

WEDDING POLICY
St. Matthew United Church of Christ
1420 South Gables Boulevard
Wheaton, Illinois 60189
Phone: 630-665-1236
www.stmatthewucc.org

Before the Wedding

We are glad you are considering a wedding at St. Matthew United Church of Christ in Wheaton. Choosing a wedding at a church suggests that you would like your faith to be part of making loving vows to one another. As such, our desire is to have a wedding that is both worshipful and reflective of your love for one another. We celebrate Christian weddings with the belief that God's love, as modeled in the life of Jesus, provides the foundation of a loving life together.

The pastor will want to meet with you after you have set up a definite date for your wedding with the church office. Please arrange for an appointment. Weddings are not firm on the church calendar until the Wedding Checklist form is completed and returned to the church. For non-members, or those who are not supportive friends of the church, a **\$125 deposit** is necessary to secure the date.

Part of our commitment to you as individuals and as a couple is to support you in beginning your marriage by helping you explore your expectations for your life together and to offer some relationship skills that will support your happiness. You will be asked to meet with the pastor two or three times both to support you as a couple and to help you work out the details of the wedding. If you live far away, you and the pastor will visit by phone and/or have you work with a pastor or a pastoral counselor in your area for pre-marriage counseling.

Setting the Date and Time

The policy of the church is that all weddings on the same day must have a four hour time period between them; therefore, if a 1:30 PM wedding is scheduled, the earliest another wedding can be scheduled is at 5:30 PM.

Music

All music should be arranged at an early date in consultation with the Organist. The selection of soloist, vocal and organ music will be done in this manner. Your suggestions for music, either to be sung or played, are welcome; however, the organist and minister will give final approval to the appropriateness of the music selected.

Decorations

All decorations will be provided by the family. The family may wish to give the flowers to the church for its use. If so, they are asked to contact the church office a week or two before the wedding date. An altar candelabrum is available from the church. No rice or bird seed may be thrown, but bubbles, hand bells, ribbon wands and similar alternatives are wonderful.

At the Rehearsal

A rehearsal is necessary for most weddings. Approximately one hour is needed, and the time will have to be arranged at the mutual convenience of the Minister and yourself. In addition to the couple, all attendants (ushers, etc.), and parents of the bride and groom, should be at the church promptly at rehearsal hour.

The **MARRIAGE LICENSE** should be brought to the rehearsal and given to the Minister to keep until the ceremony. This prevents forgetting it the day of the wedding. All fees should also be paid at this time. Separate checks should be made out to the minister, organist, wedding coordinator, a/v technician, and church facilities.

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Interfaith and Inter-religious Weddings

St. Matthew United Church of Christ is an ecumenically inclusive Christian Church. We recognize that couples may come from different faith backgrounds. There may be opportunities to include others to officiate along with a pastor or representative pastor of St. Matthew UCC. Any invited to share in the service will be done with the approval and invitation of St. Matthew's Pastor. As the marriage ceremony is a worship service of St. Matthew UCC, we will work to balance the desires of a couple with respect for our church's values and another religious denomination or faith.

Same-Sex and Opposite-Sex Weddings

St. Matthew UCC affirms and welcomes all who desire to share in a committed and loving marriage. When marriage is entered into thoughtfully and a couple commits to grow in love, forgiveness, and faithfulness, marriage is a path to becoming a more loving human being, a means of God's grace. As we believe a Christian marriage is based on the faithful love of God, what is important for us is that the commitment expresses both faithfulness and an intention for a lifelong commitment. As we say in our worship, "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here." So we welcome all couples.

At the Wedding

The attempt of the church is to have the wedding conducted as the wedding couple wishes it. There are, however, certain regulations which the church wishes to enforce so that the wedding honors both God and you:

- (1) The photographer or videographer shall make every attempt to be unobtrusive or nearly invisible during the service. The service begins with the seating of the first guest and ends with the recessional. The photographer shall refrain from the use of flash photography between the processional and the recessional

Pictures of the bridal party may be taken from the back before they start down the aisle and as they leave.
- (2) The Minister will be glad, if requested, to re-enact parts of the service for the purpose of pictures of the ceremony itself.
- (3) Video cameras should be stationary in an appropriate position. We have a video camera at the back of the sanctuary that can be used to record the service from a fixed position.
- (4) A copy of the guidelines is available so that you may pass it along to your photographer.

Additional Items – Seasonal decorations cannot be removed to accommodate a type of wedding theme. Smoking is not permitted in the building and alcoholic beverages are not permitted in or on church property. The church is not liable for any items left by the wedding party or florist and all flora and personal property must be removed immediately following the ceremony. If using an aisle runner from a florist, it must be at least 35 feet in length. Fees for having rehearsal or reception dinners in our Fellowship Hall are quoted upon request.

If you have questions, contact the church office at **(630) 665-1236**.

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Charges and Fees

The deposit, wedding coordinator, organist, A/V technician, Pastor's honorarium, and custodian fees are to be paid by all who use the facilities, as follows: *Payable to:*

Deposit (non-members)	\$125-----	St. Matthew UCC
Pastor (non-members)	\$300-----	Pastor Allen Mothershed
Pastor's suggested honorarium (members)	\$150-\$200 ----	Pastor Allen Mothershed
Wedding Coordinator	\$175-----	<u>(tbd)</u>
Organist	\$200-----	Brian Dobbelaere
A/V Technician Fee	\$ 50-----	<u>(tbd)</u>
Custodian, Wedding Cleaning for Sanctuary	\$125-----	St. Matthew UCC
(If a deposit is required, it will be applied to this fee.)		
Custodian, additional for Fellowship Hall	\$125-----	St. Matthew UCC

Church members and friends who give financial support to the church are not charged for the use of the building. Charges for all others are as follows: *Payable to:*

Sanctuary and changing rooms	\$500-----	St. Matthew UCC
Fellowship Hall and Kitchen	\$200-----	St. Matthew UCC

Separate checks for the minister, wedding coordinator, organist, A/V technician, and church/custodian should be given to the Pastor the night of the rehearsal.

Deposit (Not refundable) – Fee is due at the first counseling session, cash or check. The deposit guarantees the wedding date will be reserved on the church calendar and will be applied to the custodial fee.

Wedding Coordinator Fee – The coordinator will be present for the rehearsal time, as agreed upon by the pastor and wedding couple. The coordinator will be at the church 2 1/2 hours before the start of the wedding for floral arranging, photography etc, during, and 45 minutes after the ceremony. If small children must be present during the 2 1/2 hour time period before the wedding, for their own protection, they must be supervised at all times by an adult other than the wedding coordinator. The coordinator helps the wedding party by opening up the building and preparing it for the wedding rehearsal and wedding. They unlock doors, regulate heat or air conditioning, prepare the altar, arrange chancel and altar area, place candles in the sanctuary if requested by wedding party, clean and put back candle globes and holders, assist the pastors in coordinating the wedding party procession, assist the wedding party and photographers by being available for questions on how the facility can best serve needs which arise, provide security, plus many other duties.

Organist Fee – This includes a consultation, a rehearsal with the soloist/musician, and playing for the service. Ordinarily, the staff pianist/organist will be the primary musician leading the music program for your wedding. In accordance with the American Guild of Organists' Code of Professional Ethics, there is a \$100.00 "Bench Fee" when you request that another, properly qualified pianist/organist be allowed to play at your wedding. This properly compensates the staff pianist/organist, while allowing you to select a pianist/organist to play at your wedding. It is the responsibility of the staff pianist/organist to preserve the integrity of the liturgy as regards the musical portion of your ceremony.

A/V Technician Fee – Handles the sound and lighting systems for the rehearsal and wedding.

Note: If CDs and/or tapes are provided for the service, they must be presented to and reviewed by our staff pianist/organist at the consultation and will be handled by our a/v technician during the wedding.

Custodial Fee – Necessary cleaning before and after the service. ***Deposit will be applied to this fee.***