

Dear Prospective Wedding Couple:

Thank you for your inquiry about holding your wedding at the Unitarian Universalist Area Church at First Parish in Sherborn (UUAC). We hope that the attached guidelines will be helpful to you.

**HISTORY:**

UUAC has been the site of hundreds of weddings since its founding. Worshippers have met on this spot continuously since 1685, when First Parish was founded.

**THE SERVICE:**

There is no one standard Unitarian Universalist wedding service. Each service is developed by the couple and the presiding minister to best reflect the couple's beliefs, hopes, and relationship. When you meet with the minister, he will review the basic service with you and your fiancé/ee. Alterations to the service are possible and can be decided at this time.

**CLERGY:**

Our minister will meet with you before the ceremony in order to become acquainted with you, to make a joint decision as to whether a wedding at UUAC is appropriate, and to discuss the wedding service. If after the first interview either you or the minister feels uncertain about proceeding further, either of you is free to withdraw.

As UUAC is a parish church and not a wedding chapel, we do not permit justices of the peace to preside at weddings. We also require that our ministers co-officiate when other clergy are involved at a wedding. To arrange this, you must speak to our minister before making decisions about officiants.

We encourage you to attend worship services at UUAC, which are at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays, to get acquainted with our church.

**SPACE:**

In addition to the Sanctuary, we offer several rooms which can accommodate the wedding party prior to the ceremony as well as a large room suitable for receptions. Fees for these spaces can be found on the rental agreement. Our wedding coordinator can provide you with more information about these spaces.

**MUSIC:**

Our Music Director is available to provide music on piano or organ to accompany your wedding ceremony. Alternately, you and your fiancé/ee can arrange for outside musicians to play during the ceremony. After finalizing your ceremony with the minister, our Music Director should be contacted to discuss music.

**SCHEDULING:**

In scheduling weddings we hope that couples will understand that parish activities take priority on our calendar. In general, weddings will not be scheduled more than 12 months in advance. No weddings are scheduled on Sundays before 1 p.m.

**PROCESS:**

- **Contact:** The first step in planning a wedding at First Parish in Sherborn is to contact the wedding coordinator at 508-653-1422 or by e-mailing [uuac@uuac-sherborn.org](mailto:uuac@uuac-sherborn.org). The coordinator can answer any questions you may have about getting married at UUAC, can arrange for tours of the facility, and can provide pictures of our facilities and of past ceremonies.
- **Application:** The Wedding/Service application should be completed and returned to the church office along with a deposit. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee your reservation until we receive your deposit.
- **Meeting:** The application will be reviewed by our wedding coordinator and our minister. Our minister will contact you and your fiancé/ee to briefly discuss the ceremony and will ultimately schedule an appointment to meet with you both.
- **Confirmation:** After speaking with the minister, you will receive confirmation from our wedding coordinator indicating that your wedding date has been confirmed.

Part of the service the wedding coordinator provides is support during the planning period, and to be present at the rehearsal and the wedding to assist with logistics and details. Enclosed with this letter is a copy of our Application which includes our Facility Usage Policies, a detailed fee schedule, as well as descriptions of each room available for rental. If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact us at 508-653-1422 or [uuac@uuac-sherborn.org](mailto:uuac@uuac-sherborn.org). We look forward to hearing from you.

## ✧ WEDDING GUIDELINES ✧

### SEATING

The layout of our colonial box pews and the placement of our sanctuary table can make it difficult to seat more than 285 people on the first floor of the church where they can get a clear view of the ceremony. However, the choir loft has good sightlines. If you have more than 285 guests, you are welcome to use the loft.

The current sanctuary was built in 1830 but is handicapped-accessible. We have done our best to make the floor of the sanctuary wheelchair accessible as well. The doors to most of the box pews are not wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair, but there are spots which will accommodate a wheel chair and provide a clear view of the ceremony. The wedding coordinator will assist your ushers in seating your disabled guests.

### DECORATIONS IN THE CHURCH

- **Chancel Flowers:** Flowers may be set on the sanctuary table, which is set with two tall candles, one at each end. The space available between them is approximately three and one half feet (3½') wide and flowers may be arranged in the center, either in a single large bouquet or in several smaller arrangements. The maximum height for any arrangement on the table is thirty-six inches (36") from **the base** of the container. Flowers must be arranged so they do not touch the woodwork.
- **Other Flowers:** Freestanding arrangements may be placed on the window ledges and on other tables in the sanctuary. Arrangements may be placed on the pews at the discretion of the coordinator. At no time may any tape, tacks, wire, cord, or nails be used on the pulpit, pews, columns or any other woodwork.
- **Candles:** In addition to the two candles on the sanctuary table, a chalice candle may be placed in front of the pulpit. Candle placement in other areas of the sanctuary is at the discretion of the minister and the wedding coordinator.
- **Carpet:** The floors of the sanctuary are carpeted in red. Runners may be used during the ceremony and are the responsibility of the wedding party.
- **Rice, Bird Seed, and Confetti:** Absolutely no items can be used to shower the bridal party inside the building. Birdseed and rose petals may be used outside

**PHOTOGRAPHY** Flash photographs can be taken from the back of the church as the bride is going down the aisle before the service and as the couple comes back up the aisle after the service. Since your wedding ceremony is a religious service **we do not allow supplementary lighting during the service.**

Posed photographs may be taken in the sanctuary and on the grounds immediately following the ceremony. The length of this session may be limited due to other church events.

All other photography, including videotaping, must be discreet and unobtrusive. In order to avoid embarrassment or misunderstanding on the day of your wedding, we ask that you please **make certain that your photographer and those attending the wedding understand this request well in advance.**

**MUSIC** Music will be an important part of your service. Our music director can help you plan music in keeping with the service and appropriate to our organ. You are also welcome to have other instruments appropriate to the setting such as strings, harpsichord or trumpets at your service.

If you wish to have a soloist perform during your ceremony, your organist will be able to make suggestions regarding repertoire.

**DRESSING ROOMS AND REST ROOMS** The Sarah Allen Cooney room and the Library are available for pre-ceremony dressing and photographs. Use of these rooms must be arranged well in advance of the ceremony. Please contact the coordinator or see the fee schedule for more information.

**PAYMENT OF FEES** A deposit for the use of the sanctuary and any other rooms is due with your application. Confirmation is not considered final and reservations are not guaranteed until these fees are received. Balances are due no later one week prior to your event. Please see the fee schedule for details. If there is a case of financial hardship, the minister will be glad to discuss – and possibly adjust – some of the fees. Under most circumstances, cancellations received in writing no less than one month prior to the wedding date will result in a full refund, with the exception of a \$100 non-refundable fee. Cancellations occurring with less than 7 days notice will result in full forfeiture of fees.