



Bethlehem United Church of Christ

Ann Arbor, Michigan

"Your Wedding at Bethlehem Church"

"Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

I Corinthians 13:4-7

BETHLEHEM
United Church of Christ

423 S Fourth Avenue
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
734-665-6149 Church Office

Rev. John L. Kennedy, Pastor

Revised May 2017

Index

Introduction	Page 1
Pastoral Interview	2
Facilities	3
Flowers and Decorations	5
Wedding Service Bulletins	6
Photographs/Video Taping	6
The Rehearsal	7
Wedding Day	8
Wedding Coordinator	10
Music	10
Solo Music	11
Organist	11
Wedding Fees	12

BETHLEHEM WEDDING BOOKLET

Introduction

The wedding service which you are planning is different from many other wedding services in that it is a **Christian** wedding. The fact that you have come to this church for counsel and guidance indicates that this is indeed your concern. You desire a ceremony characterized not only by dignity, reverence, and joy, but also by the spirit found only in the worship of God; for indeed, the Christian wedding service is an act of worship. You worship, as you come together to offer special thanks and praise to God, and ask God's blessing upon your life together as husband and wife. The guests gather together not only to witness the marriage ceremony but to give thanks and praise to God in worship--participating through prayer, perhaps even in song. As all plans for the wedding are made, therefore, this one single fact must be kept clearly in mind: the ceremony is not a show, or an "extravaganza," but a Service of Worship in which certain customary and traditional forms must be observed.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to offer guidelines to couples beginning to plan their wedding arrangements. Inasmuch as possible, it contains the appropriate customs and regulations for weddings to be solemnized at Bethlehem United Church of Christ, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

You, the couple, should be willing to abide by the principles of the church that will determine many facets of planning the service, including consultations, music, decorations, pictures, etc. You should also be willing to accept the leadership of the Pastor in the planning of your individual service.

At times, exceptions or alterations to the customs and regulations may be made; but the final decision as to the propriety of any detail of any service rests solely with the officiating Pastor.

Pastoral Interview

Couples must plan to meet with the Pastor for a minimum of three consultations in advance of the date of the wedding. The first of these appointments should be made as soon as possible after the wedding date has been formally "reserved and cleared through the church staff." All times and dates must be cleared with the Pastor well in advance of the wedding.

The Pastor expects the opportunity to counsel with the couple regarding their readiness for marriage, the meaning of a Christian marriage, and the establishment of the wedding service itself. Couples are allowed to have another minister participate in their service. One of the pastors of Bethlehem United Church of Christ (or from another local United Church of Christ) will participate in all weddings held at Bethlehem Church.

Bethlehem Church will allow non-members to be married at Bethlehem Church only with the approval of the Pastor.

Non-members will abide by all the rules and regulations of the congregation and should approach their wedding at Bethlehem as a privilege.

Facilities -- for the Wedding Ceremony and Reception

The Sanctuary of Bethlehem Church has a seating capacity of approximately 650 persons. The church provides candles for the altar candles and two candelabra.

The Chapel of Bethlehem Church has a seating capacity of approximately 75. The church provides altar candles and candelabra, if desired.

Unity candles and holders are not provided by the church.

Bethlehem Church is barrier free. Enter by the Fifth Avenue entrance for access to elevator.

The church does not provide aisle runners for either the

Chapel or Sanctuary. For your information, however, the Sanctuary aisle requires 75 feet length of runner and the Chapel 40 feet. You must use an aisle runner if flower petals are thrown.

A room is designated for a bride's dressing room. This room will be locked during the service, and so is a safe place to leave purses and other valuable items.

The church library is available for the groomsmen.

The church lounge is available as a locale in which family members may wait prior to the beginning of the service. Bethlehem Church is not responsible for lost or stolen articles.

Bethlehem Church is a smoke free building. No smoking is allowed inside the building.

Weddings will not be scheduled on the following dates:

- Sundays
- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Maundy Thursday through Easter Sunday
- Saturday before Mother's Day
- Memorial Day Weekend
- 4th of July Weekend
- Labor Day Weekend
- Thanksgiving Day Weekend
- Middle to end of December

Flowers and Decorations

The Bethlehem Church Sanctuary, with its beautiful windows and ornate woodwork and the simplicity of Bethlehem's

Chapel are very beautiful in themselves, and will add beauty to every service.

Floral decorations, candles, ribbons, and a center aisle runner may be used if desired, but no nails, tacks, thumbtacks, staples, clamps, etc., may be attached to the furniture, rails, or screen of the chancel, nave, or narthex. Only decorations that can be tied with ribbons, or set upon the floor, are permitted.

Suggested in the Sanctuary: two floral arrangements in the vases (vases are supplied by the church) behind the altar, and one low centerpiece on the altar. Four brass flower stands are available for other suitable arrangements.

Suggested in the Chapel: one low floral centerpiece arrangement on the altar.

Arrangements for the delivery and set-up of flowers must be made at least one week prior to the wedding through the church office. Note: The building is open 1-1/2 hours prior to the wedding. Delivery at other times will require special arrangements through the church office.

Sanctuary and Chapel decorations for any liturgical season or celebration cannot be changed. Furniture in the chancel area cannot be moved.

Wedding Service Bulletins

You are responsible for producing wedding service bulletins if you choose to have them. If a bulletin is used please print the following information on the back: **"Please no camera use during the ceremony"**. Copies of the bulletin should be brought to the rehearsal.

Photographs/Video Taping

Pictures of the wedding party may be taken before the cere-

mony, if sufficient time is allowed, or following the ceremony, after the guests have left the Sanctuary or Chapel. No photographs may be taken while the service is in progress, excepting: 1) from the balcony or in the rear of the Sanctuary or Chapel; 2) pictures of the wedding procession as it begins from the north narthex to the center aisle; and 3) pictures of the wedding party as they recess down the center aisle, taken from the rear of the Sanctuary or Chapel. All photographs taken prior to the service should be completed at least 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the service.

The Photographers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is sensitive and respectful of the traditions of Bethlehem Church. Placement of video cameras is restricted. Consult the Pastor for specifics. Guests should be instructed by the ushers as to the rules prohibiting flash pictures during the service. The Pastor reserves the right to halt the service if these regulations are not observed.

The Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is an important part of the wedding preparation. It should be held no more than a day or two before the wedding, and before any dinner or other festivities.

All planning for the service should be completed before the time of the rehearsal. It is only necessary for those who have part in the service to attend, including: bride and groom, attendants, soloist, organist, those parents assigned a special part in the service, and ushers.

The marriage license shall be given to the Pastor at the rehearsal.

The rehearsal should begin promptly and will last no more than one hour. There is a late charge of \$25 should the rehearsal begin more than twelve (12) minutes late. This may

be deducted from your deposit. It is expected that the dress and behavior of the bridal party will be appropriate as befits the solemnity of the occasion. The Pastor has the final authority in all matters at the rehearsal.

Wedding Day

The building will be open 1½ hours before the wedding and will close one hour after the ceremony concludes. Any other arrangements must be cleared through the church office and will incur an extra charge.

Bride and bridesmaids: please be at the church at least 30 minutes prior to the service.

Groom: please be at the church at least 30 minutes prior to the service. You may wait in the church library.

Family and Special Guests: please be in the Schmale Lounge at least 10 minutes prior to the service.

Ushers: arrive at the church at least one hour prior to the service, in order that you may perform the following duties: usher guests to their seats, distribute bulletins (if used).

One person should be designated on the wedding day to supervise the handing out of flowers and bouquets in order to avoid confusion. It is best that this person **not** be a member of the wedding party.

We suggest that a reception line be formed at the place of the reception rather than at the church, inasmuch as the narthex area is limited and in order to expedite the taking of pictures after the service.

The proper order for this line is: Bride's mother, Groom's father, Groom's mother, Bride's father, Bride, Groom, Maid of Honor, Best Man, Bridesmaids. Other options to consider

would be:

- Form the receiving line outside in front of the church (weather permitting);
- Bride and groom greet guests as they dismiss them from the pews.

No rice, bird seed, balloons, or items of this type are to be thrown either within or outside the building. A charge of \$35 for clean up will be assessed if items are thrown in the building or excessively tracked into the building. Bubbles or ringing of small bells can provided as a festive alternative.

Wedding Coordinator

For each wedding scheduled at Bethlehem Church, a Wedding Coordinator is assigned to give the wedding party assistance at both the wedding rehearsal and the wedding itself. This person is available to direct any persons to parts of the building, help with the flowers, and give any needed assistance.

Music

The music for your wedding service is meant to be unique to your special day. As in any Service of Worship, the music should be in keeping with the dignity and joy of the occasion. The organist of Bethlehem Church will play all weddings unless special arrangements are made with and approved by the Pastor and the organist. A sample of a variety of appropriate organ wedding music is available on CD through the church office. Please notify the organist with your selections. If you wish to choose other music, consult with the pastor and the organist. All must be meaningful and appropriate to Christian worship.

Solo Music

If you are planning to have a soloist/vocal group at your wedding, please be aware that although we all have favorite songs

that are of the "popular" type, they are not in keeping with the dignity of a Service of Worship. Therefore, any such songs will be sung, or played, prior to the beginning of your wedding service.

Organist

For any suggestions regarding any facet of the music for your wedding, consult with the pastor and the organist. In order that your music might be carefully planned and made special to your particular needs, it is important that you contact the church office at least one month before the date of your wedding for the name of the organist.

Wedding Fees

In order to reserve your wedding date on the church calendar, one-half of the wedding fee must be returned as a deposit along with your wedding information sheet. The remainder of the fee should be paid at least one week prior to the wedding. Please make checks payable to Bethlehem Church. The fees will be quoted by the Wedding Coordinator.

Fee Includes:

- Use of Sanctuary/Chapel
- Pastor
- Organist
- Building Coordinator/Custodian
- Audio Tape (not available in Chapel)
- Deposit

The wedding fee includes one meeting for the couple to meet with the organist to discuss service music. The above fees assume that the Wedding Party secures the guest soloist/music group and will make private arrangements for whatever reimbursement is required. If our organist will accompany the soloist, there is an additional charge.

If you have any further question or concerns, please contact