in the process so that he/she can keep the date open on his/her calendar.
- 5) If you are planning to have a rehearsal dinner or reception in our Fellowship Hall, make sure to also reserve that room on our calendar. Reserving the sanctuary for your wedding does not automatically make other areas of our facilities available for your use.

## FEES

A deposit of \$150 must be paid at the time of confirming your date on the calendar. This guarantees priority for that date and for your rehearsal the night before will be yours and no other church event will be scheduled in conflict with your date. Upon completion of your wedding, assuming all fees are paid, all agreements completed, and no undue damage is noted, we will return the full deposit amount to the one who made the deposit. **Note: fees must be paid in full on or before the night of rehearsal.** No part of this deposit should be deemed a partial payment of fees incurred.

We believe that our facilities belong to the people who provide for their upkeep and ongoing maintenance, to be used to the glory of God. Those who have contributed to this upkeep and maintenance should have use of these facilities in a reasonable and timely fashion, having already paid to make them available. Others, who have not yet made such contributions, can be expected to pay these reasonable fees to help make these facilities available. Therefore some of the fees in this section may be waived for our own church members.

**For a wedding in our sanctuary and/or a reception in our fellowship hall these fees and honoraria are expected:**

1) Fees for use of facilities

a. For a wedding in our sanctuary: \$500

This fee provides:

- i. Use of sanctuary and associated spaces for both rehearsal and ceremony
- ii. Use of dressing rooms for the wedding party as needed
- iii. Limited use of Fellowship Hall and kitchen to provide refreshments and relaxation space for family and wedding party gathering early for photos, etc.
- iv. Heating or air conditioning as needed for rehearsal and the service

b. For a reception in our Fellowship Hall: \$100.

This fee provides for:

- i. Use of all tables, chairs, dishes, coffee servers (silver and otherwise), etc.
- ii. Use of the oven
- iii. All utilities and Fellowship Hall should be left in the same condition as you found them.

**Note:** The reserving parties are expected to furnish: All the food for the reception (delivered to the church); any cake, coffee, sugar, cream, etc.; punch with disposable punch cups; napkins, table and room decorations.

c. Custodian:

- i. \$100 for wedding
- ii. \$25 for rehearsal dinner
- iii. \$100 for reception

d. Wedding Coordinator: \$200

She will be responsible for making sure doors are unlocked for the wedding party, assist the bridal party, help set up wedding ceremony and any other duties that may arise. This fee gives the bridal party eight hours of her service. Any hours over this will incur a fee of \$50.00 per hour.

e. Audio technician: \$50 - optional

If you are planning to use any of the churches sound equipment (microphone or musical playback system) you will need an Audio technician. This individual is familiar with our audio system and will be present at the rehearsal and on the day of the wedding. This person will be able to play recorded music as needed. He/she could make an audio recording of the service if desired. (Our equipment is compatible with all the current media sources available).

2) Musicians: amount arranged directly with the musician

We have one of the finest pipe organ instruments in the entire region. Most often it is used in worship services here. We also have a very fine grand piano that could provide service music. Our church organist is usually asked to play for weddings but others could also do this. Please contact our organist to reserve your date on his/her calendar and to determine the amount of the honorarium expected. (See "A Word about Music" section of this booklet for more thoughts about the music for your wedding.)

3) Pastor: \$300

In addition to the ceremony, this honorarium provides for all necessary counseling sessions (typically three or four), all planning meetings and the ceremony rehearsal. In the event the couple secures other pastoral leadership for the service, this amount becomes \$50 which will cover the local pastor's assistance in arranging for the service. (If others are officiating at your service, counseling and service fees should be negotiated with the one doing the service.)

## **A WORD ABOUT MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING**

As in any worship service, music should be chosen to speak to the purpose of the service. Any song used in a worship service should honor God and be respectful of the setting and purpose of the service. There is an abundance of good quality music, both sacred and secular, that would enhance the service. Some secular pieces are more appropriately played at the reception, giving you ways to maintain the integrity of your wedding service and still use the music that is significant to you. We recommend that you discuss your music preferences with the pastor and with the organist or other professional musician who has lots of experience with this.

Our church organist is available to play for weddings at our church. We recognize, however, that sometimes family members or close friends can provide this service capably. If that is the case, please let the pastor know early in the planning process. It is expected that should you ask someone other than our organist to play, he or she will consult with our church organist to provide an orientation to our particular instrument, and to agree on which stop settings are available for use.

Under typical circumstances, there should be 20 – 30 minutes of music while your guests arrive. In addition, a postlude is provided while your guests depart. The wedding party enters to a processional and often the bride has her own private piece by which to enter. You are free; however, to do whatever fits your particular circumstances.

It is possible to purchase or download music intended for these services. We have the capability to play these through our sound system and mix them into the audio in a professional way. **Please understand that copyright laws apply to churches,** as they do to you. We will not knowingly violate copyright laws. Music purchased and downloaded for your enjoyment at home is generally not meant for use in public settings. Please be careful of this as you plan your service.

Special music within the service should reflect the couple's preferences. Typically one to three solos are common. None is necessary. The pastor can assist in placing the music within the service in such a way as to honor and support the lyrics being sung. If needed, we can recommend a vocalist. Consider using congregational singing as well. Keep in mind that the wedding service itself is about 30 minutes long. Add five minutes for each song that is sung to get an estimate as to the length of the service you are planning.

**GUIDELINES FOR USE OF CHURCH BUILDING FOR WEDDINGS & RECEPTIONS**

Although the church is open to all who seek to use it, there are certain requirements, developed by the leadership of the congregation that will insure its use in a respectful and honorable way. These will enable us to continue to make it available for community use. Your willingness to use our building carries with it your agreement to comply with these requirements. (Note: variations from these guidelines may be negotiated with our church administrative council.)

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. The date for any activity to be held in the church must be cleared on the church calendar by the pastor or church secretary before any date becomes official. A deposit of \$150 must be made.
2. There will be no smoking anywhere on church property.
3. Use of any alcoholic beverages in the church or on church property is not permitted. This includes champagne used in the dressing rooms or for private toasting of the marriage.
4. The church is to be left in the same condition as it was found – that is the tables & chairs folded; counters cleared; personal effects cleared from dressing rooms, trash put in proper receptacles, etc. Our custodian will clean floors, vacuum & dust entire church following the service and dispose of the trash as appropriate.
5. The use of cellophane tape adhesives on any painted surface is not allowed. Please use adhesives that will not damage the surfaces and confine the taping of decorations to the wooden surfaces.
6. The throwing of rice, bird seed or confetti is not allowed. In addition to the difficulty caused with clean up, it can make the steps and approaches to the church slippery under foot causing a liability issue.
7. Payment of all fees is due and payable at the time of the rehearsal of the service. (Checks given to the pastor at that time will be distributed after the service if desired.)
8. Fellowship Hall is available for the hosting of reception, rehearsal dinner, or showers as needed. These arrangements must be made through the church office. (Reserving the sanctuary for your wedding does not automatically include space for these other events.)
9. Any costs incurred due to damage to or loss of church property will be the responsibility of the renting party.
10. The deposit will be returned to the party providing it only after conclusion of the service, all fees are paid, and satisfactory inspection is complete. The deposit shall not be construed as paying any part of the fees incurred.

I have read the above and agree to the items there. I will be responsible for seeing that everyone associated with my wedding will also abide by these terms.

Signed (bride) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (groom) \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that this wedding is recorded on our calendar for \_\_\_\_\_ (date) and that a deposit of \$\_\_\_\_\_ has been paid. We will reserve this date plus an appropriate time for rehearsing this wedding.

Signed (for the church): \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**WEDDING USE WORKSHEET**

**FEES:**

- ( ) Initial Deposit: \$150\_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Sanctuary Fee: \$500\_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Use of Candelabras: \$25\_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Fellowship Hall Fee: \$100\_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Custodial Fee – Wedding: \$100\_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Custodial Fee – Rehearsal Dinner: \$25\_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Custodial Fee – Reception: \$100\_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Wedding Coordinator (first 8 hours): \$200\_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Wedding Coordinator – \$50/hour after 8 hours: \_\_\_\_\_hrs.\_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Audio Technician (sound system): \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Musicians: (arranged privately) \_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)
- ( ) Pastor: \$300 \_\_\_\_\_ (date paid)

**TIMES:** (requested but not guaranteed until coordinator confirms)

Rehearsal time and date \_\_\_\_\_

Time to open church on wedding day \_\_\_\_\_

Time to expect flower delivery \_\_\_\_\_

Time for Rehearsal Dinner \_\_\_\_\_

Time for Reception \_\_\_\_\_