

WEDDINGS / COVENANT COMMITMENTS AT UNITED CHURCH OF CHAPEL HILL

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.

Book of Worship, United Church of Christ

Entering into a covenant with another person creates a new relationship, a new way of living, and a new family of God. It is a joyous and celebrative event. These guidelines are intended to assist you in the planning of that event within the rhythm of the life of this congregation.

The church rejoices with you that you are making plans to celebrate the making of a covenant. It is important to remember that a wedding does not have to be elaborate to be beautiful. The beauty of the day is the gathering of family and friends with you as you affirm your union before God.

Arrangements

Call the church office (942-3540) to make an appointment to see one of the pastors. No dates are set until one has met with one of the pastors. At that time, arrangements will be made for pre-marital counseling, depending on the couple and the pastor, or other meetings in order to prepare the service.

The usual order of service is that of the Book of Worship of the United Church of Christ. The pastors will consider special requests and work with couples in preparing a service that bears witness to the Christian faith — seeking God's blessing on your covenant, praising God for your union, praying for God's help in your life together and dedicating yourselves to God as you make your vows.

One of the members of the pastoral staff officiates at church weddings or covenant commitments.

Non-members of United Church may be married or united in covenant at United Church of Chapel Hill having met with one of the pastors. Because members have priority in reservations, non-member weddings will not be scheduled more than six months in advance.

Wedding License

The wedding or covenant commitment is a service of worship, but it also confirms the legal requirements for a marriage between a man and a woman. For this service to confirm a legal marriage, a couple must obtain a marriage license prior to the service. **The license should be signed by the couple and brought to the rehearsal.**

In North Carolina, a wedding license must be obtained in the county where the wedding is to take place. As United Church of Chapel Hill is in Orange County, the license should be obtained from the Orange County Office of Vital Records, 200 South Cameron Street, Hillsborough, NC 967-9251.

No physical examination is required. The legal age for a marriage in North Carolina is 18 years. Proof of age is required for applicants under 25 years. If either applicant is under 18 years of age, the consent of one of the parents must be obtained. Both applicants must be present to sign the application, and each must bring either birth certificate or a valid driver's license with them. A photo identification is also required. There is no waiting period for the license. The license is valid for a 60-day period. The Office of Vital Records will provide full information. At the time of this printing, the cost is \$40.00.

Music

Music suitable for a service of marriage or covenant commitment directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. The congregation may join in hymns and other musical expressions of praise and prayer, or vocal or instrumental soloists may offer appropriate musical selections.

While suggestions for appropriate music are always welcomed, the church organist approves the selection of all music for a wedding. Any solo or ensemble music for the wedding should be reviewed with the organist as well.

Normally, it is expected that the organist of United Church of Chapel Hill will play for your service. If you desire a family member or friend to play, you should speak to the church organist so that person may be invited to play.

It should be noted that music is not necessary for a wedding or covenant ceremony.

Rehearsal

Plans for the service are made during meetings with a pastor. The rehearsal is a time during which the logistics, or mechanics, of the wedding (where to stand, how to process, duties of participants) are discussed and rehearsed. Normally, rehearsals take approximately one hour. **Because the pastors and organist may be responsible for a number of weddings or rehearsals, it is important that the rehearsals begin at the agreed time. Please ask participants to be prompt and attentive.**

The rehearsal will be conducted by one of the pastors. The pastor may be assisted by a wedding coordinator if there is one.

Chancel Furniture

The sanctuary space and the presence of the Table, Pulpit and Font are in and of themselves a witness to this congregation's faith and experience in being welcomed at God's table, in encountering God's word, and in being called into God's family.

While the Table, Pulpit and Font are movable, the integrity of their witness should be honored and their movement should be minimized. For example, it would be inappropriate to move the Table out of the Chancel but it would be acceptable to move it back towards the retable and create more room in the Chancel.

Also because the chancel space in its spare simplicity is a witness to the faith of this congregation, additional candelabra or floral archways should not be used.

Flowers and Decorations

There is an elegance in simplicity. Excessive decorations and floral displays are not necessary. Indeed there are weddings without flowers. If flowers are desired, there are a few guidelines.

- (1) It is possible, if having a Saturday wedding, to accept whatever flowers or greens that are on the retable (the table behind the communion table) in preparation of Sunday's worship.
- (2) If you will be using a florist, it would be advisable for them to see the sanctuary before preparing your arrangements.
- (3) Flowers may be placed on the retable (the table behind the communion table) and/or on the communion table. Flowers may also be placed in the narthex as one enters the front doors.
- (4) Ribbons or floral arrangements may be used only to designate pews reserved for family members, but no nails, tacks, wire, gummed or scotch tape may be used on any walls, furniture, or accouterments of the building.
- (5) United Church has several different sets of candle stands that may be used with your floral arrangements. Please make arrangements in advance with the Flower Committee as to which you will be using. Please do not place candle holders on any cloths which may be used on the tables.
- (6) Candelabra are not used in the sanctuary, although a Unity candle may be used, provided that the florist providing it uses dripless candles and covers the floor beneath it with protective covering.
- (7) When the sanctuary is decorated for a special season, i.e., Christmas or Easter, decorations already in place must not be altered in any way.
- (8) If you wish to leave your flowers for the Sunday worship of United Church, please let us know in advance that we may inform our Flower Committee. This is particularly important if your wedding is a late afternoon or evening wedding on Saturday, as the Flower Committee would have less time to prepare for Sunday morning services.

Time Allotted

Weddings are most often on Saturday. On many Saturdays there are multiple requests for the use of the building. For example, there are Saturdays when the Girl Scouts are having a county-wide workshop in the morning and there is a wedding in the afternoon. There have even been occasions when there are two weddings in a day. To be good stewards of this space and to schedule its use efficiently, weddings are allotted a four (4) hour time slot - two (2) hours in advance, the service, and one (1) hour following the service. If more time is needed, it may be negotiated.

Church Facilities

If you wish to use the church facilities for dressing prior to the service, rooms are available. Typically, the bride and her party use the parlor and/or rooms west of the Fellowship Hall.

Smoking and the use of alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the church building.

Use of Amplified Sound

All but the smallest of weddings will want to use the sound system in order to assure that everyone can hear. When a pastor of United Church of Chapel Hill is not present, there will be an additional fee for the services of a sound system operator. If no one is available to operate the sound system, the sound system may not be used.

Fellowship Hall Receptions

If you wish to use the Fellowship Hall for a reception, please make those arrangements in advance. The serving of alcoholic beverages is not allowed.

The cost of using the Fellowship Hall varies by the intensity of its use. As with the sanctuary space, this church facility often has multiple groups wishing to use the space or some part of the space. Unless negotiated, it is assumed that the Fellowship Hall is available four (4) hours in advance for set-up and two (2) hours following an event for clean-up.

It is expected that the caterer will provide all necessary supplies and serving implements.

Unless it has been negotiated with the custodian of United Church in advance, the wedding party is responsible for cleaning both the Kitchen and the Fellowship Hall and returning the Fellowship Hall to same configuration of tables and chairs as found. Trash should be taken to the dumpster at the west end of the parking lot. No cardboard may be placed in the dumpster. Cardboard must be re-cycled.

Wedding parties have access to the custodian's cleaning supplies (brooms, vacuum cleaners, mops, replacement trash bags, etc) in order to leave the Fellowship Hall and Kitchen clean.

Children

Weddings and receptions are adult occasions and children are too often left to entertain themselves. Please make plans for your children. Just as you plan for adults to gather and become acquainted or re-acquainted, please include plans for the children that come.

Unsupervised church school rooms are not available for your use.

Perhaps some of the older adolescents in your family would serve as baby-sitters or would be willing to organize a few activities to engage the children that are a part of your wedding or reception.

Rice/Birdseed

Rice and/or birdseed is particularly difficult to clean up inside the building. Please throw rice and birdseed outside and, preferably, on the lawn.

Photographs

There should be no flash photographs taken during the ceremony. If the couple wishes, photographs are permitted afterwards. The exceptions are the traditional pictures of the father and the bride preparing to process down the aisle and the couple walking out the aisle during the recessional.

While photographs can be important keepsakes, please take non-flash (and quiet) photographs from the back of the church with minimal movement. The same is true of videotaping the service. Please establish a position or tripod, so as not to distract the congregation away from the service with the movement of the photographer.

Costs

Since weddings require special services on the part of the church staff, it is necessary to indicate the financial responsibilities involved. However, all costs are negotiable so that no one should be discouraged from planning a wedding here for financial reasons.

The following fees apply for weddings in the church, and are to be paid at least one week in advance, with checks for facilities made payable to United Church of Chapel Hill, and checks for individuals (minister, organist) made directly to them.

UCCH members

Sanctuary no charge
Fellowship Hall (reception) no charge
Fellowship Hall (dinner)+no charge
Minister no charge
Organist \$ 300

+ Depending on the extent of the use of the space, there may be an additional fee for custodial services.

Non-UCCH couples - A contribution schedule will be included with the building use application indicating the various possible costs for facility use.

Sanctuary \$ 250
Fellowship Hall (stand up reception)+ \$ 100
Fellowship Hall (dinner)+ \$ 250
Minister \$ 300
Organist \$ 300
Sound Person (not included) please negotiate with a pastor
Key deposit (refundable). \$ 50

+ This is assuming the average size reception of 50 - 100 guests. Depending on the extent of the use of the space, there may be an additional fee for the time the space is set aside and for custodial services.

United Church of Chapel Hill
1321 Airport Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
919.942.3540

ucch@unitedchurch.org
www.unitedchurch.org

Contracting for the use of the facilities - A Scheduled Timeline:

- Meet with one of the pastors
- Set rehearsal and wedding dates on the church calendar (no earlier than six (6) months prior to the event for non-member weddings)
- Sign “Request for Wedding/Covenant Commitment in Sanctuary” form with costs (if any) indicated and receipt of payment (if any) noted. Generally, this occurs six (6) months prior to the event for both members and non-members.
- Obtain a key to the church. Church members may be issued a key to the church at their request; non-members may obtain a key 10 working days prior to the wedding by providing a \$50.00 key deposit check. The deposit check will be refunded upon return of the key and on condition that the building is left in satisfactory physical condition.
- On the day of the wedding, the church will be available to the bridal party no earlier than two (2) hours in advance of the service; it is expected that the premises will be left in clean and orderly condition no later than one (1) hour after the conclusion of the service.

Application for use of UCCH facilities

Please complete and return to church office.

Name of Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone: Daytime _____ **Evening** _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Date / Time requested: _____

Number of participants: _____

Description of space needed: _____

Please describe activity / use of space: _____

Furniture or Equipment Needed: _____

UCCH does not provide set-up.

Please plan for set-up and clean-up time in your request for building use.

Request for Wedding/Covenant Commitment in Sanctuary

Full Name: _____ (Birthday) _____

Address: _____

Phone: (home) _____ (work) _____

Church affiliation: _____

and

Full Name: _____ (Birthday) _____

Address: _____

Phone: (home) _____ (work) _____

Church affiliation: _____

Wedding: _____
date time

Rehearsal: _____
date time

Officiating Pastor: _____

Flowers will be left _____ Yes _____ No

Office Use:

Fees Received

- ___ Sanctuary
- ___ Fellowship Hall (reception)
- ___ Fellowship Hall (dinner)
- ___ Key Deposit
- ___ Minister
- ___ Organist
- ___ Sound System Operator
- ___ Other