

Weddings at First Christian Church, Downtown Springfield

As you prepare for holy matrimony, may the Lord bless you and keep you; May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; And may the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace, both now and in the life everlasting. Amen.



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Note: any variations to the provisions below may be discussed with or approved by the Senior Minister. Some decisions may need full Board approval.

Your Wedding at First Christian Church

We at FCC are excited about your upcoming marriage. We are eager to help you prepare your married life together as well as your wedding day. Our desire is for your wedding to be a glorious and sacred event and your marriage to be a lifetime of fulfillment, joy and blessing. We view marriage as a sacred promise shared between a man and a woman who faithfully love and cherish each other. It is a bond that is created and blessed by God. Therefore, when you choose to enter this covenant promise, your loyalty must first be to God and then to each other. Each partner brings a uniqueness that enriches you as a couple where both have equal rights and responsibilities. Your wedding service is both a religious ceremony and a legal proceeding. It is our responsibility to see that the service is conducted in a reverent, dignified manner as you express your pledges to each other before God. In this booklet you will find information to help get you started in planning your special occasion. Our minister, organists and staff are ready to assist you in creating the most beautiful experience you have ever known. Have fun!

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Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts

Here at First Christian Church we are not only interested in your wedding, we are also interested in your marriage. We want you to possess the skills you need for a lasting and happy life together. Living “happily ever after” is less a mystery than a mastery of certain skills.

To help you get started in the right directions, we have *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* (SYMBIS), a marriage preparation program. This program is designed to help today’s couples address crucial areas within marriage in order to cultivate intimacy and develop a rich, lifelong love. Attending this program is a requirement to be married at First Christian Church.

Our SYMBIS class is held once a year with two to five couples in each class (typically in January). It is a great opportunity to meet other couples who are going through all the same things you are like finding a place for the reception, deciding on flowers, discussing the honeymoon and dealing with parents/in-laws who are driving you crazy! The class is video-based with group discussion as well as interaction between the two of you. It is scheduled for seven weeks, usually meeting on Sundays between 9:00 am and 10:00 am, and is led by our minister. We believe it is well worth it to invest these few hours toward having the very best marriage possible.

The Church Building

First Christian Church is a totally accessible building with an elevator to all floors of the complex, including the sanctuary. The church parking lot is located directly south of the building off Sixth Street in addition to parking along adjacent streets. Use of the parking lot at the Shrine Temple, immediately north of the church, may be arranged. Please note that the parking lots behind the building (across the alley) are previously reserved and not available.

Dressing rooms specifically designed with the wedding party in mind are provided. The Bride’s Room is conveniently located on the lower level of the building, close to restrooms and with easy access to the front lobby where the bride and her attendants enter into the sanctuary. A beautiful table and bench add a make-up/hair area, and large mirrors cover two walls so the ladies may check their attire from head to toe. The Groom’s room is furnished to meet all the guys’ needs; a large mirror for adjusting ties and combing hair, comfortable seating and even a fireplace (electric, of course) for those group pictures. But most importantly, there’s a television, which always finds itself tuned to the latest sporting event!

The Hott Memorial Chapel on the third floor of the education building is the perfect setting for a small wedding, having seating capacity of 50 people. The main sanctuary has seating for over 400 people on the main floor with additional seating for 200 in the balconies.

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Rehearsal

We believe that practice helps to make things perfect, so we ask that a rehearsal be scheduled for sanctuary weddings. Usually this is the day before the wedding (so it's fresh in your minds for the big day!). It is extremely important that all participants in the ceremony be present including: bride, groom, parents of bride and groom, maid/matron of honor, best man, bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girl(s), ring bearer(s), ushers, soloist, special readers, organist and minister. Please extend common courtesy to the minister and organist by insuring all participants arrive on time. The normal length of a full rehearsal takes approximately one hour (from the time everyone is present). Also, don't forget to bring your marriage license to the rehearsal.

Pictures

No wedding would be complete without photographs and/or videotapes to capture your memories. We want to help you get all the pictures you want. To keep the sacredness of the occasion intact, however, we request no flash pictures during the ceremony. They may be taken during the processional and recessional but must be done unobtrusively. Time exposure (non-flash) photographs may be taken from the balcony or a stationary location mutually agreed on between the minister and the photographer. Videotapes of the ceremony may also be made from the balcony, or a mutually agreed location, using only the natural lighting of the sanctuary. Wedding party photos may be taken before or after the ceremony. Please advise all relatives and friends also taking photographs or videos to follow these same rules.

Flowers

When you make plans with the florist about flower arrangements, please ask them to check with the church staff about where they may be placed. Pew bows are fine; however, they cannot be attached using tape, tacks or anything that will harm the surface of the wood. Tying them or securing them with rubber bands works well. Any type of tape or tacks may not be used anywhere in the sanctuary. Before you ask, there are 30 pews in the main section of the sanctuary, not counting the north or south side areas.

Aisle Runner

We discourage the use of an aisle runner as it almost always proves problematic during the service. If you choose to use one, it should be at least 70 feet long.

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Candles

In the sanctuary, the church provides two brass candelabras for the chancel, equipped with metal candles that use candle inserts. Thirty of the same type of candles are positioned around the balcony. These candles are long lasting and dripless. If you choose to include a Unity Candle Service in your ceremony, you will need to provide a large unity candle and two separate tapers and optional holders. If you prefer, a brass unity candle candelabra has been provided by the Women Today organization of First Christian Church for your use. Please notify the minister if you plan to use it.

Receptions

The church's Fellowship Hall or Gathering Place is available for wedding receptions.

Special Rules and Regulations

Minister

To ensure the quality of your wedding and to maintain continuity with the marriage counseling you have received, it is recommended that our minister of FCC perform your ceremony. He understands, better than anyone, the specific challenge of the FCC building and already has a working relationship with the organist and other staff.

Organist

The organist/pianist from First Christian Church best understand the nuances of our fine pipe organ and grand piano, and already have a working relationship with the ministers and staff. Therefore, it is necessary that they serve in this capacity. Again, please communicate your musical selections at least six weeks in advance of your ceremony if you would like music for your ceremony.

A vocalist or ensemble may be used during your ceremony.

Rehearsal must be arranged in advance with our organist/pianist. It is the policy of First Christian to not allow pre-recorded tape or CD music.

It should be noted that fees for musicians outside First Christian Church should be paid by you directly to your chosen musician.

Access to the Building/Custodial Needs

The church custodian will handle any set up and clean up of the church building. The custodial fee includes opening the church building two hours before the scheduled time of your wedding and will lock-up an hour after the ceremony to prepare the church for the next scheduled event. If additional time is needed, prior arrangements must be made through the church office and an additional fee of \$50 per hour will be assessed.

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Fees

All wedding fees, as listed on the Wedding Fee Schedule, are required to be fully paid at least one month prior to your wedding. A non-refundable deposit of **\$250** is required to secure your wedding date. This will be applied to your total wedding fees if you and your wedding party and guests adhere to the rules and regulations as outlined. Check(s) for fees should be made out to First Christian Church; the church will see that the fees are distributed to the appropriate persons.

License

A valid marriage license from Sangamon County, State of Illinois, must be given to the presiding minister no later than the time of the rehearsal.

Special Rules

- No rice or birdseed may be thrown inside or outside church building.
- No smoking is allowed within the church building.
- No alcoholic beverages of any kind may be consumed on church property, inside or outside the building

Your fee deposit will not be applied to your total fees if any of these rules and regulations are violated.

Music

Since the wedding ceremony is a service of worship, the music must be carefully and discriminately chosen. Current show themes, theatrical music and pop music don't easily lend themselves to reflect the sacrament of marriage and are discouraged. Your presiding minister will direct you to your accompanist who will be able to give you examples of appropriate selections. In order for us to provide music for your ceremony, contact with the accompanist **must** be made at least 6 weeks in advance of your ceremony.

Invitations

If you are printing invitations, a suggested form for the church address is:

First Christian Church
Sixth and Cook Streets
Springfield, IL 62703

If you would like the minister to attend the rehearsal dinner and/or wedding reception, please send a written invitation or extend a personal invitation well in advance of the event.

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Wedding Ceremony

In addition to the marriage preparation classes, a separate meeting with the officiating minister is required to discuss the wedding ceremony in detail at least 6 weeks prior to ceremony. Our minister is dedicated to personalizing the ceremony according to your desires, as much as possible. Special readings are encouraged and are a good way to include special friends in your ceremony. Because the marriage vows are personal promises you make to each other, you may want to write them or other parts of the ceremony as well. The minister *must* approve all special readings, personal vows and other parts of the ceremony. This is to ensure the ceremony reflects the sacredness of the occasion and is in harmony with the theological beliefs of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Wedding Fees

First Christian Church provides use of the Hott Memorial Chapel for weddings at no Sanctuary fee to all couples, members or non-members, as a ministry to the community.

Sanctuary: \$700.00

Minister: \$300.00

Organist: \$200.00

Custodian: \$150.00

Audio Tech: \$ 125.00

*The fee for custodian covers **two** hours before the wedding time and **one** hour after the service. If you need more time, the additional fee is \$50 per hour.*