

WEDDINGS
at
CHURCH ON THE HILL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



55 Main Street
Lenox, MA 01240
413.637.1001
www.lenoxucc.org/weddings

Dear Friends,

Weddings are times of joy, exhilaration ... and confusion. The joy and the exhilaration are wonderful, and Church on the Hill looks forward to sharing it with you. We even look forward to sorting out the confusion and helping to make your special day a holy celebration!

A wedding in the church's Meetinghouse or Chapel is first and foremost a service of worship, celebrating the blessing of God in your life together. As you begin your marriage journey, you are joining a long line of couples who have affirmed and shared their commitment to a Christian covenant with each other since this congregation's origins in 1769.

This booklet should help you with many of the questions couples ask us. You will also have your own particular questions and we look forward to helping you find answers.

Congratulations on your wedding!

Yours in Christ,

The Members of Church on the Hill

*It is for the union of you and me
that there is light in the sky.
It is for the union of you and me
that the earth is decked in dusky green.
It is for the union of you and me
that night sits motionless with the world in her arms;
dawn appears opening the eastern door
with sweet murmurs in her voice.
The boat of hope sails along on the currents of
eternity towards that union,
flowers of the ages are being gathered together
for its welcoming ritual.
It is for the union of you and me
that this heart of mine, in the garb of a bride,
has proceeded from birth to birth
upon the surface of this ever-turning world to choose the Beloved.*

Rabindranath Tagor

Weddings at Church on the Hill

Pastoral Leadership

Church on the Hill is committed to accommodating those who sincerely wish to be married in our Meetinghouse or Chapel. The pastor will be responsible for and have authority over both the arrangements and the service. While the Church typically works with couples who seek a Christian service of marriage, we are delighted as well to extend hospitality to interfaith, ecumenical, and interreligious couples and will work with you to accommodate your needs. A wedding at Church on the Hill is first and foremost a service of worship, celebrating the presence and asking the blessing of God.

We ask couples married in our church to participate in premarital counseling. If you are a member of the church, the pastor's services generally include a minimum of five counseling sessions, the planning of your service, guidance of the rehearsal, and officiating at the wedding. If you are not a church member, or live at a distance from Lenox, the pastor will help you find a premarital counselor.

Church on the Hill is an Open and Affirming congregation. As such, we gladly welcome couples of every sexual identity and gender expression who wish to enter into the covenant of Christian marriage.

You may invite other ordained clergy to participate in the service. Please discuss guest clergy participation with our pastor before setting arrangements in motion. Church on the Hill clergy will normally be the "minister of record" for marriages witnessed in this church. The deacons of Church on the Hill support the right of the pastor to decline to perform a marriage.

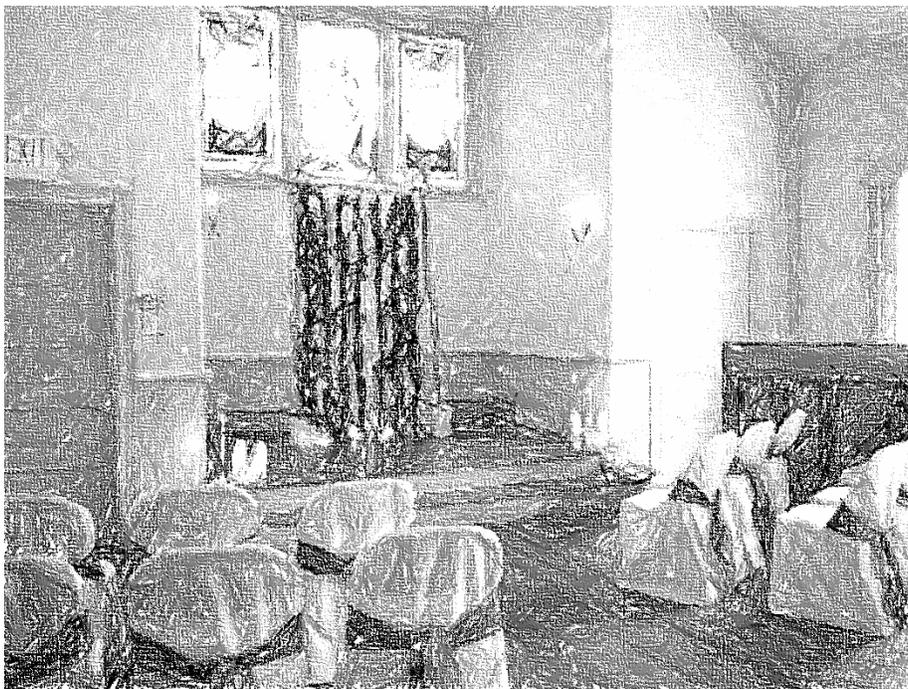
Wedding Coordinators are appointed by the pastors. The role of the coordinator is to make everyone feel welcome and comfortable, and to facilitate your wedding. The coordinators are prepared to handle myriad last-minute details. They are seldom overwhelmed and never object to even the slightest of questions.

Facilities

Church on the Hill has two buildings: the historic 1805 Meetinghouse (on top of the hill to the north of town center), which can comfortably seat 220 guests, and the 1877 Chapel, an smaller space for intimate ceremonies with up to 35 guests.



Please note that the Meetinghouse is located at **169 Main Street**, while the Chapel and Church offices are at **55 Main Street** (both in **Lenox, MA 01240**). You'll want to be sure the correct address is used for invitations, GPS, etc.



Music

The church is fortunate to have a versatile Music Minister who can play classical and contemporary music on piano and organ or arrange for other instrumentalists. The Wedding Coordinator will put you in touch with the Music Minister to discuss the selection of music for your ceremony.

As is the custom in churches served by the American Guild of Organists, our Music Minister has the right of refusal for all services held in Church on the Hill. Ultimately, all music used in weddings should be approved in advance by Church on the Hill pastor or its Music Minister. If outside musicians are going to participate in the ceremony, they should attend the rehearsal.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal is an important preparation for your wedding service. The wedding rehearsal is normally held the day before the wedding. The bride and groom, their parents, and all members of the wedding party should attend. If there is to be a dinner or party, it should be held after the rehearsal.

The church schedules one hour for the rehearsal, which is directed by the pastor. The Wedding Coordinator and Sexton will be present at the ceremony to take care of last-minute logistics and to help ensure a smooth-running service. The pastor and coordinator will discuss your wishes about how your guests are to be seated and any other pertinent ceremony details. Details may include arrangements for flowers, photographer, handling of children, handicap access, rest rooms, and candle lighting.

The Marriage License

In order to be married at the Church on the Hill, you must have a valid marriage license from any city or town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Massachusetts requires that you both apply in person for a marriage license by filing your intentions jointly with a city or town clerk. There is a waiting period of three days between the time you file your intentions and the time the license is issued. The license is valid for 60 days from the date your intentions are filed.

Note also that Massachusetts Law requires either that the officiating clergy person be a resident of Massachusetts or that s/he obtain permission from the office of the Massachusetts Secretary of State. The pastor has experience with such arrangements and can give guidance as needed.

The marriage license should be given to the pastor no later than the time of the rehearsal. The pastor will complete the form and return it to the town or city. If you desire copies of the municipal certificate, this may be arranged with the town clerk.

Photography and Videography

Because the Meetinghouse and Chapel are houses of worship, we request that all photography and videography be unobtrusive and that no flash photography be used during the wedding service. Please inform your family and friends of this policy. Video cameras are permitted and may be placed at the back of the space or in the balcony of the Meetinghouse. Only the lighting already available may be used. We understand the importance that married couples place upon the preservation of their wedding day in photographs. Our church Wedding Coordinator will work closely and cooperatively with your photographer the day of your wedding.

Please communicate to your photographer that under no circumstances are photographers or videographers to move around the sanctuary during the service, after the bride's processional is completed. The Meetinghouse will be available for up to one hour following the service to accommodate photographs. Please advise your photographer of the expected attire of the wedding guests, so that they may dress appropriately.

Professional Wedding Planners

The church Wedding Coordinator assumes responsibility for all wedding rehearsals and services at Church on the Hill. Sometimes couples hire a professional wedding planner to help facilitate the events of their wedding. If this is your choice, it is especially important that the planner be conversant with the particulars of this booklet and that contact is made with the church Wedding Coordinator well in advance of the rehearsal.

Dressing Arrangements

While our historic Meetinghouse is a beautiful venue, it does lack modern conveniences such as a room where members of the wedding can change clothes before the service. Please plan to dress before coming to the ceremony. (If you have much travel either to or from Lenox on the day of the wedding, we can offer the option of using the church parlor, located ¼ mile from the Meetinghouse, as a changing room for members of the wedding party.)

Flowers

Flowers can adorn the sanctuary in many ways. A single flower arrangement is traditional and appropriate on the altar table. Additional arrangements can be placed on the chancel and in the narthex (lobby). Over the years some couples have chosen to provide either ribbon or flowers as a pew marker. The Wedding Coordinator will be happy to discuss further ideas with you, and review options for decorating that will protect the Meetinghouse or Chapel from any damage.

Flowers may be delivered by arrangement with the Wedding Coordinator. Wedding flowers may be removed from the church after the ceremony, or, if you wish, they may be left for the following Sunday's worship service. Please let the church Wedding Coordinator know the name and phone number of your florist by one week before the ceremony in case of a delivery difficulty on the wedding day.

Programs and Printed Material

Providing an Order of Service often makes guests feel welcome and comfortable. The church administer will gladly provide an illustration of the church if you choose to use it on your Order of Worship. Your printer may offer suggestions as to placement and size.

Guest books may be placed on a stand in the narthex (lobby) of the Meetinghouse. Directions to the reception may be made available here as well.

We reserve the right of final approval for any printed material used in the church.

Candles

Altar candles are provided by the church. If you choose to use a Unity candle in your ceremony, please plan to provide the pillar candle and tapers. For sunset weddings we can arrange for electric candles in the windows.

Receiving Line and Reception

You may plan on a receiving line in the narthex (lobby) or the front lawn of the Meetinghouse, if you wish. Please decide this before the day of the service and discuss with the Wedding Coordinator.

For smaller weddings (up to 40 guests), we can offer the use of the church Fellowship Hall, on the lower level of the Chapel building at 55 Main Street, for an additional charge. For larger weddings, the town of Lenox has a wealth of venues, from local inns to the town's Community Center to larger resort establishments.

Parking and Traffic Safety

Parking at the Meetinghouse is limited. The church's lot will hold approximately 50 vehicles. Our sexton does an excellent job of fitting as many cars as possible into our parking lot. Carpooling is strongly suggested. For weddings with over 100 guests, please make plans with the Wedding Coordinator to provide bus services.

Limousines may park out in front of the church as long as they respect the entrance and exit signs. Please respect all Handicap Parking signs.

Because of the location of the church (on a heavily traveled street with limited visibility), the town of Lenox requires couples to hire a traffic safety detail for the day of their ceremony. The officer will be on duty for four hours and helps guests enter and exit the parking area safely. The Wedding Coordinator will take care of ordering the traffic detail. The fee is included in

Handicap Access and Amplification

Handicapped access to the Meetinghouse is available through the door on the northwest corner of the building. The sanctuary is equipped with amplification for voice, with three microphones available: wired, wireless, and lavalier (typically used by the presiding minister).

Reserving the Building

In order to secure the Meetinghouse or Chapel for the date of your ceremony, a \$300 nonrefundable Reservation Deposit is required, along with a refundable \$150 Security Deposit. This will be returned to you after the ceremony, if the building has sustained no damage during your ceremony.

Typical Timeline, Day of the Wedding

1 1/2 hours ahead	Wedding Coordinator opens the Meetinghouse or Chapel.
1 hour ahead	Ushers arrive; flowers should be delivered.
45 minutes ahead	Pastor arrives; Photographer(s), videographer(s) set up and meet with Wedding Coordinator.
30 minutes ahead	Music Minister arrives; Groom and best man arrive.
20 minutes ahead	Reserved seating guests arrive
5 minutes ahead	Bride and attendants arrive.

Costs

Your wedding at Church on the Hill will be given loving attention by a team of professionals. This includes the services of the Pastor, Wedding Coordinator, Music Minister, Sexton, the use of the building(s), and the cost of the required traffic detail. Additional fees may apply for guest musicians, or if our Music Minister needs to schedule an extra rehearsal. If you are planning a wedding between November 1st and March 30th, plan on an additional \$400 in case snow removal becomes necessary for your safety and comfort (this amount will only be charged in case of snow).

Fee schedule:

Meetinghouse (capacity 220)	\$1000
(or) Chapel (capacity 35)	\$300
Staff (wedding coordinator and sexton)	\$400
Required traffic detail	\$100
Pastor	pastor sets fee
Music Minister	music minister sets fee
Reservation deposit (nonrefundable)	\$300
Security deposit (refundable)	\$150
(both due at time of securing your date)	
Winter differential (Nov-Mar) (refundable)	\$400
(due one month before ceremony)	
Balance due one month before to ceremony.	

Please make checks payable to “Church on the Hill, United Church of Christ.”

Please discuss all fees with the pastor at your first meeting. The pastor can help you manage costs and is more than willing to talk to you about this.

We extend our very best wishes as you plan for your marriage ceremony. Please don't hesitate to call us. We're here to help make your wedding a special celebration.

God bless you both.

*May God bless you and keep you;
May God's radiance shine upon you and be gracious unto you;
May God look upon you with favor and grant you shalom
this day and forevermore.*



United Church of Christ
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Lenox, MA 01240
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www.lenoxucc.org
welcome@lenoxucc.org

An Open and Affirming congregation