

Scotland United Church of Christ Marriage Policy

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“Marriage is a divine institution, and honorable to all who therein maintain a true fidelity. The marriage obligations..... should not be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, discreetly and in the fear of the Lord.”

Our Church’s Belief on the Biblical Definition of Christian Marriage

We believe in the Biblical definition of Christian marriage as defined by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:4-6 as being only between one man and one woman.

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Therefore, in affirming the teaching of Jesus Christ, “the sole head of the Church, Son of God, and Savior of all” our congregation has reaffirmed, by congregational vote, that only Christian marriages between one man and one woman will be performed as a rite of the Church by our pastor and celebrated within our church facilities.

Planning Your Wedding

It is a great occasion when a man and woman are joined together in holy marriage. We at the United Church of Christ of Scotland want to make it as memorable as is humanly possible for each of you.

The marriage service is a service of worship to God, and rightfully belongs before the altar in the House of God. As you make your plans for you wedding, we trust that you will ever keep this in mind.

Your wedding is an important event in your life and is one of the most important steps you will ever take. Thus, you will want it to be a memorable and meaningful occasion for you and for your families and friends. This ideal is best achieved when careful attention is given to the sanctity of the Church and its Services.

The pastor will help you, not only in planning the service itself, but in the even more important task of preparing to initiate your life together. He/She expects you to give him the opportunity to counsel with you even before making other arrangements and plans.

The following policies have been established by the Church Council to implement these ideals.

SCHEDULING: All requests for use of the Sanctuary and other rooms of the Church should be made through the church office and/or the pastor. It is suggested that this be done at least three months in advance of the proposed date of the wedding. No weddings would be scheduled during Holy Week or on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

COUNSELING: The pastor will counsel with each couple before a marriage is performed. Counseling dates should be set up on the pastor’s and your schedule as early as possible. It should be scheduled at least four to six weeks before the date of the wedding. The pastor will be free to decline to perform any ceremony in which the couple does not desire counseling and for any other reason that he/she may feel it justified.

OFFICIATING: The pastor will officiate at all weddings.

There may be occasion, however, when the couple may want to ask the pastor of the partner who is not a member of the United Church of Christ to have his/her pastor to assist. This should be made known to the pastor who will extend the invitation to the other clergyman. The pastor of the United Church of Christ is in charge of all marriages performed. However, the service is of such a length that it is more worshipful and meaningful if this is kept to a minimum.

REHEARSAL: The pastor will set a time for the rehearsal in consultation with the bride and groom. Promptness at the rehearsal will be appreciated.

LICENSE: The Marriage License should be left with the Pastor no later than the time of the rehearsal or the day before the ceremony.

MUSIC: The music of the wedding service is of great importance. All music should be in keeping with the reverence associated with worship. It is the responsibility of the couple to notify the church organist to play and to make arrangements with him/her regarding music. If he/she is unable because of his/her schedule, the organist will secure a substitute. The choice of music to be used in the service should be discussed well in advance of the wedding date.

Since wedding is a service of worship to God, and not a secular occasion, the music should be fitting and in keeping with the worship of God. Thus, some of the popular music of our day is not appropriate for a service or worship, but should be planned for the reception.

DECORATIONS: The primary thought in the selection of decorations should be their appropriateness and their simplicity. Candelabras are for your use but you are responsible for purchasing “No Drip” candles. If you wish to leave your flowers for the church service on Sunday, please make this known to the office or pastor.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: It is the responsibility of the bride to instruct any photographers –commercial or amateur – that NO flash pictures are permitted during the service. However, following the wedding ceremony, pictures may be taken in the sanctuary and the whole service will be reposed, if necessary. Video cameras are allowed.

BIRDSEED/RICE: Birdseed and rice are not allowed.

RECEPTION: The Church’s Fellowship Hall is available for wedding receptions. Arrangements for this are to be completed with the office. A group from the Church will serve your reception, if you requested. You will be able to obtain a name and telephone number from the Pastor. Specific arrangements and cost will be made with the women of the Church.

FEES FOR MEMBERS: There is no charge made for the use of our facilities when one party is a member of the congregation. However, the following fees are expected of every couple using the church for a wedding.

- Organist/Pianist: Arrange with Organist or Pianist
- Custodian: Charge as needed
- Sound: Arrange with Church Sound Committee
- There is no set fee for the Pastor. If you care to remember him/her, this will be your decision.

FEES FOR NON-MEMBER WEDDINGS:

- Sanctuary: \$ 200.00
- Fellowship Hall: \$150. 00
- Organist/Pianist: Make needed arrangements.
- Kitchen: \$100.00 (A representative of Women's Fellowship must be present)
- Sound: Arrangement with Church Sound Committee required
- Pastor: Minimum of \$150.00

Payments of all fees must be made no later than the time of the rehearsal, or on the day preceding the wedding. Individual checks may be made out to the name of each individual and **United Church of Christ of Scotland.**

Marriage Policy adopted by Church Council, December 2011

Biblical Definition of Christian Marriage reaffirmed by Congregational vote, July 26, 2015

Marriage Policy amended by Church Council, August 2015

