The Policy of the Board of Deacons

on

WEDDING SERVICES

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We at The Kingston Congregational Church want you to know how pleased we are that you are considering our church for your marriage ceremony.

The congregation of the church has given the Board of Deacons the responsibility for all services of worship in the church, including marriage services. Marriages are very special services of worship for the couple, for their families and for their friends. Thus, the church is concerned with making sure that this special worship service which you are considering will be a significant moment in your lives as well as an appropriate service of worship for this church.

The United Church of Christ's Book of Worship reminds us that...

> *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 as husband and wife 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.*

To help you plan for your wedding and to know the traditions, requirements, and expectations of the church, the Board of Deacons has prepared this guide for you. It is our joy to work together with you to make this one of the most special and meaningful days of your life.

How to begin:

Call the church office and indicate your interest in being married at the church. You will be given this guide, the schedule of fees for weddings, and a Wedding Application form.

Return the completed and signed Wedding Application to the Church's Office Administrator. After it is received, you will be called by the Pastor to schedule for an interview.

You may ask the Office Administrator to "pencil-in" a **tentative** date for the rehearsal and wedding service on the master calendar of the church. This date remains tentative until after the couple has met for the first session with the Pastor.

Premarital counseling:

Those desiring to be married at The Kingston Congregational Church commit themselves to a series of premarital counseling sessions with the pastor. These consist of two to three one-hour conversations. The first is an initial planning session, the second is a conversation about the marriage relationship, and the third, if needed, is a combination of counseling and planning. Additional sessions may be scheduled if the Pastor feels they are required.

All arrangements are to be deemed tentative until the second interview in the series has been completed. The Pastor is the sole arbiter of whether or not a proposed or scheduled wedding will occur at The Kingston Congregational Church, and will communicate any indications to the contrary to both parties involved immediately and directly.

The Service:

The United Church of Christ provides an "Order for Marriage." Note that the Pastor does not marry the couple. Rather, the couple marries one another by making a public commitment to each other with their vows, by exchanging rings, and by joining hands in the presence of God and the company of family and friends.

In consultation with the Pastor, you may want to develop a service which will uniquely express the meaning of your marriage. The Pastor is prepared to work with you in developing such a service, which might include writing your own vows, including guest speakers or musicians, the selection of favorite readings, or other modifications.

Traditional Vows of the Marriage Covenant

I give myself to you
to be your wife/husband.
I promise to love and sustain you
in the covenant of marriage,
from this day forward,
in sickness and in health,
in plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow,
as long as we both shall live.

Expectations:

* A wedding at The Kingston Congregational Church is a Christian service of worship. We presume you desire to be married in a church because you are a person of faith. The wedding is a time of praise, prayers, and invoking God's presence and blessing. Those not comfortable with a wedding in the context of a community of faith should request information from their town clerk about others in the state who can officiate at weddings.

* "Till death do us part" is the commitment a bride and groom make to one another. Whatever your past experience, you are now making a commitment to stay together for the rest of your lives... "as long as we both shall live." You are giving your word to one another that, no matter what ever happens, the relationship is not at stake: You are promising to remain married.

Policies and procedures:

1. OBTAIN a) this booklet, b) the Wedding Application form, and c) the schedule of fees from the Office Administrator. Return the completed and signed Wedding Application to the Office Administrator.

2. THE PASTOR, upon receiving your application, will call you to schedule an interview. At that interview, dates will be discussed but remains tentative until the premarital counseling process has been completed.

3. THE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH WILL OFFICIATE AT ALL WEDDINGS which take place at The Kingston Congregational Church, unless for some reason that is not possible. Guest clergy (e.g., relatives or friends who are Pastors) may be invited to take a part in the service, but only at the invitation extended by the Pastor of The Kingston Congregational Church.

4. THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL WEDDING MUSIC. If unavailable for any service, the Director of Music will make other arrangements in consultation with the Pastor. Suitability of certain music for the organ, as well as consideration of the appropriateness of suggested music, will be the decision of the Director of Music. If music is requested which the Director of Music does not own, it must be provided by the couple at least two weeks prior to the service. Use of recorded music (e.g., tape recording) is not encouraged. Guest musicians should not be invited until after consultation with the Director of Music and Pastor. It will be the responsibility of the couple to schedule a planning consultation with the Director of Music.

5. REHEARSALS. All participants must be present and on time for the wedding rehearsal. Bring with you: the marriage license and any special items to be used. Fees are due and payable at the rehearsal in separate envelopes. Allow one full hour for the rehearsal. In respect to staff members present, please inform all members of the wedding party that the rehearsal will start on time, even if members of the wedding party or family have not yet arrived.

6. PREVIEW THE PREMISE, if you are unfamiliar with our church and its facilities. The building is normally open 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Photographers:

There are to be **no flash pictures** taken during the ceremony, either by guests or by professional photographer. No moving about by photographers or members of the congregation is allowed.

Your photographer is permitted to take flash pictures during the Processional and the Recessional, and may take available light photos during the service from the balcony or any other vantage point out of sight of the congregation, if done in silence. Photographers (or others) may not walk around or be up front during the service. Please request your photographer to consult with the Pastor prior to the service.

Consider whether you would like most of your photographs taken before or after the ceremony. Some wedding parties favor taking photographs before the ceremony to insure that all members of the party are present and to avoid long delays between the ceremony and the reception.

Video taping of the ceremony may be made from the balcony with available light, with the approval of the Sexton.

Printed Order of the Service

A printed order of the marriage ceremony is not necessary, although it can be helpful to your family and friends as well as a keepsake. It is your responsibility to have the bulletin printed (some couples make their own on their computer with special paper available from an office supply store). The minister will be pleased to give you the order of worship a week in advance by request.

Flowers and decorations:

Since the beauty of the Sanctuary is its antiquity and simplicity, floral decorations are best kept to a minimum. You may wish to place a small floral arrangement on the table in the narthex. Decorations on the end of pews are not permitted because the aisles are so narrow. Aisle carpets are not used at The Kingston Congregational Church.

Unity Candle

A unity candle adds beauty and meaning to a service, signifying how the two lives and lights become one. You are responsible for providing the unity candle, tapers, and holders. Some brides and grooms ask florists to provide. Others ask a friend or family member if they would be willing to make the unity candle – a special gift!

Confetti & rice:

Confetti and rice may not be used inside the church buildings or elsewhere on the premises. Some wedding parties provide bubbles to guests to use.

Alcoholic beverages:

Alcoholic beverages of any kind are prohibited on the church premises. Please note: The Pastor may not conduct a ceremony when it is any way apparent that either bride or groom has been drinking, no matter how small an amount may be reported to have been consumed.

Our facilities:

THE SANCTUARY seats 150 people without using the balconies (for another 75). It has two main aisles, not a center aisle.

THE AUDITORIUM is served by a fully-equipped **kitchen**. This area is suitable for wedding receptions of about 100 people, subject to specific regulations governing its use.

Our staff:

* **The Office Administrator, Shirley Schock,** handles all matters of scheduling and use of facilities. The church Office Administrator will provide you with this booklet, the Application, and the schedule of fees. Contact at 783-5330.

* **The Director of Music, Dr. Enrico Garzilli,** offers consultation concerning the selection of music appropriate to the occasion, rehearses with and accompanies soloists, and plays for both the rehearsal and the wedding service. Contact at 783-6141.

* **The church sexton** sees to the general comfort and cleanliness of the sanctuary and all other facilities being used. The sexton is present at both the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony. Contact at 783-5330.

* **The Senior Pastor, The Rev. John W. Zehring,** meets with the couple, directs the rehearsal, and presides at the wedding ceremony. The minister's contact in planning is only with the bride and groom. Contact at 783-5330.

Planning Checklist:

__ Get and read this booklet, Application, and Fee Schedule from Office Administrator.
__ Return completed and signed application to Office Administrator.
__ Meet with Pastor (Pastor will call you after receipt of Application).
__ Schedule follow-up sessions with Pastor.
__ Set rehearsal (usually evening before wedding at 5:00 p.m.)
__ Call the Director of Music to discuss music.
__ Contact florist. Explain to florist when and where to deliver all arrangements. Make sure anyone preparing decorations or flowers understands church wedding policies.
__ Contact photographer. Inform of church wedding policies.
__ Plan and schedule reception.
__ Obtain marriage license(s). You are responsible for complying with all state laws in application for the license.
__ Deliver marriage license and fees to Pastor at rehearsal.
__ Take a deep breath, relax, take charge of your own wedding. Don't get so stressed out that you don't enjoy your own wedding. We will all work together to make this a beautiful and significant ceremony for you!