

Your Wedding

A guide to getting married at Barrington Congregational Church, UCC

“God has ordered the covenant of marriage that husband and wife may give to each other companionship, help, and comfort, both in prosperity and in adversity; that God may hallow the expression of the natural affections; that children may be born and nurtured in families and trained in godliness; and that human society may stand on firm foundation.”

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INTRODUCTION

We have prepared this information to help you in making appropriate wedding plans. It contains specific information to assist you in the handling of wedding details in this church. You will also find an interpretation of the wedding as a Christian service. Please read the information carefully. The services of the church staff and the church facilities are offered to you with the purpose of making your wedding a joyous and spiritually meaningful event for you, your families, and your guests.

MARRIAGE IS A LIFE COMMITMENT

Marriage is a covenantal act between two persons, who, after a period of trust and intimacy, have decided to commit themselves to each other “as long as life shall last.”

A COVENANT is a promise or contract which is elevated above everyday promises because it is consciously made before and with God, the Creator and Sustainer of our lives. A wedding is a religious ceremony and the Church over the centuries has declared the importance of that commitment in an elegant drama, which states the loyalty and the hope of the couple and the affection and support of their friends and larger family, as well as of society itself.

The Church takes marriage very seriously, and its marriage liturgies are meant to declare the quality of the relationship between husband and wife by the words and actions of the ceremony. To that end, the tradition of centuries, our denominational practices, and the hopes and trust of the couple join together in a very powerful service of worship.

THE CHRISTIAN WEDDING SERVICE

The Christian wedding is an act of worship. The church has the responsibility to see that the service is carried out in a reverent and dignified manner. More importantly, the church has the responsibility to point out to you that the wedding service should be in harmony with the best principles of Christian worship.



The Christian wedding seeks to draw all present into active congregational participation in prayer and thanksgiving to God. There are several ways of doing this through hymns, prayers, and responses. The service is made up essentially of five parts. They are:

- Processional, welcome and opening prayer
- Statement of covenant intentions
- Reading of scripture
- Wedding vows and ring ceremony
- Pronouncement, Benediction, and Recessional

When the couple meets with the minister he/she will go over the UCC marriage service that is usually used here. A copy may be obtained in advance from the church office upon request. Several responses are possible as the minister and couple plan the ceremony:

- Use that liturgy essentially as it is
or
- Make modifications, change phrases, or add material
or
- Select a different service,
or
- Write you own service, or parts of it. The bride and groom are reminded, however, that the final product of this collaboration should remain overtly Christian in language.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Our ministers, the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Larsen or the Rev. Elizabeth Barnum, should be given a minimum notice of at least three months prior to a wedding date. Such time is necessary if proper pre-marital counseling, discussion of service plans, and overall consideration of the implications of Christian marriage are to be accomplished.

Occasionally, when the bride and groom are from different denominational backgrounds, they may wish a clergyperson of another denomination to participate. If there is a special desire to have a guest clergyperson, arrangements must be made by Rev. Larsen or Rev. Barnum, and an invitation extended from him/her to the guest.

The marriage service, unless augmented by other material, is brief, usually taking no more than twenty minutes. The wedding ceremony can be enhanced, for example, by readings, lighting a family candle, singing of hymns or other appropriate music, or a homily by Rev. Larsen or Rev. Barnum.

Should you wish the church office to prepare the wedding bulletin, please notify them at least a month in advance and know that there will be an additional fee for this service.

USE OF THE CHURCH

The Sanctuary is available for services for both members and non-members. As a Christian church, we do not permit altering the display of Christian symbols in the sanctuary. The church seats 294 people comfortably with room for an additional 25 people in the choir loft at the back. The church does not have a center aisle. After conferring with Rev. Larsen or Rev. Barnum, the actual date and time for the service of marriage should be cleared through the church office. The Fellowship Hall and its kitchen may be available for a reception. Alcoholic beverages may not be sold or consumed on the premises.

FINANCES

Below is the fee schedule. *If you are not a member of the congregation a \$450 security deposit is required in order to reserve the date for your wedding.* The deposit is completely refundable if the couple has not yet met with the minister and the wedding is canceled at least one month prior to the wedding date. If the couple has already met with the minister, then a portion of the deposit may not be refunded (as payment for the consultation(s) with the minister).

For accounting purposes, separate checks should be made out for each of the fees. When payment is due, please call the church office to find out to whom the checks should be written.

Use of Church (fee applies to non-members only)*	\$ 450.00
Minister's Honorarium (includes consultations)	300.00
Non-Members*	600.00
Organist	
wedding & consultation	200.00
additional consultations	50.00 per hour
attendance at wedding rehearsal	50.00
rehearsal with vocal or instrumental soloist	50.00 per hour
Custodian - church service only	100.00
- with reception	an additional 30.00 per hour (2 hr minimum)
Bulletin preparation (optional)	50.00 plus cost of materials
Candelabra (optional)	
(Two with 7 candles each)	20.00
Reception (optional)	If Fellowship Hall is needed for the reception, a request form must be filled out at the church office for review by the Buildings and Grounds Ministry Team. A fee will then be determined by the team at that time.

A \$450 security deposit is required from non-church members in order to secure the date.

All fees are due two weeks before the day of the wedding.

* When either the bride or groom is an active member or friend of the church who supports BCCUCC with their pledge or gift, there is no fee for use of the church for their wedding. For all others, there is a fee associated with using the building. In addition, non-members pay a higher honorarium to the minister.

If any of these costs are considered a hardship for you or your family,
please discuss them with the minister.

LICENSE

Rhode Island law requires that you secure a license from the town or city in which the bride lives. If both bride and groom are from out of state, the license should be obtained from the Barrington Town Hall. You should apply for the license at the Barrington Town Hall at least one month before the service. If it is not a first marriage for either the bride or the groom, you must take a death certificate or final divorce decree with you. Once granted, the license is good for ninety days. It is wise to bring the license to the church office as soon as it has been obtained. Under no circumstances will the marriage service be performed unless the minister has the license in his possession. A certified copy of the license and marriage certificate can be obtained from the Town Hall about a week after the wedding.

COUNSELING

The minister officiating at the wedding - either Rev. Larsen or Rev. Barnum - will expect to have at least one conference with you before the rehearsal. The minister will help you review the details of the service and your marriage vows.

REHEARSAL

A rehearsal of the wedding is usually needed and normally takes place the day before the wedding, but the exact date and time will be worked out with officiating minister. We urge that everyone who will participate in the wedding be present and on time for the rehearsal as well as for the wedding itself.

PHOTOGRAPHY

A photographer or videographer may take pictures before and during the processional or after the recessional. No pictures are to be taken during the ceremony except from the choir loft without flash. The wedding party may return to the chancel after the service for pictures. It is the responsibility of the person employing the photographer to share these restrictions and to communicate this information to guests. A stationary video camera may be left unattended after consultation with the minister.

GUESTS

Drinking alcoholic beverages is not permitted anywhere on the church property.

It is the church's policy that no confetti, birdseed, or rice be thrown about the church or its grounds.

An elevette is available for those who have difficulty with stairs. The church office must be notified in advance of need so that there is someone available to run the elevette the day of the wedding.

FLOWERS

Any floral arrangements are the responsibility of the wedding couple. From experience two matching arrangements are suggested. The church office should be notified if flowers are to be left for services or for distribution to a nursing home or the sick. The church will be open one hour prior to the service for the delivery of flowers. If flowers are to be placed on the ends of the pews, we ask that they be attached without the use of tacks or tape.

CANDLES

Please notify the church office if you wish to use the candelabra. There are two brass candelabra and each hold seven candles. The church provides the 14 white candles at a small charge.

MUSIC

Both the joy and solemnity of the occasion may be enhanced by music carefully and tastefully performed. Music in the ceremony is not meant to be background music. It is an integral part of the Christian service. Music enhances the dignity and drama of the marriage service.

The use of soloists, choirs, bells, and instrumentalists can greatly enhance the service and our organist can assist you with this.

Congregational singing is a means of encouraging participation on the part of the guests. The organist or minister can suggest a number of hymns or other appropriate music.

The organist of the Barrington Congregational Church, UCC, is an experienced professional and safeguards the standards of music performed therein. She has the right of approval of the choice of all service music whether organ, choral, or instrumental, as well as soloists. Particular requests will always be considered; however the standards which apply to music of all religious services at the Barrington Congregational Church, UCC, will apply to weddings as well.

The organist of the Barrington Congregational Church, UCC, must be contacted at least three months before the wedding *either* to be asked to play *or* to approve the use of any other organist or guest musicians. If our organist is available but you choose to use another qualified organist, it is understood that you will compensate our resident organist.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to set up an appointment with the organist to discuss the music for the wedding. The organist contact information can be obtained by calling the church office at (401) 246-0111.

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