

# Your Wedding at the Church by the Sea

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**The pastors and staff of the Church by the Sea are eager to guide and assist you in making your wedding a solemn and yet joyous occasion.**

**In the words of the traditional wedding service, marriage is “instituted of God, regulated by His commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be held in honor among all people.”**

**Your wedding will mean more to you, your families and friends, when there is careful concern for all the reverential aspects of this happy and holy occasion.**

**Certain policies have been established by the Church Leaders to accomplish this purpose and to assist the bride and groom and their families in answering questions regarding the wedding ceremony and procedures. The following information is given to help you plan for this important event.**

## Setting the Wedding Date

Before a definite date is decided, please telephone the Church Office at the Church by the Sea to make sure the Church and a Minister are available. A time for meeting with the Minister should be arranged, and the date set before any other plans are made. The date for a wedding is official when the wedding application is submitted to the church, been approved, and a **non-refundable 50% deposit** made. The balance of the wedding fees must be paid in full at least one month before the service, either in cash or by check.

No wedding should be scheduled in the Church during Holy Week or on Christmas week. Also, no weddings may be scheduled before 2pm on Sundays in the Sanctuary or before 4pm in the Chapel.

A rehearsal date can be set if necessary. The best time for a rehearsal is between 5pm and 7pm the evening before the wedding. A minimum of thirty minutes should be allowed for the rehearsal.

## Changes or Cancellation

Any changes in the date or time of the wedding will be subject to a \$50 service charge. Cancellation of a wedding should be done in writing to avoid any questions about your intentions. Only fees already paid in excess of the non-refundable deposit will be returned to you.

## Officiating

One of the ministers of the Church by the Sea will direct all weddings. We are a Parish Church, and it is the responsibility of our pastors to provide for and conduct the full range of Christian services and pastoral functions.

If a couple wishes another minister to share in the ceremony, the request should be made to our Minister. Protocol dictates that a minister enters another church by invitation, and so our Minister will invite the other minister to participate in the service.

## Music

Music is an important part of a wedding ceremony and should be in keeping with the reverence observed in the House of God. Our Organist will be happy to discuss with you a program of music to be played at your wedding, but has the ultimate decision on appropriateness. If you wish to select the music, please call the church office and make an appointment to meet with our Organist. Only the Church Organist may play the organs of the Church, unless s/he chooses to secure someone else.

## Pre-Marital Conferences With The Minister

A significant phase in preparing for your wedding is the conference with the Officiating Minister. This opportunity allows for a personal relationship to be established between the Minister and the couple, and also provides the couple a chance to share in the creation and design of their wedding ceremony. Please call the Minister's Assistant to make an appointment with the Officiating Minister.

## License

In Dade County, marriage licenses are good for 60 days. It is recommended that the marriage license be brought to the pre-marital conference with the Minister. Please note that the marriage license must be in the Minister's possession before the ceremony.

## Invitations

For your invitations, the suggested form for the address of the Church is: Church by the Sea, 501 Ninety-Sixth Street, Bal Harbour, Florida 33154. The suggested form for the chapel is: The Ford Chapel of the Church by the Sea, 501 Ninety-Sixth Street, Bal Harbour, Florida 33154.

## Photographers

Photographers are to be instructed that flash pictures are not permissible during the ceremony. Non-flash pictures may be taken from the rear of the Church, and pictures may be posed following the service. Ushers will inform guests arriving with cameras that flash pictures are not permitted. Videotaping is possible under certain conditions. Please consult with the Officiating Minister.

## Decorations

Many of the local florists are acquainted with our Church and will be able to suggest various decorations for your consideration. Florists unfamiliar with the Church by the Sea, should check with the Church Office about what is and is not permissible. The Church requests that no aisle runners be used. No rice, birdseed or confetti may be thrown inside or outside the Church.

During the Christmas Season, arrangements should be made with the Church Office to use the Church decorations. Usually, in this case, the couple makes a contribution to the fund providing Christmas decorations.

If you wish to leave your floral decorations at the Church, the Church will be happy to make use of them in an appropriate way, and see that they are distributed to the sick and shut-ins. Please inform the Church Office of your wishes in this regard.

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## Interpreters

Please discuss with the Minister if you plan to have the wedding translated into another language so that appropriate coordination might be done. The Church does not routinely provide interpreters, but should you need the services of one, we will do what we can to assist you in locating one. The fee will be set by the interpreter.

## Expenses

The Church makes every effort to assist in keeping costs at a minimum. Weddings, however, involve various extra services which the Church is unable to underwrite. The Financial Secretary of the Church serves as your agent in compensating the individuals whose services you have desired.

All fees are subject to the discretion of the Ministers. If the charges present any great hardship or problem, please speak to the Officiating Minister.

## Late Charges

When weddings are scheduled at the Church by the Sea, an hour of service is established, and it is the policy of the Church that weddings will begin at the time set. When more than one wedding is scheduled for the sanctuary or chapel, enough time is allowed between weddings for florists to set up and pictures to be taken after the service. Also, a clearly established time allows our Ministers and Church Staff to schedule other obligations which require their presence.

Because of repeated instances of inconsiderate actions on the part of some, we have instituted the following late charge policy:

**A separate check for two hundred dollars (\$200) for a wedding late fee, postdated to the date of the wedding, is required. The check will be returned if the wedding starts as scheduled. A separate check for a hundred dollars (\$100) for a rehearsal late fee, postdated one week before the wedding, is also required. The check will be returned if the rehearsal starts as scheduled.**

The Officiating Minister will exercise sensitivity and discretion in assessing a late charge, taking into

consideration unusual circumstances and unforeseen emergencies.

If a wedding is more than 30 minutes late, and there are conflicts with either the use of the Church or Church Staff obligations, the Officiating Minister has the right to postpone the service.

Most couples being married at the Church by the Sea are prompt, courteous, and considerate, and it is our pleasure to work with them in planning a meaningful service. However, the actions of a few make the above policy necessary. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

## Facilities For Your Wedding

The Sanctuary of the Church by the Sea has a seating capacity of 320 people Extra seating for up to 200 more can be arranged. Ford Chapel has a seating capacity of 60 people.

**Our membership includes people from many faith traditions, diverse lifestyles and family configurations, and over 34 different nationalities. We are committed to welcome all persons without regard to race, ethnic background, economic status, age, gender, personal ability, sexual orientation, or any other human condition. We are as multicultural as the entire South Florida community from which we draw.**

**The Church by the Sea**  
**United Church of Christ**  
**501 Ninety-Sixth Street**  
**Bal Harbour, Florida 33154**  
**Telephone (305) 866-0321**  
**Fax (305) 864-6501**  
**[www.churchbythesea.org](http://www.churchbythesea.org)**

“Love comes as birth dogs...  
knowing its own time.”



Your Wedding  
at the Church  
by the Sea



The Church by the Sea, Bal Harbour, Florida