



## Wedding Information

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF  
FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS  
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

The First Congregational Church of Falmouth extends its welcome to you as you prepare for one of the most meaningful events in your lives--the day when you as a couple will exchange your vows before God, to enter into the sacred covenant of marriage together.

Our church is pleased to provide this special service of Christian worship for you and to celebrate your vows of love and faithfulness to one another. We hope that the information contained in this booklet will be helpful to you as you plan for that special day.

### **SCHEDULING**

Ideally, our church office should be contacted more than 8 months in advance. All weddings are scheduled at the discretion of our Minister, the Rev. Jonathan Drury, and on a "first come, first served" basis. No more than two weddings will be scheduled per day--weekend or weekday.

We feel it is very important that we get to know you, and you us. Therefore, prior to scheduling your date on the church calendar, you will be asked to have an informal conversation with Rev. Drury. Once this takes place and all feel First Congregational Church is a "good fit," your wedding will be added to the church calendar.

Of particular note to those who live outside the Cape area: Couples seeking to be married in our church must be prepared to schedule their required pre-marital counseling conversations on a Monday - Friday, and not on a weekend or a holiday. This, however, is at the discretion of the presiding minister.

### **CLERGY**

All weddings in our church will be conducted by our Minister, Rev. Jonathan Drury or his designated representative.

Clergy from outside our church may assist in the service, at the discretion and invitation of the Rev. Jonathan Drury or his alternate. However, the formal pronouncement of the marriage and the signing of the legal license shall be done by the minister representing our congregation.

## HONORARIA

Total cost for having a wedding at First Congregational Church is \$1,600. This includes the use of the church and the services of the minister, organist, sexton, and wedding co-ordinator. Since persons affiliated with the church are assumed to already support the church through their pledging, their total cost is \$1,100. One honoraria check should be made payable to the church.

Affiliation with the church is defined as either the bride or groom, or a direct relative [parent(s) or grandparent(s)] being an active, pledging member of the church.

Services required of our church Sexton exceeding the three-hour allowance [adequate for most weddings] will entail an additional honorarium at the rate of \$25 for each additional hour or part thereof. Additional rehearsals for the organist with soloists could entail an additional honoraria. The organist will determine the need for any additional fee.

Couples are responsible to work out, on their own, all honoraria arrangements for participants in the service not directly provided by our church, for example: assisting guest clergy, assisting guest organist, guest soloists/instrumentalists.

**To reduce wedding day responsibilities, the marriage license and the honoraria check should be brought either to the wedding rehearsal or to the church office during the week prior to your wedding. The wedding cannot take place until a valid license is received.**

## FLOWERS

The church will be open one hour before your service. If your florist **MUST** make an earlier delivery, arrangements should be made in advance with our church office. This **COULD** entail an additional charge for the Sexton. Usually one, but sometimes two or three floral arrangements are used in the front of the chancel.

Tape is not to be used in placing bows on the pews; ask your florist about plastic pew clips. We have installed special eyes on the pews for pew bows; they can be tied on or a stick can be inserted.

Also, you should inform your florist, that because of space considerations, we do not usually seat anyone in the very first pew. Parents and close family are seated beginning with the second pew.

You may wish to secure a white aisle runner from your florist. The center aisle is 60 feet in length. If you are using an aisle runner, it should be inspected to be certain that it is secured to the center aisle rug. If the bride wishes a flower girl to drop flower petals during the processional, an aisle runner is **required**.

## CANDLES

There are two service candles on the altar-table which may be used. If the couple wishes to have someone in their wedding party light the candles as part of their service, tapers with which to light them are found in the vestibule to the sanctuary. Otherwise, the altar-table candles will be lit by the Sexton approximately 15 minutes prior to the service. Candelabra rented from a florist may be used in the sanctuary area, but only if they are provided with drip cups. For safety reasons, no candles are to be lit anywhere else in the sanctuary, including window sills.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

To maintain the dignity of our wedding services, certain guidelines for photography have been established. **You should instruct your professional photographer to consult with the officiating minister, on your wedding day, prior to the service.**

Guidelines are these:

Up to and including the bridal procession, and after the kiss: photographs may be taken as desired.

When the service begins: still photography is restricted to the designated wedding photographer who may take pictures without flash, and unobtrusively, from either the back, vestibule door of the sanctuary or upstairs from the back of the balcony [near the organ].

A Video Camera may be used in the balcony to record the entire service, as long as the operator stays in place, and uses no auxiliary lighting. Usually this is done from the right front balcony over the lectern.

After the service: the wedding party may return to the sanctuary and take all the pictures desired. To assist our Sexton, please let the minister know in advance, whether or not you will be returning to the sanctuary for pictures.

## **ORGANIST**

All organ accompaniment for weddings in our church will be provided by our Music Director, or, if he is unavailable, by alternates under his direction. Extra rehearsals (i.e. with soloists) or time spent preparing specially requested music for the wedding may entail an additional charge for the organist's services.

Organists from outside our church may assist in the service, at the discretion and invitation of our organist or his alternate. If an organist from outside our church is requested, professional protocol dictates that the outside organist be invited to participate by our organist. Please advise the church office as soon as possible if an outside organist is desired so that our organist may contact him/her directly well before the wedding.

If other musical arrangements are desired for the wedding (i.e. string quartet, harp), please notify the church as soon as possible. All outside musicians should arrange to speak with the wedding co-ordinator either at the rehearsal or prior to the wedding to discuss the minister's procedures for the wedding.

## **MUSIC**

All music in the service is subject to the approval of the minister conducting the service. Additionally, specific requests for organ music should be discussed with the Music Director in advance of the wedding rehearsal.

*Ave Maria* is a Roman Catholic song which is appropriate for ecumenical weddings when a Roman Catholic priest is assisting in our service. When a priest is not assisting, *Ave Maria* may be used in the service at the discretion of the presiding minister.

Generally speaking, contemporary music is acceptable as long as it has an air of dignity appropriate to the occasion (i.e. *One Hand, One Heart* and *The Wedding Song*)

Guest soloists and instrumentalists are welcomed, subject to the above guidelines.

## **PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING**

All couples will be issued a pre-marital inventory to keep and read through together at their own pace. Many couples have found this resource quite helpful.

One or more confidential pre-marital conversations may be held to assist the couple in beginning their new life together. **Answers to the questions in the inventory should be sent to the presiding minister prior to a couple's first pre-marital conversation.**

These meetings should be scheduled by the couple several months before the wedding, and for a time other than a weekend or a holiday. Upon request, additional counseling can be scheduled.

## **THE MARRIAGE SERVICE LITURGY**

You will receive the order for weddings regularly used by the minister conducting your service. This service is designed to be dignified and worshipful. Without additional inclusions, it lasts about 30 minutes. Modifications to this service may be made, or another worship order substituted, with the approval of the minister conducting the service.

## **MARRIAGE LICENSE**

Be sure to bring this to your rehearsal or to the church office during the week prior to your wedding, as your wedding cannot be performed without it. Contact your local town office to learn the legal details of acquiring your license.

Generally speaking: Both parties to the marriage must file their intentions together, no earlier than 60 days before the wedding. There is a mandatory waiting period of three days to receive the license, not counting the day of filing intentions. The license can be obtained anywhere within Massachusetts and used in our church.

After your marriage the officiating minister will sign your license and return it to the town office from which it was issued--the same place you must go to secure your own copy, if needed.

In addition, after your service our church will provide you with its own certificate of marriage.

### **GUEST REGISTRY**

In our vestibule there is a writing stand available for a registry.

### **PARKING**

There is a parking lot to the left of our church. Use the asphalt driveway on the left hand side of the stone wall. Parking in front of the church during the wedding is allowed.

### **ELEVATOR**

An elevator to the sanctuary is available for anyone in your wedding needing such assistance. The elevator is located immediately inside the church's portico entrance off the parking lot.

### **THE REHEARSAL NIGHT**

The rehearsal should take no more than one hour. It should be scheduled to allow out-of-town participants to arrive punctually. In addition to the wedding party, it is also helpful to have the parents of the bride and groom present.

To save time, the decision as to the line-up of the bridesmaids and groomsmen should be made beforehand.

### **YOUR WEDDING DAY**

The church will be open one hour before your service. Ushers should be prepared to seat guests one half hour beforehand. The bride and her party may use a room downstairs for dressing, or may wish to arrive at the church just before the wedding is to begin. The groom and best man should be in the church parlor at least 20 minutes before the service.

While the church does not prohibit the throwing of rice and birdseed outside the church for the bride and groom's exit, we request that it be avoided as it creates additional cleaning responsibilities for the Sexton. The blowing of soap bubbles has enjoyed recent popularity and there are several places that market small bottles specifically for weddings. All these activities must take place outside the church building.

Most important of all, take time to enjoy this day! Rely on the minister conducting your service to lead you through it effortlessly, but very meaningfully. After your service, arrange to take your flowers with you so that you can enjoy them at your reception. Some may wish to leave flowers for our Sunday church service, which is certainly appreciated, but not expected.

### **RECEIVING LINE**

If you wish to have your receiving line at our church, you may use the Village Green or the front of the church--assuming the weather cooperates. Other alternatives are our church's vestibule [which can get crowded], or the lobby of our church's Fellowship Hall.

If your receiving line is to be at the church, you should decide the order in which participants stand, before you come to the rehearsal.

### **RECEPTION**

Our church's Fellowship Hall is available for non-alcoholic wedding receptions. More information is available upon request.