

## **WEDDING BOOKLET**

We are happy that you have chosen to be married at St. Stephen United Church of Christ. Marriage is one of the most important steps that you will ever take. In Christian marriage, this step is taken before God. It is “Holy” Matrimony, instituted not by man, but by God. The family is the basic unit of society. Hence your marriage is of concern to the community as well. The religious wedding service is the giving of public approval to the union by the family, Church, and community before God.

Marriage is a venture of faith. Promises are made to bear with each other’s infirmities and weaknesses, and to rejoice in each other’s strengths, to stand by the other in both good and troubled times. The wedding service is a sacred service in which the couple pledges life-long faithfulness.

The Staff of St. Stephen United Church of Christ stands ready to make your wedding day a most happy and memorable one. We will be happy to consider any special requests you may have regarding the ceremony within reason. It must always be remembered, however, that the service is first of all a Service of Worship. We want to feel close to God in the wedding ceremony. We ask God’s blessings upon your marriage through this act of worship.

We make preparations for various events in life. The Church feels that preparation is also needed for marriage. The Pastor expects each couple to give time for pre-marital counseling. Dates for these sessions will be scheduled for mutually convenient times. Once these dates are set, it is expected that every effort shall be made to keep them without interference from other commitments.

The date of the wedding itself should be set early – several months or more in advance if possible. This will ensure the availability of the Church on the date of your choice.

The couple is also required to meet with the congregation’s “Wedding Coordinator” as soon as possible after the date is set.

It is expected that the services of the Pastor will be used. Another minister may perform a ceremony in the Church or share the ceremony with our Pastor only with the permission of the Church Council and the Pastor of the Congregation.

### **LEGAL RESTRICTIONS**

Apply for your marriage license several weeks before your wedding date. Marriage licenses are issued by the Office of the County Clerk. In Jefferson County this office is located in the Fiscal Court Building, located at 6<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson. Licenses may also be obtained at the Branch County Government Centers. Please check with Jefferson County Clerk’s Office for current guidelines for obtaining a marriage license. You may call the office at 502.574.5700 or visit the website at [www.jeffersoncountyclerk.org](http://www.jeffersoncountyclerk.org). The Pastor ask that you bring your marriage license to the Church Office no later than one week prior to the wedding, in order that it not be forgotten on the wedding day, and so he might have time to complete it before the ceremony.

If either party has previously been married, that party or parties will have to provide legal proof, i.e. divorce decree, marriage resolution, death certificate, etc. to the pastor at the final premarital counseling session.

**WEDDING COSTS**

The Church Council has adopted the following schedule of fees for use of St. Stephen United Church of Christ for a public wedding:

***When either the bride or groom, or both, are Members of the Church:***

**Wedding Only**

Minister: \$100.00  
 Organist: \$100.00  
 Custodian: \$75.00  
**Wedding**  
 Coordinator: \$75.00  
 Total: \$350.00

**Wedding & Reception at the Church**

Minister: \$100.00  
 Organist: \$100.00  
 Custodian: \$125.00  
**Wedding**  
 Coordinator: \$75.00  
 Total: \$400.00

***When neither the Bride nor Groom is a Member of the Church:***

**Wedding Only**

Minister: \$150.00  
 Organist: \$125.00  
 Custodian: \$100.00  
**Wedding**  
 Coordinator \$125.00  
Use of Church: \$250.00  
 Total: \$750.00

**Wedding & Reception at the Church**

Minister: \$150.00  
 Organist: \$125.00  
 Custodian: \$150.00  
**Wedding**  
 Coordinator: \$125.00  
 Use of Church: \$250.00  
  
 Use of Fellowship Hall: \$50 per hour  
 -Use of Kitchen without the stove requires additional \$20 flat fee.  
 -Use of Kitchen plus stove requires additional \$50 flat fee.  
 -Reception time lasting beyond 6p requires additional \$50 custodial fee.  


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 Total: \$750 + Fellowship Hall Costs

**Reception Only**

Custodian: \$150.00  
 Use of Fellowship Hall: \$50 per hour  
 -Use of Kitchen without the stove requires additional \$20 flat fee.  
 -Use of Kitchen plus stove requires additional \$50 flat fee.  
 -Reception time lasting beyond 6p requires additional \$50 Custodial fee.  


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 Total: \$150.00 + Fellowship Hall Costs

One check for the above fees, made out to "St. Stephen United Church of Christ" should be given to the Pastor no later than the rehearsal date. Non-members are asked to make a \$50.00 deposit when arrangements are first made. The deposit will apply to the fees to be paid.

## **MUSIC**

Music plays a very important part in the marriage ceremony. Hence the selection of the music to be used is very important. It must be remembered that the ceremony is first of all a service of worship of Almighty God. The music should contribute to the dignity, meaning, and spiritual basis of the marriage service. Wedding music should be “God-Centered” rather than “Bride-Centered”. Not all romantic secular music or popular music with special meaning for the couple will be suitable for use in the church. The Pastor has the authority to make the final decision in this matter. Please consider using your favorite music at the rehearsal dinner or reception if it cannot be used in the ceremony.

If you do not use the services of the congregation’s organist, the arrangements must be approved early in the consultation concerning the wedding. It is expected that any organist be familiar with the organ and the wedding practices used in the congregation.

Our Organist will be happy to talk with you and aid you in selecting appropriate prelude, processional, vocal, and recessional music. You may wish to leave the selection to the Organist.

You might also consider the singing of a suitable hymn by all present as a part of the service.

If you desire a soloist, he or she will be of your own choosing. Remuneration should be arranged between you and the soloist. The soloist must contact the Organist as early as possible to arrange rehearsal time.

## **ATTENDANTS**

For a small wedding a maid/matron of honor and a best man would suffice. Larger weddings have bridesmaids and groomsmen as well. Ushers are also used, though this task is sometimes handled by the groomsmen together with their other duties. All of the participants in the wedding party have important functions to perform. Junior bridesmaids, ring bearers, or flower girls may be used if desired. It should be remembered, however, that the actions of very young children are unpredictable and may disrupt the ceremony. If very young friends or relatives are to participate in the ceremony, it is important that their duties be within their capabilities. The selection of attendants is sometimes difficult when there is a number of possibilities. Consider the matter carefully before asking anyone to participate. Changing your mind after that time results in a very awkward situation.

## **INVITATIONS**

If you desire that members of the Church be invited, an announcement will be printed in the church newsletter or bulletin prior to the wedding. One of your invitations sent to the Church would be helpful in preparing this announcement. If your wedding will be by invitation only, the Congregation will not be so invited.

## **FLORAL DECORATIONS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS**

Arrangements can be made with a florist to meet your decorative needs. We suggest the use of a local florist who knows our Sanctuary and who would also be available should any last minute problems arise.

The church has artificial palms that you may use, or you may prefer to secure these from your local florist. The Church has two large candelabra with seven candles on each, as well as candlesticks for the Communion Table. The Church will provide the necessary candles. A candelabrum which holds three candles is also available for the candle lighting ceremony, if it is used in the wedding. We ask that the

wedding couple provide the three candles needed for this ceremony. Standard dinner candles are needed - either 12" or 15". White is most often used, although other colors are suitable depending upon your preference. You may wish to secure a candelabrum from your florist instead - or use such appointments in addition to the Church's.

If decorations are used on the pew ends to mark special seating, or if the florist provides aisle candles, please see that proper precautions are taken to insure that pews - or any chancel furnishings - are not marred. Tacks - or any fastenings of any sort, to include sticky tape which will result in damage - are not permitted.

The Church has a kneeling bench which is often used in wedding ceremonies.

If an aisle runner is desired, please see your florist. The length of the aisle from the base of the steps to the narthex is 68 feet. Should you desire that the runner go up the steps to the base of the Communion Table, the runner will have to be 12 feet longer.

Many couples choose to leave flowers from the wedding for the use in the next regular Worship Service. If you so choose, this will be made known to the congregation.

### **THE WEDDING REHEARSAL**

For a beautiful and orderly wedding, a rehearsal is necessary for all but the smallest wedding. The time will be set in consultation with the Pastor. Usually it is best to schedule this the evening before the wedding. To have it earlier may make it impossible for all to be present - or that important details will be forgotten by the participants. To have the rehearsal the day of the ceremony crowds an already busy day. When a dinner is planned for the wedding party, it is convenient to have the dinner either prior to or immediately after the rehearsal. Allow one hour's time for the rehearsal. It is essential that all participants be present and on time, including the ushers, parents of both bride and groom, bride and groom, and all attendants. The bride and groom are expected to notify each person of the rehearsal time.

### **THE WEDDING DAY**

ALL participants should be at the Church promptly. Ushers should arrive an hour before the ceremony is to begin, to have time to familiarize themselves with final arrangements, get their flowers (if used), etc.

The bride and her attendants should also be at the Church at least one hour before the ceremony is to begin, possibly earlier if she plans to dress at the Church and photos are to be taken. The Pastor will designate a room for this purpose at the time of the rehearsal.

The groom and his attendants should arrive no later than a half hour before the ceremony, earlier if they plan to dress at the Church and photos are to be taken. The Pastor will designate a room where the men can meet on the wedding day.

The bride's mother may want to assist her daughter and will arrive early. Other relatives should plan to be at the Church at least 15 minutes before the appointed time so there will be no delay in the ceremony.

### **RECEIVING LINE**

If there is to be a reception at the Church, the wedding party customarily forms a receiving line in the narthex or in the Church Fellowship Hall after the ceremony. Even if you are having a reception

elsewhere, you might want to form a receiving line at the Church as some who attend the ceremony may not go to the reception.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

**NO** photographs are permitted during the marriage service itself. The ceremony is a Worship Service, not a performance. Photographs may be taken of the processional and the recessional only.

All videos must be made from cameras mounted and placed on tri-pods - moving about to take videos will not be permitted. After the ceremony, portions of the ceremony may be posed if desired. Often the guests are awaiting the arrival of the wedding party at a reception and so it is ideal that the pictures be taken as quickly as possible. A prior consultation with the photographer as to what pictures are to be taken would expedite matters.

It is recommended that photos after the service requiring the minister(s) be made first, thus freeing the minister(s) for other obligations.

## **THE RECEPTION**

The Church Fellowship Hall is available for receptions if desired. Arrangements should be made well in advance to avoid scheduling conflicts. Table coverings, if desired, should be provided by the wedding couple.

If you plan decorations for the Fellowship Hall, we ask that tacks and tape not be used. Such fasteners damage walls and ceilings, or may pull paint from the surface.

There are rings throughout the hall ceiling. We ask that decorations be tied up with cord to these rings.

The services of the Church Custodians must be used if the reception is at the Church. Custodial services are also required to clean the Church after all but the smallest wedding. The Custodians will set up tables and chairs in the Fellowship Hall as desired. The washing of dishes and basic kitchen clean-up is the responsibility of the caterer or other persons providing the reception. If your reception is on a Saturday evening, the premises must be vacated no later than 10 p.m. to give the Custodians time to prepare for Sunday Services.

If there is any breakage or damage to any Church equipment, furnishings, or facilities, the wedding couple is expected to reimburse the Church for same.

## **RICE AND CONFETTI**

Confetti is all but impossible to clean up. It is asked that it **not** be used. Rice is often thrown at the couple as a wish that they have many children. However, it is recommended that bird seed be used rather than rice. It is safer and also provides food for God's creatures. If throwing rice, it **must** be outside the building. The bride and groom are expected to make this rule known to the wedding guests.

## **USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

It is expected that the wedding party will **not** use alcoholic beverages immediately preceding either the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony. Any member of the wedding party who is intoxicated will not be permitted to take part. **NO** alcoholic beverages are to be used in any of the refreshments if the reception

is in the Church Fellowship Hall. Smoking, drinking, or eating is not permitted in the Sanctuary. Smoking is **ONLY** allowed outdoors. The bride and groom shall make these rules known to all members of the wedding party and guests.

# **NOTES**