



## **Beginning Your Marriage at North United Methodist Church**

We are delighted you are considering North Church for your marriage ceremony. This booklet has been prepared to assist in making your ceremony a beautiful and memorable occasion and should answer some of your questions to help you plan with greater efficiency and ease. As other questions arise, please contact us.

### **A Community of Support**

Whether you are a longtime member or were drawn in by the beauty of our worship space, our community wants to support you as you begin a new phase in your life. At North, we believe the service of Christian marriage is a solemn asking of God's blessing upon the lives of a man and woman united by God in one new life. Christian marriage recalls Jesus' own blessing of a wedding at Cana in Galilee and in that light, we see weddings as worship services to celebrate God's gift of love, and to affirm a covenant between two people and God.

We hope you also will see the beauty of our community as well. By beginning your marriage at North Church, our community will surround you with love and support on that day and in the days and years to follow. We hope you will continue your life together in worship with us each Sunday, but even if you choose another faith community we hope North Church will remain an important part of your connection to one another and to God.

### **A Myriad of Important Decisions to Make**

We know there are many factors in choosing your wedding location: size, beauty, history, and availability. North Church is certainly a beautiful and historic building, centrally located and easily accessible. It is a wonderful place to celebrate a marriage. Here are just a few ways we hope to support you as you prepare and plan for your marriage:

#### ***Planning your marriage ceremony***

From music to attendants, planning this important day can often be stressful and difficult. Our pastoral staff will help you create a beautiful ceremony full of the richness of Christian worship and unique to you. Our musical staff will help you choose appropriate music for the occasion and offer their numerous talents for your ceremony as well. Our wedding facilitator will help you coordinate the many details that are a part of your planning. Our

administrative and facilities staff will work all along the way to tie up loose ends and take care of often forgotten details that are crucial to your ceremony.

### ***Helping you prepare for marriage***

Our community will reach out to you as you prepare not only for your big day but for the lifetime of commitment you begin here at North. This support does not end the day you get married but continues into the years following.

## **Next Steps in the Process**

### ***Timeline and events***

#### ***Step One: Schedule your wedding at North Church***

Your first step will be to contact the church office (924-2612) to see whether your proposed date is available. Dates surrounding and including Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter), Christmas, New Years, and other holidays are not available due to the church's heavy scheduling of worship and related seasonal activities. We will do whatever we can to find the right date for your celebration. Note that all weddings are booked in six hour blocks and the ceremony will not be scheduled later than 6:00 p.m.

Early booking of the church for your wedding is to your advantage. Member and non-member weddings may be booked up to 18 months in advance. It would be unwise to publicize your wedding date at North Church until your date has been booked and confirmed in writing by the church.

**It is important that you are aware that North Church is a very active place every day and evening of the week. Therefore, as you reserve the wedding rooms you need, be aware that other activities will most likely be scheduled in other rooms at the time of your wedding.**

#### ***Step Two: Wedding fees***

A list of wedding fees is available from the church office. *An Initial Questionnaire and Wedding Contract* signed by both the bride and groom and a non-refundable \$600.00 deposit toward your total wedding fees must be received in the church office in order to book your wedding at North. Please make checks payable to North United Methodist Church.

Your membership status *at the time of booking* determines the fees which will apply to your wedding. You must be a member of North Church in good standing the day your wedding is booked to receive member pricing.

The balance of all wedding fees shall be due and payable at the church office one month (30 days) prior to your wedding date. Failure to make payment in full by the due date can cause forfeiture of your reservation.

### Step Three: Preparing for Marriage

We usually schedule two meetings with pastoral staff to help plan your service of worship but we will work with you to schedule more if that would be helpful. The pastoral staff will focus on the ceremony itself but will also be available to answer any questions you might have. The meetings with pastoral staff must be in person and include both bride and groom.

We hope that as you are meeting with our pastors that you will attend worship with us on Sunday mornings, if you do not already. That way, not only will you get to know our pastoral staff better, you will meet our larger community of worship.

As you prepare for your wedding, we also want to assist you in preparing for your marriage. **Couples are required to participate in pre-marital counseling sessions with the church's designated counselor.** An on-line fee for an assessment is the responsibility of the wedding couple and is not included in the counseling fee. These sessions (usually 3) will assess your mutual expectations, strengths, and areas of growth. We believe this time together will enhance your relationship and provide an enjoyable and informative way to grow in your marriage.

### Step Four: Preparing for the Ceremony

Our wedding facilitator will begin working with you once your date has been scheduled. We will provide you with some helpful information to think about, and our pastoral and music staff will work with you to plan a beautiful service. We encourage meaningful creativity in the elements of the service but ask that these elements be fitting for a service of Christian worship. We will help you create a service that is worshipful, personal, and memorable. The North Church pastor who works with you will not only approve the final order of worship but will help you each step of the way.

A North Church pastor will officiate at all weddings held at North. If desired by the wedding couple, other clergy may, at the discretion of the officiating North Church pastor, be invited to participate in the ceremony. It is normally not a problem for other pastors to assist in these services of marriage. However, your North Church officiating pastor will make the contact to extend an invitation and to arrange details regarding the visiting clergy's participation in the ceremony.

In order to help you think about your celebration, here are a few things to remember:

#### ***Music***

North Church enjoys a tradition of excellence in music. Whether you are familiar with sacred music and want to take an active part in the selection of music or if you prefer to leave the selection up to our staff, here are a few guidelines to remember in thinking about the music for your ceremony:

- Because the service of marriage is a worship service, the music selections are sacred music and serve to reflect and intensify worship—whether hymns,

classical, or more contemporary Christian music. We desire to cultivate a sense of worship in each wedding service with selections that invoke blessing, reverence, and the glory of God in devotion, thanksgiving, and praise. North's music staff will assist and approve all musical selections for your service.

- Because they are not elements of Christian worship, secular love songs are reserved for your reception. Additionally, pre-recorded, electronic, or amplified music is not suitable to our worship space and are not to be used. No sound equipment may be brought in to the sanctuary.
- Music selections are to be sent to the organist of North Church at least six weeks prior to your ceremony so that the music staff can have time to approve the selections or suggest fitting alternatives.
- Another organist or other musicians may be invited to take part in weddings at the discretion of North's music staff. In any case, North's organist will be active in your ceremony and should be compensated as normal. This is part of the organist's compensation agreement with our community.
- Instrumental music such as violin, harp, brass, guitar and flute are appropriate to worship and our music staff can help locate such musicians (as well as vocalists) for you. Fees for these musicians should be worked out with both North's organist and the musicians. The organist's fee would still apply in these cases as well.
- If you have a soloist, we recommend scheduling a time for them to meet with our music staff at least two weeks prior to the ceremony to discuss technical details (microphones, musical arrangements, keys of selections, etc.) and to schedule a time to rehearse (usually 45 minutes prior to the service although other times are available as well). These rehearsals should be at other times than the official rehearsal so that due time can be spent in coordination of solo and accompaniment and for testing the microphone and acoustic environment of this church.

### ***Decorations***

- North Church is a beautiful site to hold a service of marriage and in order to keep this beauty and to maintain the important elements of our worship space, we ask that you take special care not to adhere by either tacking, taping, or sticking any materials, floral or otherwise, to the pews or walls of the sanctuary or chapel.
- North Church has established a tradition of special sanctuary decorations throughout the year in various liturgical forms. These decorations are important parts of our worship life together and shall remain in place during your service as that too is part of our worship life. This is especially true of the placement of the baptismal font and decorative or symbolic items on the altar. For example, poinsettias and other floral or symbolic decorations placed on and around the altar during Advent season may not be removed for your ceremony. A white linen pulpit hanging designed especially for weddings will be added to the pulpit.

- The church can supply candelabra, both floor-standing and pedestal types, as well as a floor-standing unity candle stand. The couple must provide the central unity candle if you wish to use one. North Church provides two standard taper candles in white for a unity candle ceremony. Only drip-less candles will be used.
- No flash photography is allowed during the service. Please be sure to remind your photographer as well as family and friends so the service is not interrupted.
- Videography may also be desired and our wedding facilitator will work with both your videographer and photographer to find locations where they will not interfere with the service.
- After the service, in stewardship to the environment as well as for our community's safety, no rice, confetti, or birdseed is to be thrown on church walks, steps or grounds. Biodegradable bubbles or flower petals may be used. Only faux flower petals may be used inside; only real flower petals may be thrown outside.

#### Step Five: Marriage License

Marriage licenses can be obtained at the County Clerk's office, either in the county of residence of the bride or the groom, or Marion County, the county in which North Church is located. There is no waiting period but the law requires the bride either to take a rubella test or to present evidence of prior inoculations. This is validated on the State form. Please bring the form, with biological information completed, to North's wedding facilitator no later than the rehearsal. The wedding facilitator will return the form to the County Clerk's office after the ceremony.

#### Step Six: Rehearsal

Whenever possible, the rehearsal for a wedding will be held the evening before, usually beginning at 4:30 or 5:00pm. This will be determined by the particular circumstances of the wedding party, the minister, and the wedding facilitator. In consideration of the time and other responsibilities of the church staff, it is important that a rehearsal begin promptly. Our wedding facilitator will coordinate the rehearsal and it should take no longer than one hour. All persons immediately connected with the wedding party should be present for the rehearsal.

### **The Wedding Day: General Information**

- Ceremonies may be scheduled in the sanctuary, the chapel, or the courtyard. The ministers are also available to consult about weddings in homes, outdoor settings, or other appropriate locations.
- Courtyard weddings may be moved indoors at the discretion of clergy if there is inclement weather.

- While we provide convenient dressing rooms for all attendants, items of value such as cameras, jewelry, purses and wallets should not be left in the rooms unattended. North's doors are open to all people and we cannot insure the security of your personal items.
- The use of any alcohol, drugs or tobacco products is not permitted on church property. No member of the wedding party (including the bridal couple) should be under the influence of alcohol or drugs for the rehearsal or for the ceremony. At the discretion of clergy, the wedding may be cancelled or delayed at any point if alcohol or drug use by any in the wedding party is suspected.
- Some couples like to leave wedding flowers for Sunday use in the church. This is certainly appropriate and, if you wish to do so, please tell the wedding facilitator in advance so that proper notation may be made in the church bulletin expressing our joy in your marriage and appreciation of your gift.

Violations of the wedding policy may result in cancellation of the wedding at any time. Deposits will not be refunded in the event of a violation. Please be sure to meet all deadlines and requests for information in a timely manner.

The Senior Pastor reserves the right to cancel or delay the wedding at any point if any person in the wedding party exhibits actions or attitudes that the Senior Pastor determines are unbecoming Christian virtues or violate the principles of a Christian marriage. Any refund may be granted at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.

Thank you for thinking of North Church as a place to begin your life together as a married couple. We are honored to share in this important time. We hope you will make North Church your church home if it is not already. Our community is here to support you both before the ceremony and in the years to come. If you desire counseling at any point in your marriage, or if you simply want a place to worship, we hope you will call on us!

(End)

(Revised: February 2018)