



A Service of Christian Marriage

***United Methodist Church
of Hudson***

“LOVE is patient, love is kind.
It does not envy, it does not boast,
it is not proud.”

**”And now these three remain:
faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love.”
I Corinthians 13: 4,13**

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Planning a Wedding at the United Methodist Church of Hudson

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Congratulations! A wedding is one of the happiest and holiest moments in life. The uniting of two lives in marriage is a significant and meaningful occasion. For Christians, the church is the most natural and appropriate place to celebrate this event. The church is obligated to keep the atmosphere of the occasion worshipful and joyous.

In order that you may have a sacred and dignified wedding ceremony, you are urged to make thorough preparations. Specific plans for the ceremony should be discussed during premarital conferences with the pastor.

The ceremony should be planned with care and carried out with reverence to enhance the meaning of the occasion. The beauty of the ceremony is not determined by the elaborateness of the decorations, but rather by the spirit of love, trust, and faithfulness in the attitude of the participants.

1. First of all, please read this entire booklet.

Jot down any questions you might have.

2. Confirm the date of your wedding

Reservations for weddings are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis for members and constituents of Hudson UMC. All weddings must be arranged through the pastor. A wedding will not be placed on the church calendar prior to personal consultation with the pastor. At this time, you will be asked to fill out a BUILDING USE FORM which can be obtained from the pastor or church secretary. This is important for scheduling purposes. A reservation will be confirmed after: 1) the name of the officiating pastor (and any assistants) have been listed and he/she has agreed to participate; 2) the exact date and time of the ceremony and rehearsal have been set; and 3) the BUILDING USE POLICY has been returned.

Unless the bride or groom or their parents or guardians are actively participating in and supporting this church, the wedding will be regarded as one of nonmembers.

Nonmember weddings are welcome, but are subject to availability of open dates.

Saturday weddings may not be held after 6:00 p.m. with a reception at the church or 7:00 p.m. without a church reception. This is to allow for enough time to prepare for Sunday worship. Also, weddings may not be scheduled for the following days:

- -Sundays
- -Friday or Saturday prior to Christmas
- -Christmas Eve or Christmas Day
- -Monday-Saturday of Holy Week (week prior to Easter)

3. Arrange for an initial planning session with the pastor

As you are thinking about and planning for your wedding, the pastor will want to meet with you several times prior to the wedding. These meetings will provide the pastor an opportunity to explain the various elements of the worship service, the progression of the service, and our understanding of marriage within the Christian context. It will also give the couple an opportunity to ask questions and to seek any pastoral counseling that may be desired (see Premarital Consultation).

Because a wedding is a ministry of the church and an expression of the church at worship, the ordained pastor appointed to this church will conduct all weddings. Other clergy may be invited to participate, but the pastor is the primary officiant.

If the bride and groom desire an outside minister, the local pastor will write a letter to him/her and/or phone him/her to extend the invitation. Usually, the local pastor will be in charge of the rehearsal and wedding ceremony and the invited minister assist.

If you plan to include the pastor(s) and spouse/guest at the rehearsal dinner and/or reception, please let them know so it can be put on their calendar.

4. Arrange for pre-marital counseling

Premarital counseling sessions are a vital part of a Christian marriage. All persons marrying at the United Methodist Church of Hudson are encouraged to engage in premarital counseling with the pastor. The pastor will be pleased to spend much time with you in discussing the privileges and obligations you will assume in Christian marriage.

5. Contact the church's wedding consultant

The church's wedding consultant is required for all weddings. She will answer questions about arrangements and refer you to those who may help. She will help with the rehearsal and be in charge of the rehearsal if the pastor has an emergency. At the wedding, she will help with last minute details, direct the ushers, and guide the processional from the back of the church.

If you would like the wedding consultant to attend the rehearsal dinner and/or reception, please make an invitation known to her and her dinner guest in advance.

Talk with the pastor to obtain the consultant's name.

6. Contact the church organist immediately

If you desire the church organist to play for the wedding, please talk with the pastor about making an initial contact to be sure the organist is available. Please work with the organist well in advance (two-three months) and provide music; the organist might have a variety of wedding music, but you will need to determine this.

If you will provide your own organist, you must work with the church's organist to learn about the organ and the sound system.

If the organist and spouse/guest are invited to the rehearsal dinner, please be sure they have been notified ahead of time.

7. Obtain your wedding license

The state of Iowa requires that the couple, accompanied by at least one witness who knows both persons, apply for their marriage license from the Clerk of Court office at the County Court House. The application for the license must lie on the clerk's desk for at least 3 days before the license

can be issued. The day the license is applied for does not count toward the 3 day waiting period required by Iowa law. (If the application is made on Monday, the license may be picked up on Thursday.) The license may be secured in any county in Iowa and is valid everywhere in the state for one year. Please deliver the marriage license to the church office at least one week prior to the wedding.

8. Wedding Fees

Church weddings require the services and assistance of many people. The fees listed below should be regarded as minimum figures. You are welcome to pay more.

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>
Sanctuary	\$ 50.00	\$ 200.00
Pastor	\$ 100.00	\$ 200.00
Church Organist	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00
Wedding Coordinator	\$ 50.00	\$ 100.00
Custodian	\$ 50.00	\$ 100.00

Please remember that honorariums should be given to soloists and other musicians providing special music (unless their services are provided out of personal friendship. Even so, a gift of thanks is appropriate).

For nonmembers, all fees are payable at the time of reservation. For members it is expected that the appropriate fees will be paid no later than 7 days prior to the wedding. If you would like to pay the fees together in one lump sum, checks may be made out to the *United Methodist Church of Hudson*

However, the church prefers that separate checks be written for the individuals involved. The checks should be made out in the names of the appropriate persons and should still be delivered to the church at least by the times mentioned above.

PLANNING THE SERVICE

9. No alcohol and no smoking

In recognition of the God-given value of life and health, the use of alcoholic beverages and smoking are prohibited inside and outside the church building. Please inform members of the wedding party, family, and friends about this policy. Also, it is not in order for any member of the wedding party to come into the church for the wedding or for the rehearsal after having had anything alcoholic to drink. Clear, alert minds are necessary prerequisites for worship.

10. Wedding music

Because a wedding is a worship service, all music must be appropriate to Christian worship. Ordinarily popular music, ballads, love songs, etc., are inappropriate in the context of Christian worship. These songs would be more appropriate at the wedding reception. Wedding music, like all music used in worship, should direct our attention to Almighty God and celebrate God's goodness and love.

If you need help choosing appropriate music, the pastor and church organist are available. In all cases the final decision regarding the music for a wedding will remain with the pastor.

11. Wedding bulletin

If you desire a printed program, the pastor and wedding consultant will assist you with the information you need. It is not the church secretary's job to type or copy the program. Please consult a commercial printer. They will have examples to also assist you.

12. Decorations

You should discuss these floral guidelines with your decorator to avoid any embarrassing misunderstandings. Floral decorations should be conservative. Artificial backgrounds, arches, etc., are not acceptable.

Someone must be available to remove any equipment used from the sanctuary as soon after the ceremony as possible. It must be out before the next church worship service. The church is not responsible for loss. Plastic must be placed under all candles, vases, posts, or baskets to protect the carpet and other furnishings. Florists should pick up items no later than Monday after a Saturday wedding.

The two altar candles are provided by the church for all weddings. If the church candelabra are used, you will need to purchase 14 standard candles - dripless. If you choose to use a unity candle as a symbol of your marriage, you will need to purchase a 3 inch candle and two standard ones. Only pipe cleaners or ribbons may be used to attach flowers to the church candelabra (6 inches below the base of candles). You may use church-owned candle lighters.

The church has a kneeling bench for use.

No nails or tacks may be driven into the woodwork, furniture, floors, or walls. Greenery, flowers or other decorations should be placed in free-standing containers. Pew markers must be attached with either poster putty or ribbon ties. Masking or scotch tape is strictly prohibited.

If your wedding is set for Friday or Saturday and you wish to leave flowers for the Sunday service, please notify the church office as soon as possible. A suitable notice will be inserted in the bulletin.

13. Confetti, birdseed, rice, bubbles

These are not permitted inside the church because of the difficulty involved in cleaning them up. While rice is traditional, and a fertility symbol in some cultures, it should not be used in light of its effect on the ecological system.

Rice is not only a safety hazard (many people have slipped and fallen on rice resulting in injury), but birds may eat the rice which could be fatal, since it expands when moistened.

Instead, birdseed may be purchased at hardware and pet shops and could be wrapped in individual packets for guests to open and throw upon the newlyweds outside the church.

Bubbles have become a delightful way for the guests to welcome the newlyweds as they leave the church.

14. A church reception

If a reception is desired at the church, the United Methodist Women must assist in serving the reception in the Fellowship Hall for a small wedding only (under 50). The reception fee (to be paid to Hudson United Methodist Women) is \$75.00 for the first 100 guests plus \$.50 for each additional guest. Food will be provided by the bridal family.

THE REHEARSAL

15. Expectations of the rehearsal

It is expected that there will be one wedding rehearsal. The wedding rehearsal should begin promptly at the time scheduled with everyone present. The following suggestions will help guide you as you prepare for your rehearsal:

a. The pastor will be in charge of the rehearsal, and the wedding consultant will be present to assist with the movement and placement of the wedding party. In all instances of procedure the standard of the church will prevail if a difference arises.

b. The rehearsal, unless otherwise agreed upon, will be the day before the wedding at a time agreed upon by the bride, groom, and minister(s) and scheduled on the church calendar. Most often the rehearsal will require one full hour.

c. Arrangements should be made to have all participants of the service present, including the parents of both the bride and groom, the attendants, ushers, any flower girls or ring bearers, vocalists and the organist.

d. According to the tradition of The United Methodist Church, the altar, the communion table and baptismal font, and the pulpit may NOT be moved or removed from the chancel area. No furniture may be moved without the pastor's permission. The hymnals and Bibles may NOT be removed from the pew racks.

e. Check to see that lighting is set for candles and photography you will use.

f. The rehearsal will give you and the wedding party the opportunity to become familiar with the various elements of the worship service and the progression of the service. It will also give you the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the wedding.

g. NO SMOKING NOR NO ALCOHOL are allowed anywhere inside or outside the church building. Please make sure your wedding party, family, and friends understand this.

h. If the minister, organist, wedding consultant and their spouses/guests are invited to the rehearsal dinner, please be sure they have been notified ahead of time.

A SERVICE OF WORSHIP

16. The wedding ceremony

The Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God. A wedding at the United Methodist Church of Hudson is provided for couples who wish to solemnize their marriage in a service of Christian worship. Both words and actions reflect the belief that husband and wife are equal partners in the sight of God and that they are entering into the marriage of their own volition. Those present are understood to be an active congregation rather than simply passive witnesses. They give their blessing to the couple and to the marriage, and they join in prayer and praise.

As you prepare for your wedding, please remember that the Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God.

17. Photographs or video

Your photographer should be given clear instructions before the ceremony to avoid any embarrassing misunderstandings.

Pictures help capture the magic of this happy occasion. A good photographer can record the event for lasting memories. Arrangements with a reputable professional photographer should be made well in advance. Many couples prefer to take pictures before the ceremony.

The wedding service is a worship service. Pictures disturb the holy and solemn atmosphere of the wedding ceremony. **NO FLASH PICTURES ARE TO BE TAKEN AFTER CANDLE LIGHTING** with the following exceptions:

- a. attendants processing down aisle;
- b. bride entering on father's arm;
- c. bride and groom leaving together.

These restrictions apply not only to the commercial photographer but also to friends and members of the family. The photo flash and click of the camera are disruptive to the spirit and mood of the ceremony. Ushers should remind guests of this. Also, please add a note on the program to discourage flash pictures. For example: "In order to maintain an appropriate mood of worship throughout the marriage service, we ask there be no flash pictures taken during the ceremony. Thank you for your consideration."

Time exposures from the balcony are permitted if they can be taken quietly. The pastor has the final authority and should be consulted about any pictures scheduled during the service.

A videotape of the wedding can be made providing the equipment can be run quietly from the balcony. No video cameras will be allowed at the front of the sanctuary.

18. After the wedding

After the wedding, please have family members or selected friends check the church for all personal belongings, and to remove candles, flowers, aisle cloth, etc., from the church.

19. REMEMBER!

The marriage license and the appropriate fees are due at least one week before the wedding. A wedding will not take place unless all fees have been paid and the license is complete and ready for signatures. Please be responsible in these and all other matters.

**THE WEDDING CEREMONY
PROGRESSION OF THE WORSHIP SERVICE**

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE

Prelude Music

- Guest Book Closed
- Finish Ushering People In
- Seating of Grandparents
- Lighting of Candles
- Seating of Mother and Father of Groom
- Solo
- Seating of Mother of the Bride
- Ushers pull aisle runner, if used
- Solo

Processional

- Minister enters
- Groom and Grooms men enter
- Bridesmaids (one at a time or with escorts)
- Maid or Matron of Honor
- Ring Bearer
- Flower Girl
- Bride on Father's left arm

Greeting

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

Declaration by the Man and the Woman

Response of the Families and People

Prayer

- Solo

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Scripture

- Solo

Scripture

Homily/Sermon (if desired)

Intercessory Prayer

THE MARRIAGE

Exchange of Vows

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

Declaration of Marriage

Lighting of the Unity Candle

Solo

Blessing of the Marriage

[The Lord's Prayer]

SENDING FORTH

Dismissal with Blessing

Wedding Kiss

Presentation of the Couple

Recessional

- Bride and Groom - sign license!
- Ring Bearer and Flower Girl
- Maid of Honor and Best Man
- Grooms men and Bridesmaids
- Ushers will usher out:
 1. Mother and Father of the Bride
 2. Mother and Father of the Groom
 3. Grandparents

Postlude Music

- Extinguish Candles
- Ushers or couple dismiss guests