

Weddings
at
The First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ



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TO THE COUPLE

We are pleased that you are considering the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, for your wedding. We are aware of the importance of this day to you and will do everything possible to assist you in making this a meaningful occasion. In this brochure we include general information and specific guidelines regarding wedding policy and procedures at First Congregational Church.

This reflection on Christian marriage comes from the Book of Worship of the United Church of Christ: *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.* Your wedding will be a joyous and profound experience, marked by your holy covenant with one another.

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 promise to live the kind of love demonstrated by God in Jesus Christ. With the exchange of vows and rings and the lighting of the unity candle (optional), spoken word and music, the ceremony is about faith, hope, and love.

First Church is a beautiful and sacred place for your wedding. The grandeur of our vaulted sanctuary, the exquisite stained glass windows and Brussels Tapestries, and the magnificent sounds of two world-class pipe organs evoke a spirit of inspiration and majesty, dignity and sanctity.

Our clergy and other professionals will work with you to prepare 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 this Christian community. Our staff, as faithful representatives of the One who welcomes us all in love, seeks to provide guidance and assistance for you in the planning of your wedding here.

Our prayer for you is that you will love and honor each other all the days of your life, grow in wisdom and patience, be filled with the grace of God, and find fulfillment and happiness within the Christian community.

WEDDING CEREMONY: ORDER OF SERVICE

The following is a typical order of worship. A selection of Scripture readings and vows will be discussed at the meeting with the pastor.

Prelude Music

Seating of the Grandparents and Parents

Lighting of the candles (optional)

The Procession of the Wedding Party

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Scripture Readings

Homily

Declaration of Intent

Pledge of Support

Prayer of Petition

Wedding Vows

Exchange of Rings

Lighting of the Unity Candle (optional)

Communion (optional)

Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

Benediction

The Wedding Kiss and Introduction of the Couple

The Procession of the Wedding Party



- ❖ Pre-wedding photography and videography 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 make these decisions in advance, as some areas of the church may be scheduled for other purposes on your day.
- ❖ *All photography must fit into the three hour time frame agreed upon for your wedding.*
- ❖ Photographers and videographers need to work out arrangements with each other regarding placement of equipment.
- ❖ Photographers and videographers should dress appropriately for the occasion.

FLORAL AND OTHER DECORATIONS

The following policies are established by First Church for floral and other decorations during weddings at the church. Your respect for these policies is expected. The pastors and wedding coordinators have authority and responsibility to administer these policies regarding church decorations.

- ❖ No floral arrangements are permitted on the communion table, except those decorating the base of the unity candle.
- ❖ Liturgical banners for the season are part of the worship life of our congregation and will be in place for wedding ceremonies.
- ❖ Furniture may not be moved.
- ❖ Aisle runners are not permitted.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 22 aisle candles are available for rent.
- ❖ Rose petals or other flowers may not be scattered inside the church.
- ❖ Rose petals, flowers, rice, birdseed, or any other item that leaves a potentially slippery residue may not be used outside the church.
- ❖ All decorating and removal of decorations must fit in the 3-hour time frame agreed upon for your wedding.
- ❖ The sanctuary of First Church has great beauty in its windows, architecture, and appointments. We hope you will agree with us that in most cases, "less" floral decorating is best.

OUR OPEN AND 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 have a tour of the church and facilities, if you are not familiar with the church, and to submit a request for a wedding date and time. If the date and time requested is available, *the wedding will not be scheduled until the wedding service agreement is signed by all parties and a non-refundable deposit submitted.* Your deposit will be applied to the wedding fee. You then will be given a copy of the signed agreement, an invoice detailing your fees and payment schedule and an information sheet to be filled out. Once the minister, organist and wedding coordinator have been assigned to your service, you will receive a letter detailing who they are and how to contact them.

THE CHURCH

Our church is a conveniently located downtown facility with substantial parking. Weddings are held at First Church on Saturday afternoons, either at 1:30 p.m. or 4:30 p.m. Each wedding has use of the church for 3 hours: 12 to 3 for a 1:30 service, and 3-6 for a 4:30 service. All activities (placing of flowers, ceremony, photography, including pictures taken after the wedding) must take place within that time period. The Sanctuary, bride's room, and rooms for the groom and groomsmen are designated for your use. *Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the church or on the church grounds.*

THE MINISTER

A Minister of/or associated with First Church will officiate at your ceremony. Wedding arrangements include three meetings with the assigned minister. On occasion couples wish to include other clergy (member of family or family clergy person) as a co-officiant. Please discuss this as soon as possible with the clergy at First Church and provide all contact information for the visiting minister, so that our clergy can issue an invitation. ***It is your responsibility to make an appointment with the minister four to five (4-5) months prior to your wedding.***

THE MUSIC

The Minister of Music at First Church (or a substitute of his choice) will play the organ at your wedding. ***It is your responsibility to make an appointment for a wedding music consultation, which lasts approximately 30-45 minutes, with the Minister of Music 60 days before your wedding.*** During that time you will hear samples of the finest organ music appropriate for weddings, from which you may choose music for the entrance of the groomsmen and bridesmaids, the bride and escort, music for the procession of the wedding party out of the Sanctuary at the end of the service.

If you would like to have a vocal soloist at your wedding, there are five excellent professional singers in the First Church Choir from which you may choose male or female, high or low voice. ***Other soloists, friends or family or other professionals, are not permitted. Please do not ask to change this policy.*** If you are considering engaging instrumentalists (harp, trumpet, string quartet, etc.), talk to the Minister of Music first, so that all music arrangements can be coordinated. ***Also, the use of amplification systems or recorded music of any kind is not permitted in the church.*** The First Church Choir has sung special music for weddings; should you wish the choir to sing, contact the Minister of Music.

The texts of anthems and solos ***should be sacred in nature***, speaking of the love of God and God's presence at your union or a similar theme. Popular and secular love songs are best heard at your reception.

Hymns may be sung as part of the wedding service. If you anticipate having a large gathering of family and friends, many of whom are churchgoers and likely to sing, you may want to include a hymn. The Minister of Music can offer suggestions.

THE WEDDING COORDINATOR

The wedding coordinator is your contact person from First Church. She will help you organize your wedding service and time at the church. You will receive a form to complete, listing names of attendants, escorts, those needing designated seating, florist, photographer/videographer and specific details for your ceremony. Bring this form to the scheduled meeting with your wedding coordinator. You may contact the coordinator at any time to ask questions about the building or wedding details. Pastoral and music questions or concerns may be discussed with your assigned Pastor or the Minister of Music, respectively.

REHEARSALS

Wedding rehearsals will be scheduled on the Friday evening prior to the day of your wedding, 6 p.m. rehearsal for the 4:30 wedding and 7 p.m. rehearsal for a 1:30 wedding. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to assure prompt arrival of all members of the wedding party. The wedding rehearsal begins on time and concludes within an hour.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

While wedding photography is important, church policy maintains that photography must not become a distraction. The ministers and wedding coordinators have the authority to administer these policies. **VIOLATION OF THESE POLICIES MAY RESULT IN REMOVAL FROM THE CHURCH.** Please share these policies with your photographer early in the planning process.

- ❖ Printed bulletins are required to include this announcement: *The First Congregational Church respectfully requests that no flash pictures be taken during today's wedding ceremony.*
- ❖ Flash photography may not be used in the sanctuary during the wedding ceremony, which begins when the prelude music ends.
- ❖ *Photographers and videographers should be unobtrusive throughout the ceremony. For pictures taken during the processional, the wedding coordinator will instruct the photographer where he/she may stand. The photographer and videographer may not be at the front of the sanctuary during any part of the ceremony.*

- ❖ The Gallery may be used for photography (without flash) or videography. All equipment must be set up before the prelude music begins and no equipment may be placed on the organ chest.
- ❖ Videotaping may be made from a fixed position, either in the Gallery or beside the pillars at the front in either side aisle.

WEDDING PROGRAM

The preparation and printing of a wedding program, if you choose to have one, is the responsibility of the couple. A draft order of service must be approved by the wedding coordinator prior to printing. Check with the Minister of Music for correct music listings.

INFORMATION

Contact Amy Wagner in the church office at 614-228-1741, ext. 10, or awagner@first-church.org with your questions or concerns. She will provide a tour of the church, a schedule of fees and other information that you need.

ABOUT THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The following text may be used in printed programs for your guests:

Welcome to First Church. As you await our service of marriage, look around and enjoy the beauty of this neo-Gothic house 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 of Sarah's tomb. 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 (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 1882-1914. Dr. Washington 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 & 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, 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 pipes. The chancel organ was built by W. W. Kimball of Chicago in 1931 and contains 4455 pipes.