



Two Shall Become One

A Guide to Weddings at Harmony Creek Church

We gladly honor and celebrate those who wish to have their marriages blessed in our beautiful sanctuary before God and their community of family and friends. A wedding is a public celebration and acknowledgment of a covenant made between two people. At Harmony Creek Church, we are pleased to bless and welcome all couples desiring to enter into the covenant of marriage, including same-gender and interfaith couples and those who have been previously divorced.

We affirm that marriage is an outward sign of an inner grace. It is a visible sign of something invisible, meaning that many things in life are simply signs that point to something deeper. Your wedding ring is not love, but it is a sign of love. So it is with marriage. It is a sign of the way we are loved by God. As couples grow together, love, argue, forgive, reconcile, work through disappointments and trials, they become a living sign saying to the world: This is the same love we which God has graced us. God loves us through thick and thin, for better or worse, in sickness and in health. This is the way we love, you are saying through your marriage, and it is but a shadow of the way God loves us all.

This booklet will be your guide as to the wedding services provided at Harmony Creek Church. Your wedding may be as elaborate or as simple as you desire. Whether public or private, large or small, you will want to make this ceremony as meaningful, joyful, and memorable as possible. This requires careful preparation and planning.

Setting the Date and Time

BEFORE SETTING THE DATE AND TIME, please call the church office at 434-3941 to inquire about the availability of one of church's pastors and the church facilities for the wedding, the wedding rehearsal, and/or the wedding reception or banquet.

Harmony Creek Church requests that weddings not be scheduled on traditional holiday celebrations. Any exception to this request must be negotiated with the pastor and higher fees will be expected.

Securing the Services of our Pastor and Ministers or Other Ministers Outside our Church

Services of Marriage are typically performed by one of the pastors of Harmony Creek Church upon consultation with its Senior Pastor.

When it is the wish of the couple to invite another clergy person outside of Harmony Creek Church to participate in the ceremony, the couple should discuss this with the Senior Pastor BEFORE extending an invitation. In all cases, approval of the Senior Pastor is required before clergy outside of Harmony Creek Church are permitted to officiate at services of marriage at Harmony Creek Church.

Pre-Marital Counseling

Pastors at Harmony Creek Church are trained and prepared to offer pre-marital counseling. This service is included in the fees charged for pastoral services. However, this service is offered only to those couples who desire it and think that it will be helpful to them. The pastor will discuss this option with you. The purpose of pre-marital counseling is NOT to tell you whether or not you should get married. It is offered to help couples reflect on the meaning and realities of marriage and to help couples explore their relationship. All pre-marital counseling is held in the strictest confidence by our pastors.

Including the Worship Leaders in the Rehearsal Dinner or Reception

If you would like the pastor or minister, musicians and other worship leaders as well as their spouses/partners to attend the rehearsal dinner and/or the reception/banquet, please feel free to invite them but please don't assume their attendance. Without an invitation, they won't plan on attending.

Invitations

When ordering your invitations, the suggested form for the address of the Church is:

Harmony Creek Church
5280 Bigger Road
Kettering, Ohio 45440

License

For couples who are able and desiring to receive legal recognition of their marriage in the State of Ohio, a marriage license may be obtained through Montgomery County or any Ohio county, and the laws of the State of Ohio will be applicable. As costs and requirements for obtaining a marriage license vary from county to county, please apply within 3-5 weeks prior to your planned wedding date. *Please bring the license with you to the rehearsal, or if there is no rehearsal, please present it to the pastor prior to the wedding service.* In all cases, **the Marriage License must be delivered to the Pastor or minister officiating at your service before the Wedding Ceremony may begin.**

The Order of Worship

Couples are reminded that the wedding ceremony is first and foremost a service of worship and celebration. When using a Harmony Creek Church pastor, he or she will be happy to work with you in designing a service that is uniquely yours.

Music

In any service of marriage, music will greatly add to the experience. We will work with you to find music and musicians that fit the type of ceremony you envision.

If you wish to use organ or piano as part of your wedding ceremony, you are expected to use Harmony Creek Church's musical staff, if available. Fees for these services are an anticipated part of our musician's livelihood and are included in the total wedding fees paid to Harmony Creek Church.

In addition, our musicians have the "right of first refusal" as to the type of music selected. If our organist or pianist is not available, we will work with you or assist you in securing the services of musicians elsewhere.

You are free to use other types of musicians that you obtain on your own. Couples that desire vocal or instrumental music in addition to, or in place of, the organ or piano often ask family or friends to perform in their weddings. However, couples who do not have such a person(s) in mind sometimes ask the organist or pianist to assist in making these arrangements. The amount of the fee for such performers may vary widely. Generally, paid soloists are accustomed to receiving \$50 - \$100 for their services. You may discuss an appropriate fee with the organist or pianist if you wish to use his or her assistance for this purpose.

Having a soloist in your service that needs organ or piano accompaniment will require at least one additional rehearsal with the accompanist. Scheduling this can become difficult, particularly if the soloist of your choice is coming from out of town. Communication between the organist or pianist and the soloist at the earliest possible time can go a long way toward providing a well-coordinated effort. Please provide the name, address, phone number and general level of training of your soloist(s) to the organist or pianist as soon as possible. Please make your payments directly to the soloist(s).

Use of Audio Equipment

Harmony Creek Church has audio equipment available for use during your wedding ceremony. This could include the use of all microphones as well as the playing of CD's and accompaniment soundtracks that may be used by a soloist. If you plan on using any of this type of equipment in your wedding service, it is required that you secure the services of one of Harmony Creek Church's Sound Technicians. Fees for this service are included in the total fees paid to Harmony Creek Church.

Photographs/Video Tapes

Every couple wants a pictorial record of their wedding. We want photographs and/or videos to be made without distracting from the sacredness of the occasion.

We ask that ONLY the wedding photographer take pictures during the wedding ceremony and that the photographer consult with the pastor and the wedding coordinator BEFORE the wedding ceremony so

that photographs can be taken in the least disruptive way possible. We ask for the same consideration in videotaping the ceremony.

The photographer and videographer may move around and take pictures, flash or otherwise, during the processional and the recessional, as well as before and after the wedding ceremony. Otherwise, during the wedding ceremony the photographer and videographer must stay in the back of the sanctuary and not move around, and no flash or camera lights shall be used. Of course, after the ceremony, you may re-pose your wedding as you wish.

The Pastor will be happy to re-enact any part of the service which you would like recorded in pictures. Please arrange to have all pictures with the Pastor taken as soon after the service as possible, or before the service, if desirable.

Decorating the Church

Most of the local florists are acquainted with our church and will be able to suggest various decorations for your consideration. It is not permissible to use nails, tacks or tape when decorating.

If you wish to leave your floral decorations for the Sunday morning worship service, please inform the wedding coordinator of your plans IN ADVANCE.

Aisle candles and candelabras with candles are available to rent. Other decorative devices are available through florists or rental companies. Please consult with the Wedding Coordinator prior to renting additional equipment.

Only artificial flower petals may be dropped on any carpeted area.

Wedding Coordinator and Custodian

When the use of the building is requested for services of marriage, the services of the Wedding Coordinator and Custodian are REQUIRED to prepare the church for the service and to clean up following the service. The cost of this service will be included in the fees charged.

The Wedding Coordinator will help you with preparations and details pertaining to the use of the church building, calendaring and collection of fees. The Coordinator will make arrangements for the use of our facilities for the rehearsal and the ceremony, and/or the reception or wedding banquet. The Wedding Coordinator will be present at the rehearsal and the ceremony and the reception to give assistance to the wedding party and guests. She or he understands our procedures and will advise you on any questions that may arise.

The Custodian will clean the church and prepare the building for use before and after any rehearsal and ceremony and reception.

Worship Bulletins

Many couples provide worshippers with a bulletin. Most religious bookstores carry a variety of bulletin covers or you may design your own. It is the responsibility of the couple to purchase, type and reproduce these bulletins. Prior to having them printed, it is a good idea to have the bulletin reviewed and proofed by the Pastor or other officiating minister. Please check with the minister for the proper way to list his or her name and title in the bulletin.

The Rehearsal

A rehearsal date should be set at the same time the date for the service of marriage is set. The usual time for the rehearsal is the evening before the wedding. However, other times are possible if negotiated in advance.

One hour should be allowed for the rehearsal. The entire wedding party, ushers and parents, are expected to be present. All musicians participating in the service are also expected to be present, unless negotiated in advance.

The rehearsal is expected to start on time and end on time. All paid personnel who are present at the rehearsal, including the pastor, wedding coordinator, sound technicians, and musicians, who must stay longer than one hour scheduled due to the rehearsal not starting on time will be paid an additional \$25.00 each for every half hour, or portion thereof, that the rehearsal runs late. Payment of this fee will be expected on the night of the rehearsal or you will forfeit their services for the ceremony and all previous fees paid will be non-refundable. Please instruct your wedding party as to the serious and costly ramifications of not starting and ending the rehearsal promptly.

If one or two people in your wedding party is not able to make the rehearsal due to travel or other unexpected difficulties, the rehearsal should commence on time and someone in the wedding party will be asked to catch them up later.

The Day of the Wedding

The entire wedding party is encouraged to be at the church no later than one hour prior to the service. This will allow time for last minute details, plus it will also allow the Wedding Party a few moments to gain composure before the ceremony. The Church will provide changing spaces for the wedding party as needed.

Under no circumstances should the service of marriage start later than the established starting time. The pastor or minister will have the authority to cancel the wedding if it does not commence within 15 minutes of the established starting time and all fees will remain non-refundable.

Parking

There is adequate parking in the church's parking lot for your wedding guests.

Use of Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages are permitted to be served as part of your wedding reception. However, any indication of over consumption of alcohol resulting in disruptive and destructive behavior will result in dismissal from the church property, including possible police action.

No Rice, Please

The church requests that rice or any other substance that might prove harmful to persons, property or nature not be thrown on church property. Bird seed and bubbles are permissible but are only permitted on the outside of the building..

No Smoking Please

Harmony Creek Church requests that there be **No Smoking** inside the building or near the entrance before or during the ceremony.

Damages

All damages caused to Harmony Creek Church building or equipment as a direct result of your rehearsal or ceremony or reception is the responsibility of the couple getting married.

Wedding Expenses and Fees

Members of Harmony Creek Church in good standing who are fulfilling their vows to support the church by their presence, prayers, giving and gifts of service shall be granted the use of the sanctuary and fellowship hall, as well as the services of a pastor, without charge. However, fees for other services and personnel will apply. In addition, we firmly believe that no member of our congregation should forego a church wedding because they do not have the money for fees. Finances are something that a couple may want to discuss with the Senior Pastor.

Non-members of the church are expected to pay the established rentals and fees as a part of your wedding budget.

For members and non-members, half of the total rental and service fees shall be paid as a non-refundable deposit. Payment of the non-refundable deposit is required in order for any wedding to be placed on the church's and pastor's calendars.

The remaining balance of all fees is to be paid in full two (2) weeks prior to the wedding day and are non-refundable thereafter. Failure to pay the fees on time may result in forfeiture of services. Please make checks payable to Harmony Creek Church. When a wedding is canceled anytime before full payment is received, the deposit paid will not be refunded.



Harmony Creek Church

United Church of Christ and Alliance of Baptists Community

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