

For Your Wedding...

A Guide from Union Church

Thank you for considering Union Church for your marriage ceremony! We are pleased to have been a place of worship for over 150 years, offering our sanctuary openly in God's name to all who ask. As with thousands of weddings in our past, we stand ready to be of service to you and your families to make your ceremony a meaningful occasion.

Though the wedding service is performed on behalf of a couple and their families, it remains a worship service of this church, dedicated to God. There are many ways to celebrate and worship. As you plan, these suggestions will help you know which things are appropriate for a service at Union Church.

First Things First: Where, When and Who:

Who will preside?: The Rev. Kent Gilbert, minister of Union Church, stands ready to assist you as in your service. In certain circumstances you may also request that an additional clergyperson (such as a family pastor, personal friend, or ordained family member) also take part. Our minister is very open and willing to help facilitate a wide variety of weddings, and to help you appropriately integrate others into your service. When you have a date in mind (but before you book) you may wish to meet the minister here to get acquainted. You can learn more about wedding options, premarital counseling, etc on the following pages. You should contact the minister of your choice 3-6 months before your anticipated date. After you have filled out your church reservation form, please call the pastor to confirm your date and schedule an appointment to get acquainted.



The Setting: Union Church's *Main Sanctuary* is well suited to weddings with large guest lists. The sanctuary's capacity is about 650, including seating in the balcony. If the balcony is not used, approximately 290 can be seated on the floor. Because of the building design, smaller numbers of guest will not be "lost" or "distant," so smaller services are easily accommodated. *Cowan Chapel* is located on the south side of the church buildings. It is a smaller, more intimate space which seats about 100, and is well suited for small and family weddings. There are pipe organs and pianos in both the Sanctuary and Cowan Chapel.

Weddings elsewhere: Many people choose to invite our ministers to preside at their weddings in other places, such as parks, back yards, and other churches. If this is your plan, make contact early as additional arrangements may need to be made. Outdoor weddings should have a "Plan B" in case of inclement weather. If your wedding is to be held in another sanctuary also be sure to check their policies concerning guest pastors. If your wedding is out of the immediate area for the clergyperson performing the service, you should plan to remunerate travel expenses including mileage, food and any overnight stays.

Legal Considerations:

Licenses are available at the Madison County Courthouse (Richmond) at a cost of \$35.50. Bride and groom must apply together and a picture ID is required. If one or both persons is under 18 parental consent and other documentation are required. Call the County Clerk's office (859-624-4703) for specifics. Two witnesses who are of legal age (18 or older) are required to sign your license at the time of the ceremony. These are usually the Best Man and Maid of Honor, but you may choose anyone who witnesses your vows. Bring the wedding license with you to the rehearsal and the minister will fill out the required lines and bring it to the service.



The Pastor and Your Wedding:

Planning and Counseling: If you choose to have our minister preside at your service, he will want to get acquainted with you to discuss the joys and concerns entering into marriage has raised and, of course, plan a service that will be warm and personal, reflecting your love and commitment. This is best done in three 1-hour sessions beginning about three months before the date of the ceremony. It is important to contact the minister early so the three of you can negotiate schedules.



Honorarium: There is no set “fee” or “charge” for counseling, planning and presiding over the ceremony by the minister. However, an honorarium (an amount given in appreciation) over and above the church rental is appropriate. The process of planning, preparation and the service itself, usually demands 10-15 hours of work. We recommend that you compensate the pastor with an amount equal to what you and your fiancé(e) both earn in that time. For example, if your combined hourly wage is \$20.00/hour, you might consider a gift of \$200-300. A minimum of \$100 is suggested as appropriate.

Gifts to the pastor are used for his wedding materials, continuing education, and spiritual renewal. If you are richly blessed you might consider an honorarium greater than that suggested. It is customary to present the honorarium check, made out to the pastor personally, at the time of the rehearsal.

Fees for Building Use:

We believe our building is here to be used and in order to ensure its maintenance and upkeep we ask for your help if you choose to have your wedding with us. These fees include a rehearsal of about an hour, any reasonable set-up time on the day before the wedding (with the understanding that such set-up not interfere with church events that may be scheduled during this time), 2 dressing rooms and, of course, the sanctuary or chapel on the day of the wedding itself. Also included in the fee are the services of a sound system operator (sanctuary only) and the time of the church host/ess to unlock & relock doors, turn lights on & off, help you find the your way around the building and answer questions about set-up and cleaning. You may choose to hire a wedding planner, as the church host/ess’ duties are limited to those listed. The non-member fees are:

Sanctuary: \$650 (plus a \$200 cleaning deposit which we return if everything is left as it was found)
Cowan Chapel: \$500 (+ \$200 cleaning deposit)

Your deposit will be returned to you if there is no additional charge for the host/ess’ time and the facility has been returned to its original state of cleanliness. **Please send check no fewer than 4 weeks before the date of the wedding.**

Members are asked to contribute \$350 for the Sanctuary and \$250 for Cowan Chapel and are asked to consider an additional donation. Again, if you are richly blessed you might consider a larger donation. Checks should be made out to “Union Church.”

Payment of the deposit fee, no fewer than 4 weeks before the wedding date will reserve your date on the church calendar. The full payment is due no fewer than 2 weeks before the wedding date. Naturally, if unforeseen circumstances force you to cancel or change dates, we will do our utmost to accommodate your new circumstances. However, if the cancellation is less than 2 weeks before the scheduled date, the deposit is forfeited. We ask that you designate someone to introduce him or herself to the host/ess at the rehearsal, and that that person be responsible for seeing that the dressing room(s), sanctuary or Chapel, Community Room and kitchen be returned to their regular arrangements and picked up. This person will be responsible for seeing that the guests and wedding party remove their belongings no more than an hour after the service is over. **Please have the person you designate the responsible party tell the church host when you’re leaving and he or she will look over the facility with you.**

Music for Your Wedding:

The church service can accommodate a wide variety of styles in musical settings for Christian marriage and you should feel welcome to select music that is meaningful to you. You are, however, responsible for contacting and hiring musicians for your wedding. Other vocalists and instrument players can add a great deal to the worship experience. It is customary to pay the musicians on the night of rehearsal and you should discuss the amount in advance. Some couples choose to use recorded music. The sanctuary is equipped with a sound system and a CD deck and i-pod connection, which will be operated for you. If you use a CD, we recommend making copies of any song you will use on one CD in the order you plan to use them in the service. Due to its small size, there is no sound system in Cowan Chapel, but you are welcome to bring a system of your own.



Decorating for Your Wedding:

The Sanctuary, Cowan Chapel and the Community Room lend themselves to a great variety of colors and decoration. The main sanctuary is often decorated with banners, window dressings, and specific colors during the liturgical seasons. Since you have chosen to have your wedding ceremony in a church, we hope you can respect and understand that these decorations are part of the worshiping life of the congregation and **cannot be moved** for temporary wedding events. We've listed some of the common themes and seasonal colors so you will know what to expect:



Advent (the four weeks prior to Christmas): *Dark Blue.* As the color of the sky, Blue symbolizes Christ who in one ancient Advent song is called the "Dayspring" or source of day. The dark blue also reminds us of the night when Jesus was born. It is the color of hope and waiting. During this time the sanctuary is often decorated with accents of red and green as well, especially poinsettias.

Christmas and Christmas season (through the first week of January): *White and Gold.* The traditional colors of the season are *White or Gold*, symbolizing joy in the light of day.

Season after Epiphany (January to Mid February): *Dark Green.* The season following Epiphany continues the theme established on Epiphany Day: the spread of the Good News of Christ from its source in the Jewish community to all nations on earth. The theme of this season can be called the "Time of the Church." The traditional liturgical color is *Green*, is the color of growth.

Lent (Approximately Mid February through Mid April): *Violet, Black and Grey.* The traditions of Lent are derived from the season's origin as a time when the church prepared candidates, or "catechumens," for their baptism into the Body of Christ. Most of this time of preparation is symbolized by the color *Violet*, though the season is bracketed by the mourning *Black* of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Some Lenten decorations will not be moveable.

Easter (Mid April through May): *White and Gold.* The liturgical color for this season is celebratory White or Gold. During this time, butterflies as a symbol of resurrection are represented in various ways in the sanctuary. Given the nature of these banners, it will not be possible to remove them for wedding services.

Pentecost (End of May-August): *Red.* When the season ends on Pentecost Sunday, White is replaced with *Red*. This color reminds the congregation of fire—the symbol of the Holy Spirit coming to rest on the disciples. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit overpowered the barriers of culture and race. Union Church celebrates this season until the opening of Sunday School in mid August.

Season after Pentecost (Mid August-November): *Green.* This longest season of the liturgical year is a continuation of the "Time of the Church" that began on the Sunday after Epiphany. It explores the mission of the church and uses the color of *Green*, symbolizing growth.

Some minor adjustments to pulpit area are possible, but other decoration such as banners, **must stay in place**. We ask that you be responsible for replacing anything you may need to move, and for removing all traces of tape, wires, etc., after your service. Hint: Use a camera phone to take a picture before your wedding to make sure that everything is back exactly where you left it. To preserve the furnishings, we ask that **no tacks, no nails, no scotch tape, and no staples** be used and we ask your help to keep dripping candle wax from damaging carpets, tables, and wood floors. Plastic sheeting under any candelabra or candles is a necessity.

Receptions:

The Community Room is an excellent choice for your reception for an additional fee of \$200.00, plus a refundable \$100 cleaning deposit. About 150 people can be accommodated comfortably and you are welcome to use the kitchen. A reception of about 2 hours in length is standard. Please discuss your plans in detail with the church host/ess. For the good of the environment we would prefer that you use china and silverware rather than paper and plastic goods. An ice machine is available as well. Alcohol use is not permitted on church premises, nor is smoking. Please be responsible! If there are those who need to smoke, provide them a sand can or other disposal method - outside only! There is no smoking allowed inside the building.

Photographers:

Candid pictures and/or a video of your service can present a wonderful record of your wedding service. Unobtrusive candid photography is wonderful but flashes, roving cameras and artificial lighting make it difficult for you, the minister, and your guests to fully enter a sense of worship at your wedding. The experience of the wedding itself should be more important than any records of it.



To that end we ask you to explain to your photographers and guests that candid shots are permissible but the use of a flash during the service is to be discouraged. It is also important to help them understand that moving around during the service is very distracting and, if it cannot be avoided, should be kept to an absolute minimum. Your photographer may wish to come to the rehearsal to see who will be standing where and when to get the best shots.

The best place to set up a video camera is on a tripod in the balcony. Under no circumstances will a camera be permitted in front of the congregation or in the aisles. We suggest that any special video shots that require this be taken before or after the ceremony.

Rice and Bird-Seed:

It is better if your guests throw birdseed than rice, and only outdoors, please. Wedding bubbles may be used indoors or out. Please be prepared with someone to sweep the walks clear afterwards.

OUR FELLOWSHIP PRINCIPLES

*“Union Church welcomes all followers of Christ and works with all who work with Him;
respecting each person’s conscience; working by love,
endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”*

