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Wedding Personnel

Wedding Coordinator:

(Prior to the event)

Kathy Crandall, Dir of Finance

Officiating Ministers:

Rev. Dr. M. Jacob Kaufman

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

Organist:

Dr. Albert G. Bolitho

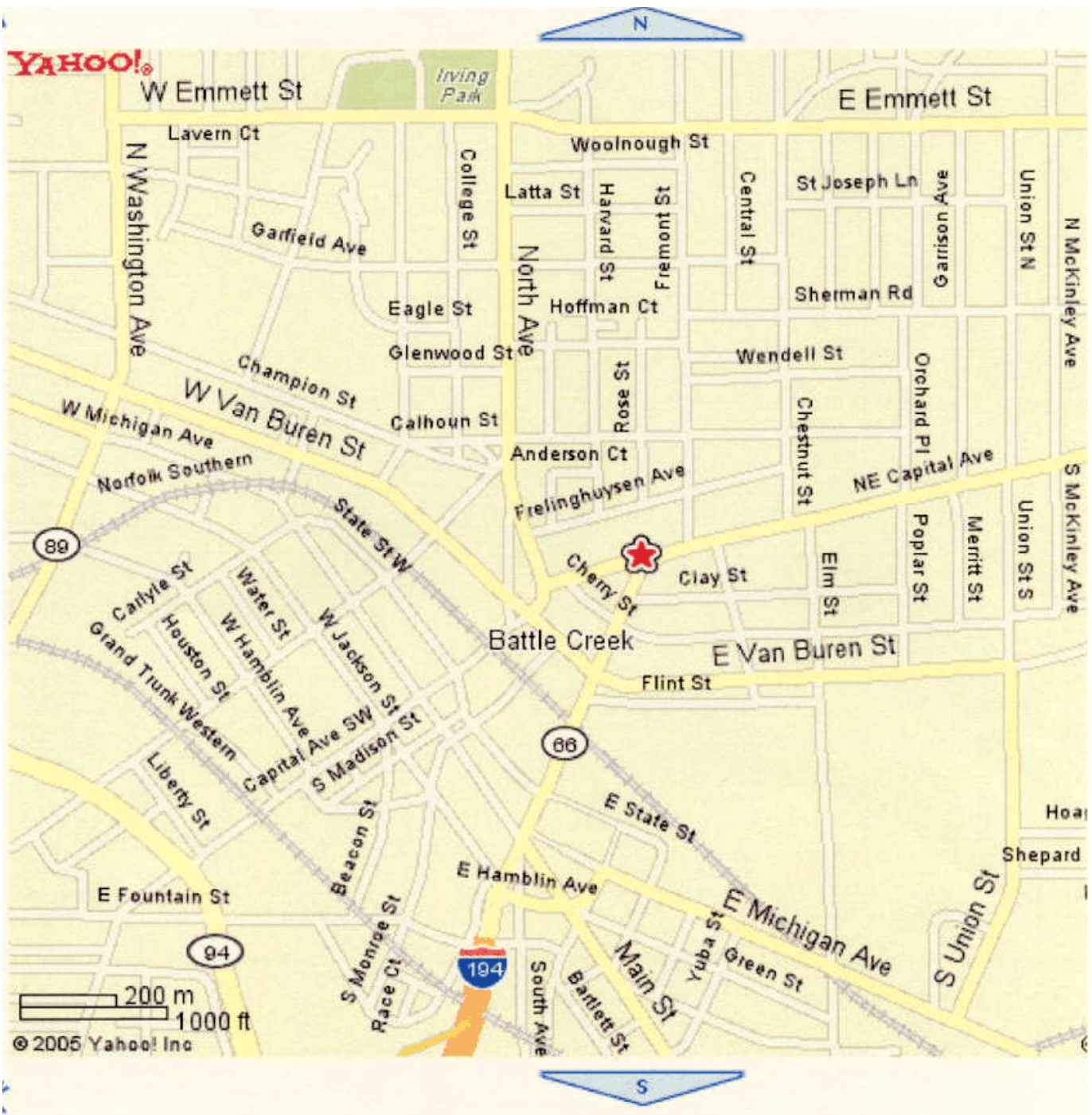
Wedding Hostess:

Mrs. Kathy Mahoney

Church Policies

Because of the nature of the service and our church facilities, the following policies have been determined:

- 1) No flash photographs may be taken during the wedding ceremony.
- 2) Video Taping location must be approved by the Minister. No extra lighting is allowed.
- 3) No rice, confetti or birdseed may be thrown on the church grounds. Other materials must be approved in advance, and arrangements made to clean up the grounds following the ceremony.
- 4) Drinking prior to the rehearsal or wedding is inappropriate and may be grounds for canceling the wedding.
- 5) Bottles of wine or champagne may be permitted at the wedding reception upon prior approval by the Senior Minister and strict adherence to our required procedures.
- 6) Weddings are not held on Sundays or holidays.
- 7) Music: the church shall provide the organist. Music needs to be selected in conjunction with the organist. If other musical requests are made, they must be approved in advance by the organist.
- 8) The bridal family is expected to reimburse the church for breakage or damage of church property.
- 9) One of this church's Ministers will officiate.
- 10) Logistical issues and the choreography of the wedding will be determined in conjunction with the officiating minister and must be approved by him/her.



First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
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Battle Creek, Michigan 49017
(269) 965-1225

A WEDDING is the ritual or ceremony that signifies the marriage relationship between a man and a woman. This public acknowledgment of marriage has its historical roots in the very beginning of the human race. While the wedding is considered an act of public worship by the Christian Church, there are no specific guidelines set down in the New Testament. Most early church writings reveal that wedding worship followed Hebrew precedent in Palestine and in Judeo-Christian communities in the Mediterranean world. However, as the Christian Church continued its progressive separation from the Hebrew traditions in the first several centuries, Christian weddings included traditions familiar to particular locales which did not have a Hebrew connection.

While many customs and traditions have a secular origin, the purpose of a Christian wedding is clear from the Church's tradition. It is worship before God: acknowledging God's gracious love in which the marriage of two persons might grow, to hear words of encouragement about that relationship from the Scriptures, to pray for guidance and to make a public promise of faithfulness to each other in the marriage vows. Therefore, the wedding service is an act of worship and should be approached as such. Music, the ceremony itself, and all other aspects should fit into the sacred concept of marriage and will be determined by the officiating minister and organist.

Arranging for a Wedding Date:

Arrangements for weddings are made through the church Financial Office and with one of our ministers and should be placed on the schedule as far in advance as possible. Weddings are scheduled in 5-hour intervals. All plans should be discussed with the Director of Finance & Property before any final arrangements are completed. Weddings are arranged for the Miller Chapel which seats up to 170 and the Sanctuary which seats up to 500. No weddings are scheduled on Sundays, on national holidays, during Easter weekend nor when Christmas falls upon a weekend.

Consultations With The Minister:

The Minister takes time not only to counsel with you for the wedding itself, but also for a Christian marriage. Three one-hour consultations are required.

Organist / Choirmaster and Music:

Only the church organist is to be used. After the first consultation with the minister, the organist should be contacted by the couple to discuss the selection of appropriate music. If you wish to utilize additional musicians, such persons will need to be approved by the organist or the organist will be able to recommend capable people. Both the Chapel and Sanctuary have excellent pipe organs. The suitability of musical texts are an important consideration for worship services, including weddings. The church office will provide a cassette tape of organ music suitable for weddings. Couples should keep in mind that there is a wealth of music and texts available, and that hymns are the best sources of religious texts. We strongly encourage the use of one or two hymns for congregational singing during the wedding service. Songs sung by soloists should emphasize praise and worship of God, Christian love characterized by commitment and fidelity, home and family, and texts which reinforce the wedding liturgy. Some popular or secular songs are appropriate for wedding receptions rather than before or during the wedding service. The church organist is responsible for the wedding music and all requests must be approved by him/her.

Wedding Hostess:

Our Wedding Hostess will be present to assist with all weddings unless otherwise arranged by the minister. You will find her very helpful in assisting you during the rehearsal and suggesting protocol on the day of the wedding. She will show you the appropriate building facilities you will be using. She is at the church an hour before the wedding to assist the bride and attendants with anything they might need. She checks the Sanctuary or Chapel to see that everything is in order, and gets the wedding party to the appropriate place at the appropriate time.

Church Facilities:

The Church Sanctuary seats approximately 500. The Chapel seats approximately 170. The Brides Room or the Harmony Room may be used by the bride and her attendants for changing, if desired. The Signature Room may be used by the bridegroom and his attendants.

The rehearsal and wedding will be conducted in the Christian spirit and with dignity, since this is one of the most sacred of our religious services. The pulpit, lectern, Bible, cross, candle and communion table may not be moved or hidden from view for any wedding. No nails, tacks, tape, etc. which can deface church property shall be used to secure any decoration in the Sanctuary or Chapel. No decorations which interfere with any other activity in the church will be allowed. All decorations must be approved by the church and should be removed immediately following the wedding ceremony.

It is required that members of the wedding party refrain from alcoholic beverages prior to both the rehearsal and wedding. Bottled wine or champagne may be permitted at a church wedding reception pending prior approval of our Senior Minister. Smoking is not permitted in the church building.

Wedding Day Time Frame:

The church premises will be available for three hours prior to the wedding ceremony and two hours after (if needed).

Photography and Videography:

Please share the following guidelines with your photographer. No photographs or video may be taken from the main floor of the Sanctuary or Chapel once the wedding worship service has begun. Flash pictures are permitted as the wedding party processes in and out as long as the photographer is discreet. Non-flash still pictures may be taken from the back or the balcony (Chapel) during the service. Additional lights are not allowed, therefore be sure that your video person can do the job with existing light. Posed pictures before and after the wedding may be taken in the locale where the ceremony is scheduled. Posed pictures may also be taken in the Courtyard and stairway as long as there is no interference with other church activities.

Florist:

Your florist needs to deliver your flowers within time limits arranged with the church. In addition to delivering flowers, the florist is the person with whom you arrange for the white aisle runner (66-feet for the Chapel, not suitable for the Sanctuary) and a Unity Candle if you have chosen to include this in the service. The church has available two candelabra with seven candles each at a fee of \$50.

Sound System:

The church sound system is available if requested well in advance and providing that a Sound Technician from the church is available to operate the equipment. There will be an additional charge for this service.

Securing a Marriage License:

Michigan State law requires that all persons desiring to be married present a valid marriage license issued within the state. Marriage licenses from other states are not acceptable. The license is secured from the marriage bureau of the county in which either man or woman resides. If the couple are not state residents, the license must be obtained from the county in which the wedding is to take place. The bureau is usually listed in the telephone book under "County Government". It is wise to call for the particular hours that the court house is open as well as to check auxiliary locations.

When applying for a marriage license, each party will need a valid driver's license, a state identification card or a birth certificate. The county clerk shall distribute to each applicant a brochure on health issues which must be read before receiving the license. Sometimes, if you are divorced, proof of divorce can be required. It is best to check with the county clerk's office in the county in which you will be applying for your marriage license to ascertain which documents are required.

Legal age of marriage without parental consent is 18 years. Between the ages of 16-17, you must have the written consent of one respective parent. The fee

for a marriage license is currently \$20 for in-state residents and \$30 for out-of-state residents. A license is valid for 30 days. Please double check the date on your license when you pick it up. There is a three-day waiting period, not including the date of application, between the application and the date you may pick up the license.

Wedding Rehearsal:

The rehearsal lasts about an hour and usually takes place the evening before the wedding. All persons participating in the service, including parents, should be present and on time. Your wedding license should be given to the officiating minister at the rehearsal.

Parking:

The lots on the east and west sides of the church and across Frelinghuysen Street to the north are available for use.

Receiving Line:

If you wish to have a receiving line, we would suggest the following sequence of members of the wedding party:

- Mother of Bride
- Father of Groom
- Mother of Groom
- Father of Bride
- Bride
- Groom

Or, the bride and groom may greet and unseat the guests row by row.

Wedding receptions:

Arrangements for a reception in the church Courtyard or Harmony Room following the ceremony may be made through the church financial office. A church Circle or a church caterer must be in attendance at a reception. Fees for receptions are available through the church financial office. The Harmony Room could seat 40-50 guests and the Courtyard could seat 150-200.

Personal Possessions:

Personal possessions such as purses, wallets and cameras should not be left in unlocked rooms during or after the wedding. Any clothing, jewelry or other belongings left at the church prior to the wedding are the sole responsibility of the owners.

Financial Arrangements:

Financial arrangements will be made with the officiating minister depending upon your status as member or non-member of First Congregational Church of Battle Creek. Member fees include the Sanctuary or Chapel (at no charge), honoraria for organist and wedding hostess, and custodial fees, and shall be paid, in full, two weeks prior to the wedding. The honorarium for the officiating minister should be made directly to him on the night of the rehearsal. To qualify for a member fee, you must have been an active member of First Congregational Church for at least one year prior to the date of the wedding.

Non-member fees include the Sanctuary or Chapel rental, honoraria for the officiating minister, organist and wedding hostess, and custodial fees, and shall be paid, in full, two weeks prior to the wedding.

A Wedding Planning Calendar

At least six months before the wedding date:

- ___ Reserve the church
- ___ Make reservations for the reception, caterers and musicians
- ___ Buy notebook to keep track of schedules, appointments, gifts, etc.

Five months before the wedding date:

- ___ Decide whether your wedding will be formal or informal, work up a budget for the wedding itself
- ___ Begin lining up auxiliary services, e.g. florist, photographer, etc.
- ___ Decide upon your attendants and ushers and invite them
- ___ Draw up your guest list
- ___ Select wedding ring(s)
- ___ Begin shopping for bride's wedding dress, veil and accessories, for the bridesmaids' and mothers' dresses and accessories and the men's formal wear

Three months before the wedding:

- ___ Call the church and make counseling session appointment
- ___ Order wedding invitations, announcements, thank you notes, etc.
- ___ Plan furnishings for the new home
- ___ Register with department store bridal registries to indicate your needs in the matter of wedding gifts, china patterns, crystal and silverware
- ___ Make up your honeymoon itinerary and make reservations
- ___ Address wedding invitations and prepare for later mailing
- ___ Select gifts for the attendants and others
- ___ Make a system for recording and displaying wedding gifts
- ___ Begin assembling the bride's and groom's trousseaux

Two months before the wedding:

- ___ Recruit your guest book person, servers, gift person, etc.

One month before the wedding:

- ___ Mail the wedding invitations
- ___ Order the wedding cake
- ___ Finish your counseling sessions
- ___ Arrange for a rehearsal dinner or party
- ___ Have final fittings on men's and women's wedding attire
- ___ Check on wedding ring(s)
- ___ Arrange for transportation to the wedding and reception
- ___ Prepare a newspaper announcement
- ___ Notify all people in your wedding party of rehearsal time
- ___ Arrange for someone to check on your home during honeymoon
- ___ Check on health and other insurance
- ___ Check accommodation for out-of-town relatives

Two weeks before the wedding:

- ___ Obtain your wedding license
- ___ Double check wedding attire
- ___ Confirm arrangements for reception, photographer, florist, musicians. Plan reception seating, if necessary.
- ___ Begin recording the wedding gifts and writing thank you notes
- ___ Arrange to move belongings to new residence
- ___ Make final payment to the church

One week before the wedding:

- ___ Continue writing thank you notes
- ___ Prepare checks for charges and fees incurred for requested services

The day before the wedding: Get a good night's rest