St. John's United Church of Christ Wedding Policy

St. John's United Church of Christ, Grand Rapids, MI welcomes the opportunity to offer the ministry of weddings to members and people in our community. A Christina wedding is a service of worship in which a couple enters a covenanted relationship with each other before God, receiving the blessing of Christ's church and being witnessed by family and friends. This policy was developed to help you celebrate your wedding in a fitting and worshipful manner, and applies to all couples regardless of gender.

Set the Date: Set a tentative date and time for your wedding at least six months in advance. Contact the pastor to make sure he and the church building are available, and to schedule pre-marital preparation sessions. THE WEDDING DATE IS NOT CONSIDERED FIRM UNTIL THE PASTOR CONFIRMS THE DATE AFTER THE FIRST PRE-MARITAL PREPARATION SESSION.

Pre-marital preparation: The pastor will have four to six personal conferences with each couple. This will allow the pastor and the couple to become acquainted to help the couple explore their relationship, their expectations for marriage, and their compatibility, to consider what Christian Marriage is, and the factors that make a successful marriage, to go over the type of service the couple desires and to complete arrangements for the ceremony.

Pastor: THE PASTOR IS ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR DECIDING IF A WEDDING WILL OR WILL NOT TAKE PLACE and will officiate at all weddings in the church building. He will receive a set fee regardless of membership status for the services of counseling, preparation, and officiating at both the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. If a couple wishes to invite another clergy-person to officiate, please make this known at your first meeting with the pastor who may then extend the invitation to that clergyperson.

Organist: The acting organist will play at all weddings in the church. Contact the church office for the phone number to contact him/her for availability. If the regular organist is not available, he/she will recommend a replacement. If you will have a soloist, make it known to the organist during this initial contact. The organist will be paid the appropriate fee, with or without a soloist, as set in the fee schedule regardless of membership status, since this is in addition to his/her normal hours of employment. If a guest organist is desired, make this known to the church organist who may extend the invitation. Final determination as to the appropriateness of music selections will be made by the Pastor and the Organist.

Wedding Host/Hostess: After your first conference with the minister, you will also meet the Wedding Host/Hostess. He/she will become your liaison with the church and will be available the day of the wedding for flower delivery, photographer, etc. The Wedding Host/Hostess receives a fee for their services as outlines in the fee schedule, regardless of membership status. The Wedding Hostess will collect all fees on behalf of the church, including a non-refundable deposit toward all applicable fees due at the first meeting with a couple of $50.00.

Cleaning: The church building is cleaned by an outside contractor. The fee to clean those rooms used during your wedding ceremony is passed on to you regardless of your membership status. The minimum fees are listed on the fee schedule accordingly with or without a reception.

Audio Console Operator: If taped music is to be used for any reason an audio console operator is required. An audio recording of your ceremony can be made for the fee shown on the fee schedule; you must supply a new, flash drive.

Sanctuary: Our sanctuary seats approximately 238.. The main aisle is 100" long from Narthex to altar. A fee as outlined in the fee schedule is expected to be paid by non-members for use of the sanctuary; there is no charge for members. Couples are expected to make a $50.00 non-refundable deposit upon the first meeting with the Wedding Coordinator with the balance due the night of the rehearsal.

Sanctuary Furniture and Décor: Weddings take place within the normal liturgical life of this congregation. The sanctuary decorations and furniture are a part of that life. Furniture and liturgical items in the sanctuary including but not limited to the pulpit, lectern, baptismal font, organ, banners, choir seats, communion table, paschal candle, altar, and paraments will not be moved or changed.

Fellowship Hall & Kitchen: These rooms, on the lower level, are available for a NON-ALCOHOL RECEPTION. Alcohol is not permitted on church grounds at any time during the wedding or rehearsal. Non-members are charged a fee as outlined in the fee schedule for use of the fellowship hall and/or kitchen; fees are waived for members.

Service of Worship: The pastor will plan your wedding service with you. You will be invited to personalize it in the music selections, vows, Scripture Readings or other readings that are meaningful to you and that are appropriate for a service of Christian Worship.

Rehearsal: All members of the wedding party, including ushers, should be present and ready to begin rehearsal at the appointed time. Details, i.e.: seating of parents, grandparents, special moments, should be worked out well ahead so that rehearsal can be conducted as promptly and gracefully as possible. Appropriate dress is appreciated. The Wedding Hostess may conduct the rehearsal in certain circumstances.

License: St. John's United Church of Christ celebrates the Order for Marriage for couples without requiring a Marriage License. If you have obtained a Marriage License from Kent County and desire the pastor to validate it, the license must be in the pastor's hands at the beginning of the rehearsal. The Wedding Hostess may sign the marriage license in certain circumstances.

Flash Photography: Flash pictures may only be taken before and during the Processional, and after the Recessional begins. NO FLASH PICTURES ARE TO BE TAKEN DURING THE CEREMONY. Please have this printed in your wedding bulletin. No video lights may be used during the ceremony. Photographers and videographers MUST remain stationary from the conclusion of the processional until the recessional begins. NO VIDEO OR STILL PHOTOGRAPHS SHALL BE TAKEN FROM THE CHANCEL. Ceremony pictures may be reposed after the guests have dismissed.

Rice and Confetti: No rice or confetti is to be thrown inside or outside of the building. Birdseed is suggested as an alternative as it is not harmful to birds. Bubbles may be used outside of the building only.

Alcoholic Beverages: All members of the wedding party and wedding guests are expected to refrain from the consumption of alcoholic beverages before the rehearsal and the actual wedding ceremony. The wedding party is required to be sober in order to participate in the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. NO CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL IS ALLOWED ON THE CHURCH PREMISES, INCLUDING PARKING LOTS AND GROUNDS.

Smoking: Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building. There is a receptacle (an aqua colored tube placed in the ground) for cigarette butts outside the east entrance on the Bridge Street side of the building.

Kneeling Bench: Available for use at the church free of charge.

Candelabras: Two brass seven-stemmed candelabras are available for use free of charge at the church. Fire regulations permit open flames only in the Chancel area; if candles are used elsewhere, they must be enclosed Hurricane Lamps.

Unity Candle: Two brass-finished unity candle stands are available at the church, free to charge. One is free-standing and the other is a table top model. Drippless tapers must be used. Candles may be ordered through the church to ensure the type of candle used fits the device. Cost is market price for pillar candles, regardless of membership status. The Wedding coordinator will order the candles and the cost will be noted when the fee scheduled is prepared.

Wedding Bulletins: These are not done by the church and must be purchased and printed elsewhere. Pastor will work with the couple to prepare the text/order of service.

Floral Decorations: Floral decorations must be arranged through your own florist. A suitable delivery time and pick-up time must be arranged by the florist with the Wedding Coordinator. Care must be taken to avoid damage to church furnishings by the use of holders or wires. No hole-producing methods or sticky substances (tape, plasti-tac, etc.) are permitted.

Aisle Runner: The church does not supply this. It must be secured through your florist or purchased elsewhere. The aisle is 100 feet long.

Fees: ALL FEES ARE TO BE PAID THE NIGHT OF REHEARSAL. Checks should be made out in accordance with instructions on the fee schedule.

At your first meeting with the Wedding Coordinator you will be asked to sign a document indicating that you have read, understand and will abide by all the terms of this policy.

We are glad to be able to help you at this very important time in your life. If you have any further questions, please consult the pastor.

St. John's UCC Wedding Fee Schedule

Services without Fees

Kneeling Bench	N/C
Candelabras (Brass)	N/C
Floor Standing Unity Candle (Brass Finish)	N/C

Universal Fees (for Members and Non-Members) (List applicable fees)

Unity Candles Market Price _____

Minister	***Payable to the* Pastor** _____ 616 453-2497		$350.00	_____
Organist	***Payable to*: Joel Gary** 616-304-3749	With Soloist No Soloist	$250.00 $200.00	_____
Hostess	***Payable to*: Diana DeKorte**	With Reception No Reception	$200.00 $100.00	_____
Cleaning*	***Payable to*: St. John's UCC**		$100.00	_____

*This is the minimum cleaning fee for using the women's and men's dressing rooms, restrooms, narthex and sanctuary for a ceremony-only wedding. Use of additional rooms or holding the reception at St. John's will incur additional cleaning fees.

Audio Tape, CD Console Operator $50.00 _____

Facilities Fees (Facilities Fees are waived for Church Members)

Sanctuary	$500.00	_____
Fellowship Hall Only	$300.00	_____
Fellowship Hall & Kitchen	$450.00	_____
	FEE TOTAL:	_____
	DEPOSIT RECEIVED:	_____
	DUE AT REHEARSAL:	_____

Fees must be paid before the ceremony will take place.

Signature: _____ Date:_____

(Printed Name): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Printed Name) _____

Revised & Approved 02/13/12