



A  
*Wedding*  
*Guide*  
for

Laurel United  
Methodist Church

Laurel UMC is pleased to share this joyous occasion as you enter into a covenant with each other and God, and are committed to grow in Christian faith together. We welcome you as you plan your special day, guided by our Pastor, in our beautiful, light-filled sanctuary.

Where to begin? Once you have set your desired date, please contact the church office to arrange your initial meeting with the Pastor. You will then have the opportunity to submit the proper forms and deposit, along with the Pastor's approval, in order to officially reserve your date on the church calendar.



## The Pastor

Laurel's Pastor oversees all officiating aspects of our weddings. Should the Pastor not be available to officiate, Laurel's Music Coordinator will represent the congregation and has final authority concerning the conducting of the wedding ceremony. Other clergy may assist the Laurel Pastor. Other United Methodist Clergy of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference may officiate upon approval of the Pastor. When a Guest United Methodist Clergy is the sole pastor for a wedding, Laurel's Music Coordinator will serve as the liaison for the wedding (additional fee).

## Music

The Laurel Music Coordinator will be the primary organist and musician at all wedding ceremonies at the church. After their initial meeting with the Pastor, and the date of the wedding and rehearsal are confirmed on the church calendar, the couple should contact the Music Coordinator to schedule a time to meet with the couple to review and select appropriate music for the wedding ceremony. The Church's guidelines are that all musical selections must be suitable for performance at a religious worship service.

The Music Coordinator's fee includes a consultation to select your music, provide music at the rehearsal, the wedding prelude music (usually 20 minutes), the service itself, and one rehearsal with the soloist or other musicians in the service.

## Rehearsal

A rehearsal usually takes place on the evening preceding the wedding. The time should be no earlier than 5:30pm, and be determined giving consideration to travel time for the wedding party and allowing time for the rehearsal dinner, if one is planned. One hour is needed for the rehearsal, providing that all who take part in the ceremony are on time. **The marriage license must be brought to the rehearsal.**

## Marriage License

The marriage license must be secured at the Sangamon County Court House, Springfield, IL, office of the County Clerk. The license becomes valid one day after it is issued and is valid for 60 days. **Your marriage license MUST be brought to the rehearsal.** Bride, Groom and two witnesses will meet with the Pastor to sign the license on the day of the wedding.

## Wedding Day

**The doors of the church will be unlocked 3 hours prior to the time of the wedding for the florist or other deliveries.** It is suggested that members of the wedding party arrive approximately 2 hours prior to the wedding service with the exception of ushers and the person assigned to the guest book who should arrive 1 hour prior to the wedding service. If the party is to dress

at the church, they should allow ample time to prepare themselves.

If it is necessary to open the church more than 3 hours in advance, additional hours must be requested and coordinated with the custodial staff. There will be an additional fee and is based on availability.

## Order of Service

The following represents most of the procedures in the order of service for a formal wedding:

- A. The organ or piano prelude will begin 15-20 minutes before the service, while the guests are being seated.
- B. Ushers or acolytes should light the candles at the direction of the Pastor.
- C. A special section in the pews may be reserved for the immediate family and close relatives. These individuals should be identified to the ushers, who will seat them at the appropriate time.
- D. At the designated time, an usher will escort the mother and father of the Groom to the first pew on the right side of the Sanctuary.
- E. The mother of the Bride will be escorted by an usher to the first pew on the left side of the Sanctuary. If an aisle runner is used, it should be unrolled immediately after the seating of the Bride's mother. (The church does not supply the aisle runner.)
- F. A vocal or instrumental solo may be included at this point.

### **The processional begins the service.**

- G. Upon the opening notes, the Pastor, followed by the Groom, the best man, and the groomsmen, enter the Sanctuary and take their places at the chancel rail.
- H. The bride's processional includes: Bridesmaids, Maid or Matron of Honor, Ring Bearer (if desired), Flower Girl (if desired), Bride, on her father's arm.

### **NO FLASH PICTURES ARE TO BE TAKEN AFTER THIS**

- I. The recessional order: Bride, on Groom's right arm, Maid or Matron of Honor on the right arm of the Best Man, Ring Bearer and Flower Girl, Bridesmaids on the right arms of the Groomsmen.
- J. As soon as the wedding party is out of the Sanctuary, the ushers or the couple may return to the Sanctuary to dismiss guests by rows.
- K. If you choose to have a receiving line, it should assemble immediately. Arrangements will be made at the rehearsal.
- L. After the guests have been greeted, the Bride and Groom and witnesses should proceed to the final signing of the

marriage license.

## **The Wedding Pictures**

---

In keeping with the spirit of worship, no flash photographs may be taken during the wedding ceremony. This means from the time the processional ends until the wedding party starts out of the Sanctuary. Pictures may be taken before and after the service.

Time exposure pictures may be taken from the balcony/worship nursery. **NO FLASH PICTURES!**

Professional photographers should consult with the Pastor prior to the service.

If videotaping is planned, this must also be discussed with the Pastor prior to the wedding. The Pastor will designate the location of the video cameras. No video cameras will be allowed in the front half of the sanctuary. Video cameras must be stationed on a tripod.

## **Church Wedding Reception**

---

*For members of Laurel United Methodist Church only*

If a reception in the church building is desired, the church office will assist the family with arrangements. **Smoking, consuming, or serving alcoholic beverages in the church building, parking lots, or on church property are prohibited!**

If the reception is to be held at the church, the wedding party should go directly to the reception area. Please do not keep your guests waiting by having your pictures taken at this time. Go first to the reception table where pictures may be taken of the Bride and Groom cutting the cake. The wedding party will then proceed to form the reception line with the last person in line being near the reception table. The wedding party may now return to the Sanctuary for photos. After the pictures are taken, the Bride and Groom should return to the reception area. At this point, you are free to leave for your next point of destination. Gifts are not to be opened at the reception.

## **Options**

---

### **The Lighting of the Wedding Candle**

A wedding candle (Unity Candle) may be used during the ceremony. The couple must provide this candle and stand. The organist will provide an appropriate interlude as a solo at this time is awkward.

### **Witness to the Christian Marriage**

You may wish to ask the Pastor to offer a brief meditation, 2 or 3 minutes, on Christian marriage. This is not seen as a sermon, but as an appropriate and desired part of the wedding.

### **Scripture Reading**

The Pastor will recommend appropriate passages of scripture. The couple may select a person(s) to read scripture or other

selections.

## **Bulletins May Be Used**

The Church does not supply bulletin covers. They may be ordered through a local bookstore or online. The Pastor will assist with the content of the bulletin. The church secretary may prepare bulletins for you for a small fee. The information to be included in the bulletin should be submitted to the church office two weeks prior to the wedding.

*Feel free to discuss with the Pastor any additional or unique items you wish to have as a part of your service.*

## **Decorations**

---

The couple provides all decorations. Unless prearranged with the church office, flowers are not to be left for Sunday morning. If time is needed to decorate other than at rehearsal or the day of the wedding, please contact the church office to schedule.

The sanctuary may be decorated for a liturgical season, in which case, church decorations will remain in place for the wedding ceremony (example: Christmas trees). Please speak with the Pastor about the colors you have chosen for your wedding.

Ribbons, flowers, etc., may be used on the pews. All attachments must be secured without the use of tape, tacks, glue or putty. Plastic "clips" are available from florists and other sources. In the event of damage to the pews due to non-compliance with this direction the couple will be required to pay any and all repair costs. Damage will be determined by Laurel United Methodist Church.

An old custom has been that of throwing rice or birdseed on the Bride and Groom as they leave the church. If this is done, please see that it is done outside the church building. Distribute rice/birdseed only as guests leave the church. Only dissolvable rice, birdseed or bubbles are allowed. We strongly recommend the use of bubbles.

## **Custodial Services**

---

It is a requirement of the church that a custodian be present on the day of the wedding. There is a fee for this service. The custodian will be present three hours prior to the time of the wedding ceremony to prepare the sanctuary and other rooms being used by the wedding party. Additional hours may be requested prior to the wedding at an additional fee and are based on availability. The custodian will remain until the ceremony is completed. Because the Custodian must prepare the building for the following day, we ask that the wedding party and family please plan to depart the church within an hour and a half (1½ hours) of the ceremony being complete.

