

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding!

Congratulations on your plans for marriage and a life together in a union blessed by God. Whether you end up celebrating your covenant commitment with us or make other plans, we wish you joy and happiness.

At United Church of Christ, Second Congregational Church, we view marriage as a covenant established between two equal and independent individuals who are seeking to publicly declare their commitment to one another and are also seeking the blessing of God and that of the Church.

We at Second Church see the marriage ceremony as a religious service. We are Christian. We are Protestant. We are progressive. The base ceremony is that of the United Church of Christ. This service allows for variation and flexibility. I am often asked about the length of the service: the service is as long as it needs to be. Naturally the larger the wedding party (bridesmaids, ring bearers, flower bearers, etc.) and the more special pieces that are added (additional scripture readings, Holy Communion, unity candle, special music, presentations, other readings), the longer it will become.

All weddings will require a rehearsal. Having a rehearsal helps to work out logistical issues, alleviate confusion, and ensure that the ceremony will go more smoothly. Rehearsals are generally done the evening before the wedding date.

You are not required to be a member of UCCSCC in order to be married in this church. **However, ALL weddings in the church are presided over by the pastor of this congregation.** If the couple wishes to invite a “guest” clergy person to co-officiate during the ceremony, **all such arrangements must be made ahead of time with, and agreed to by, the settled pastor of this congregation.** In case of conflicts of schedule the pastor, in consultation with the couple, may make arrangements for another individual to preside.

We have a wedding packet that offers planning information as well as suggested vows, sentences, Bible verses, etc. Included in the packet is an **application form**. It will list fees as established by the congregation, as well as communicate UCCSCC policy and ground rules. **A date is not reserved until we have received the application form with deposit.** We would be happy to mail you a packet when you call us.

When organ music is desired, the Music Director of UCCSCC will have “first refusal,” meaning that she will be the organist for your ceremony unless she has a conflict. Please inquire about our procedure in the event you would like special, non-organ music to be played, or if there is someone else who would like to offer the gift of music for your ceremony.

As the Pastor, I like to meet with couples at least three times. These premarital meetings are an opportunity to get to know each other, to have conversations about the covenant in which you are entering, and to take the necessary time to plan your service.

A marriage ceremony in a Christian church is one that includes God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Presumed is an ongoing relationship with the Holy. We encourage this relationship by giving it a “nudge” and ask couples to attend worship four times. Naturally, we love it when couples choose to worship with us. More important than the *where* is the *developing*. You are welcome to use this as an opportunity to develop a relationship with a congregation that is close to you, or as an opportunity to seek.

I look forward to working with and celebrating this special and exciting time with you both.

Rev. Kimberly J. Murphy