DOWNTOWN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GUIDELINES FOR COUPLES

Planning to Wed at Downtown United Presbyterian Church

Revised – JULY 2024

DOWNTOWN UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
121 N Fitzhugh St., Rochester NY 14614

Guidelines for Couples
Planning to Wed at Downtown Church

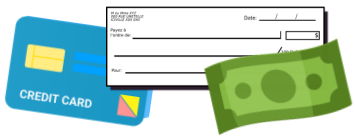
This information has been developed to provide couples with often-requested information and important guidelines and policies of the Downtown Church. We strive to make our church a friendly and hospitable place for everyone. We ask that you treat the building and staff with the same respect and care that you would have for your own house of worship or other sacred space. Please feel free to contact the Wedding Facilities Coordinator with any questions.

Outstanding Balances & Fees

All remaining fees must be paid in full 30 days prior to your rehearsal date. If paying by check, payments for amounts due cab be made payable to Downtown Unite Presbyterian Church or DUPC. Payment can be made by credit cared or in cash as well.

Please bring or send all payments to Downtown Church. If final payments are not received 30 days prior to your ceremony, facility use will not be permitted and your event will be canceled and removed from the Downtown Church calendar.

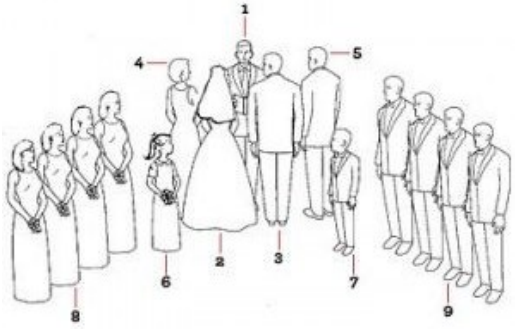
Unless the church is responsible for a delay, the church spaces must be cleared two hours after the scheduled start time of the wedding. For a Saturday wedding, the sanctuary **must** be cleared by 4:00 pm for our sister congregation's Saturday mass.



Rehearsal

- **Timeframe** The time allotted for each rehearsal is one hour. Please make every effort to ensure that you and your bridal party members arrive so that the rehearsal can begin promptly at the designated time. Downtown Church hosts many events, worship services and rehearsals. **You are required to adhere to your scheduled rehearsal and ceremony time.** You will have access to the building and grounds only during the scheduled time frames.

The Wedding Facilities Coordinator will make every effort to start the rehearsal on time and will begin the rehearsal as soon as the couple and officiant (if attending) are present.



If the bride or the couple would like to meet with the Wedding Facilities Coordinator prior to the rehearsal on that date, please plan on arriving one half hour before the listed start time for the rehearsal. Couples can also meet with the Wedding Facilities Coordinator at another date and time prior to the date of the rehearsal to view the space and discuss arrangements.

- **Preparing for the Rehearsal** In preparation for the rehearsal, the couple is strongly encouraged to determine beforehand in what order the bridal party will be standing during the ceremony, how the attendants will be processing, recessing and with whom. Also, please determine in advance who will be escorting any honored guests such as parents, godparents, or other relatives. Please convey that information to the Wedding Facilities Coordinator prior to the day of the rehearsal. The means to do so will be provided.

  Please let **honored guests** know that they will be seated as part of the processional and should arrive at the church no later than 15 minutes before the scheduled start of the ceremony. Chairs will be provided for them in the rear of the sanctuary. **They are also highly encouraged to attend the rehearsal**. Please let them know ahead of time if they will be receiving a boutonniere or corsage.

Aisle Runner

The center aisle in our sanctuary measures approximately 60 feet from the bottom of the chancel steps to the back of the sanctuary. The aisle in the Taylor Chapel measures 50 feet. If you are planning to use an aisle runner, we strongly recommend that you purchase one made of paper or fabric. Plastic is not recommended as it can be very slippery on the marble floor in the sanctuary, can snag easily, and may create a serious tripping hazard. **Flower petals** (real or fabric) made be spread by a flower girl or other bridal party member.

Alcohol

The serving or drinking of alcohol is not permitted anywhere on church property. This includes the building grounds (exterior steps and side walk surrounding the church) as well as the church parking lots. Upon request, an exemption will be made if the couple wishes to use wine as part of a covenant ceremony, or in the celebration of communion.

Bubbles, Birdseed, etc.

Bubbles, birdseed, flower petals and/or biodegradable confetti may be used **outside** the church to celebrate the couple's nuptials. **Rice may not be used.** Please consult with the Wedding Facilities Coordinator about these or any other substances not listed here.

Building Amenities

Our building is equipped with wheelchair accessible bathrooms, wheelchair ramps, and an elevator for access to larger reception areas. Both the sanctuary and chapel are fully heated and the sanctuary has an industrial air handler that provides cooling in the summer. The chapel and sanctuary are not air conditioned.

Candles

The church candelabra and pew candles (8) are refillable liquid candles and can be rented for an additional fee of $50. **The church does not have Unity candles for rent.**

Special care must be taken when using wax candles. All candles used at the church other than the Unity candles **must be fully contained** in an appropriate container to prevent wax melting onto other surfaces. The use of dripless and smokeless candles is highly encouraged. Battery operated candles may also be used.

Children

Whether in the bridal party or as invited guests, children under the age of 12 must be supervised by an adult while in the church buildings. This is both to ensure their safety and to allow the church staff the ability to fully support the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. Please be sure to provide an adult escort for any children under 12 who wish to go upstairs to the sanctuary balcony.

Clergy

Couples can invite their own clergy to perform the wedding ceremony or ask the Wedding Facilities Coordinator for references. Judges, Justices of the Peace, military officers, and anyone who is legally able to perform a wedding ceremony in the state of New York can officiate a wedding at Downtown Church.

Communion

Occasionally a couple and their officiant may decide that the couple will take Communion as part of the wedding ceremony. In these cases, the officiant and couple are responsible for providing all of the elements and serving implements for this observance. Please check with the Wedding Facilities Coordinator if you are planning to use wine as an exemption to the policy prohibiting alcohol on church property must be approved by the church governing body.

COVID-19

The Downtown United Presbyterian Church reserves the right to cancel or reschedule wedding reservations in response to government (city, county, state or federal) declared health emergencies, for example, a State of Emergency impacting the Monroe County region which mandates a business, school and/or government shut down.

Dressing Rooms

Reservation of the Nearly-wed Room in the Taylor Chapel is included in the cost of each wedding rental. Another room in the church will also be made available for the other celebrant and their attendants at no extra cost. Members of the wedding party can have access to these spaces up to ninety minutes prior to the start of the ceremony.

Flowers

Please let the Wedding Facilities Coordinator know your plans for flower arrangements and other sanctuary decorations. Special arrangements may need to be made for larger decorations, or for items that need a table or display space. Decorations may be placed on the pews, however **nails, tape or any sticky adhesive may not be used as fasteners** (see pew bows section for more info). The worship space will be available up to 90 minutes in advance of the ceremony to accommodate floral deliveries and placement of decorations.

Please be sure that all flowers, boutonnieres, corsages, and bouquets are clearly labeled. We want to ensure that everyone whom you have planned to receive flowers has them for the ceremony and has the correct ones. The Wedding Facilities Coordinator is available to help pin on flowers if time and circumstances allow.

Music

Musicians Hired through the Church Our sanctuary is equipped with a Fisk pipe organ and both the sanctuary and chapel are equipped with pianos. It is the policy of the Downtown Church that the Fisk organ be played by the Director of Music Ministry (DMM) unless another arrangement is made in consultation with the DMM. **The Director of Music Ministry is a professional musician who can also provide piano and violin music and recommend several excellent soloists.** Because music plays an important part in the wedding ceremony, we encourage couples to schedule a consultation with musicians at least two weeks prior to the wedding day.

Outside Musicians We highly recommend that any musicians (instrumental and vocal) who are not hired through the church be present at the rehearsal so that they can become familiar with the space and determine any audio needs they may have. Musicians who are unable to attend the rehearsal should arrive at the church and check in with the Wedding Facilities Coordinator **no later than one hour** prior to the start of the ceremony on the day of the wedding or schedule another time prior to the date of the rehearsal to meet with the Wedding Facilities Coordinator at the church.

Recorded Music If you choose to use recorded music for any part of your ceremony, please create a flash drive with the music in the order that it will be played during the ceremony. **Please be sure to bring the flash drive to the rehearsal or schedule a time prior to the rehearsal to review them with the Wedding Facilities Coordinator and the maintenance staff so that we can ensure the music will be able to be played as you intend.**

Consultation If you are unsure about the who, when, where and what regarding the music for your ceremony, our Director of Music is available to meet with you for an additional fee. Please contact the Wedding Facilities Coordinator to obtain contact information and learn more about this service.

Officiant

We highly recommend that the person (or persons) who will be conducting the ceremony of marriage attend the rehearsal. If he or she is unable to do so, please let the Wedding Facilities Coordinator know in advance of the scheduled rehearsal time. Officiants who cannot attend the rehearsal should arrive at the church **no later than one hour** prior to the start of the ceremony on the day of the wedding so they can familiarize themselves with the church and any decisions made at the rehearsal that affect them. The officiant will be given a lavaliere microphone to wear and the volume will be controlled from our in-house sound board.

Parking

On Saturdays, Sundays, federal holidays, and weekdays after 5:30 PM the City Hall lot across from the church can be used for parking at no cost. Additional parking is available one block south at the Sister Cities parking garage and is free on weekends when no special event is taking place. During weekdays parking at the Sister Cities lot is $2.00 for the first hour and $2 for each addition hour or fraction.

Special parking validation passes may be purchased by the couple to provide guests with free parking at the Sister Cities lot if the wedding is taking place on a weekday. Please contact the Wedding Facilities Coordinator for more information about this option.

Pew Bows/Pew Decorations

Decorations may be placed on the pews, however nails, tape, or any sticky adhesive substance **may not** be used as fasteners. Large rubber bands, pipe cleaners, ribbon and plastic pew clips may be used. The worship space will be available up to 90 minutes in advance of the ceremony to accommodate placement of decorations.

Photographs

Downtown Church does not have restrictions (other than safety considerations and respect for wedding guests and other scheduled events) regarding where a photographer and videographer can be before, during or after the ceremony. Use of other spaces in the church must be pre-approved by the Wedding Facilities Co-ordinator. Please be sure that the photographer and/or videographer confers with the officiant regarding any limitations as to the use of flash, positioning, etc.

Our church is home to four faith communities and as such we ask that couples be mindful of photographic content. Please refrain from taking pictures on the church grounds that depict violence, nudity, cruelty, or obscenity.

Because of the many other events scheduled at the church, it is very important that the start time for the ceremony be honored. Please make plans with the photographer for all pre-ceremony photographs to be completed so that the wedding ceremony can begin at the scheduled time.

If you plan to take pictures at the church after the wedding ceremony, please discuss with the photographer what this will involve and the estimated amount of time it will involve. Unless the church is responsible for a delay, an additional fee of $100.00 will be charged if the church is not able to be cleared two hours after the scheduled start time of the wedding. For a Saturday wedding, the sanctuary **must** be cleared by 4:00 pm to accommodate a regularly scheduled worship service. **This time constraint is not negotiable.**

Program/Bulletin

The Downtown Church does not create a printed program for every wedding, and many couples prefer to create their own program or use an outside company. However, for an extra fee, you have the option of contracting with a staff member of the church who can create a bulletin for you. Please contact the Wedding Facilities Coordinator for more information about this option.

It is highly recommended that a copy of any printed program or bulletin be provided to the Wedding Facilities Coordinator prior to the rehearsal if possible.

Receptions

Downtown Church can provide accommodations for small to medium sized receptions. Arrangements, including all related fees, must be made through the church office. The church does not provide catering services. As a reminder, smoking and the serving of alcohol are both prohibited on church property and building grounds.

Setting up for the Ceremony

The worship space will be available up to 90 minutes in advance of the ceremony to accommodate florists, decorators, photographer, and videographers. Please talk with the Wedding Facility Coordinator if you are planning to use an amount or type of decoration that may involve a lengthy set-up time.

The couple is responsible for making any arrangements necessary to transport from the church any decorations that they wish to keep from the ceremony. For a Saturday wedding, the sanctuary **must** be cleared by 4:00 pm.

Smoking

Please be aware that smoking by anyone inside the church buildings is prohibited. Smoking is also prohibited **within 25 feet** of any building entrance. Please be very mindful of smoking in entryways where air currents are most likely to draw smoke into the building.

Wheelchair User Accommodations

A wheelchair ramp is available for entrance to the church building to the left of the sanctuary. The sanctuary has seating areas that will easily accommodate someone using a wheelchair or walker. Please let the Wedding Facilities Coordinator know if you will have guests who require these or other special accommodations.

Just Married

Wedding Guidelines Agreement

My signature below indicates that I have received and read the *Guidelines for Couples Planning to Wed at Downtown Church (DPC).* I understand and agree to abide by the policies and guidelines outlined in this document and will consult with the DUPC Wedding Facilities Coordinator if I have any questions.

Please sign and return this form to the DPC Wedding Facilities Coordinator.

Please print your Names: _____

My Wedding Date is:_____ Time: _____

My Rehearsal Date is:_____ Time: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____