

Riverside Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Wedding Policy

Riverside Avenue Christian Church finds great joy in providing a ministry with those who are planning a wedding. We are blessed with a beautiful building and feel called by God to use it for members and non-members alike. In addition to a lovely wedding it is even more important for us to help couples prepare for a good marriage. Our ministry involves both planning your wedding and preparing for marriage.

A church wedding is more than a wedding in a building owned by a church. A church wedding includes the church's faith and people.

- 1) **Time with the minister.** You will have at least two meetings with a Minister of Riverside Avenue Christian Church. The first will be to get acquainted with the community of faith. The second will be devoted to planning a ceremony that reflects the love of God and the promises you are making to each other
- 2) **Pre-marital counseling.** It is our hope that all couples planning to be married at Riverside Avenue Christian Church will participate in a course of pre-marital counseling. The State of Florida encourages couples to receive counseling by discounting the fee for the marriage license. We offer pre-marital counseling with an ordained minister. Typically, there are four to five sessions with the counselor. The minister will arrange for counseling sessions with the couple.
- 3) **The Wedding as Service of Christian Worship.** The wedding service is a special service with similarities to all worship services. Communion is central to worship in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Though not a requirement, weddings for members of Riverside Avenue Christian Church will typically include **an open service** of communion for the congregation. An open service means that all wedding guests, regardless of religious affiliation, will be welcomed at Christ's table. Wedding participants or guests who come from a tradition that prohibits receiving communion in another church are invited to, but not required or expected to share in communion. The minister will make all necessary arrangements for the communion service. Each couple will discuss all elements of the wedding ceremony such as the attendants, readings, vows, etc. with the minister.

Member or non-member couples may choose to invite a minister/officiant for their wedding who is not a minister of Riverside Avenue Christian Church. Ministers/celebrants who are not affiliated with Riverside Avenue Christian Church or who do not have standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may only preside over weddings by invitation and consultation with the Senior Minister of the congregation. Should a couple choose to do this, their minister/officiant must make arrangements with the Senior Minister of the congregation and adhere to the following policies:

- a) The program must indicate that the minister/officiant is not affiliated with or an employee of Riverside Avenue Christian Church.

- b) If communion is to be shared, the invitation must be to everyone gathered, not just the couple, wedding party, or family.
 - c) Rhetoric indicating that marriage is solely between one man and one woman may not be used.
 - d) Rhetoric that implies women are to be submissive to their husbands may not be used.
- 4) The **Minister of Music** will consult with the couple in planning prelude, processional and recessional music. The couple will also notify the Minister of Music if there is a vocal or instrumental soloist for the wedding and whether or not the soloist will require organ/piano accompaniment.
- 5) The **Wedding Coordinator** will help the couple plan the logistics of the rehearsal and the wedding day beyond the ceremony such as photography, changing rooms and the reception if it is held at the church. After completing the enclosed Questionnaire, the couple will schedule a meeting with the Wedding Coordinator to complete the wedding day planning.

Wedding Fees

Weddings Held on Church Property

Due to the high demand of the church staff and church facilities during peak liturgical times, the fee may vary slightly throughout the year. The standard wedding fee is **\$1500**.

For weddings during Advent (between November 15th – January 1st) and during Lent/Easter (February 1st – April 30th), there will be an additional charge of **\$400**. This is to honor the time of the minister, musicians, custodian, and church staff during peak liturgical seasons.

All fees for services are included in the wedding fee. The fee includes:

- a) Minister arranges for pre-marital counseling and plans the ceremony with the couple.
- b) Wedding coordinator assists in planning and set-up for the rehearsal and the day of the wedding.
- c) Minister of Music participates in the rehearsal and provides twenty minutes of pre-wedding music, accompaniment for soloists, and post-wedding music.
- d) Pre-marital counseling leads couples in greater self- understanding and provides resources for helping couples to maintain a loving, healthy relationship. Counseling services will be arranged with the Minister.
- e) Sound Technician sets up and operates the Sanctuary sound system for all participants needing sound amplification.
- f) Custodian prepares all facilities for the rehearsal and wedding and cleans up following the ceremony.
- g) Building use includes the Sanctuary, parlor/bridal lounge, changing rooms for men along with all the building's public use facilities.

The Fellowship Hall is available for the rehearsal dinner and/or the wedding reception for an additional fee of **\$350**. This includes both the rehearsal dinner and wedding reception. If the couple chooses to only do the rehearsal dinner or only do the wedding reception, the fee will remain **\$350**.

A deposit of one half the wedding fee is required to schedule the wedding. The balance is due three weeks prior to the wedding. **There will be an additional \$100 charge for late balances.**

Refunds will be made up to two weeks prior to the wedding upon request.

Active members of Riverside Avenue Christian Church will receive a discount of \$600.

Please note that in order for the ceremony to take place as scheduled, all fees must be paid prior to the wedding day.

The couple will be responsible to reimburse Riverside Avenue Christian Church for any damage to the building by the wedding party or guests.

Weddings Not Held on Church Property

Should you choose to have the wedding ceremony at a different location but still utilize a minister from Riverside Avenue Christian Church, the fee will be **\$350**. There may also be an additional fee for extensive travel outside of Jacksonville.

The fee includes the minister's role in pre-marital counseling, the minister's assistance in planning the ceremony, participating in the rehearsal, and performing the wedding itself.

For weddings during Advent (between November 15th – January 1st) and during Lent/Easter (February 1st – April 30th), there will be an additional charge of **\$200**.

A deposit of one half the wedding fee is required to schedule the wedding. The balance is due three weeks prior to the wedding. **There will be an additional \$100 fee for late balances.**

Refunds will be made up to two weeks prior to the wedding upon written request.

Please note that if all fees have not been paid to the church office prior to ceremony, the ceremony will be cancelled.

Guidelines

Thank you for observing our policy of **no smoking** on church property.

Thank you for observing our policy of no rice or confetti, etc. to be used outside.

Thank you for sharing these guidelines with the florist:

- Only metal-encased or electric candles may be used.
- Tacks, staples, tape or other fasteners that could damage wood may not be used.
- Floral arrangements and candles other than church items may not be placed on the communion table.
- Property belonging to the florist is to be removed immediately following the ceremony.

We will name you in prayer on the next Sunday worship service. We would be pleased to display flower arrangements left from your wedding ceremony during Sunday worship. Please notify the wedding coordinator if you plan to do so.

Thank you for sharing these guidelines with your photographer:

- Flash photography is not appropriate during the wedding service.
- The photographer may take pictures of the wedding party at the rear of the Sanctuary during the Processional.
- The photographer may take available-light only pictures during the ceremony from the back of the sanctuary. Photographs may be taken up to 45 minutes prior to the ceremony and for one hour following.

Rehearsal & Ceremony Times

Rehearsal:

- Building will be open 1/2 hour prior to the rehearsal.
- Building will be locked 1/2 hour following the rehearsal.
- Encourage the wedding party to be prompt so that the rehearsal lasts no longer than 1 hour. There will be a 5-minute grace period, however, an additional fee of \$10 per 5-minute increment will be charged if the wedding party is not prepared to begin at the designated time.

- All participants, including parents/families, are asked to be present for the rehearsal.
- The marriage license should be given to the minister at the rehearsal.
- Wedding attire may be left at the church following the rehearsal.

Wedding Day:

- Building will be open four hours prior to stated hour of the service.
- Building will be closed 1 1/2 hours following the recessional.
- Ushers will begin seating guests 30 minutes prior to the service.
- Additional scheduling requests can be discussed with the wedding coordinator.
- All building use must conclude by 10 pm.

Helpful Information

To Do:

1. __ Contact the Church office to tentatively clear the date on the Church calendar.
2. __ Contact the Minister to confirm availability for your wedding day. The wedding date is confirmed on the Church calendar only after the couple has contacted the Minister and paid the deposit.
3. __ Make a financial deposit of one-half of the total fee to confirm the wedding date on the church calendar.
4. __ Contact the Wedding Coordinator to review details.
5. __ Set an appointment with the Director of Music Ministries and/or Accompanist for assistance in music selection.
6. __ Pay balance of fee within 3 weeks of wedding.

Contact Information

Please contact the church office for all wedding inquiries.

2841 Riverside Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32205

office@jaxdisciples.org | www.jaxdisciples.com

Administrative Pastor: Janet Novick

Wedding Coordinator: Karen Adams

Minister: Rev. Erin Dickey

Director of Music Ministries: Melissa Aiuppy

Accompanist: Deborah Bryant