

INTRODUCTION

We are a congregation of the United Church of Christ. We worship a God of overflowing love who has invited us, in the gift of Jesus Christ, to share and fulfill that love through extravagant hospitality, creating a community of reconciliation, justice, peace, and joy. Know that whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

Whether you are a traditional couple engaged to be married, or a non-traditional couple who seek blessing of your partnership in a holy union, we invite you to explore the ways Kent United Church of Christ can help you to establish your home in God's love and build a life together in Christian faith and community.

This brochure will help you prepare to talk with the pastor about a wedding or holy union at Kent UCC. It gives an outline of what's offered, what's possible, and what's expected. Please read carefully, making note of any questions you want to raise when you meet with the pastor.

First and foremost, weddings and holy unions in our church are joyous occasions for the worship of God; working with the couple, the pastor, organist, and wedding coordinator will assure that all aspects of the ceremony respect that commitment and reflect that standard. Faithfulness and fun fit together most beautifully when they are focused on the worship of God.

If you do not regularly attend worship services at Kent UCC, your first personal contact with the pastor should be immediately following a Sunday morning worship service that you have attended. Introduce yourself and say that you are interested in having your wedding/holy union at Kent UCC. Though you are not required to become a member of the congregation, we do invite and encourage you to worship with us regularly and to enjoy our open and affirming community of faith.

TAKE A BREATH

You've probably been thinking and dreaming about your wedding/holy union for a long time. You may already have definite ideas of how you want it to look, sound, smell and feel. But please recognize that the church and its staff are not a blank slate. We strongly advise you to read this brochure carefully and meet with the pastor to discuss your plans before you make a lot of commitments.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The way to begin is with the couple and the pastor getting to know each other in one or two private meetings (usually one hour each) in the pastor's office. These meetings will include some sharing of personal history, exploration of religious convictions, discussion of marriage and family issues, and practical planning of the wedding ceremony. In addition to traditional "business hours," evening and Saturday morning appointments can also be arranged.

MATTERS OF SIZE

The sanctuary of Kent UCC can accommodate 450 worshipers: 300 on the main floor and 150 in the balcony.

It is strongly recommended that wedding parties (the couple and the attendants who stand with them) in the sanctuary not exceed 10 persons. The sightlines are difficult and the space is crowded with wedding parties of more than 10.

Our chapel can hold as many 150, and is ideal for a wedding party of no more than six (the couple plus four attendants) with 75-100 wedding guests.

There are many ways to have people share in the leadership of your wedding: reading one of the scripture lessons, ushering, making music, or serving as an acolyte -- these are but a few of the possibilities. You do not need to ask every important person in your life to stand with you as one of your attendants.

Your best choice is to creatively adapt your plans to the scale of the room.

DECOR

The design of our sanctuary reflects a clean modern aesthetic in which the decoration is architectural. Many people find that one colorful flower arrangement inbetween the candles at the back of the chancel is plenty. The chapel is an even more modern space with abundant natural light.

With the possible exception of a "unity candle," use of candles in the sanctuary is limited to the candlesticks and candelabra provided by the church. We can provide two seven-branch candelabra, placed to the right and left of the Communion table, and hurricane lamps attached to the pews along the center aisle.

If you want a "unity candle" in your ceremony, you are responsible for providing it, and it must be present for the rehearsal so that this part of the ceremony can be practiced.

The use of an aisle runner (white carpet) in the center aisle is strongly discouraged. Laying it before the service makes for difficult seating. Laying it as the procession begins makes for awkward choreography. In all cases it is a hazard with much more potential to cause you a problem than it is likely to add to the beauty or drama of the ceremony.

No nails or adhesives (tape or glue) may be used on any furniture or other surface in the sanctuary.

No rice, confetti, or helium balloons are to be used anywhere in the church buildings or on the church campus. You are responsible for making sure that your guests honor this policy. Bird seed may be thrown outside of the building as the couple is departing.

MUSIC

In keeping with the nature of weddings as worship gatherings which are genuinely joyous celebrations before God, our organist is responsible for maintaining an appropriate musical tone and quality. Music from secular literature (opera, Broadway, movies, etc.) though it may be of high quality, is not generally recommended. Our organist will offer you a broad repertoire of excellent and festive music that is suited to a worship service.

The wedding fee covers the services of our organist, including a musical consultation with the couple.

If you want other musical instruments or voices at your wedding, our organist can act as your agent to hire musicians. You may also choose to bring in musicians on your own who are not known to our organist. In any case, a rehearsal with our organist is required and additional fees may be charged. Even the most excellent musicians need to rehearse in order to play well together.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

If your wedding starts on time (see TIMING below), the pastor will be available for photographs for 15-20 minutes immediately following the service. During the worship service (from the end of the procession to the beginning of the recession) photographers and videographers should not be in view of any of the worshipers. Only photography that does not draw attention away from the worship service is acceptable. It is the responsibility of the couple to make sure that photographers and videographers understand this policy.

TIMING AND SCHEDULING

Weddings may be scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. on some weeknights, or from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturdays. The standard ceremony lasts about 30 minutes.

Usually, the facilities will be open and available to you one hour before and up to 90 minutes following the scheduled start of your wedding. Those times can be adjusted through the church office if you wish to have the wedding party dress at the church, or if you plan to have photographs taken at the church before the wedding.

We recommend that you have flowers for your wedding or holy union delivered to the church on the day of the service, during our regular office hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Saturday. We cannot guarantee that someone will be here to accept delivery of your flowers except during these office hours.

For most weddings, a rehearsal on the night before is recommended. It may not be scheduled to begin later than 6:30 p.m. The rehearsal usually lasts about one hour and should include the couple, their attendants, parents, ushers, readers, and anyone else who will be included in the formal seating. If you envision a casual wedding that doesn't involve a procession, lay readers, or more than two other people standing with you, you may not need to have a rehearsal.

Please impress upon all members of the wedding party the importance of punctuality. Most weddings and rehearsals happen on the weekend, which is the busiest time of the week for the staff and facilities of Kent UCC.

CHILDREN

It can be great fun to include children in your wedding, but there is also a risk involved. If they are not mature enough to recognize and honor the nature of the occasion, they might behave inappropriately or become frightened and start to cry. You may be sure that the kids you have in mind will be OK, but over the years we have known too many couples who were sorry that they pushed children into roles for which they were not emotionally prepared. Therefore, we strongly advise you not to have children younger than seven years old in your wedding party. Also, if some of your guests may be bringing very young children, you might want to consider providing child care for them in our crib room. If you need a child care provider, our wedding consultant can make a recommendation.

TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, AND DRUGS

No alcohol or tobacco use is permitted anywhere on the campus of Kent United Church of Christ. If any member of the wedding party appears to be intoxicated, the pastor will delay the wedding or rehearsal until that person is sober or removed from the wedding party.

CEREMONY

Your wedding ceremony at KUCC will follow an order of worship like the one you find at the end of this brochure. The pastor and the organist, in their meetings with you, will review your options and help you to make your choices.

The KUCC pastor who works with you to prepare for your wedding will preside at the wedding ceremony. You may also request of the KUCC pastor that other clergy be invited to participate

The church office will prepare a printed bulletin that includes the order of worship and identifies the service leaders. This will help your guests to participate in the service; and it makes a nice memento of the occasion. If you prefer to have a customized bulletin, we will supply you and/or your printer with a digital file of the required information and format.

The church's wedding coordinator will help you put it all together... from running the rehearsal to getting everybody in place at the wedding.

DOCUMENTATION

The church will provide a formal certificate of your wedding or holy union which documents your covenant within the church but has no legal standing with the state.

Couples who expect to be legally married in the State of Ohio must obtain an Ohio marriage license from the Portage County Probate Court and deliver it to the pastor at the rehearsal. For more information call 330-298-3149.

RECEPTION

If you would like to have your reception at the church, our women's fellowship will make arrangements for you in VanMeter Hall which can accommodate approximately 150 people seated at tables. The couple and/or their families must provide all of the food and beverages.

Along with kitchen and dining room servers, the Women's Fellowship can provide:

- A beverage table and cake table with tablecloths and lace skirt;
- Silver service and silverware;
- Glass hostess plates and cups, or place settings for a buffet meal;
- Chairs, and round guest tables with lace cloths;
- Skirted head table for the wedding party.

Arrangements for your reception at the church are made directly with our women's fellowship and require a separate fee paid to them. If you want a reception at the church, the wedding coordinator will help you make contact with the women's fellowship.

FEES

For wedding and rehearsal access to the facility, pastoral services, organist consultation and performance, custodian, wedding coordinator, printed bulletin, and candles, as described above:

Non-members:	Sanctuary \$1,000	Chapel \$750
Members:	Sanctuary \$400	Chapel \$350

No wedding reservation is complete or binding until all fees are paid in full. If fees have not been paid already, you will be sent a bill 60 days prior to your wedding date. Payment in full is due 30 days before your wedding date. Unless prior arrangements have been made with the church office, our facilities and staff may not be available for your wedding if fees are not paid in full by the due date.

**ORDER OF WORSHIP
FOR A WEDDING OR SERVICE OF HOLY UNION**

** indicates optional locations for instrumental or vocal music and/or hymns

PRELUDE

SEATING

This is usually the formal seating of parents and grandparents

If the couple choose to have a unity candle, it is customary for mothers to light the outer two of its three candles as they are being seated.

PROCESSIONAL

Option #1: Enter from narthex by pairs. "Usually" the pastor and the groom are the first pair, the bride and her father the last pair. In the case of a holy union, other configurations are possible within this option.

Option #2: Pastor, groom and his attendants enter first by chancel door. Bride's attendants enter next, singly from narthex. Bride and father enter last from narthex.

GREETING

INVOCATION

QUESTIONS OF INTENT

to couple (obligatory)

_____, *will you have* _____ *to be your wife/husband/partner, and with God's help will you love her/him faithfully as long as you both shall live.*

to parents (optional)

Do you offer your prayerful blessing and loving support to this marriage/partnership?

to congregation (obligatory)

Do you, the community of faith, pledge your support and encouragement to the covenant that _____ and _____ are making?

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SCRIPTURE

One or more scripture lessons may be read. Passages for consideration include, but are not limited to:

Hebrew Scripture (Old Testament)

Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:18-24

Psalms 23, 33, 34, 37:3-7, 67, 100, 103, 112, 117, 121, 127, 128, 136, 145, 148, 150

Song of Solomon 2:8-13, 8:6-7

Jeremiah 31:31-34
Isaiah 54:5-8
Hosea 2:16-23

New Testament

Matthew 5:1-12; 5:13-16; 7:21, 24-29; 19:3-6; 22:35-40

Mark 10:6-9, 13-16

John 2:1-11, 15:9-17

Romans 8:31-39; 12:1-2, 9-18

1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 13:1-13

Ephesians 3:14-21; 5:2, 21-33

Colossians 3:12-17

1 Peter 3:1-9

1 John 3:18-24, 4:7-16

Revelation 19:1, 5-9

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HOMILY (optional) This is a brief reflection on the scripture and the meaning of marriage.

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VOWS

_____, *I give my love to you freely, and with joy. From this day forward, in all changing conditions, I will honor and support you, that we may grow together, in love and grace, and in all good gifts, which come by the hand of God.*

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

I give this ring to you as a sign of the covenant made between us this day. With all that I am and all that I have I honor you in the name of God.

** If the couple have chosen a unity candle, its center candle may be lighted here.

PASTORAL PRAYERS

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DECLARATION The pastor announces that the covenant is sealed

BENEDICTION

RECESSIONAL

The couple exit by the center aisle. Attendants, in pairs, follow the couple. Parents follow the attendants. Once the pastor has exited, the remaining guests may use the center aisle.