

Union Grove Congregational United Church of Christ
Wedding Guidelines

It is Union Grove Congregational United Church of Christ’s sacred responsibility to host and witness the Christian sacrament of a wedding. This is such an exciting time in a couple’s life and we hope these guidelines answer questions specific to the preparation of your big day! To make the process go smoothly, we ask that only the couple getting married or a wedding or day-of coordinator be the point of contact.

Please note: Our congregation desires to support and encourage anyone who wishes to be married in our church. We recommend that the couple worship with us so that we can all share in faith and community. If unable to worship with us, we encourage the couple to have an active participation in another church.

For all persons who maintain active church membership (in worship attendance, acts of service, financial giving, or other forms of commitment at the discretion of the pastor), we offer the church and our preparation services free of charge, and request honorariums for certain people and positions to honor their work and services. *This includes members for whom physical limitations and geographical proximity limit in-person participation in the life of the community.*

Position:	Suggested Honorariums:	Working w/ a Day-Of or Wedding Coordinator	Working without a Day-Of or Wedding Coordinator:
Pastor	\$175	Payment will be arranged through the coordinator*	Payment will be expected at or before the service*
Organist/Pianist**	\$150	“ ”	“ ”
Soloist/other musician	\$75	“ ”	“ ”
Cleaning Fee	\$150	“ ”	“ ”

For all persons who do not have active membership (see comments above) or **community members for whom our church was not their faith home**, we offer the church and our preparation services according to the fee schedule below, with expected honorariums for certain people and positions.

Position:	Expected Fees:	Working w/ a Day-Of or Wedding Coordinator	Working w/out a Day-Of or Wedding Coordinator
Pastor	\$250	Payment will be arranged through the coordinator*	Will be expected at or before the service*
Organist/Pianist**	\$150	“ ”	“ ”
Soloist/other musician	\$75	“ ”	“ ”
Facility Fee	\$200	Will be expected at or before the service*	“ ”
Cleaning Fee	\$150	“ ”	“ ”

**all checks should be made out to name of person (i.e. Rev. _____, name of organist, name of solo/musician, etc.), except for rental costs, which should be made out to the church.*

***If using the church’s musician, the couple or their coordinator should discuss any additional rehearsals/ meetings that may be required between the musician and the wedding couple, or with any other soloists and/or musicians are required. Please be aware that this may increase the musician’s fee. If you choose to use your own musician, it is the responsibility of the couple and/or their coordinator to negotiate their fees.*

PROCEDURES WHEN PLANNING

1. The couple or their coordinator will contact the pastor to request a date and time for the service, as well as the date and time for a rehearsal, and all necessary arrangements, including how early you plan to arrive at the church, and how long you plan to stay after (i.e. for pictures). **Please note: a rehearsal is required.**
2. The pastor requests an opportunity to meet with the couple at least twice prior to the wedding to gain a better understanding of the couple's relationship and create personalized plans for the service. In addition, pre-marital counseling with the pastor is available.*
3. Some questions to consider as you prepare for the service:
 - a. Would you like a pianist/organist? Are there specific songs/hymns you'd like?
 - b. Any special music or soloist (to be coordinated by couple and the pianist/organist)?
 - c. How long would you like music to be played prior to the service beginning? (i.e. 10minutes, 30minutes)
 - d. Do you have any favorite scripture you would like included?
 - e. What kind of processional will you have? Will the bridal parties walk down together, or will one be up front to begin with? Will parents be escorting?
4. The organist/pianist should be contacted as soon as the wedding date is set for the purpose of reserving the date and planning the music. If you would prefer not to have live music, we have a sound system as well.
 - a. Music selections for the ceremony must be discussed with and approved by the pastor and the organist/pianist. Any special music (i.e. solos, etc.) must also be discussed with and approved by the pastor.
5. We will coordinate church volunteers at your request, all given expected honorariums as listed on the front page. Any further details for the service [soloist, flower arrangements, guest book, ushers, etc.] are the responsibility of couple or the coordinator.
6. A printed bulletin can be arranged if you provide the following information three weeks prior to the service:
 - a. Photo (if desired), order of service (coordinated with the pastor), names of bridal party and families, and any other information you desire to have printed.
7. The church will be open 1.5 hours before the service begins unless other arrangements are made in advance. If flowers will be delivered, the church needs to be made aware of this arrangement.

Please note: If you opt to have your own organist or pianist, all organ settings *must* remain the same.

FURTHER INFORMATION TO ASSIST YOU IN PLANNING:

***PREMARITAL COUNSELING**

It is our hope to do all we can to help prepare a couple for the adventure of marriage. Pre-marital counseling with the pastor is highly recommended, but not required. It can be an opportunity to connect more deeply to one another, learn each other's love languages, figure out how to communicate well, and strengthen your bond as a couple. To all couples getting married, we offer two complimentary sessions of pre-marital counseling included in the price of the pastor's stipend/honorarium. For church members, we offer all pre-marital sessions free of charge; for non-members any pre-marital counseling sessions beyond the two complimentary sessions will be \$50 each. Sessions typically last an hour and are done in-person.

CEREMONY PLANNING

Each bond of love is unique and a gift from God, and your ceremony should reflect that. For that reason, ceremonies are planned collaboratively between the couple and the pastor. We want to be sure it feels true to who you are as a couple and is a real celebration of the love you share. After our first initial meeting, several ceremony examples will be sent to you so you can get a feel for what you do or don't want to include. Much of this planning is done via email. We will then have at least one more follow-up meeting to finalize details.

REHEARSAL

We do require a wedding rehearsal. This will allow the pastor to walk you, your families, your wedding party, and musicians through the ceremony so everyone has a feel for what will happen during the service. Please plan at least 30 minutes to an hour. **The marriage license must be given to the pastor at the rehearsal.**

DAY OF

The pastor will arrive at least an hour prior to the ceremony to touch base with the couple or the coordinator. We will discuss ahead of time if you would like prayers with either side of the wedding party. Many couples like to do a prayer with the wedding party doing a laying-on of hands prior to the ceremony. If you would like a prayer before the meal at the reception, please let the pastor know ahead of time.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

1. Church decorating is to be done in a timely manner before the wedding. Please arrange with the pastor a time for the church to be open for you to decorate; this should be done before the day of the wedding; i.e. sometime during the week prior.
2. On the day of, flowers must be placed and arranged at an appropriate time before the wedding ceremony.
3. The church does not provide a center aisle runner, but you are welcome to use one that you purchase. We do have two candelabras available for you to use if you would like.
4. Please do **not** attach decorations with tacks, nails or tape that will leave residue.
5. Make arrangements to have someone be responsible to remove decorations, runners, flowers, etc., from the church soon after the service. This helps us prepare the church for Sunday's worship service.

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Flash pictures are **not** permitted during the ceremony but **are** permitted during the entrance and recessional.
2. Pictures are permitted after the ceremony. If you desire the pastor to be in the photographs, please have these taken early in the line-up.
3. If you wish to have a photo of the signing of the marriage license, please arrange for the photographer to take this photo first in the post-ceremony line-up.
4. Video cameras can be placed at the pastor's discretion. If using a videographer, please let the pastor know ahead of time.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Alcoholic beverages are **not** permitted anywhere in the church building or on the church grounds.
2. It is understood that members of the wedding party will not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the rehearsal or the ceremony.
3. Smoking is **only permitted outside of the church**. A receptacle will be available for disposal of cigarettes.
4. No rice, confetti or live flower petals may be thrown anywhere in the church building or immediately outside the building.

For further information and questions, please contact our church office (ugcrcc@gmail.com) or Rev. Kelsey Beebe (262.488.7020 or PastorKelseyB@gmail.com).