

WEDDING INFORMATION BOOK



2017

**First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
300 S. Minnesota Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
(605) 336-3072
www.firstcongucc.com**

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! This is a very important time in your life and we at First Congregational Church want to help make your wedding day a time to remember with much happiness.

As you begin to plan your day, you will want to check with the church for availability of one of the pastors and the church. If you wish to have an “outside” pastor perform the ceremony, that will need to be approved before booking the ceremony.

The pastor officiates at your wedding, representing both church and state, but it is you who bind yourselves to each other in mutual covenant, by your promises before God and in the presence of the gathered community.

You will want to talk with the pastor well in advance of the wedding. The pastor will visit with you not only about all the wedding details, but also about the deeper significance of the institution of marriage. You will talk about ways of strengthening the bonds of marriage which will enable you to experience greater fulfillment as a couple sharing life together, and about how to anticipate some of the problems of adjustment that accompany marriage. A minimum of 2 counseling sessions should be expected. You will need to call the church office to schedule these.

After the church and pastor have been booked, we ask that you keep the office updated on plans by completing the information sheet that is included. You will be assigned a wedding coordinator to help you navigate in the church and help make the day a little less stressful. They are familiar with the church and the equipment available at the church. In addition, they are familiar with all of the rules and procedures concerning decorations, pictures and music. They will be at your rehearsal and the day of the wedding.

Please note that weddings **will not** be scheduled on the following days or the weekend of:

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day
Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter)
Independence Day (July 4th)
Sidewalk Arts Weekend
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Eve or Christmas Day
(the week between Christmas and New Year's)

Effective 7-1-13

WEDDING EXPENSES

Member Definition: A member is a person whose name appears on the membership rolls of First Congregational Church as a Member for at least 18 (eighteen) months prior to reserving the wedding date. The bride and groom are eligible for member rates if one of the parents of either the bride or groom is a member. Full-time college students who have been active in worship and participate in activities at First Congregational Church prior to reserving the wedding date are eligible for member rates.

Deposit: A \$250 refundable deposit is required to secure the wedding date. It is to be collected the day the wedding is booked. It is to secure the date and act as a deposit against damage to the facility. **It cannot be used to pay for any facility fees charged** and will be refunded within 7 days after the wedding, less any damage costs.

Facility Fee: Member—\$700
 Non-Member (with one of our pastors) - \$1225
 Non-Member (with outside pastor) - \$1,525

Use of Facility: The church will be available to the bridal party for 4 hours prior to the ceremony, which will include dressing and pictures. If you want to arrive at the Church earlier than 4 hours before the ceremony, you will be billed \$100 per hour. If you wish to decorate for your wedding, it can usually be done on Friday morning from 8:00 to 11:30 when staff is available, at no extra cost.

The facility fee includes the services of the following:

- Pastor
- Organist
- Wedding Coordinator
- Custodian
- Audio Technician

The facility fee is inclusive and will not be discounted if other arrangements are made for an alternative Pastor or Organist. **The facility fee does not include payment to the soloist.**

All fees must be paid in full no later than the Monday before the wedding rehearsal.

Guest Books & Candles

We suggest using a guest book that has clip out pages so that guest books can be at both the west and east entrances. Basket should be provided for cards. (Please arrange for several people to be responsible for taking cards and gifts out of the church).

Greeters: We ask that you have 2 people as hosts at the west doors to direct people to the Sanctuary and restrooms. They should be in place 45 minutes before the ceremony.

Photography

The church does not allow flash photography taken in the sanctuary during the ceremony. A professional photographer may take pictures during the processional and recessional as approved by the Pastor.

Photographs taken prior to the ceremony by a professional photographer must be completed 45 minutes to 1 hour prior to the beginning of the ceremony. The bride and groom are responsible for letting this policy be known, not only to any professional photographer but also to relative and friends. A video recording may be made of the wedding ceremony but the camera will be placed in the church balcony and must not be moved. The pastor or wedding coordinator will make final determinations about pictures.

Please inform your family and friends that no pictures are to be taken during the service while seated in the sanctuary. Your family and friends are welcome to take pictures before or after the ceremony, with permission from your official photographer.

Conduct of Guests

As the wedding is set within the context of worship, participants and guests are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE NOT PERMITTED ON THE CHURCH PREMISES (BUILDING OR PARKING LOT).** Persons under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances will not be permitted to participate in the wedding. Smoking is prohibited in the building. No food or beverages are permitted in the sanctuary at any time. **Your deposit will not be returned if we find alcohol to be present.**

The Pastor reserves the right to halt the ceremony if a member of the wedding party or a guest is behaving in an inappropriate manner.

Parking

For the rehearsal and wedding day, there will be ample free parking in the east and west parking lots of First Congregational Church. Entrances to the church are off of Minnesota Avenue and Dakota Avenue. If you are planning on a limo to pick you up after the ceremony, we will need to know that so that the parking meters can be "tagged" for that purpose.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal is usually held the evening before the wedding. It cannot be scheduled before 5:30 PM so that the Wedding Coordinator can be here for the rehearsal. Prior to the rehearsal, the Pastor/minister will decide upon details so that the rehearsal should not take any longer than 45 minutes to an hour. All participants in the wedding party will need to be present and they should keep in mind that the wedding service is an act of worship, so the rehearsal is actually a time of preparation for effective worship. We do ask that your attendants and the people involved in the rehearsal be respectful of the schedule and plan to *arrive early*.

Ushers

You will need one usher for every 50 guests. Ushers should start ushering 45 minutes prior to the service.

Flowers & Flower Pinner

As you plan your flowers, please consider the possibility of a wrist corsage for women or something your florist may suggest. Many people do not want pins stuck in the fabric of their top and in the case of summer clothing, that also creates some challenges. Flower pinner need to be present at least 3 hours before the wedding is scheduled to begin, along with the list of everyone who is to receive a corsage or bout. Ask the florist to provide extra corsage pins.

The Bridal Room

The Bridal Room (Gerlinger Room), along with the men's changing area, must be in good order before the wedding party leaves the church. All valuables should be locked in cars before the ceremony as the church is open to the public.

Child Care

Childcare is not provided by the church. The nursery may be used as long as a responsible adult supervises the children and that the nursery is cleaned up prior to leaving.

Decorations

The florist selected will be responsible for decorating and removing floral bouquets/ decorations without interfering with other scheduled activities of the church. **Absolutely no glitter can be used on decorations.** They will be expected to leave the sanctuary uncluttered. Under no circumstances will they be permitted to use scotch tape on any of the walls or furnishings. Masking tape will usually fill any need of this nature.

We do not allow rice or confetti to be thrown after the wedding, but birdseed is allowed.

Preparation for the Ceremony

The Bridal Room (Gerlinger Room) is provided for the bride and her attendants to change clothes before the pictures and ceremony. There is a kitchenette next to the Gerlinger Room for some beverages or light snack if so desired. The groom and his attendants will change downstairs and there is also a kitchen area available for them as well. Both areas must be cleaned before the ceremony starts. The church will be available to the wedding party up to 4 hours prior to the ceremony.

Ceremony Schedule

Wedding party, parents and all pre-seated guests will meet downstairs 45 minutes prior to the service (when ushers start ushering). Candles should be lit 10 minutes before service.

Bride's and Groom's Checklist of Things to Think About

- Keep all appointments promptly, or notify those you have appointments with that you will be delayed and/or make new arrangements.
- Before finalizing plans, check with the Pastor, Wedding Coordinator, and/or organist to see if your plans conform with church policy.
- Make sure all involved are notified of any change in plans. A small detail may seem unimportant, but could lead to problems.
- When choosing your attendants, remember how much room there is at the altar. Don't have so many that you are crowded.
- If you have extra people you wish to honor, here are some suggestions that will help make your wedding go more smoothly:
 - Host and hostess (other than parents) to greet your guests in Fick Hall (west entrance area) and at the wedding reception.
 - Someone to be present at the gift table.
 - Someone to collect and remove wedding gifts from the church.
 - Someone to assist small children and/or elderly guests.
- Double check all suppliers for delivery time of your wedding purchases.
- Provide your flower pin person with a complete list of flowers and/or other items on your floral order. The person who pins on flowers will then be able to check for errors with the florist. Choose someone organized.
- Get all legal, medical, and religious documents in order. Bring your license to the church office on the Thursday prior to the wedding.
- Do as much as you can ahead of time. This will tend to lessen last minute confusion.
- Call on the Wedding Coordinator or Pat in the office at any time if you have questions.
- Gifts to your attendants should be given to them at the rehearsal dinner or at some time other than just before the wedding. Please do not expect the church personnel to do this for you.
- In choosing someone for the guest book and for host or hostess, be sure they have a friendly, outgoing personality. They see your guests before you do.
- Check all sizes and colors of the wedding attire and accessories (men and women) before the wedding day. It is impossible to make alterations and exchanges just before the wedding.
- Have all members of the wedding party, including ushers, at the rehearsal and ensure that they are here 15 minutes before the rehearsal time.

BEFORE YOUR BIG DAY

Please provide to the Church office the following information:

Full name of spouse _____

Full name of spouse _____

Wedding Date: _____

Time: _____

Rehearsal Date and Time (it must be after 5:30 in the afternoon) _____

Will there be more than one pastor officiating? _____

If so, Pastor's name _____

Wedding Party Members

Maid/Matron of Honor _____

Best man _____

Other attendants: _____

Ring bearer _____

Flower girl _____

(Children in wedding party must be at least 4 years old—unless otherwise approved by Pastor)

Ushers _____

Limo: Will you need parking for a limo on the east side of the Church? Yes _____ No _____

Music Selections

(all music & musicians must be approved by the Minister of Music & Arts
at least 3 months before the ceremony)

Processional

Title & Composer _____

Recessional

Title & Composer _____

Vocalist(s)

Name(s) _____

Selections _____

Organist: _____

Pianist: _____

Pre-recorded music: _____

Seating Arrangements

Mothers of bride & groom (including any step-parents) _____

Who will seat them? _____

Grandparents (how many?) _____

Who will seat them? _____

Any guests with special needs? _____

Who will escort the bride? _____

Who will host the guest register? _____

How many guests do you expect? _____

Will you use a Unity Candle? (you must provide your own) _____

Who will light the sanctuary/altar candles? _____

Will you use the seven-branch candelabra (we have 2)? If so, how many _____