

Your Wedding

A guide to getting married
at Barrington Congregational Church, UCC



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INTRODUCTION

We are delighted that you are considering having your wedding at Barrington Congregational Church, UCC. 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. 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 COVENANTED COMMITMENT

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. The one presiding acts as an official representative of the church and gives the marriage the church's blessing. The congregation joins in affirming the marriage and in offering support and thanksgiving for the new family.

from the U.C.C. Order of Marriage

THE WEDDING SERVICE

A wedding held in the sanctuary of BCCUCC is a Christian religious service. The wedding service seeks to welcome and include all present. The service typically includes the following:

- Prelude, Processional, Welcome and Opening Prayer
- Expression of Intent & Pledge of Support
- Scripture Lessons & Readings
- Exchange of Vows & Rings
- Blessing & Pronouncement, Benediction, Recessional

The selections and specifics of the order of service are determined in consultation with the presiding minister. There are options to include both traditional and contemporary language, select readings, write selected portions, and craft a meaningful ceremony that will resonate with the couple and guests.



POLICY STATEMENTS

Our ministers should be given a minimum notice of at least three months prior to a wedding date. Such time is necessary to provide consultations and plan the service.

Occasionally, when the individuals are from different denominational or faith backgrounds, they may wish a clergy person of another denomination or religious tradition to participate. If there is a special desire to have a guest clergy person, arrangements must be made with our minister, and an invitation extended from our minister to the guest.

The marriage service, unless augmented by other material, is brief, usually taking no more than 20-30 minutes. The wedding ceremony can be enhanced, for example, by readings, lighting a family candle, singing of hymns or other appropriate music, or a reflection by the minister.

Should you wish the church office to prepare the wedding bulletin, please notify your presiding minister and the church office 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.

Our ministers are available to preside at services for both different-sex and same-sex couples.

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 the minister, 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.

LICENSE

If either partner lives in Rhode Island, the couple should apply for the license at the clerk's office in the city or town of residence of either of the individuals.

If both partners are non-residents and the ceremony will take place at Barrington Congregational Church, the license should be obtained from the Barrington Town Hall in-person.

Once granted, the license is good for ninety days. It is wise to bring the license to the presiding minister as soon as it has been obtained.

Please contact the city or town office where you will apply for the license to verify requirements and visit the following website for further & updated information about how to get a Marriage License in Rhode Island. <http://www.health.ri.gov/records/howto/getamarriagelicense/index.php>

Our ministers are available to preside at services for both different-sex and same-sex couples. In 2010, the Barrington Congregational Church, UCC formally adopted an Open & Affirming Statement (see page 7). As of August 1, 2013, the state of Rhode Island grants licenses for marriages of both different-sex and same-sex couples.

All couples will receive a signed marriage certificate in accordance with the rites and rituals of the United Church of Christ with the seal of the Barrington Congregational Church, UCC. This is a religious document.

CONSULTATIONS & PASTORAL COUNSELING

The minister officiating at the wedding will expect to have at least one consultation, typically three consultations, with you before the rehearsal. These consultations include introductions, sharing of faith journeys, pre-marital pastoral counseling, and service preparation. The minister will help you review the details of the service and your marriage vows. Additionally, the ministers can refer couples to skilled counseling professionals if longer-term counseling is requested or suggested.

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 couple 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.

AFFIRMATION OF WELCOME

We believe that all people are blessed and loved equally by God. Following the teachings of Jesus we heartily welcome everyone into God's covenantal community. Whatever your race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic or marital status, variety of thoughts and beliefs, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression - whoever you are and wherever you come from you are welcome into the full life and ministry of our church.

*This Affirmation of Welcome was unanimously adopted by the congregation
at the church's Annual Meeting held on June 6, 2010*

Revised by the Staff and Deacons October 2014
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Fees revised September 2017