

Weddings  
at  
The First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ



**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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## *To The Bride and Groom*

*We are pleased that you are considering the First Congregational Church for your wedding. We are aware of how much this day means to you, and we will do everything we can to assist you to make it a grand occasion. We include some general information in this brochure regarding First Church procedures.*

*Our church is a conveniently located downtown facility with substantial parking. The grandeur of our vaulted sanctuary and the traditions of this faith community evoke awe and inspiration. We maintain two of the finest pipe organs in the entire region. First Church is a beautiful and sacred place for your wedding. Our clergy and other professionals will work with you to plan a Christ-centered service of worship worthy of the occasion and appropriate for the setting in which we gather. First Congregational Church is an open and affirming congregation (see below) welcoming all people into the warmth of Christian fellowship. Our Ministry of Marriage staff reflects that diversity and inclusion. We hope that you will regard First Church as your friend in this great adventure of matrimony. We expect to be for you a source of comfort and strength, and a faithful representative of the One who welcomes us all in love.*

*This reflection on Christian marriage comes from the United Church of Christ, Book of Worship: "The essence of marriage is a covenanted commitment that has its foundation in the faithfulness of God's love. The marriage ceremony is the glad occasion on which two people unite in the mutual exchange of covenant promises." To regard marriage as a covenant expression makes the wedding ceremony a profound experience. It is a joyous occasion marked by a solemn covenant.*

*Couples who arrange for their marriage to begin in First Church intentionally invoke the presence of God in the making and confirming of sacred vows. They make a sacred covenant to live the kind of love demonstrated by God in Jesus Christ. Surrounded by religious symbols and sounds, and celebrated in a sacred space, the ceremony is about faith, hope and love. It is our prayer that you will find fulfillment and happiness within the Christian community all the days you live together.*

### *Our Open & Affirming Statement*

*We, the members of The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, believe the following statement represents our commitment and desire to reach out and welcome those in need of and searching for God's love: **We believe we are all created in God's image, female and male, and we are called to love our neighbors as Jesus loves us. We believe we are many members, but one body in Christ, and called to unite all people in God's love. We welcome and affirm all people. We invite those who are seeking God's presence in their lives to join us in our common journey. Our faith community seeks to unite persons of all ages, races, nationalities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, mental and physical abilities, socioeconomic levels, and political and theological backgrounds. Together in our diversity, and being empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit, we will "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God"** (Micah 6:8) (Adopted September 8, 2002 by the congregation.)*

### *A Wedding at First Church*

*Arrangements for weddings begin with a call or visit to First Church to receive a tour if you are not familiar with the church and to submit a request for a wedding date and time. Once told a date is available, the wedding will not be scheduled on the church calendar until the **wedding service agreement is signed by all parties and a non-refundable deposit submitted.** Your deposit will then be applied to the Wedding Fee. We will then mail to you a packet including a signed copy of the wedding agreement, an information form for you to fill out and return, and an invoice with fees and scheduled payment thereof, and other pertinent information will be mailed to you. A minister and a wedding coordinator will be assigned. Contact numbers for them and the Minister of Music will also be provided.*

### *The Church*

*Weddings are held at First Church on Saturday afternoons. The times are 1:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Each wedding has use of the church for 3 hours: 12 to 3 for a 1:30 service, and 3 to 6 for a 4:30 service. All activity i.e. placing of flowers, photography, ceremony, and pictures following must take place within that time period. The Sanctuary, the bride's room and rooms for the groom and groomsmen are designated for your use.*

### *The Minister*

***A minister of or associated with First Church will officiate at your ceremony.*** Our wedding arrangements include three meetings with the pastor. On occasion couples wish to include other clergy (i.e., a family member) as a co-officiant. Please be sure to discuss this immediately with our pastor, including all contact for the visiting minister. Our pastor will issue an invitation to them. ***The minister plans to meet with you four to five (4-5) months prior to the wedding.***

### *The Music*

The Minister of Music of The First Congregational Church will play for all weddings (or a vacation substitute of his choice). You will meet with him at the organ, where you will hear samples of the music discussed below. He will not meet with parents, but is willing to meet with out-of-town couples nights or weekends if necessary. We have four excellent ***professional singers*** who are the soloists for weddings. ***No other soloists are permitted.*** Please do not ask to change this. The soloist fee is \$125.

The First Church ***Choir*** has sung for weddings periodically. There are several joyous anthems that can enrich the service. Should you wish the choir to sing, there is a \$500 donation requested.

Occasionally hymns are sung as part of the wedding service. If you anticipate having more than 200 guests (many of whom are churchgoers and likely to join in singing) you may want to include a hymn, and the Minister of Music can make suggestions.

*Please note: The use of recorded music of any kind is never permitted in the church. If you wish to engage any instrumentalists, please consult with the Minister of Music before contacting any instrumentalists so that all musical arrangements can be coordinated.*

Please contact the Minister of Music 60 days before your wedding to schedule a meeting. Often these can occur before or after a visit with the minister. The music meetings generally require 30 to 45 minutes.

### *The Wedding Coordinator*

*The wedding coordinator is your contact person from the church who will help you organize your wedding service and day. You will receive a form to fill out with the names of all those involved in the wedding as well as what details you would like to make your wedding a special event. Please return the form to the coordinator or bring it to your meeting together to discuss the specifics of your ceremony. You may also contact the coordinator at any time with questions you may have outside of the Pastoral or music realms. Our coordinators have long experience with our building and all types of ceremonies, ensuring that your wedding will run smoothly!*

### *Rehearsals*

*Wedding rehearsals will be scheduled on the Friday afternoon prior to the day of your wedding. All rehearsals begin promptly. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to assure prompt arrival of all members of the wedding party.*

### *Photography and Videography*

*Please note: The wedding service is a sacred act of worship to God in our church. We recognize the importance of photography, but the church policy maintains that photography must not become a distraction. The ministers and the wedding coordinators of First Church have the responsibility and authority to administer these policies. Please be sure to share these policies with your photographer early in the planning process, so that your wedding day runs smoothly.*

- a. *Couples are **required** to include the following announcement in their printed bulletins: **"The First Congregational Church respectfully requests that no flash pictures be taken during today's wedding ceremony."***
- b. *Flash photography may **not** be used in the sanctuary during the wedding ceremony. The wedding ceremony begins when music for the prelude ends.*
- c. *Photographers and videographers are not to be in evidence during any part of the ceremony. At the beginning of the processional, the photographer may go no farther into the sanctuary than the fifth or sixth row from the back of the*

sanctuary. The photographer is not to be at the front of the sanctuary during any part of the ceremony.

- d. Photographs by time exposure may be made from the gallery during the service. However, all equipment must be set up before the music begins. During the playing of any service music, photographers are not to move around in the gallery, as to do so distracts the musicians. Videotaping is to be from a fixed location. The gallery or the organ bay of the chancel area are possibilities. The video person must not be in view.
- e. Prewedding pictures may be taken in the parlor, the chapel, the narthex, the sanctuary, the bride's room, outside, or in other appropriate settings pre-approved by the Wedding Coordinator. Please check in advance since some areas of the building may be scheduled for other purposes on the wedding day.

***All photography must fit into the 3 hour time frame agreed upon for your wedding.***

*Photographers and videographers need to work out arrangements with each other regarding the placement of equipment.*

### *Floral and Other Decorations*

*The following policies are established by The First Congregational Church for floral and other decorations during weddings at the church. Your respect of these policies is expected.*

*The pastors and wedding coordinators have responsibility and authority to administer these policies about decorations in the church:*

- a. *No furniture is to be moved. No aisle runners are allowed. Liturgical banners for the season are part of the worship life of our congregation and will be in place for ceremonies.*
- b. *Nails, tacks, wires, screws or other fasteners that leave marks,*

*holes, coloring or adhesive may not be used to fasten decorations on any furniture or the building including the pews.*

c. *No floral arrangements are permitted on the Communion table except those associated with the use of the unity candle.*

d. *22 aisle candles are available for rent.*

***All decorating and removal of decorations must fit into the 3-hour time frame agreed upon for your wedding.***

### *Wedding Program*

*The preparation and printing of a program, if you choose to have one, is the responsibility of the couple. A draft of the order of service must be approved by the Church Office prior to printing.*

### *Wedding Ceremony*

#### *Order of Service*

***The following is a typical order of worship. A selection of Scripture readings and vows will be sent for you to discuss upon meeting with your minister.***

*Seating of the Grandparents, Parents of the Groom, and Mother of the Bride*

*The Processional*

*The Call To Worship*

*Introduction*

*Opening Prayer*

*Scripture Readings*

*Homily*

*Declaration of Intent*

*Pledge of Support*

*Prayer of Petition*

*Wedding Vows*

*Exchange of Rings*

*Lighting the Unity Candle*

*Prayer and the Lord's Prayer*

*Benediction*

*The Wedding Kiss, and introduction of the Couple*

*The Recessional*

### *Schedule of Fees*

***NOTE:*** For any wedding parties of 14 or more (includes the bride & groom), an additional fee of \$100 will be charged to provide for a second wedding coordinator. No children under the age of four (4) years old may participate in your wedding service as bridesmaids, flower girls or ringbearers. Additional fees for soloists and/or instrumentalists will be charged. Make arrangements through the Minister of Music.

*Persons who are not members or whose immediate families are not members.*

*\$1,850.00 fee covers:*

- services of a minister of the First Congregational Church*
- organist*
- wedding coordinator*
- custodial services*
- wedding rehearsal (one [1] hour)*
- sanctuary, bride's room and other facilities (three [3] hours)*

***The non-refundable deposit is \$1,150.00, which will be applied to the total .***

### *Schedule of Fees*

***NOTE:*** For any wedding parties of 14 or more (includes the bride & groom), an additional fee will be charged to provide for a second wedding coordinator. No children under the age of four (4) years old may participate in your wedding service as bridesmaids, flower girls or ringbearers. Additional fees for soloists and/or instrumentalists will be charged. Make arrangements through the organist.

*Members or persons closely related to members.*

*For this fee one member of the couple must be a participating member of First Church for at least one year prior to the wedding date, or parents or grandparents of at least one partner be current members.*

*\$800.00 fee covers:*

- services of a minister of the First Congregational Church*
- organist*
- wedding coordinator*
- custodial services*
- wedding rehearsal (one [1] hour)*
- sanctuary, bride's room and other facilities (three [3] hours)*

***The non-refundable deposit is \$300.00, which will be applied to the total.***

The following text may be used in printed programs for your guests' information..

### ***About The First Congregational Church***

*WELCOME!* As you await our service of marriage, look around and enjoy the beauty of this neo-Gothic place of worship. Designed by renowned New York architect, John Russell Pope, the church was dedicated in 1931.

#### ***Brussels Tapestries in the East and West Transepts —***

Woven in 1575 in Brussels by Franz Geubels, the tapestries embody the artistic ideals of the Renaissance. The monogram of the artist, which is officially recorded in Brussels, may be seen at the lower right hand corner. Theme of the tapestry in the West Transept is taken from Genesis 23, the story of Abraham's purchase. The East Transept depicts the story of Abraham sending his trusted servant to find a wife for Isaac.

#### ***Stained Glass Windows and Chancel Cross —***

The Jeffrey Window (in front) depicts our Lord's earthly life and ministry. The Friendship Window (East Transept) represents The Lord and St. John. The Gladden Window (West Transept) honors the distinguished pastor of First Church from 1882 to 1914. Dr. Gladden was nationally known for his Social Gospel views. He wrote the hymn, "O Master Let Me Walk With Thee."

The Clerestory (high) windows depict the Seven Days of Creation and the Fall. The Aisle (lower) windows (French, 1988) depict Parables from the Gospels. The Rose Window (behind the organ) portrays the cardinal Christian virtues of Love (Chi Rho), Hope, Faith, Purity, Wisdom, Courage and Justice. The Chancel Cross (1963) is made of red enameled copper on rosewood.

**The Organs:** The gallery organ was built by von Beckerath in Hamburg, Germany in 1972 and contains 3620 individual pipes. The chancel organ was built by W. W. Kimball of Chicago in 1931 and contains 4455 pipes. —

*The First Congregational Church  
is pleased to provide you with this wedding  
booklet to acquaint you with the guidelines  
for your wedding.*

*If you have any questions or concerns  
about the information in this booklet,  
please contact Denny Mahoney in the church office  
(614) 228-1741, ext. 17, or [dmahoney@first-church.org](mailto:dmahoney@first-church.org)*

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