



**First Congregational Church, UCC**  
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# **Guide to Weddings**

at

# **First Congregational United Church of Christ**

[www.FCIndy.org](http://www.FCIndy.org)

We invite you to get married at First Congregational United Church of Christ, an Open and Affirming church celebrating God's love for all. Traditionally, wedding services opened with these words, "We are gathered here in the sight of God and this company..." While we may not use these words, we very much believe that God is present in the wedding service.

A wedding is a sacred and holy event. You can be married in any number of settings and by any number of individuals; however, a church marriage ceremony provides a unique and profoundly meaningful way to celebrate the marriage covenant. This guide is intended to answer some of your questions and explain the process of exploring marriage at First Congregational.

## Church Building

The sanctuary is air-conditioned and handicapped accessible. Arrangements may be made if the wedding party needs accessibility to the front chancel area. Wedding parties should note that alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the church building or on church grounds. Smoking is permitted outside the building only.

- The Sanctuary seats up to 150.
- There are areas available that may be used for photos, receiving line, and preparation.

## Fees and Honoraria

- There is a \$500 fee for the wedding. \$250 is due when the date/time of your wedding is reserved. It should be submitted with the information sheet and is refundable up to 30 days before the wedding. The balance (\$250) is due 30 days prior to the service.
- For members, there is only a fee of \$250, due when you submit the information sheet and schedule the date. It is also refundable up to 30 days before the wedding date. There is no additional fee.
- Honoraria for the Pastor and the Music Director/Outside musician(s) should be arranged independently with each.

## Steps to Arranging Your Ceremony

1. All couples will meet with the pastor of the church and receive approval for marriage at First Congregational UCC before securing a date.
2. Couples must pay the wedding deposit, fill out and return the wedding information sheet to the church.
3. After steps one and two are accomplished, the wedding rehearsal and ceremony dates should be confirmed with the church office.
4. Scheduled meetings for pre-marital counseling with the pastor and planning music for the ceremony with the Music Director should be arranged.
5. Honorariums should be made to the Officiant and the Music Director (or Outside Musician) according to mutually agreed upon rates.

## Photo and Video

- Photographers and videographers are expected to preserve the character of the ceremony as a religious service without disruption.
- If the wedding is to be digitally recorded, prior permission for such recording shall have been received from the officiant. All equipment should be in place, tested, and ready to operate before guests arrive (a minimum of 30 minutes before the scheduled time of the ceremony).

## Receptions and Dinners

There are limited resources for hosting receptions, dinners, or wedding meals. If you are interested in having a reception and/or meal at the church, please discuss this in advance with the officiant and the Building Manager. Additional fees may apply. Please note: due to liability issues and our commitment to mental health issues, the church does not allow alcohol in the building or on the church grounds.

## Decorations

- The wedding party will arrange with their florist for decorating the church, timing to be coordinated with the Building Manager.
- The wedding party or florist will also arrange for decorations to be removed following the ceremony.
- If floral arrangements are to be left for an upcoming church service, the church office must be informed so that a note crediting the couple's gift of the flowers may be included in the worship bulletin.
- The north and south sides of the sanctuary have four tall glass windows that may be used. There are eight hurricane chimneys and eight crystal candle holders that will accommodate standard 1½", 2", or 3" candles.
- If flowers or petals are to be strewn, an aisle runner, (provided by the wedding party) must be used.
- The church has two wrought-iron candelabras, holding nine candles each, that may be used.
- Decorations on the pews, candelabras, and windowsills may be attached with ribbons, elastic, and the like. No tape, pins, or nails may be used. The wedding party is responsible for any damage to the woodwork or church pews, including wax on the carpet or communion table.
- Birdseed or rice, if desired, should be distributed and used outside the church. Clean-up of rose petals, bubbles, etc. inside the church is the responsibility of the wedding party.

## Wedding Expectations

First Congregational invites people who are not members to consider being married at this church; however, because we have some requirements for participating in a marriage service. We expect prospective couples to:

- Become acquainted with this church. While membership is not required, we want to ensure we know each other well.
- The officiating clergy are from this church. At their discretion, the authorized minister(s) of First Congregational may invite other clergy to participate in the ceremony as requested by the marriage couple. While we expect the service to be in accordance with our United Church of Christ tradition, other faith traditions may be included at the pastor's discretion.
- For wedding music, you may choose to use the First Congregational Music Director or you may choose to employ someone of your choice. If you choose to employ someone outside of the church, any damage to church instruments is the responsibility of the couple.