

# Dearly Beloved



The Wedding services of  
The Reverend Keith M. Haithcock, Pastor & Teacher at  
St. John United Church of Christ  
Bellevue, Kentucky



**ST. JOHN**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**St. John United Church of Christ**

520 Fairfield Avenue

Bellevue, Kentucky 41073

859.261.2066, ext. 202

***Pastor@StJohnChurch.net***

**WELCOME** to St. John United Church of Christ and

congratulations on your engagement to be married. I am eager to help make your wedding a joyful and meaningful experience and I will do my best to keep it from being more stressful than it needs to be. As a congregation of the United Church of Christ, we believe marriage is a lifelong, spiritual commitment. The Book of Worship United Church of Christ says:

*The essence of marriage is a covenanted commitment that has its foundation in the faithfulness of God's love. The marriage ceremony is the glad occasion on which two people unite...in the mutual exchange of covenant promises. The one presiding acts as an official representative of the church and gives the marriage the church's blessing. The congregation joins in affirming the marriage and in offering support and thanksgiving for the new family. A Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship offered to God. (Page 323)*

One of the most challenging and rewarding of human relationships, marriage is meant to be lived out in a community of faith where it can be supported and nurtured by others seeking to grow in love, forgiveness, justice, and compassion. As you consider being married at St. John United Church of Christ, I invite and encourage you to be supported by and committed to this church community. If you live out of town, I invite and encourage you to seek out a church family in your own community that will support you in your life together. It is also important for you to know that the members of St. John United Church of Christ and I affirm equality in marriage for all couples including same-sex couples.

From my work with couples planning weddings of all sizes, I understand that the wedding itself can eclipse the marriage at this stage of your planning. I want to help prepare you for both your wedding and your spiritual covenant of marriage together. The information in this booklet is provided to help you better understand the beliefs and practices that guide weddings that I officiate at St. John United Church of Christ. Please feel free to contact me to arrange an initial consultation to learn more about what we can offer you as you decide where and how your wedding will be celebrated.

Blessings,

The Reverend Keith M. Haithcock

The Reverend Keith M. Haithcock has served as Pastor & Teacher at St. John United Church of Christ since 1999. He is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ and holds a Master of Divinity degree. His credentials are held with the Southwest Ohio Northern Kentucky Association of the Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ.



# A step-by-step guide to getting married at St. John United Church of Christ

## Getting started

- Read the material in this booklet.
- Call the church office to schedule an initial consultation so we can discuss this information and I can respond to any questions you might have. I encourage you to schedule this initial consultation at least six months before the date you desire for your wedding.

## Answers to some basic questions I'm usually asked about...

### ...the service:

- Yes, the marriage service at St. John United Church of Christ is a Christian worship service.
- Yes, I will bless a civil marriage for a couple married by a Justice of the Peace who now want a service in the Church.

### ... the couple:

- Yes, I will marry interfaith couples where one is Christian and the other is of another religion.
- Yes, I will marry couples who are not members of St. John United Church of Christ.
- Yes, I will marry a person who has been previously married and is now divorced.
- Yes, I will marry heterosexual couples as well as homosexual couples. All couples will receive a certificate of marriage from the Church.

### ...the preparation:

- Yes, you are required to meet with me for three pre-marital sessions.
- Yes, attending worship for at least five Sundays before our first pre-marital session is a part of your preparation for getting married.
- Yes, you are required to meet with a professional marriage counselor for at least one pre-marital counseling session for the purpose of making you aware of the resources available to you as a couple as you move forward in life together. A list of referrals will be offered to you and the cost for this session is not included in the wedding fees covered in this booklet. Please ask the

counselor to send a letter to me confirming your session before our second premarital counseling session.

**...the marriage license:**

- Yes, you must obtain your own marriage license from the Campbell County Marriage License Office, (1098 Monmouth St. Room 205, Newport, KY 41071, Phone: 859.292.3885). Bring your license to your wedding rehearsal. After your wedding takes place I will sign your license, make copies and mail your license to the County office.

**Campbell County Marriage License Office**

1098 Monmouth St. Room 205

Newport, KY 41071

(859) 292-3885

**...the date of the wedding:**

- Yes, I do recommend that you schedule your wedding at least six months in advance and choose a date and time that work well with other activities in the church. Weddings are typically held on Fridays at 5:00 or 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., or 5:00 p.m. Weddings are usually not scheduled during the Christian seasons of Advent through New Year's Day or Lent through Easter Day.
- Yes, the wedding rehearsal is typically scheduled twenty-four hours in advance of the wedding. Everyone participating in the wedding is encouraged to be at the rehearsal.

**...the ceremony:**

- Yes, another clergy-person may assist in the service at my invitation. According to our church by-laws, "*No other minister shall perform any religious ceremony in the Church or fill the pulpit, without the Pastor's consent (Article XII).*"
- Yes, you may write your own vows. If this is your choice, I will read them for approval at your second pre-marital session.
- Yes, others may participate in the wedding service in ways such as reading scripture and lighting candles.
- Yes, one flower girl or boy and one ring bearer may participate in the service. It is recommended that they be at least five years old.
- Yes, animals are God's creatures and blessed and loved at St. John, however, only animals providing services to impaired or disabled persons are permitted in the sanctuary during the service.
- Yes, we have a Wedding Assistant who will help you with decoration decisions and coordinate the participation of the wedding party. Runners, unity candle, aisle candles, and throwing of rice or birdseed are not typically practiced and their use involves consultation with the Pastor and additional fees.

- Yes, photographs are allowed during the service, however no flash photography may be used after the processional and all photographers must remain in designated areas. All video equipment must be stationary and only in designated areas. No special lighting is allowed during the service. It is suggested that the majority of pictures be taken prior to the service.

**...the music:**

- Yes, our Director of Music will provide the music for your service and you will need to make an appointment with her/him to discuss your music selections. If you want other musicians to participate in the service this must also be arranged with the Director of Music.

**...the church house:**

- Yes, our building is beautiful! It is filled with all the trappings of a traditional church including stain-glass windows, dark wood furnishings, a pipe organ, a center aisle, and seating for up to 160 guests. We do have air conditioning in our Sanctuary.
- Yes, the chancel area will comfortably accommodate a wedding party of up to six people.
- Yes, our sanctuary is accessible to persons with physical disabilities and includes an accessible restroom and comfortable seating options for persons in wheelchairs.
- Yes, we have a parking lot adjacent to the building with 17 parking spaces including two for persons with disabilities.
- Yes, two air-conditioned rooms are available for use in wedding preparations.

**...the cost:**

- Yes, there are fees involved but they are not exorbitant. The total cost of your wedding, including two fresh floral arrangements, two candelabras with candles, and the services of the Pastor, Wedding Assistant, Director of Music, and Housekeeper can be as low as \$1100.00. Another option is a simple service that includes only my services and up to ten guests for \$400.
- Yes, arrangements may be made for offsite weddings with the Pastor. However, fees and arrangements are independent of the procedures in this booklet.

# Wedding Planning Worksheet

- ✓ Read the material in this booklet
- ✓ Contact the pastor to schedule an initial consultation
  - 859.261.2066 ext. 202 or Pastor@StJohnChurch.net
- ✓ Choose a date and time for the rehearsal and wedding
  - Rehearsal date \_\_\_\_\_ and time \_\_\_\_\_
  - Wedding date \_\_\_\_\_ and time \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Calculate the total cost of the wedding

Expense	Non-member	Member
Use of the church facility (deposit*)	\$500	\$100
Pastor	\$300	\$300
Music Director	\$150	\$150
Wedding Assistant	\$100	\$100
House Keeper	\$50	\$50
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1100</b>	<b>\$700</b>
* Non-refundable if the wedding is cancelled less than two weeks prior to the wedding date. All but \$100 will be refunded if cancellation is more than two weeks before the wedding.		

- ✓ Send the deposit check payable to *St. John United Church of Christ* to:
  - The Rev. Keith M. Haithcock
  - c/o St. John United Church of Christ
  - 520 Fairfield Avenue
  - Bellevue, KY 41073
- ✓ Contact the Pastor to schedule three pre-marital sessions
  - Session one date \_\_\_\_\_ and time \_\_\_\_\_
  - Session two date \_\_\_\_\_ and time \_\_\_\_\_
  - Session three date \_\_\_\_\_ and time \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Schedule an appointment with a professional counselor
  - Professional counselor's name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Session date \_\_\_\_\_ and time \_\_\_\_\_

- ✓ Schedule a meeting with the Director of Music before the first session with the Pastor  
Music planning date \_\_\_\_\_, time \_\_\_\_\_, and location \_\_\_\_\_.
- ✓ Submit the names of those participating in the service to the Wedding Assistant prior to the first session with the Pastor
- ✓ Secure a Civil Marriage License from the County Clerk's office (Remember the Pastor does not sign marriage licenses)
- ✓ Bring checks for Pastor, Director of Music, Wedding Assistant, and House Keeper to the rehearsal

The intent, policies and fees of  
*The Wedding services of The Reverend Keith M. Haithcock, Pastor & Teacher at  
St. John United Church of Christ Bellevue, Kentucky*  
have been updated and affirmed by the Strategic Leadership Council on July 23, 2015.

# Statements of the Church

## **Mission Statement**

As a vibrant growing diverse Church,  
our mission is:

- To be representatives of Jesus Christ,
- To provide a spiritual, compassionate,  
nurturing place of worship,  
learning, and fellowship,
- To share our gifts and resources,  
serving all with unconditional  
love and acceptance.

Adopted 1999

## **Open and Affirming Statement**

We, the members of St. John United Church of Christ, declare ourselves to be an open and affirming congregation. We know that as the Church we are many members, but one body in Christ. With Christ we affirm that we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves, and that we are called to act as agents of reconciliation and wholeness within the world and within the church itself.

We pledge to welcome people of all races, ages, abilities, ethnicities, socio-economic levels, sexual orientations and gender identities into the full life and ministry of the church.

We affirm and celebrate all loving and committed relationships. We seek actively to include and support those who because of fear and prejudice find themselves in exile from a spiritual community. We commit ourselves to caring and concern for all.

Adopted 2003

## **Marriage Equality**

On July 4, 2005, at the 25th General Synod of the United Church of Christ in Atlanta, delegates voted to adopt the resolution, "Equal Marriage Rights for All". Go to <http://www.ucc.org/lgbt/issues/marriage-equality/> for more information.