



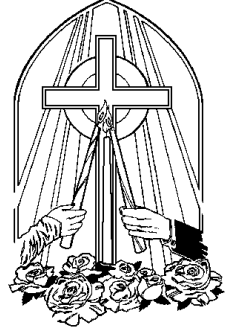
# The United Church of Christ in Bayberry

215 Blackberry Road, Liverpool, NY 13090  
Telephone (315) 652-6789  
E-mail: [office@uccbayberry.org](mailto:office@uccbayberry.org)

Dr. J. Mark Lawson, Pastor  
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Also on Facebook

## The Covenant of Christian Marriage

We are pleased that you are considering the United Church of Christ in Bayberry for your wedding ceremony. Our church believes that marriage is a covenantal relationship, which is rooted in the faithfulness of God's love. Marriage is ordained by God as a sacred order for establishing home and family, nurturing people in love, and fulfilling God's plan.



As you continue looking forward to your wedding ceremony, please read this entire document carefully. You should be mindful of these principles.

- 1) A church wedding service is a time of worship. The ultimate focus should not be on the clergy performing the service, not upon the couple who is exchanging the vows, but upon God, who is the source of all love and whose blessing you seek for your marriage. This principle may affect the selection of music (see below), readings, or other aspects of the service.
- 2) Like other Christian ceremonies, marriage is a ceremony of promises, including the promise between two people to love each other wholeheartedly, God's promise to care for them in their relationship, and the promise of those gathered at the ceremony to support them. Promises, especially those made in the presence of God, should not be taken lightly.
- 3) The Pastor officiating your wedding ceremony is a representative of the church to facilitate God's blessing, and of the state to ensure that your marriage is legal. However, the pastor does not "marry" the couple. You are marrying each other. You, with God's help, are the agents of this sacred covenant.
- 4) If you are divorced, you need to be willing to discuss openly with the pastor the circumstances leading to the dissolution of your previous marriage and your own healing process since the divorce. Our church has no stated policy regarding the re-marriage of divorced people, but expects that the pastor will exercise careful discretion in determining a couple's fitness for marriage, and may refuse to perform a ceremony.
- 5) Having a wedding in a church will not guarantee a successful marriage. However, if your decision to be married in a church symbolizes that you have sought and will continue to seek God's help in making and fulfilling your mutual commitment, you have a strong foundation for your relationship. For this reason, we strongly encourage membership in a local church.



*After reviewing these principles and the attached policy (including the form), please call the office to confirm your interest in being married at our church, and to schedule an initial appointment for both of you to speak with the Pastor.*

## Wedding Ceremonies at the United Church of Christ in Bayberry

*The particulars that have been developed below, in some cases, are very specific. The intent here is not to be restrictive, but to be informative. It is our desire that your wedding ceremony run smoothly. Attention to detail in the planning stages will allow you to concentrate on each other on your wedding day, rather than attending to multiple problems that arise. This is an important day in your lives.*

Setting the Date: A wedding date must be confirmed at least 3 months prior to the intended date. Therefore, in order to allow for time for the church office to check for possible conflicts, please initiate your request at least 4 months before the wedding date. *Please use the attached form.*



Wedding Counseling/conferences: The Pastor will schedule several appointments with both of you. The purposes of these meetings will be to discuss the fundamental elements of a lasting marriage, cover the details involved in preparing a meaningful wedding ceremony, and to explain the legal requirements for matrimony.

The Music: Traditionally, music is an integral part of a wedding ceremony. Appropriate music enhances the occasion by helping to create a mood of reverence and beauty. A church wedding is a worship service; therefore, not everything is appropriate. For instance, popular love songs or other romantic music that has no sacred content is not suitable for a church service. Such music is best left for the reception following the ceremony. The Pastor and/or the Music Director will aid you in choosing from a great variety of appropriate music. Soloists and other musicians must meet with the Music Director. It is the responsibility of the couple to recruit and pay for musicians other than the church organist.

Timing/Promptness: The church will be opened by the Pastor, Deacon or designated lay person 1 ½ hours before the ceremony is scheduled. Various rooms, offices, and bathrooms can be used as “changing rooms” if needed. It is required that one designated member of the wedding party report to the church personnel at least one hour prior to the service. It is the couple’s responsibility to confirm limousines, flowers, wedding party members, etc., so that the wedding will begin at the scheduled time. This is a courtesy to the Pastor and the guests.



Flowers: Altar flowers, bouquets, corsages, etc. should be delivered to the church at least 1 hour before the ceremony is scheduled (see “Timing/Promptness” above). Please use no tape or tacks on the walls or furniture. The church does not supply any flower stands.

Aisle runners: An on-site aisle runner is not available. If you wish to have one, the florist usually provides it. Our aisle is 45 feet long; a 50-foot runner would be appropriate (allowing for extension into the narthex.)

Candles: The couple supplies the candles and candleholders for the wedding. Possibilities are candles for the altar, a unity candle, etc. The altar candles may also be lit for the ceremony.

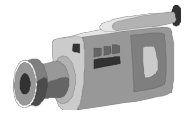


Smoking: Smoking is absolutely prohibited in our building (including the restrooms).

Food and Beverages: No food or beverages (other than “bottles” for infants) are permitted in the sanctuary.

The Rehearsal: In most cases a wedding rehearsal is desired. Traditionally, it is scheduled for the early evening of the day preceding the wedding. Please arrange the specifics with the Pastor.

Photography/Videotaping: Professionals hired by the couple for this purpose must meet with the Pastor or Deacon about one-half hour before the ceremony. Designated areas in the sanctuary will be described for both photographers and videographers for placement during the ceremony. Flash photography by the guests or professionals is permitted only during the processional and recessional. No photography other than a stationary video camera is permitted during the actual ceremony. No additional lighting will be permitted for videotaping. Posed pictures may be taken in the sanctuary after the ceremony.



Marriage License: The license must be presented to the Pastor at the rehearsal. If there is not rehearsal, it must be presented to the Pastor at least one hour prior to the wedding ceremony.

Birdseed: This may be used outside to shower the couple. Rice and confetti are prohibited. Bubbles may be used outside only.

Receiving Line: This is traditionally formed in the upper narthex, lower narthex, or outside, often dependent on the size of the wedding party and/or the weather. This will be organized as part of the rehearsal.

Wedding Bulletin: The church will print a bulletin for the ceremony. The contents will be made available to the couple in advance for approval.

Guest Clergy: Our Pastor is the principal officiate. It is the couple's responsibility to inform the Pastor of their desire to have a guest clergy person take part in the ceremony. Also, please make sure that this person contacts our Pastor in person (via telephone would suffice) with ample lead-time to ensure proper communication as to possible attendance at the rehearsal and roles to be performed. It is the couple's responsibility to provide an honorarium (amount undesignated) for the assisting clergy person.

Reception: If the couple desires to use our "Fellowship Hall" as a site for their reception, they need to use the same guidelines as stated in "Setting the Date" above. Alcoholic beverages at such an event are limited to the *toast only*. Other than the toast, the consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited anywhere on church property (including the parking lot). The church expects that the demeanor of the wedding party and guests be fitting for the setting – a church hall. Please do not disfigure any walls or beams with tacks, etc. when putting up decorations. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to remove all decorations, take down table and chairs, sweep the floor, and clean the kitchen following the reception. The couple must supply all paper products, staples, etc. *Note the portions on the attached form dealing with a reception.*





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Wedding of: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Rehearsal: \_\_\_\_\_

Couple to be married:

1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Member of the UCC in Bayberry?      Yes    No

Names of Attendants (Bridesmaids/Groomsmen): \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Member of the UCC in Bayberry?      Yes    No

Names of Attendants (Bridesmaids/Groomsmen): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of guests you plan to invite: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you request the services of our church organist/pianist?    Yes    No

Will you require the church hall and kitchen for a reception?    Yes    No

<u>Fees</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
1. Clergy	\$300.00	\$450.00
2. Sanctuary, utilities, cleaning	\$100.00	\$200.00
3. Organist	\$100.00	\$100.00
4. Fellowship Hall Fees (up to 4 hrs)	\$75.00	\$100.00

(over)

**We have read this policy in its entirety and will follow the guidelines.**

**Signatures of Couple to be married:**

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please detach this form and return it to the church office at least three months prior to the wedding date. You may deliver it to the pastor during a pre-marital counseling session.*