

Wedding Booklet

Rev. Dr. William Sencabaugh



**The Congregational Church
of South Dartmouth, UCC**
United Church of Christ

17 Middle Street, South Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02748

The Congregational Church of South Dartmouth, UCC
Helpful Information

Rev. Dr. William Sencabaugh, Pastor

Wendy Reardon, Director of Religious Education

Daphne Fogg Siegal, Youth Director

Dr. William Haffner-Jones, Music Director

Linda Keith, Church Administrator

Albert DeMello, Custodian

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Introduction

We rejoice with you in your upcoming wedding and your plans to be married at the Congregational Church of South Dartmouth. This booklet has been prepared to help you plan your wedding. A proposed outline for the service itself, with example vows, exchanges of rings, and scriptures often used during wedding services are also included.

We hope this information is helpful to you as you begin to plan your wedding.

Please call the church office and/or pastoral staff with any questions you may have regarding your wedding. We look forward to working with you to create a unique service of meaning and joy.

THE CHURCH WEDDING

A church wedding is not simply a civil ceremony in a beautiful setting. It is an act of worship held in a sanctuary that has been dedicated to God. The United Church of Christ wedding ceremony is a part of the liturgy of the church and can include prayers of thanksgiving and petition, and the sharing of the marriage vows through which you commit yourselves to one another.

Rev. Dr. William Sencabaugh, Pastor of the church will be happy to work with you as you plan for a meaningful and worshipful wedding ceremony. The ceremony is a service of the church and final decisions on any part of the service rest with Rev. Sencabaugh.

MUSIC

Music enhances wedding ceremonies in some very special ways. Rev. Sencabaugh and the church organist will be glad to work with you in choosing music that is appropriate and celebratory. They can also help in locating a vocal or instrumental soloist if you would like to have one. After you have confirmed that the date and time of your wedding is available, and have spoken directly with Rev. Sencabaugh, please contact Dr. William-Haffner Jones (401-848-4327) and make an appointment to meet with him.

SEATING

The church will comfortably seat 220 guests.

CANDLES

If you would like to include a "unity candle" to light during your ceremony, you are responsible for the purchase of the central unity candle, as well as the two tapers on either side. These are easily found in card and candle shops.

FLOWERS

You may have as many flowers as you desire although we suggest you keep it to a minimum to highlight the beautiful simplicity of the old style New England sanctuary of our church.

Please remind your florist to keep pads under floral arrangements to avoid water stains and not to use any tacks, nails, etc. If you would like to have a runner you need to arrange it through your florist. (Length necessary for our sanctuary is 50'.)

BULLETINS

You may print your own bulletins for the wedding service or use a standard format created in our church office. We would be happy to show you a sample of our bulletin, and will work with you to make adjustments to reflect your style and needs.

PHOTOGRAPHS

We ask that a minimum of flash pictures be taken during the wedding ceremony so as to not distract you and your guests. However, the photographer may take flash pictures during the Processional and Recessional. Please ask your photographer to check in with Rev. Sencabaugh prior to the service. Video cameras are welcome in the balcony.

PLEASE

No alcoholic beverages are allowed on church property. We encourage members of the wedding party to refrain from drinking prior to the rehearsal the wedding itself. We also request that you do not throw rice, birdseed or paper at the wedding. We have also found that flower petals can stain our sanctuary rugs, however, you may use silk flower petals if you wish.

CHURCH FEES

Custodian	\$100
Organist	\$200
Minister	\$500
Non-members building use	\$200

Please bring checks made out to the Congregational Church of South Dartmouth, UCC (for non-members), the custodian - Al DeMello, the organist - William Jones, and Rev. Dr. William Sencabaugh - the Pastor, individually and placed in separate envelopes and given to Rev. Sencabaugh at the rehearsal.

PLEASE NOTE: No one will be excluded from the church because of financial considerations. If payment of the church fees is problematic, please speak confidentially with Rev. Sencabaugh.

The Marriage Ceremony-Draft

A Proposed Order of Worship

PRELUDE

PROCESSIONAL

THE CALLING TOGETHER

INVOCATION & LORD'S PRAYER

THE WEDDING PROMISES

BLESSING BY FATHER, FAMILY AND/OR WHOLE CONGREGATION

SOLO (OPTIONAL) READING OF SCRIPTURE

EXCHANGE OF VOWS

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

PRONOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

UNITY CANDLE (OPTIONAL)

SOLO (OPTIONAL)

BRIEF HOMILY

SENDING FORTH

BENEDICTION

INTRODUCTION OF NEWLY MARRIED COUPLE

RECESSIONAL

Prelude

Processional

The Calling Together

A) Dear friends and loved ones of _____ and _____; Throughout religious history, God's people have felt the need to celebrate the great moments of life. At these times they call upon their family and friends to help commemorate these experiences. They have felt as if they could not do justice in celebrating alone, but have felt the need to hold these times up before God and before each one of you as their witnesses. And so today, in this Sanctuary, before loved ones and friends and in the presence of our loving God, _____ and _____ have come to speak their eternal vows of marriage.

OR

B) Dear friends and loved ones. We have come here today, to participate in the marriage which _____ & _____ will begin this day. Our role is a time-honored and essential one, for we serve as the witnesses to this sacred event. Our presence here says we believe in the vows these two will make to one another, and we believe that their coming together is good for them, and good for the world in which we live. We come here knowing that _____ & _____ are people of integrity and commitment. We believe in their intention to build a strong and lasting partnership with one another. Our presence witnesses our willingness to support them in their marriage, and our joyful affirmation of their decision to build a future together.

The Invocation and Lord's Prayer

The Wedding Promises

A) _____do you take_____ to be your wife, to live together in the holy bond of married life? Do you promise to honor and uphold her, and to join with her in making a home that shall endure in love and peace?

Do you affirm your purpose of a deeper union with her whereby you both shall know joy and the fulfillment of love? Do you pledge to her your complete faithfulness throughout your lifetime? And, of your own free will, do you now give yourself to her completely that from this day forth you shall be hers alone so long as you both live?

Groom: Yes, I do.

_____do you take_____ to be your husband, to live together in the holy bond of married life? Do you promise to honor and uphold him, and to join with him in making a home that shall endure in love and peace?

Do you affirm your purpose of a deeper union with him whereby you both shall know joy and the fulfillment of love? Do you pledge to him your complete faithfulness throughout your lifetime? And, of your own free will, do you now give yourself to him completely that from this day forth you shall be his alone so long as you both shall live?

Bride: Yes, I do.

OR

The Wedding Promises (Continued)

B) _____do you take_____ to be your wife? Will you promise to love her and to care for her, to honor and to respect her, to support her in all her endeavors, to be honest with her and to be faithful to her, as long as you both shall live?

Groom: I will with God's help.

_____do you take_____ to be your husband? Will you promise to love him and to care for him, to honor and to respect him, to support him in all his endeavors, to be honest with him and to be faithful to him, as long as you both shall live?

Bride: I will with God's help.

The Blessing

The blessing can be given by the father of the bride, the parents of the bride, the parents of the bride & groom, the family of the bride & groom ,or everyone gathered!

Who gives their blessing to this marriage?

The appropriate person or persons will respond with: "I Do" or "We do."

Vocal Solo

(optional)

Passages of Scripture or Poetry

(Usually one or two are read by friends or family)

The Wedding Vows *(see other example on pages 8-9)*

And now, will you please share one another your marriage vows?

Groom: I take you _____ to be my wife, to have and to hold, from this day forth, throughout our lifetime, to love and to cherish, so long as we both shall live. To this I pledge you, my solemn vow before God.

Bride: I take you _____ to be my wife, to have and to hold, from this day forth, throughout our lifetime, to love and to cherish, so long as we both shall live. To this I pledge you, my solemn vow before God.

The Giving of Rings

Wedding rings serve as the symbol of the vows you have just spoken. They are the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible love which now lives and grows between you. As rings are without edge or seam, having no beginning and no end, so they symbolize the everlasting nature of your love.

Prayer

Bless these rings, O God, to be the visible sign of the vows here made, that each who gives a ring, and each who wears one may ever be reminded of their promises, to you and to one another, growing ever stronger in the spirit of your love. AMEN.

Exchange of Rings *(see other examples on page 14)*

Groom: With all that I am, and all that I have, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

Bride: With a joyful and thankful heart, I accept this ring from you, and wear it as a sign of our love and faithfulness.

Bride: With all that I am, and all that I have, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

Groom: With a joyful and thankful heart, I accept this ring from you, and wear it as a sign of our love and faithfulness.

Pronouncement of Marriage

Because _____ and _____ have desired each other in the holy sacrament of marriage, and have witnessed this before God and our gathering, by sharing their vows with one another and in the giving and receiving of rings, I do now pronounce that they are husband and wife in the sight of God. Let all people here and everywhere recognize and respect this holy union, now and forever more. AMEN

Lighting of Unity Candle *(optional)*

Vocal Solo *(optional)*

Brief Homily

The Sending Forth

Minister:

And now that you are participants in the miracle of marriage, the joining of loved and beloved in covenant, remember this day as one of the most sacred days in your life.

May the God who lives within you, between you and around you, unite your hearts in love and peace.

May your children (if appropriate) bring you happiness and may your generous love for them be returned to you, many times over.

May the Spirit of Christ live always in your hearts and in your home.

May your friends and family walk beside you in your journey through life in times of joy and sorrow.

May you be ready and willing to help and comfort all who come to you in need.

May you find challenge and meaning in your work.

The Sending Forth (continued)

May daily problems never cause you undue anxiety, nor the desire for material possessions come to dominate your lives.

May you find ways to nurture and strengthen your inner spirit, and may you faithfully schedule those things into your busy lives.

May you make time to do the things you love together _____ and _____. Remember to have fun, enjoy one another, and celebrate your love in thoughtful and special ways!

The Benediction

May the love of God, which first formed us and gave us life, be with you, strengthening and enabling you to share your love with all creation, today and forever more. AMEN

Presentation of Newly Married Couple

It is my honor and privilege to present to you _____ love and beloved in the sight of God. As a sign that our service is complete, and your marriage just begun, I ask you to share with one another a kiss of joy!

Recessional

Wedding Vows

For several years, I have encouraged couples who are preparing for marriage to create their own wedding vows. Most couples have found this to be a meaningful experience, as they seek to express their unique covenant with one another. Below are some examples of vows and the words used when exchanging and receiving rings. Perhaps they will help give you a start as you go about the process of writing the vows for your own marriage service.

I take you (name) to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forth, throughout our lifetime, to love and to cherish, so long as we both shall live.

(Name), I give myself to you to be your (wife/husband). I promise to love and sustain you in the covenant of marriage, from this day forward, in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, as long as we both shall live.

(Name), I promise to express my love for you in all ways possible: to share in your pleasure and in your pain, and to let you share in my own. I promise to help you and to comfort you; to trust you, and to deserve your trust. I promise that with my heart, my mind and with my body, I will honor and cherish you all the days of my life as if each day were the first day of our love.

I, (name), take you (name), to be my (wife/husband). I commit my life to you, embracing all joys and sorrows, all triumphs and hardships. I make this commitment in love, I keep it in faith, I live it in joy, eternally and forever more.

Wedding Vows *(continued)*

I, (name), choose you (name), to be my (wife/husband), my friend and my love. On this day I affirm our life together for the past years, and I pledge to keep and strengthen it, in the days to come. I will be yours in plenty and in want, in health and in frailty, in triumph and in failure. Together, we will dream, and create, break bread and love; we will stumble but restore one another; we will share in all things. I will cherish and respect you, comfort and encourage you, be steadfast and faithful, truthful and trustworthy, and honor our life as one, for as long as I live.

Name), I promise to love you and respect you; to be your strength when you feel weak; your courage when you feel afraid. I promise to consider your feelings as I would my own and to never stop growing with you. You are my life, my love and my best friend. Through the joys and sorrow of life, I pledge to you before God, to give myself to you, completely and unselfishly. I love you.

(Name), I love you and so I promise you my friendship and trustworthiness every day of our lives. I promise to be honest with you, to listen to you and work with you, create a home where we can rest and play and welcome others. I promise to work with you in the world for peace and justice and delight. I will always strive and hope for understanding and let us forgive and ask for forgiveness when we fail. I will cherish your smile, touch and imagination, as the steps in the dance of our life together.

Exchange of Rings

(Name), this ring I give you, in token of our marriage vows. May it ever be a symbol of the unbroken bond of our love. (Name), I accept this ring from you. And I wear it as a sign of my love for you.

(Name), with all that I am, and all that I have, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness. (Name), with a joyful and thankful heart, I accept this ring from you, and I wear it as a sign of our love and faithfulness.

(Name), I give you this ring, as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

(Name), this ring I give you in token and pledge of my (our) constant faith and abiding love.

(Name), this ring I give in toke of the loving covenant made between us this day.

(Name), with this ring I thee wed, and with it pledge my honor, my love, and my life.

Examples of Scripture

(often used during wedding services)

Old Testament

Genesis 1 :26-28. 31; 2:18-24

Psalms 23, 33, 34, 37:3-7, 67, 100, 103, 112, 117, 121, 127, 128, 136, 145, 148, 150

Song of Solomon 2:8-13, 8:6-7

Jeremiah 31:3.1-34

Isaiah 54:5-8

Hosea 2: 16-23

Epistles

Romans 8:31-39; 12:1-2, 9-18

I Corinthians 6:15-20, 13:1-13

Ephesians 3:14-21; 5:2, 21-33

Colossians 3:12-17

I Peter 3:1-9

I John 3:18-24, 4:7-16

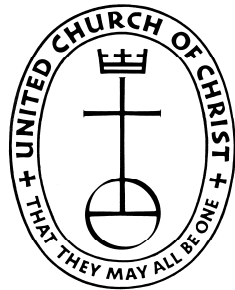
Revelation 19: 1, 5-9

Gospels

Matthew 5:1-12; 5:13-16; 7:21, 24-29; 19:3-6; 22:35-40

Mark 10:6-9, 13-16

John 2:1-11, 15:9-17



Revised 09/19/2008