

Humbercrest United Church Wedding Guide for Couples

1. Context and Purpose

Congratulations! We are delighted that you are considering Humbercrest United Church for your wedding.

Preparing for a wedding is both joyful and meaningful. It is a time of celebration, anticipation and love as two people prepare to make commitments to one another in the presence of family, friends and community. A wedding service marks an important moment in life and creates lasting memories for the couple and all who gather to witness and support their union. Whether rooted in spiritual faith traditions, a more secular approach, or a blend of both, the service is intended to reflect the values, beliefs and hopes of the couple. Through words, music, ritual and shared presence, the community gathers to celebrate the commitment.

Humbercrest is an open, inclusive and affirming community that welcomes people of all backgrounds, beliefs, identities and traditions. We celebrate the dignity and worth of every person and are honoured to support couples in creating a wedding ceremony that reflects their relationship, values and vision for the future. Our sanctuary offers a warm and historic setting for weddings, and our reception spaces may also be available for gatherings and celebrations. We ask that all who use our space value and respect this spirit of inclusivity.

The Worship Ministry of Humbercrest United Church has developed this guide to assist couples in planning a wedding service that reflects love, dignity, joy and authenticity, in keeping with the practices of the United Church of Canada within the Greater Toronto Area. This guide includes elements of ministerial support, practical administrative logistics, facility use and honoraria to help make your planning experience welcoming and clear.

2. Principles

1. To create a meaningful wedding celebration that honours the couple's commitment and reflects their values, hopes and relationship.
 2. To support couples, families and guests with flexibility, respect and joyfulness of diverse traditions, identities and beliefs.
 3. To embody a spirit of openness, inclusion and care in words and actions, welcoming people of all backgrounds and life experiences, consistent with the United Church of Canada
 4. To ensure transparency and consistency in fees and honoraria, while striving to remain accessible to all.
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3. Eligibility

Wedding services may be provided for members and adherents of the congregation, individuals with a pastoral or historical connection to the church, and members of the wider community (subject to availability and minister approval). Priority scheduling will be given to members and adherents.

Couples seeking marriage at Humbercrest must meet all applicable legal requirements for marriage in the Province of Ontario, including obtaining a valid marriage licence.

4. Role of the Minister

The Minister will meet with the couple to discuss their hopes and plans for the wedding service. The Minister will officiate the wedding ceremony and, where appropriate, may also participate in or attend the rehearsal.

In keeping with the practices of the United Church of Canada, the Minister ensures that the ceremony is respectful and meaningful for a gathering in this community, while honouring the individuality of the couple. The Minister retains responsibility and decision-making for the content and flow of the service. However, within this framework, there is considerable flexibility, and personal touches are encouraged to reflect traditions, identities, beliefs and the couple's desire for inclusivity.

The Minister will invite the couple to share aspects of their love story, values and hopes for marriage. Couples may be asked to consider music (sacred or secular), readings such as scripture, poetry or other meaningful texts, vows, symbolic rituals and the involvement of family or friends in the ceremony.

Alternatively, couples may choose to engage their own Officiant, Elder, or Celebrant. In such cases, that person must contact the Humbercrest United Church Minister and/or the church administrator in advance to review facility expectations, rehearsal arrangements, and any requirements related to the use of church space. All guest officiants are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values of Humbercrest United Church as an inclusive and affirming community.

Practical details such as rehearsal timing, live-streaming, recording, photography, videography, processional arrangements and accessibility considerations will be discussed with the couple and in consultation with the Church Administrator and/or Wedding Facilitator.

Printed bulletins or programs may be arranged through the church or independently by the couple (see Appendix for example content).

There is no specific fee for the Minister although participants may wish to consider an honoraria. A range of honorariums for Ministers of \$800 - \$1,200 is reflective of common

amounts across United Church congregations in the Toronto area. All amounts are suggested and may need to reflect scope and context.

5. Music

Music plays an important role in a wedding ceremony. Sacred or secular selections, recorded music and solo performances are all appropriate. Selections should be meaningful to the couple, while respecting the communal and celebratory nature of the space.

Couples may bring their own music or arrange for the church's Music Director for planning or for accompaniment. If unavailable, they can suggest an alternative option. Upon request, the Music Director may also coordinate soloists, instrumentalists or the church choir. Recorded music may require you to hire speakers suitable for the space.

The Steinway piano and organ are special antique instruments with beautiful sound. Guest musicians are welcome to use them with permission.

The ranges of honoraria below are reflective of common ranges across United Church congregations in the Toronto area. All amounts are suggested and may need to reflect scope and context.

- Organist/Pianist Honorarium: \$250 – \$400
- Soloist/Instrumentalist Honorarium: \$100 – \$400

6. Use of Church Facilities

The Church Administrator is responsible for scheduling and coordination of the spaces. Available spaces for use may include the sanctuary (wedding ceremony), a hall for receptions or gatherings (e.g. Heritage Hall, Friendship Room), and kitchen facilities if required. The Administrator also schedules custodial care for the day ((opening, closing, cleaning, etc.) related to the event.

Once the booking is confirmed (at signing of Agreement and deposit receipt), the couple will work with a church-appointed Wedding Facilitator to assist with logistics and coordinate access, set up, rehearsal, etc. This individual is a volunteer, not intended to perform any physical work associated with the event; the Facilitator's role is supportive, supervisory and administrative.

All use is subject to availability and staff coordination. Fees will be discussed based on space and time requirements. You are requested to stay within the church zones outlined in your agreement. Alcohol is permitted with a liquor license prior to the wedding.

7. Facility Fees

- Sanctuary Rental: \$1,000 – \$1,500
- Wedding Rehearsal Coordination: Included
- Reception Hall (not including food/refreshment): \$400 – \$800
- Custodial/Setup/Cleaning Fee/Garbage Removal: \$150 – \$300
- Bulletins/printing: \$75 – \$150

8. Pastoral Discretion and Accessibility

A wedding inquiry will not be declined solely due to financial hardship. The Minister, in consultation with the Church Council or designated authority, may reduce or waive fees, adjust honoraria, or explore alternative arrangements where appropriate.

This approach reflects the United Church's commitment to justice, compassion and accessibility, ensuring a pastoral rather than a transactional relationship.

9. Payment

The church will provide a single consolidated invoice for facility fees only. Honorariums should be arranged directly with the individuals.

A deposit may be requested at the time of booking, with final payment typically due prior to or on the day of the wedding. HST will be applied where required (e.g. facility rentals, depending on CRA requirements).

10. Donations to the Church

As part of a caring community, some couples or families may wish to make a donation to the Church in gratitude for the ministry and support provided through the wedding process.

Importantly, donations are always voluntary and distinct from fees, ensuring there is no expectation or misunderstanding of "paying for ministry." Humbercrest is committed to being accessible to all, regardless of financial means.

Official tax receipts will be issued for donations in accordance with Canada Revenue Agency regulations.

11. Other Considerations

Accessibility. The building includes an elevator and accessible washroom. Please advise us of any special requirements.

Inclusivity. Humbercrest is an affirming and safe space, as we live in solidarity with many peoples (e.g. LGBTQ+, Indigenous). You may see flags or symbols to honour these peoples, please do not alter these expressions of support.

Recording or Livestreaming. Humbercrest can record or livestream wedding services if desired. Please discuss arrangements with the Minister and Church Administrator.

Photography/Videography. Photography/videography are welcome, provided they are conducted respectfully and do not disrupt the ceremony. Specific guidelines may be discussed with the Minister or other Officiant (e.g. often the officiant requests no flash).

Flowers and Decorations. Flowers and decorations may be placed in the church shortly before the ceremony and removed afterward unless otherwise arranged. The couple is welcome to leave floral arrangements for the sanctuary following the wedding if desired.

Decorations must not damage church property or interfere with safety and accessibility requirements. Candles or other open flames require prior approval.

Parking Arrangements. Street parking is available on neighbouring streets, but it is limited.

Wedding Rehearsal. A rehearsal is often scheduled in advance of the wedding date to review the order of service, processions and logistics with participants. Please indicate your intent to the Minister and Church Administrator.

Confetti or Rice. Please do not use inside the building.

Air Conditioning. The church does not have A/C. Ceiling fans are available during warmer months, and bottled water for musicians and officiants is recommended.

12. Approval

This guide will be reviewed periodically to reflect and respond to changes in practices and norms, congregational capacity, inflationary costs and any guidance of the United Church of Canada.

Approved by Church Council on [date]

Appendix:

Sample Order of Service (United Church Wedding)

A flexible template; elements may be adapted in consultation with the Minister.

Wedding for [Full Names]

Prelude music as people gather

Entrance of Wedding Party

Words of Welcome and Acknowledgment of Territory

Opening Words / Scripture (e.g. 1 Corinthians 13, Ruth 1:16–17, selected poetry or meaningful readings)

Opening Prayer

Music (solo, instrumental) if desired

Declaration of Intent

- Questions to the couple regarding their commitment and intention to marry
- Possible readings (poetry, scripture, or meaningful texts)

Reflection / Homily

Given by the Minister

Exchange of Vows and Rings

Pronouncement of Marriage

- Kiss, lighting of unity candle or other symbolic ritual (optional)
- Blessing of the couple, family and community and/or shared words of hope and encouragement

Signing the Register

- Music (solo, instrumental)
- Blessing

Presentation of the Couple

Benediction

Postlude

Music as people depart

Optional Elements

- As requested by the couple