

Webster Church United Church of Christ

Wedding Ceremony Policy

Welcome to Webster United Church of Christ. We are pleased that you have selected Webster Church as the place where one of the most significant events in your lives will take place. Webster Church belongs to the United Church of Christ denomination and has a long tradition of serving the community here in Webster Township and throughout the county and state.

The church in which your wedding will take place came under construction in 1834 at its present location. Webster Church has remained a faithful and vigilant Christian presence in the state. It has, throughout its history, championed the causes of social justice and spoken forthrightly on the side of justice throughout America's sometimes turbulent history. We believe that this, too, is a significant reason for you to be proud that this church will serve as your place of marital commitment. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender couples and we will conduct marriage or commitment ceremonies.

As a Christian Church we believe that you are embarking upon one of the most sacred of acts — a covenantal relationship of commitment that is rooted in the faithfulness of God's love and the union of Christ with the church. We are glad that you have chosen to conduct your wedding or commitment service here at Webster Church; we look forward to assisting you in this joyous Christian celebration.

Marcia Meabon
Pastor, Webster United Church of Christ

I. General Information and Policies

Webster United Church of Christ is located at 5484 Webster Church Road, Dexter, Michigan 48130-9635. The telephone number is (734) 426-5115. Our website address is: www.websterchurch.org.

The Webster sanctuary seats up to 150 persons.

- Please, no tacks, tape, pins, nails, or screws are to be driven into the walls of the church, or into the pews.
- Flammable decorations are prohibited.
- Rice is prohibited anywhere on church grounds. Bird seed is recommended instead, and it should be used only in areas outside the church.

II. Steps in Arranging a Wedding at Webster Church

Webster United Church of Christ is a Christian church. As such, we look upon marriage as a sacred covenant. It is our desire to make every ceremony a meaningful worship experience, and to render to each wedding party every possible courtesy and assistance.

For church members and non-members, we believe the marriage ceremony should be a worship celebration in keeping with the Christian faith.

A. Reserving a Date

To reserve a wedding date, you will need to complete the *Wedding Reservation and Information Sheet*, have it on file at the church, and submit the deposit. Arrangements should be made as far in advance as possible. Arrangements include scheduling a rehearsal date and counseling sessions for weddings being conducted by the Pastor of Webster Church. It is critical that the couple be able to communicate the estimated total number of people expected in attendance at the wedding/commitment service.

When the Pastor of Webster Church is conducting the wedding, a minimum of two counseling sessions with both bride and groom prior to the marriage service are required. Additional sessions will be scheduled if the need arises.

The marriage license should be given to the Pastor performing the ceremony at the time of the wedding practice or prior to the practice. The Pastor performing the ceremony is responsible for all legal steps related to the marriage licensing process. It is up to the couple to have a pen with the correct colored ink for the signing of the document as described on the license itself. Color of the ink is determined by the county from which the couple procures the marriage license. See "Section III. Legal Preparation" in this document.

B. Presiding Pastor

The general expectation is that the Pastor of Webster Church conducts all weddings held at Webster Church. Exceptions are at the discretion of the Pastor working in consultation with the Webster Church Board of Deacons. It is up to the discretion of the Pastor of Webster Church to determine the appropriateness of a variety of religious ceremonies given this is a Christian sanctuary of God.

C. Music

The general expectation is that the Webster Church Musician plays at all church weddings. It is the responsibility of the couple to make arrangements with the Webster Church Musician once the date has been reserved. Substitute musicians must be approved by the Webster Church Musician and the Pastor. The piano is not moved for any reason.

D. Alcohol, Recreational Drugs, and Smoke-Free Environment

The church building and church property including the parking lots are understood to be entirely alcohol, recreational drug, and smoke free. This includes showing up for wedding practices and ceremonies/commitment services while under the influence of alcohol and/or recreational drugs. If this is violated by the couple being married/committed or any member of the wedding party the entire event will be cancelled without refunds. It is the responsibility of the wedding/commitment couple to assure that all people who will be at the church or on church property understand this policy and abide by it.

E. Rehearsal

Schedule the rehearsal at the church when you schedule the ceremony. The Pastor performing the ceremony will inform you how long your rehearsal will take, depending on the kind of ceremony you will have.

The fellowship hall and kitchen may be rented for the dinner following the rehearsal though this is not encouraged. There is an additional fee for this and for the extra time required for the Wedding Coordinator (see *G. Wedding Fees*). There is a restriction on usage time for the fellowship hall/kitchen for the rehearsal dinner; daytime use is limited to three hours (including clean-up) and evening use is limited to 9:00 p.m. (including clean-up); exceptions must be worked out directly with the Pastor and/or Wedding Coordinator. Decorating is discouraged; no tacks, tape, pins, nails, or screws are to be driven into the walls of the church and flammable decorations are prohibited.

Clean-up following the rehearsal dinner is the responsibility of the wedding couple. Clean-up includes but is not limited to: wiping down all tables and kitchen surfaces; wiping up any spills; removing table settings or other decorations, trash and unused food; wash and return any dishes or implements used. There will be an additional cleaning fee if clean-up is not done and/or is incomplete.

You are strongly encouraged to limit the number of people attending the actual wedding/commitment service practice to the following persons only:

- Pastor
- Wedding party, including ushers
- Couple's parents
- Musicians

Provide a wedding timetable: arrival for practice, time of arrival for flowers, who is delivering flowers and/or other decorations, time of arrival for wedding photographer, time of arrival for wedding party, and other critical people involved in the wedding ceremony, time of removal of all flowers and/or decorations, and time for custodial clean up.

F. Wedding Reception

Our church fellowship hall is not set up for most receptions. We encourage couples to find another reception facility for your wedding/commitment service.

G. Wedding Fees

Persons holding membership for at least one year preceding the date of the ceremony do not pay a sanctuary fee, but donations are always welcomed. Child(ren) of persons holding membership will not be required to pay a sanctuary fee, but donations are always welcomed. Fees for members, friends or those with an association to the church are:

- Pastor \$300.00
- Church Musician \$250.00
- Sanctuary (includes dressing rooms) \$500.00
- Wedding Coordinator \$100.00
(Assists, open/close & watch building,
minor clean-up after service)
- Custodial/church cleaning after service \$200.00

Fees for couples with no affiliation and/or a pre-existing relationship with Webster Church and who are not using the Pastor of Webster church for the ceremony are listed on the following page. Fees must be paid on the night of the rehearsal and given to the Wedding Coordinator. If there is no rehearsal, all fees must be received by the Church Office no later than one week prior to the ceremony. Make the check payable to: Webster United Church of Christ.

Non-church affiliated fees:

- Sanctuary (includes dressing rooms) \$1,050.00
- Two Wedding Coordinators \$300.00
(Assist, open/close & watch building)
- Custodial/church cleaning after service \$200.00
- Church Musician (if using) \$250.00
- Fellowship hall & kitchen for rehearsal dinner \$250.00
- Wedding Coordinator during rehearsal dinner \$100.00
- Custodial/fellowship hall & kitchen cleaning after rehearsal dinner if not done or incomplete \$100.00

III. Legal Preparation

You should apply for a marriage license in the county of primary residence. If both members of the couple reside in different counties outside of Washtenaw County, the couple then must choose which county from which they will procure the marriage license. If one member of the couple lives in Washtenaw County, apply at the Washtenaw County Clerk's office. For more information call the Washtenaw County Clerk's office about fees and hours of operation. This 24-hour recording also provides other valuable information. The current County Clerk's number as of this revision of the *Webster United Church of Christ Wedding Ceremony Policy* is (734) 222-6720.

If you are procuring your marriage license through Washtenaw County, you will be given a brochure informing you where you can both be tested for AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. This testing is no longer required by the State of Michigan. It is a choice of the couple. If you are procuring your marriage license in another county of your current residence, we will include some information for you here in case you wish to be tested locally. The current telephone numbers are:

Planned Parenthood Mid- & South MI	(734) 973-0710
Washtenaw County Public Health Office	(734) 544-6700
Dexter Health Center	(734) 426-2796

IV. Photographs, Videos and Flowers

A. Church Policy Regarding Wedding Photographs and Videos:

This will be one of the most important days in the life of a couple, and the pictures, photographs and/or video tapes will be a cherished memory. In order to make the event as meaningful as possible, we expect the photographer to follow and understand these guidelines:

1. Pictures may be taken both before and after the ceremony. It is requested that no flash pictures be taken during the service of worship.
2. During the ceremony all photography will be done from the balcony or on the main floor. The designated photographer may take time exposures from the rear of the sanctuary or balcony during the ceremony. Please be as quiet as possible.
3. Procession and seating of the family and recession of the wedding party and family: flash pictures of the procession into the sanctuary or the recessional leaving the sanctuary may be taken from the rear of the sanctuary. We request that you stay clear of the center aisle at all times.
4. Flash pictures may be taken of the couple as they come back down the aisle in the recessional.
5. Following the ceremony, you may pose any part of the ceremony you wish.

B. Church Policy Regarding Flowers

In order to make the event as meaningful as possible, we would appreciate it if the florist would follow these guidelines for the wedding:

1. If fresh flower petals are to be strewn, aisle runners must be used. The aisle is 36-feet long. It is expected that the florist will install, and be responsible to take up the runner immediately after the ceremony or immediately after the photographs are finished. If this is not done in this time frame the Wedding Coordinator will take up the runner and place it in the church office. The person supplying the runner must then call the church office to make arrangements for subsequent pick up of the runner at the convenience of the Church Office Manager.
2. Potted palms or plants must be placed on mats to protect carpet and woodwork in the church.
3. Please make the necessary arrangements to have all flowers and/or decorations removed from the church immediately after the service.

Conclusion

We believe this occasion will represent a fond memory in the lives of all involved and that these few guidelines will ensure that the wedding will run smoothly and be a pleasant experience for all. We know that God's blessings are with you as you journey into life together, and we pray that this will be a fruitful and treasured marriage.