Dearly Beloved

The Wedding services of
St. John United Church of Christ
Bellevue, Kentucky

St. John United Church of Christ
520 Fairfield Avenue
Bellevue, Kentucky 41073
859.261.2066
Pastor@StJohnChurch.net

WELCOME to St. John United Church of Christ and congratulations on your engagement to be married. We are eager to help make your wedding a joyful and meaningful experience. 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, we invite and encourage you to be supported by and committed to this church community. If you plan to live in another community, we 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 affirm equality in marriage for all couples including same-sex couples.

The information in this booklet is provided to help you better understand the beliefs and practices that guide weddings at St. John United Church of Christ. Please feel welcome to contact our church to arrange an initial consultation with the pastor to learn more about what we can offer you as you decide where and how your wedding will be celebrated.

Blessings!

The Reverend Dr. Allen M. Fluent is the current Pastor & Teacher at St. John United Church of Christ. He is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ and holds a Doctor of Ministry 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 with the pastor to discuss this information and any questions you might have. For all but the most informal weddings, this initial consultation should be scheduled at least 3 months before the date you desire for your wedding.

Answers to some frequently asked questions:

The service:

- The marriage service at St. John United Church of Christ is a Christian worship service.
- If a couple has had a civil service conducted by a justice of the peace, a service at our church can be held to bless the marriage.

The couple:

- Interfaith weddings, where one is Christian and the other is of another faith are welcome at St. John Church. A representative of the other faith tradition chosen by the couple is welcome to participate in the service along with the pastor.
- Couples who are not members of St. John Church are welcome to have their weddings here.
- Marriages of persons who have been previously married and now divorced are welcomed here.
- Heterosexual couples and homosexual couples are both welcome to be married at St. John Church. All couples will receive a certificate of marriage from the Church.

T**he preparation:**

- Three pre-marital sessions with the pastor are ordinarily needed prior to the wedding.
- Since weddings at St. John Church are a ministry of the whole congregation, we ask that every couple being married at St. John Church attend worship at least one Sunday prior to their wedding here.

The marriage license:

- 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:

- Except for small, informal weddings, we recommend that you schedule your wedding at least three months in advance and choose a date and time that works well with other activities in the church. Weddings may be held on any day of the week if no other church activities are planned for that day. Most weddings take place on Friday evening or Saturday morning, afternoon or evening. Weddings cannot be scheduled on Sundays, or on Thanksgiving weekend, Christmas Eve or Day, New Years Eve or Day, during Holy Week or on Easter Sunday. Available dates are contingent upon the availability of the pastor, and, if applicable, the church musician.
- 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:

- Another clergy-person may assist in the service at the pastor's 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)."
- Couples will be allowed to write their own vows.
- Others may participate in the wedding service in ways such as reading scripture and lighting candles.
- One or more flower girls or boys and one ring bearer may participate in the service. Children under 5 years old will be allowed, with the understanding that small children often become distracted during the service. Ring bearers under 5 years of age should not be allowed to carry the real ring.
- Only animals providing services to impaired or disabled persons are permitted in the sanctuary during the service.
- Because of potential hazards, the use of runners and throwing of rice or birdseed are not allowed on the church grounds. If aisle candles are used, they must be electric. Couples/family desiring to light a unity candle during the service are welcome to do so.
- 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 either prior to the service or immediately following.

The music:

- Our Director of Music may provide the music for your service or guide you to another qualified musician. You will need to make an appointment with the Director of Music to discuss your music choices. If you want a musician who is not affiliated with our church to participate in the service, this must also be arranged with the Director of Music.

The church house:

- Our building has a pipe organ, a center aisle, and seating for up to 160 guests. We do have air conditioning in our Sanctuary.
- The chancel area will comfortably accommodate a wedding party of up to six people. The chancel cannot accommodate wheelchairs; however, larger wedding parties and wheelchairs can be accommodated at floor level.
- Except for the chancel area, our sanctuary is accessible to persons with physical disabilities and includes an accessible restroom and comfortable seating options for persons in wheelchairs.
- We have a parking lot adjacent to the building with 17 parking spaces including two for persons with disabilities.
- Two air-conditioned rooms are available for use in wedding preparations.

T**he cost:**

- The cost of a formal wedding at St. John Church, involving pre-planning with the pastor, a rehearsal, and the wedding ceremony is included with the fee for the use of the sanctuary, which is $500 for non-members and $100 for members, plus a $50 housekeeping fee. The fee for the services of the church musician will vary depending upon what is required. Please consult with the Director of Music about this. We also ask that you consult with the officiating pastor about any fees for his/her services.
- The above costs assume a formal wedding service in the sanctuary with invited guests and music. If your plan is to have a simple exchange of vows with only the pastor, the wedding couple, two witnesses, and less than ten guests present, no church fee would be charged.
- 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*	$500	$100
House-Keeper	$50	$50
Total Fees Payable upon Booking to St. John UCC	**$550**	**$150**
* Does not include fees for the services of the pastor or church musician. Such fees, if applicable, should be paid at the time of the wedding rehearsal.		

✓ Send the check payable to *St. John United Church of Christ* to:
St. John United Church of Christ
520 Fairfield Avenue
Bellevue, KY 41073

✓ Contact the Pastor to schedule pre-marital conversation with both parties.
Conversation date _____ and time _____

✓ Schedule a meeting with the Director of Music at least 3 months prior to the service
Music planning date _____, time _____, and location _____

✓ Secure a Civil Marriage License from the County Clerk's office

✓ Bring to the rehearsal:
- Marriage License
- Checks for musician(s) and officiant(s) if needed

The intent, policies and fees of
The Wedding Services of
St. John United Church of Christ Bellevue, Kentucky
have been updated and affirmed by the Strategic Leadership Council
on November 13, 2024.

Pastor's files\Weddings\Wedding Brochure & Forms\Wedding Brochure 11-13-24.docx

Statements of the Church

Mission Statement

In service to Christ, this intentionally inclusive congregation feeds the body, mind, and spirit, gives strength, and shines God's light wherever there is darkness.

We are a beacon of hope and inspiration. This ministry is open, affirming, inviting, and accessible to all. We extend love and extravagant welcome to all of God's children without judgment, no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey. We embolden everyone to live out their faith, to engage in ministry, to witness, and to serve.

Approved by Strategic Leadership Council (SLC) May 11, 2021
St. John United Church of Christ – Bellevue, KY

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 by the congregation, November 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 **Marriage Equality - United Church of Christ** for more information.