



Shiloh UCC

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WEDDING POLICY

WELCOME

Our church understands marriage to be a gift that God has given to humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. As such, it is intended to be a special and sacred relationship. In a service of Christian marriage, a couple makes a lifelong commitment to each other, which is publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith. Therefore, when you come to us with the request to celebrate your wedding service in our church...to profess your vows to one another in the presence of God...we take seriously our responsibility to guide, support and encourage you in your efforts to create and sustain a lasting and mutually fulfilling relationship based on love and faithfulness. The following policy is intended to help us do that.

Shiloh UCC fully supports conducting marriages, commitment ceremonies and renewal of marriage vows in accordance with current PA laws, including same – gender legal marriage.

I. DEFINITIONS

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I. DEFINITIONS

- A. Member/Non-Member
- B. Officiant
- C. Pastor/Senior Pastor
- D. Marriage: religious/legal

II. SCHEDULING, REQUESTS, AND ARRANGEMENTS

All requests for wedding dates and arrangements are to be made through the Pastor. We recommend that you schedule the church and pastor before making any other arrangements.

The pastor will endeavor to schedule weddings of church members or their children at their mutual convenience. Generally speaking, no weddings are scheduled on Sundays, holidays, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, during Holy Week, or in the event of a previously scheduled church commitment.

Weddings of non-members are conducted solely at the discretion of the pastor. (See definitions above with reference to who is considered to be a member).

Offsite weddings will be scheduled at the discretion of the pastor.

III. PREPARATIONS

Couples planning to be married at Shiloh United Church of Christ are required to meet with the Pastor for pre-marriage counseling and planning of their wedding ceremony. These sessions are intended to allow the pastor and couple to become better acquainted, to enable the couple to discuss questions or concerns relevant to their needs, to allow the couple and Pastor to discuss the meaning of the wedding ceremony and covenant promises, and to give the couple the opportunity to help plan and design their wedding service. Both members of the couple must attend each session.

IV. CONDITIONS FOR USE OF SHILOH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. **Officiant:** The use of Shiloh United Church of Christ is not permitted for weddings at which the senior pastor of Shiloh UCC does not officiate. We recognize there may be times when a couple would like to have a special minister participate in the ceremony. An arrangement can be made for this minister to officiate or co-officiate with the Pastor of Shiloh United Church of Christ only with permission of the senior pastor. In such case, it is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor of Shiloh United Church of Christ to offer the invitation to the other minister. Please speak with the Senior Pastor to make your request known.
2. **Dressing facilities:** Members of the wedding party may use the Library. There are restrooms located on the same floor in the Education wing. Both have full-length mirrors. The Heritage Room/Chapel is also available for preparation space. There is a restroom located next to the elevator for their use.
3. **Conduct and Behavior:**
 - a. Smoking and the use of alcohol or other intoxicants and drugs are strictly prohibited on church property (inside and outside).
 - b. Since the wedding is a service of worship, reverence is expected on the part of all present. The couple is expected to ask the members of the wedding party to refrain from the use of alcohol or other mind-altering drugs before both the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony. The rehearsal and/or service may be postponed or cancelled if members of the wedding party are intoxicated.

V. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. **Music:** It is the policy of Shiloh United Church of Christ that our church organist will be given first opportunity to play for a wedding ceremony. If the church organist is unavailable, a list of alternates can be provided. We recognize there may be times when a couple would like to have a special friend or family member provide the music. In such case, permission of the Pastor and Organist will be needed. Please speak with the Pastor to make your request known.

It is important that the music for a wedding ceremony reflect the sacredness of the occasion. The couple is required to meet with the church organist at least one month prior to the wedding, for the purpose of selecting appropriate music. If the couple wants any particular music or songs, they should make their wishes known at that time. However, the Pastor and Organist will have final say on the appropriateness of all music.

The organist will make arrangements to meet with any soloists the couple might ask to participate. Rehearsals will be at the convenience of the Organist, and may not necessarily be at the time of the wedding rehearsal.

2. **Decorations:** The sanctuary of the church was designed as a space for worship, therefore it does not require decorations to make it a suitable place for a service of Christian marriage. Simplicity in planning for your decorations is best. The couple will make every effort to ensure that carpets and furniture are protected against candle drippings and water spilling from flower arrangements. Seasonal displays and liturgical materials placed by the church for regular worship are not to be disturbed. No nails, thumbtacks, or tape are to be used on the furnishings in any part of the building.

The use of bubbles and/or throwing of birdseed as the couple leave the building after the ceremony is permitted in outside areas only, provided areas are cleaned up afterward.

3. **Photography and Video:** Flash photography may be taken during the processional and recessional only. There is no flash photography permitted during the wedding ceremony itself. During the ceremony, existing light photography may be taken from the back of the sanctuary. Pictures may be taken in the sanctuary before the wedding provided they are completed one half hour before the start of the ceremony.

Video recordings may be made from the back of the sanctuary or the balcony, as long as the camera operator remains stationary throughout the service and uses existing light only.

It is the responsibility of the couple to instruct their photographer and/or videographer on these policies. If there are any questions, please refer them to the Pastor.

4. **Programs or Bulletins:** The church secretary is available to help you prepare programs or bulletins for the ceremony. You are required to provide the bulletin stock and the information (in writing) that you would like printed in the bulletin. See the Secretary for information about where to purchase bulletin stock. Bulletin stock and information must be in the secretary's possession no later than two weeks before the ceremony date.

5. **License:** The couple must have a valid Pennsylvania marriage license in order to be married, and it must be given to the officiating minister no later than the rehearsal time. Information on how to obtain the wedding license can be obtained from the Office of the Clerk of Orphans Court at the courthouse of any county in the commonwealth.

VI. FEES

All fees are to be paid in full prior to the rehearsal. Fees for the minister and organist should be made out directly to them. Fees for the use of the building and custodian should be made out to Shiloh United Church of Christ and submitted to the Pastor.

1. **Building:** Please refer to the current Shiloh United Church of Christ policy for use of church facilities and the Building Use Application Form for fees associated with using our facilities. This form is available by contacting the church secretary.
2. **Professional:** Both the Pastor and Organist put a lot of time and effort into making a wedding a special and joyous occasion, and deserve to be compensated for the work they do. The following is a suggested minimum honorarium for each:
 - a. Pastor (covers counseling sessions, service preparation, rehearsal, and the wedding itself).
Members: no fees required, but suggested minimum honorarium of \$350.
Non-Members: fee is \$400

Note: The Pastor's role of officiating at a wedding service does not include attending a rehearsal dinner or wedding reception. Couple should not feel obligated to extend invitations to such events. However, if the Pastor's presence is desired at either of these events, a direct invitation (which includes the Pastor's spouse) should be extended well in advance of the wedding date. The Pastor will not attend without an invitation.
 - b. Organist (covers preparation and rehearsals, including special music, and the rehearsal and ceremony): Members and/or Non-Members fee is \$175.