



# **WEDDINGS**

at

# **NIANTIC COMMUNITY CHURCH**

*A congregation of the  
United Church of Christ & United Methodist Church*

November, 2008

Dear Friends,

Weddings are times of joy, exhilaration ... and confusion. The joy and the exhilaration are wonderful and Niantic Community Church looks forward to sharing it with you. We even look forward to ironing out the confusion, and helping to make your special day a holy celebration!

A wedding in this church is first and foremost a service of worship, celebrating the blessing of God in your life together. As you begin your marriage journey, you are joining a long line of couples who have affirmed and shared their commitment to a Christian covenant with each other since this church's origins in 1719.

This booklet should help you with many of the questions couples ask us. You will also have your own particular questions and we look forward to helping you find answers.

Congratulations on your wedding!

Yours in Christ,

The Members of the  
Niantic Community Church

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*It is for the union of you and me  
that there is light in the sky.  
It is for the union of you and me  
that the earth is decked in dusky green.  
It is for the union of you and me  
that night sits motionless with the world in her arms;  
dawn appears opening the eastern door  
with sweet murmurs in her voice.  
The boat of hope sails along on the currents of  
eternity towards that union,  
flowers of the ages are being gathered together  
for its welcoming ritual.  
It is for the union of you and me  
that this heart of mine, in the garb of a bride,  
has proceeded from birth to birth  
upon the surface of this ever-turning world to choose the Beloved.*

Rabindranath Tagore

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# Weddings at Niantic Community Church

## Pastoral Leadership

The Niantic Community Church (NCC) is committed to accommodating those who sincerely wish to be married in our sanctuary. The pastor will be responsible for and have authority over both the arrangements and the service. While the Church typically works with couples who seek a Christian service of marriage, we are pleased as well to extend hospitality to interfaith, inter-religious, and ecumenical couples and will work with you to accommodate your needs. A wedding at NCC is first and foremost a service of worship, celebrating the presence and asking the blessing of God.

We ask couples married in our church to participate in pre-marital counseling. If you are a member of the church, the pastor's services generally include eight counseling sessions, the planning of your service, guidance of the rehearsal, and officiating at the wedding. If you are not a church member, or live at a distance from Niantic, the pastor will help you find a pre-marital counselor.

Niantic Community Church is an Open, Affirming, Reconciling congregation. As such, we gladly welcome couples of every sexual identity and gender expression who wish to enter into the covenant of Christian marriage.

You may invite other ordained clergy to participate in the service. However, it is especially important to discuss guest clergy participation with our pastor before setting arrangements in motion. Niantic Community Church clergy will normally be the "minister of record" for marriages witnessed in this church. The deacons of Niantic Community Church support the right of each pastor to decline to perform a marriage.

Wedding coordinators are appointed by the pastors. The role of the coordinator is to make everyone feel welcome and com-

fortable, and to facilitate your wedding. The coordinators are prepared to handle myriad last minute details. They are seldom overwhelmed and never object to even the slightest of questions.

## **Music**

The church is fortunate to have a superior organist / music director. You can work directly with him, if schedules allow, or through our pastor. The music director is familiar with instrumentalists and vocal soloists should you wish to know how additional musicians may be used.

As is the custom in churches served by the American Guild of Organists, we support the policy that our organist has the right of first refusal for all services held in Niantic Community Church. Ultimately, all music used in weddings should be approved in advance by Niantic Community Church pastor or its music director.

## **Rehearsal**

The rehearsal is an important preparation for your wedding service. The wedding rehearsal is normally held the day before the wedding. The bride and groom, their parents, and all members of the wedding party should attend. If there is to be a dinner or party, it should be held after the rehearsal.

It is important to arrive promptly at the agreed time. The church schedules one hour for the rehearsal, which is directed by the pastor. At the rehearsal you may be introduced to one of the church wedding coordinators. This person may be present at the ceremony to take care of last minute logistics, the processional, and to help with a smooth running service. The pastor and coordinator will discuss your wishes about how your guests are to be seated and any other pertinent details. Details may include flowers, photographer, handling of children, handicap access, rest rooms, and candle lighting

## Professional Consultants

Because this is a house of worship, we request that all photography and videography be unobtrusive and that no flash photography be used during the wedding service. Please inform your family and friends of this policy. Video cameras are permitted and may be placed at the back of the church, or in the pews on either side of the chancel. Only the lighting already available in the church may be used. We understand the importance that married couples place upon the preservation of their wedding day in photographs. Our church wedding coordinator will work closely and cooperatively with your photographer the day of your wedding.

Please communicate to your photographer that under no circumstances are photographers or videographers to move around the church or interfere with the flow of liturgical action during the service, the processional and the recessional. Please advise your photographer of the expected attire of the wedding guests, so that they may dress appropriately.

The church wedding coordinators assume responsibility for all wedding rehearsals and services at Niantic Community Church. Sometimes couples hire a professional wedding planner to help facilitate the events of their wedding. If this is your choice, it is especially important that the planner be conversant with the particulars of this booklet and that contact is made with the wedding coordinators at the church well in advance of the rehearsal.

## Dressing Arrangements

You are welcome to change into your wedding clothes at the church. Our "Bride's Room" is an area at the back of the sanctuary, which can be enclosed for privacy. Our Fellowship Room is a convenient place for a groom's party to prepare for the service. Our restrooms are handicap accessible.

## Flowers

Flowers can adorn the church in many ways. A single flower arrangement is traditional and appropriate on the altar table. Addi-

tional arrangements can be put on the sanctuary window sills and in the narthex. Over the years some couples have chosen to provide some form of pew marker, either ribbon or flowers for the pews which are to be reserved for the families. The wedding coordinators will be happy to discuss further ideas with you.

Please let the church wedding coordinator know the name and phone number of your florist at the wedding rehearsal in case of a delivery difficulty on the wedding day. Flowers should be delivered one hour before the service.

## **Programs and Printed Material**

Providing an Order of Service often makes guests feel welcome and comfortable. The church secretary will gladly provide an illustration of the church if you choose to use it on your Order of Worship. Your printer may offer suggestions as to placement and size.

Guest Books may be placed on a stand in the narthex. Directions to the reception may be made available here as well.

We reserve the right of final approval for any printed material used in the church.

## **Candles**

Altar candles are provided by the church. The altar candlesticks provided by the church are either brass or silver.

## **Receiving Line and Reception**

We can arrange a space for a receiving line if you choose to have one. Please decide this before the day of the service.

You may also hold a reception in our dining hall, on the lower level of the church. The site is handicap accessible. Notify the office if you plan to use these facilities since they are often booked.

## **Parking**

Parking is free and plentiful. The church's lot will hold approximately 120 vehicles. More than 250 guests will necessitate police supervision at your expense.

Limousines may park out in front of the church as long as they respect the entrance and exit signs. Please respect all Handicap Parking signs.

## **Handicap Access and Amplification**

Handicapped access to the sanctuary is available both through the main entrance, at the narthex, and through the door to the church office. The sanctuary is equipped with assistive listening devices for those who request them.

## **The Marriage License**

A marriage license may be obtained from the Clerk of any city or town in Connecticut. Marriage licenses are valid for 65 days from the date you file your intentions. Both parties must be 18 years of age or older, and each must present a photo identification and social security card or passport. A marriage license can sometimes be obtained the same day, but check local requirements. Bring with you: date of the marriage; name, address, and telephone number for each individual; \$30 for the Marriage License; parents' names (including mothers' maiden names) and places of birth.

The license should be given to the pastor no later than the time of the rehearsal. The pastor will complete the form and return it to the town or city. You will be given a church certificate of marriage. If you desire copies of the municipal certificate as well, this must be arranged with the town clerk.

## Day of the Wedding

1 ½ hours ahead	Wedding coordinator opens church
1 hour ahead	Ushers arrive Pastor may also arrive Flowers should be delivered
45 minutes ahead	Photographer arrives to set up and meet with coordinator or pastor
30 minutes ahead	Organist arrives Groom and best man arrive and meet in the pastor's office
20 minutes ahead	Reserved seating guests arrive
5 minutes ahead	Bride and attendants arrive (The bride may choose to arrive earlier and wait in the Bride's Room.)

## Costs

	Church member	Guest	Check payable to:
Building use	<i>none</i>	\$250	Niantic Community Church
Pastor fee	<i>none</i>	\$400	"
Organist fee	\$150	\$150	_____
w/rehearsal	\$200	\$200	_____
Custodial fee	\$80	\$80	Niantic Community Church
<i>Wedding extras:</i>			
Bulletin covers (per 100)	\$15	\$15	Niantic Community Church
Candelabra candles	\$20	\$20	"
Pew candles	\$40	\$40	"
Dining Hall	\$50	\$50	"
Kitchen	\$25	\$25	"

Typically, clergy at Niantic Community Church do not accept money for weddings but rather deposit all fees in the church's Pastor's Discretionary Fund, which is used for exceptional needs that occur within our ministry. The fee for the church helps to offset our basic expenses of maintaining facilities.

Please discuss all fees with the pastor at your first meeting. The pastor can help you manage costs and is more than willing to talk to you about this. Fees are payable one week before the service.

We extend our very best wishes as you plan for your marriage ceremony. Please don't hesitate to call us. We're here to help make your wedding a special celebration.

God bless you both.

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*May the Lord bless you and keep you.  
May the Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you;  
may the Lord's countenance be lifted upon you  
and give you peace,  
this day and forevermore.*

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# Notes

Niantic Community Church  
170 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Niantic, CT 06357

860.739.6208

[www.NianticCommunityChurch.org](http://www.NianticCommunityChurch.org)

*An Open, Affirming, and Reconciling congregation  
of the United Church of Christ / United Methodist Church*