

The Pastor and Congregation of Samuel United Church of Christ extend to you our prayers, and in the Spirit of Jesus Christ stand ready to serve you as best we can as you prepare to begin your married life together. We are delighted that marriage equality is recognized by the laws of our land, and welcome different gendered and same gendered couples to celebrate their marriages through the ministry of Samuel Church. We hope this information will help you as you begin to plan your wedding.

## **Wedding Policy of Samuel Church**

We celebrate member and non-member weddings based on the church's and Pastor's availability. We do not "rent out" the sanctuary, but provide a wedding service. Therefore, a Pastor of Samuel United Church of Christ needs to participate in and coordinate the worship experience.

## **Setting the Date of Your Wedding**

We realize there are many details that may be involved in your selection of your wedding date and time. However, it is important that you call the church office, at (314) 727-9540, to set your date on the church's calendar as soon as possible. Weddings must be scheduled with the Pastor. **A \$200 non-refundable deposit shall be made when securing the wedding date with the balance of the fees due prior to the rehearsal.** Dates cannot be guaranteed without deposit.

## **Clergy**

A Pastor of Samuel Church will participate in all weddings celebrated at Samuel Church. Another Pastor may participate with the Pastor of Samuel, as is mutually agreeable to the Pastor and the Samuel Pastor.

## **Premarital Conferences**

Premarital Conferences are required. We ask that you contact the Pastor at least three months before your wedding date so that these conferences may be set up. Usually the Pastor will ask to meet with the couple at least three times to go over and plan the wedding service itself, as well as have conversation with the couple about marriage, and in particular, Christian marriage.

## **Music**

Respect and reverence will be maintained throughout the worship service. Therefore, the Director of Music, in cooperation with the Pastor, will determine the appropriateness of the music to be used in weddings at Samuel Church. If you choose to have organ and/or piano music it is expected that the Samuel Church Director of Music will play the organ and/or piano. If the Director of Music is for some reason unavailable on the date of your wedding, the Pastor can help to arrange an alternative organist or pianist. Other organists and/or pianist may be used only at the approval of the Director of Music.

The Director of Music will discuss music selections with you, and would be more than willing to suggest selections to make this service a special one for you. If you are planning to include vocals you should share that information with the Director of Music. Samuel Church does not supply vocalists, but may be able to help you find one. If your music needs are other than organ or piano, you will need to talk to the Pastor about where the music may best fit in the service. You will also need to make contact with the musicians.

## **Wedding Assistant**

Samuel Church will provide a Wedding Assistant to assist the Pastor and you during the rehearsal and on your wedding day. The Wedding Assistant will be available to you if you have questions concerning the building, decorating, or non-worship related issues. The Wedding Assistant is not available to help plan receptions, or make connections with florists, photographers, or other aspects of your wedding outside of the church.

## **The Sanctuary and Decorations**

The sanctuary of Samuel Church is a traditional setting with a center isle, rich wood, and stained glass windows. The main level of the sanctuary can accommodate 200 to 250 people. There is also a balcony that can accommodate another 30 to 40 people.

It is your responsibility to make arrangements with respect to flowers, candelabras, and other decorations. The church has two deep flower vases on the altar that you may choose to put flowers in, although most weddings do not use the vases. If you would like to leave flowers for Sunday worship in celebration of your wedding, please notify the church in advance, so we do not order others.

Decorations are to be removed from the sanctuary the same day as the wedding. The church does not provide an aisle runner, candelabra, pew candles, or bows. If you choose these, you will need to provide them or make arrangements.

There are two candles that will be lit on the altar. If you choose to use a unity candle in your service, the church has one with a stand and two tapers that you may use. You may also provide your own. The paraments that hang from the altar, pulpit, and lectern will be white for weddings unless otherwise specified.

## The Worship Service

You and the Pastor will plan your worship service together. It is our hope that it will be a beautiful, meaningful, worshipful experience and a lasting memory in your life. The Pastor will provide a framework for the service based on church tradition and past services. If there are changes you would like to make in the service, you and the Pastor will work them out together to ensure the service is both yours and God's.

You may choose to use bulletins in the service or not. If you would like bulletins, you may purchase bulletins through the church. The church can print them for you, after you have approved a proof copy. You may also supply your own bulletins, but you need to work closely with the Pastor to ensure the bulletin reflects the service.

There are **no flash pictures permitted during the ceremony** itself. Photos may be taken before the service, after the service, and during the processional and recessional. The photographer may not be on the chancel during the service without the expressed permission of the Pastor of Samuel Church. Because this is a worship service and not a photographic session, the photographer should remain as inconspicuous as possible. Video cameras are permitted, and the Pastor will discuss with you the best location of such cameras.

## The Rehearsal

If a rehearsal will be needed, you should set the date and time with the Pastor at your first meeting. It is suggested that all weddings have a rehearsal. Rehearsals help to ease everyone's anxiety and go best when everyone arrives on time and gives their attention to the task at hand. The Pastor and you will have spent much time planning the service before the rehearsal, therefore, changes in the service should be worked out in advance.

## Building Etiquette

You will need to arrange with the Pastor what time you will be arriving on the day of the service. You may have entrance to the building two hours before the time of your wedding. There are places for the bride and bridesmaids and for the groom and groomsmen to change. If the florist needs to arrive earlier, the Pastor will need to know that, so that plans can be made to have the church open. The Pastor, or appointed church member, will be responsible for opening and locking up the church after the wedding or event. We ask that you are finished in the building an hour after the conclusion of the worship service.

**We ask that you do not throw rice or birdseed** inside or outside the church. The blowing of bubbles may be used as an alternative, outside the building only.

**No alcoholic beverages** are permitted on the premises of Samuel Church. You need to let your wedding party know that anyone who comes intoxicated will not be a part of the service.

**Smoking is not permitted** anywhere in the building. And no food or drink are allowed in the sanctuary, but should be limited to dressing areas.

If you are having a reception or rehearsal dinner in the Wiese Hall or Ziercher Room it should be scheduled at the time the wedding date is booked. Nothing may be stapled, tacked, taped, or glued to the ceiling or wall surfaces in any of the rooms used. We ask you to take down the decorations you want to keep after the event. Janitorial services will be provided according to the fee schedule. Unusual preparation or cleanup will be billed at a higher rate.

To help us manage our custodial costs, we ask you and your wedding guests to limit your presence in the church to those rooms that you have reserved to use for the day.

## Non-Member Wedding Fee Schedule

**The contracted fee of \$1,200.00 covers all expenses for the wedding including:**

- **Building Use** – Rehearsal and Wedding Day
- **Pastoral Services** – Pre-Marriage Meetings, Rehearsal, and Celebration of the Worship Service
- **Wedding Assistant** – Planning, Rehearsal, and Wedding Day
- **Music Director/Organist/Pianist** – Consultation with couple and Wedding Day. The Director of Music will not be at the rehearsal, unless there are special needs.
- **Custodial Services** – Will prepare the building for rehearsal and clean after wedding.

**A \$200 non-refundable deposit shall be made when securing the wedding date with the balance of the fees due prior to the rehearsal.** The \$200 deposit will be deducted from the overall contracted fee.