

Welcome to University Christian Church! We are pleased to have your inquiry about celebrating your wedding at UCC, and we hope the following information is helpful to you.

Whether your wedding is small or large, it is a joyful and sacred service of worship. The requirements and guidelines established here are intended to ensure that the service is appropriately worshipful, dignified, and respectful of all of the participants, the congregation, the meaning and significance of the occasion, and the space in which the ceremony is held.

The Wedding Spaces

Our Sanctuary is in the traditional style with a center aisle leading to a raised chancel. Stained glass windows adorn the three exterior walls. The Sanctuary seats 275, including the balcony. A 360-degree view of the Sanctuary is available [here](#). The Sanctuary's superior acoustics lend richness to the sound of our Garland pipe organ and our Steinway grand piano, as well as the music of any vocalist or instrumental soloist or ensemble.

Nordan Chapel is a smaller space, seating 35 to 40. It also has a center aisle with stained glass windows on the west side. It does not have an organ or piano.

Non-Member Weddings

We welcome non-members to have their weddings at UCC. Membership status of the couple, or of any of their parents, is determined as of the date of the first inquiry about having your ceremony at UCC.

Marriage Equality

UCC offers this statement of welcome to all:

Responding to a call to be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, University Christian Church extends the grace-filled welcome of Christ to ALL persons equally, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or ability.

We celebrate that welcome in our wedding ministry by extending the rites of marriage within our building and by our ministers to all legally eligible couples.

Premarital Counseling

UCC believes that weddings are an important ministry to couples embarking on a life together. This commitment of one to the other will be celebrated before God in a joyous and meaningful rite of the church. A part of the UCC wedding ministry includes providing premarital counseling to those couples marrying in our church who desire it, counseling that can provide a strong foundation for an ever-growing relationship. UCC's ministers use the Prepare-Enrich program, which you can learn more about at www.prepare-enrich.com. A discount of \$100 on the wedding fees is

offered to couples who engage in the three one-hour-long sessions, using either Prepare-Enrich or an equivalent approved by our Senior Minister. As UCC believes so strongly in this ministry, other than the Prepare-Enrich registration fee, there is no charge for the sessions themselves.

Schedule

Weddings are typically held on Saturdays, with the rehearsal on the preceding Friday late afternoon or evening. We do not schedule weddings on Thanksgiving weekend, during Advent, Christmas, Holy Week (including the Saturday preceding Palm Sunday), or on the weekends of University of Texas home football games and May commencement exercises.

UCC Wedding Coordinator

UCC has a wedding coordinator to assist couples from the time their wedding is placed on the church calendar to the day of the ceremony. Her job is to assist with the reservation of the church and the church's equipment and to interpret the wedding policies and fee schedule. The wedding coordinator also attends all rehearsals and ceremonies to answer questions, to assist the wedding couple, the minister, and guests, and to ensure that all guidelines and policies are followed. She works with the minister to conduct the wedding rehearsal. UCC's wedding coordinator is the coordinator in charge; *outside wedding coordinators must work in consultation with her.*

Legal Information

Texas law requires that each couple have a marriage license from the State of Texas. For information about obtaining a marriage license, see the county clerk's website at www.traviscountyclerk.org or call 512-854-9188. The marriage license should be given to the officiating minister at the wedding rehearsal.

The Ceremony

The wedding ceremony is a service of worship. By choosing to marry at UCC, you are making a particular choice of a traditional and overtly religious setting for your wedding, and we are committed to maintaining that character in every wedding performed at our church. Whether the participants are members of UCC or not, every wedding performed here is a reflection of the character and beliefs of our congregation. Our Sanctuary and Chapel are not just venues for hire. Therefore, while we recognize your desire to have the wedding that reflects your taste and sentiments, and while we join you in wanting the occasion to be joyous, in all things the service must be reverent and dignified and appropriate to the sacredness of the space and the vows you are making before your family and friends. **If Communion is served during the ceremony, it must be served to the entire congregation.**

UCC's Ministers and Guest Ministers UCC's ministers will officiate wedding ceremonies as their schedules permit. The officiating minister will plan your ceremony and rehearsal with you in a

private conference. It is your responsibility to schedule the planning conference no later than three to four weeks prior to your wedding date.

Couples who desire a guest minister to officiate must provide the minister's name, contact information, and denomination on UCC's Wedding Request and Agreement. UCC's Senior Minister may invite the guest minister to officiate at the wedding. Guest ministers must follow the policies established in this booklet. The guest minister's name and church affiliation must be printed in any wedding program.

Rehearsal The rehearsal will be scheduled for one hour, typically on the late afternoon of the Friday preceding the wedding. It is important that the wedding party be present and prepared to begin on time, as the rehearsal will be held to one hour. Guest ministers must attend the rehearsal. The rehearsal is included in the wedding fee.

Music As stated in an earlier section, a wedding ceremony is a worship service, and therefore, music chosen for your wedding must be suitable for a service of worship. The music for a wedding performs the function of creating a beautiful and fitting atmosphere of religious joy. Appropriate music is sacred, and may be traditional or contemporary. Sacred music focuses on God and the love humans share within God's creation. A list of beautiful sacred wedding music is available. The list is not exhaustive, as there are many appropriate pieces, and every couple's taste is different.

We permit the limited use of secular music, which is music that is not religious or spiritual, but we emphasize that any secular selections, including those chosen for the prelude, must be appropriate for a service of worship. Off-color language or references to physical intimacy in a selection's lyrics are not acceptable and will not be approved, even if you do not intend the lyrics to be sung. If a piece of music has no lyrics, it still may not be suitable for a worship service, for example, music from a movie or television show. The titles of any secular selections must be provided to the wedding coordinator no later than 30 days prior to the wedding so that she may forward them to UCC's clergy staff for review and approval.

Recorded music is not allowed for weddings in the Sanctuary.

Organist and Pianist If you desire organ or piano music or both at your wedding, the UCC organist has the right of first refusal to play. If the UCC organist is available to play, you will pay him or her separately. If the UCC organist is not available to play, you are free to obtain another organist or pianist. If the UCC organist is available to play but you wish to use another organist, you will be required to pay a bench fee to the UCC organist, and the organist you hire will be required to contact UCC's organist to arrange practice time on the UCC organ.

Soon after receiving confirmation of your wedding date, you should contact UCC's organist to determine availability for your wedding date.

You also may invite vocalists or ensembles to provide music at the ceremony. Your contract with outside musicians is also separate.

It is your responsibility to contact the organist and any other musician engaged for the wedding to discuss music selections. **Please note that the music selection guidelines and requirements remain in effect for outside musicians engaged to provide music for the ceremony.**

Photography and videography Again, the wedding ceremony is a service of worship, and as with music selections, the photography and videography must be mindful of the sacred nature of the occasion.

Photography may begin up to three hours before the ceremony, and may continue for no more than one hour after the ceremony. Photos being made in the Sanctuary or the Chapel must end 45 minutes prior to the ceremony so that guests may be seated.

The photographer or videographer may not be in the chancel during the ceremony. They may stand behind the last pew or in the balcony to photograph or video record the processional and recessional. A flash may be used for these photographs, but flash photography is not permitted between the processional and recessional.

Available light (no flash) photographs and video recording may take place during the ceremony from the balcony or from the back of the church behind the congregation.

Photographers and videographers must be as quiet and unobtrusive as possible. No movement should take place during the ceremony.

Please include the following statement in your wedding program: *The wedding ceremony is a service of worship. Please turn off all electronic devices and refrain from any photography.*

It is your responsibility to ensure that the photographer, videographer, relatives, and friends are informed of the photography and videography policies.

Making a Reservation for Your Wedding

Reservation It is important to reserve your wedding and rehearsal dates and times and the facilities and equipment needed well in advance. Once reserved, the dates and times may not be changed without the consent of the UCC wedding coordinator. Please follow these steps to ensure that your reservation is made:

1. Call (512-477-6104) or email (admin@ucc-austin.org) the church office to determine whether the requested dates are available on the church calendar. The wedding coordinator or administrative assistant will also determine whether a UCC minister is available to perform the ceremony.
2. Deliver a non-refundable deposit of \$200 for the Sanctuary, \$100 for the chapel, payable to University Christian Church, to the church office, along with the first two pages of the

Wedding Request and Agreement completed and signed. The date will not be reserved and confirmed on the church calendar without the deposit and pages 1 and 2 completed and signed.

Fees The wedding fees compensate the minister and UCC’s wedding coordinator, and defray custodial and utility expenses. The fee schedule is set out in detail below. The non-refundable deposit is applied to the total fees. The balance due must be paid not later than 30 days prior to the wedding date. Checks must be made payable to University Christian Church with the notation “wedding” and the wedding date in the memo line. Payments are to be mailed or hand-delivered to University Christian Church, 2007 University Avenue, Austin, Texas 78705. Payments to the organist and other musicians are made directly to them according to their instructions.

Fee Schedule

Reservation Deposit.....\$200 for sanctuary; \$100 for chapel
Non-refundable; applies to total fees

Sanctuary.....\$1,500
Includes minister, wedding coordinator, custodian, and one hour for rehearsal and four hours on day of wedding; additional time \$100 per hour

Chapel.....\$500
Includes minister, wedding coordinator, custodian, and one hour for rehearsal and four hours on day of wedding; additional time \$100 per hour

Candelabra (candles provided).....\$35

Unity Candle Stand (candles not provided).....\$30

UCC Organist.....\$300
Paid separately and directly to UCC organist

Soloists and Instrumentalists charge additional individual fees.

Bench Fee..... \$150
If UCC organist is available to play but another organist or pianist is used, the fee is paid to the UCC organist to defray costs of arranging rehearsal time for guest organist/pianist and for other activities associated with accommodating a guest organist/pianist.

Building Use Policies

Alcohol and tobacco Alcoholic beverages may not be served or consumed anywhere on UCC’s premises. Use of tobacco, tobacco products, or simulated nicotine products (“vape” products) is not permitted on the premises or within 50 feet of any entrance. Any member of the wedding party

found to be in violation of these policies will be asked to leave and will not be permitted to participate in the wedding. If liquor bottles or tobacco products are discovered in the dressing areas following the wedding, you will be billed an additional \$250.

Responsibility for valuables UCC cannot be responsible for personal items such as wedding dresses, coats, purses, jewelry, silver, or glassware brought to the church for the wedding, nor will it be liable for such items. Valuables must be removed from the dressing areas prior to the ceremony.

Flowers and decorations Floral arrangements and decorations must be appropriate and must not diminish the dignity of the wedding ceremony or the Sanctuary. The Communion Table, candles, lectern, and pulpit will remain in place, and the piano will not be moved out of the chancel.

Flowers or other decorations may not be placed on the Communion Table. Also, flowers or other decorations may not be placed on the organ or piano. Sanctuary decorations for special seasons or special church days will not be taken down.

The tables in the Narthex may be decorated. However, the furniture in the Narthex will not be moved.

Flowers may be placed on the baptistery shelf, in stands on either side of the Communion Table, and on the choir rail. The florist or decorator must provide any stands, or you must make arrangements to provide them. UCC does not have stands for use. If the organ or piano is used, flowers must not obscure the musician's view.

No tape, tacks, nails, glue, adhesive, or other fixative may be used to affix decorations to UCC property. You will be billed for any damage to carpet, furniture, or the building caused by your wedding party or your vendors.

Use of an aisle runner on the aisle is not permitted.

Please inform your florist or person decorating the Sanctuary or Chapel that it will be available for decorating three hours prior to the ceremony. If more time is required, an additional hourly fee will be charged. It is your responsibility that the florist or decorator knows these policies and abides by them. UCC reserves the right to restrict the privileges of any florist or decorator who violates them.

Candles UCC has two brass candelabra that may be reserved for wedding ceremonies. Each holds nine candles, which UCC provides. UCC also has a brass unity candle candelabra available for reservation. The wedding couple is responsible for providing the unity candles.

Candles used as decoration in the Sanctuary, Chapel, and Narthex must be in glass containers. UCC does not provide candles other than the candles for the brass candelabra referred to above.

If unity candles are used, a protective, flame-retardant surface under them must be provided.

Aisle candles are not permitted, nor are any other decorations that would impede movement down the aisle or pose a safety hazard or potential damage to property.

Any candle requiring water is prohibited.

UCC does not have storage facilities to accommodate decorations. Therefore, the florist, decorator, external wedding coordinator, or a member of the wedding party must remove all decorative items, including candles and candelabra not belonging to UCC, within one hour following the ceremony. If all decorations are not removed, you will be billed an additional fee. An exception is made if you wish to leave a flower arrangement for UCC worship the next day. Please notify UCC's administrative assistant or wedding coordinator not later than a week prior to your wedding if you would like to leave an arrangement. It will be acknowledged in our worship bulletin if you wish.

UCC is not responsible for any lost or damaged items.

Showering the wedding couple at departure from the church If you wish to be showered as you depart the church, UCC requires the use of flower petals or bubbles. Birdseed, rice, sparklers, and confetti (paper or plastic) are not permitted. Distribution of the element to be used must take place outside the church, as must the showering. Any remaining undistributed sachets, packets, bottles or other containers of the showering item may not be left at the church.

Food and drink on wedding day Wedding parties may bring food and non-alcoholic drinks to the dressing areas on the day of the wedding. UCC does not furnish plates, cups, silverware, or napkins. If food is to be delivered to the church, please contact UCC's wedding coordinator to let her know, and please prepay for all items. The wedding coordinator will not sign credit card slips or delivery verification items. All food, drink, and supplies brought in must be removed within one hour after the wedding.

Parking The parking lot at West 20th and University Avenue (directly north of the AT&T Conference Center) is available for wedding and rehearsal parking *by separate arrangement* with SP Plus Parking. The cost for parking is not included in UCC's wedding fees. Please contact Chelsie Daniels at cdaniels@spplus.com or 512.474.1530 or 512.914.1673 to make arrangements for reserving the lot. If you choose not to reserve it, guests who park in it for your wedding or rehearsal must pay for parking spaces at the kiosk in the lot, and there is no guarantee that spaces will be available.

Church members wishing to use the lot for weddings must also reserve the parking lot directly with SP Plus Parking.

UCC's wedding coordinator is not responsible for the parking lot on the day of the rehearsal or wedding. If you encounter difficulties, you are responsible for contacting SP Plus Parking.