

# **WEDDING INFORMATION**

## **THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN KEENE**

**23 CENTRAL SQUARE  
KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03431  
(603) 352-4136  
OFFICE HOURS: 9:00am - 4:00pm WEEKDAYS**

***Rev. Dr. Gordon E. Ellis, Senior Minister  
Ann P. Plumley, Assistant Minister  
Renea Waligora M.M., Music Director  
Jennifer Guest, Christian Education Director***

**AN INFORMATION BOOKLET ABOUT WEDDINGS AT THE UNITED  
CHURCH OF CHRIST IN KEENE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The United Church of Christ in Keene is delighted to be part of your wedding plans. A wedding is one of the most significant events in your life. Therefore, all care and thoughtfulness should be taken to make it special and unique. The ceremony, which you will have an opportunity to help create, should reflect your uniqueness as a couple and new family, as well as affirm the covenant that both partners make in the presence of God. One of our Ministers will assist you in making it so as he or she works with you in the required premarital counseling sessions. However, ultimately it is up to you to make your wedding meaningful and not merely a formality or a show.

Our Ministers, Director of Music, and Diaconate have final authority over the use of the sanctuary or chapel and the order of the service. Your initial contact is with the Church Administrator to clear dates and to connect you with the Minister who will officiate at the worship service and provide your pre-marital counseling. If possible, this should be done at least four to six months in advance of your desired wedding date. Obviously, the earlier you make your arrangements, the more likely you are to reserve the wedding date and time you prefer.

What follows in this booklet is additional information that may be helpful to you as you plan your wedding.

## **THE MARRIAGE LICENSE**

Your marriage license must be obtained from the City of Keene or the New Hampshire town or city where either party resides. Please phone or visit the Town Clerk to gain information about blood tests and other requirements for the granting of marriage licenses. Since your Minister cannot legally perform your wedding ceremony without the license in hand, you should give it to the Minister on or before your wedding rehearsal date.

## **PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING**

In preparation for your wedding, you are expected to meet with the officiating Minister for a minimum of 3–4 pre-marital counseling sessions. Some couples may be asked to meet more than that. These sessions usually begin three to four months prior to your wedding date. It is your responsibility to call or email the Minister to arrange for these sessions. In your pre-marital counseling sessions, you will discuss some of the basic issues of marriage relationships, such as communication skills, goals, dealing with conflict and anger, relating to your extended families, parenting, and other issues that may arise. You will also work with the Minister to create your unique wedding ceremony.

In addition to your pre-marital counseling sessions, we also strongly encourage you to make an appointment for follow-up counseling six to twelve months after your wedding. Some couples have found this session even more helpful than their pre-marital counseling.

## **MUSIC**

By choosing to be married in this church, you are stating your desire that your wedding be a Service of Christian Worship, blessed and supported by God as God is revealed in and through Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the music for your service, no less than the words and the prayers, should be chosen to reflect your special relationship to God and to each other.

Our Director of Music is happy to meet with you to explore the various possibilities that sacred music offers to enhance your wedding ceremony. We ask that you select music designed to worship God rather than music that has been created strictly for entertainment value, such as most popular songs and most music from theatre or movies. In addition, you may choose to use one or more congregational hymns, both for the statements they make and for the opportunity they offer to involve your guests in the ceremony itself. Pre-recorded music is not permitted.

## **GUEST MINISTERS, READERS, AND MUSICIANS**

The United Church of Christ follows the policy of most established churches in that any services held in its facilities must use the regular staff of the church. We do, however, welcome guest participants. If you desire to have another Minister or Priest participate in your ceremony, please discuss this with our Minister as early in the process as possible. Opportunities to have friends, family members, or others do readings in the ceremony will be provided when you create your ceremony with the Minister.

In regard to music, the Director of Music is available for consultation and planning and will make arrangements with another qualified organist if she is not available for the Ceremony. We also welcome guest musicians. If you have a friend or loved one you wish to use as a soloist or instrumentalist, arrangements may be made through the Director of Music who will guide them through the selection of music and provide suitable accompaniment if needed. It is the policy of this church and the Code of Ethics of the American Guild of Organists that in cases where a wedding couple chooses to use a musician other than our Director of Music, the couple also pays the standard fee to our Director of Music.

If you wish to have the church obtain a vocalist or instrumentalist for your wedding, please contact the Director of Music well in advance. Honoraria for these people are equivalent to those for the Director of Music.

## **FLOWERS**

Altar and chancel flowers help make a wedding more beautiful and symbolize the newness of life that the ceremony offers. You may order flowers through the florist of your choice. Simplicity is urged, however, since over-decorating can detract from your wedding rather than enhance it. Any decoration, floral or otherwise, to be used at the ends of pews to reserve those pews for certain guests must be tied on with string or

ribbon. Tacks, staples, tape or other materials damage the finish on the furniture. White aisle runners are a safety hazard and are not permitted. Please arrange flower delivery with the Church Administrator.

The flowers you provide for your service are yours. Please plan to take them with you when you leave. You may even wish to use them for your reception. Should you wish to leave them at church, however, please inform the Minister ahead of time, so that they can be included in our regular Sunday service in honor of your wedding, and/or be distributed to homebound or hospitalized members.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographs may be taken by your chosen photographer as well as your guests before the service and during the processional and recessional. **NO FLASH PICTURES** may be taken, however, during the body of the worship service. The service is far too significant to allow the distraction caused by motion and flashbulbs. Therefore, the ushers should be instructed to inform guests with cameras about this rule. The Minister will also make a tactful announcement to this effect at the beginning of the ceremony. If there is not adherence to this rule, the Minister reserves the right to interrupt your ceremony to speak with your photographer and/or your guests. Following the service, an opportunity will be provided to pose whatever pictures your photographer may desire.

Similarly, while video recording of your ceremony is permitted, it must not detract from the ceremony. Therefore, arrangements must be made with the Minister at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the service for the positioning of the camera. The camera must remain in one spot throughout the service, and no special lighting is permitted.

### **THE REHEARSAL**

Most weddings require a rehearsal, usually held one or two nights prior to your wedding day. Everyone participating in the ceremony should attend the rehearsal. Promptness is requested, and with it, the rehearsal should last no longer than 30-60 minutes.

### **ROLE OF THE WEDDING HOST**

It is the custom of the United Church of Christ in Keene to provide a Wedding Host for all but the smallest wedding ceremony. This person assists the presiding Minister at the rehearsal, greets members of the wedding party and immediate family as they arrive, and shows them where they can relax and primp. He or she also assists guests who are disabled, directs limousine drivers, ensures that doors are unlocked and heat is on and a myriad of other details. Importantly, he or she also coordinates signals between the Director of Music, the Minister and both partners' parties so that timing of the procession is coordinated. If you have hired a wedding planner, you are

responsible for making it clear to that person that he or she is subordinate to and takes direction from all church staff including the Wedding Host.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

1. No rice, confetti or bird seed may be used in the church building, on church grounds or on the sidewalk in front of the church.
2. Your receiving line may be held in front of the church following the service (weather permitting) or at the site of your reception.
3. The question often arises: “What hospitality should we offer the Minister?” The following suggestions are offered:
  - A. It is not necessary to invite the Minister to your reception. In fact, because of time demands he or she is unable to attend the receptions of non-members. If members wish to have the Minister attend, with or without his/her spouse, please be sure to send an invitation as you would to any guest. If possible, he or she will attend your reception, and if desired, provide a blessing for the meal.
  - B. At the reception, it is not appropriate to introduce the Minister with the wedding party, include him or her in your receiving line, or seat him or her at your head table. It is appropriate to call upon him or her for a blessing following the toast that is typically given by the best man or other members of the wedding party.

**FEES AND HONORARIA**

Please note that the fees and honoraria for couples who are not members of the congregation are higher than for those who are members. Couples are considered “members” if either one of the partners or the parents of either partner are active members in good standing in the church. Their fees and honoraria are lower because they have been supporting the church regularly through their pledges and offerings.

	<b><u>FOR MEMBERS</u></b>	<b><u>FOR NON-MEMBERS</u></b>
<b>ORGANIST</b>		
Wedding Ceremony	\$250.00	<b>\$1,500.00 includes Minister, Organist, Wedding Host, Church Administrative Services &amp; use of the Church</b>
Rehearsal (if needed)	(\$100.00)	
Each Extra Rehearsal (With soloists, etc.)	(\$100.00)	
<b>MINISTER</b>	<b>\$400.00</b>	<b>The Music Director will require an extra fee for each rehearsal.</b>
<b>WEDDING HOST</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>	
<b>USE OF THE CHURCH</b>	<b>- 0 -</b>	

**USE OF THE CHAPEL**

- 0 -

**TOTAL**

\$800.00 + → **Plus musical rehearsals**

In addition, should you wish to use service bulletins, we request that you purchase the number and design of your choice from an area religious supply store or use resources available online. The Minister presiding at your wedding ceremony must approve the text of the service bulletin before it is printed. If you wish extra candles for your service in addition to those normally supplied, the church will pass on the expense to you.

It is sometimes possible for our Ministers to officiate at weddings held in other locations. Minister's fees apply to these situations, as do fees for our Director of Music if s/he is involved in the service.

**The payment of all costs, fees, and honoraria  
must be made at or before the wedding rehearsal.**

**FINALLY**

Again, we are honored to be part of this new relationship. Please feel free to contact our church staff regarding any questions or concerns you might have or assistance you may need.

Because we are part of your new relationship, we feel a sense of responsibility to you. If you are not already a part of our church family, we extend to you an invitation to become so, now or in the future. We also encourage you to visit one of our Ministers should problems or concerns arise at any time in your marriage.

Thank you very much for allowing us to be a part of your union. May God bless you at this very important moment in your lives and also in the years to come. And may you continue to grow stronger each day in faith, hope and love.

**WELCOME TO THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN KEENE**

**Worship and Church School Schedule  
8am Chapel Worship and Communion  
10:25am Worship and Church School**

**Join us for Coffee & Conversation following Worship**

**Office Hours: 9:00am – 4:00pm e-mail: [info@ucckeene.org](mailto:info@ucckeene.org)**

**Telephone: (603) 352-4136 Fax: (603) 352-4180 Website: [www.ucckeene.org](http://www.ucckeene.org)**