

**WELCOME TO THE
RUTHERFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
251 Union Avenue
Rutherford, New Jersey 07070
(201) 438-6324
www.rccucc.com**

YOUR CHRISTIAN WEDDING

1. PREPARING FOR YOUR WEDDING

If you are reading this booklet because you are in the process of planning your wedding, let me welcome you to an exciting period in your life. The decision to get married will be one of the most important decisions you will ever make.

Please keep in mind that you are actually preparing for TWO things: a wedding and a marriage. A **wedding** is the actual ceremony of joining together two people into a single unit. To some, this is only a legal matter to be performed by a judge or justice of the peace. For others, a wedding has a more symbolic and religious meaning – they choose to celebrate their union through a rite of Christian worship. Preparing for a wedding takes planning and coordination of people and places. How large or intimate, how elaborate or simple the ceremony will be, is left to the discretion of the couple, in consultation with the pastor.

The other thing you are preparing for at this time is **marriage** – a life together with this person you have chosen. During sessions with the pastor, you will have an opportunity to explore your relationship with your partner and your expectations for life together.

As you continue with your plans, remember that you are planning a celebration – a time to be remembered by all who share this day with you. And you are laying a foundation for an enduring life partnership with one another.

Rev. Ronald E. Verblauw
Interim Pastor

2. SETTING THE DATE AND TIME

The first step in setting a date and time is to consider the pastor's and church's calendar, who your guests will be, and where you wish to have a reception. If you are having a reception for a large number of people in a hall or restaurant, you may wish to set several alternative dates with that facility until the wedding date and time have been finalized. To reserve a wedding date and obtain a building use form, please call Teresa Bronico, our Office Administrator: 201-438-6324. Office hours are 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Thursday and Friday. Rutherford Congregational Church honors a first request first date reserved policy.

3. PREMARITAL COUNSELING

Because marriage is an important step in your life, and the church's mission includes the support of families, we want to help you make the most of your relationship and build a solid future. Therefore, two or more premarital sessions are required as part of your Christian wedding in this church. You may have these sessions with the pastor here, with another pastor, or with a designated pastoral counselor. When the pastor meets with you, it gives him an opportunity to help you personalize your ceremony, and to review the vows that you will be taking.

4. ALTERNATE CLERGY

If you desire an alternate clergy person to celebrate your wedding, you must call Rev. Verblauw: 201-838-4254. He will, in turn, call and speak to the clergy person you have chosen.

5. AFTER THE WEDDING

As a couple, you are encouraged to have an ongoing relationship with a church. If you choose to become part of our church family, or if you are already a part of our church family, we offer marriage and family counseling as part of our pastor's ministry. Our pastor will be happy to help you in dealing with crises, adjustments, and family struggles or in other areas of growth. If you are not an ongoing participant in the life of this church, the pastor here will assist you in a crisis and then refer you to another professional or agency.

6. OBTAINING A MARRIAGE LICENSE

To be married in the State of New Jersey, a couple must obtain a “Marriage License” from the New Jersey State Department of Health through the local Board of Health in the town or borough in which the bride resides.

If you have any questions, call the Rutherford Health Department: 201-460-3020. The fee for a Marriage License is \$28.00. A book about this process is available from the State Department of Health.

BRING THE LICENSE WITH YOU TO THE WEDDING REHEARSAL.

7. THE WEDDING CEREMONY

Marriage is the gift of two persons to one another, bonded together in freedom, upheld as children of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit. The minister does not “marry” a couple – the two persons marry each other. The minister is a guide and a witness to the marriage. The wedding ceremony is flexible according to the needs of the couple and their families. Options you may choose include various musical selections, a blessing for a new family (when the couple already has children), the lighting of candles, or having friends read scripture or poetry. During the first premarital counseling session, Pastor Verblaauw will hand you a folder containing several wedding ceremonies, which will help you to design your wedding ceremony.

8. ATTENDANTS

The State of New Jersey requires two witnesses to sign the Marriage License, in addition to the minister and the couple. These persons must be eighteen (18) years of age or older. You may wish to have other attendants “stand up” with you. Children who serve as attendants should be able to follow instructions and stand still for several minutes. Most couples choose to give their attendants a small gift to thank them for their support.

9. PHOTOGRAPHS & TAPE RECORDINGS

Photography is restricted to the processional and the recessional and before and after the ceremony. The pastor will be happy to pose after the service for reenactments. Photographs are restricted because a wedding is a service of Christian worship.

Video or audio recordings may be made. In no way should the use of the equipment detract from the attention to be focused on the worship. Photographers and those making recordings should consult with the pastor before the service.

10. OTHER RESTRICTIONS

Rice, birdseed, confetti, and helium balloons are restricted from being used within the church or on the church's property. Soap bubbles are permitted to be used only outside of the church building.

11. WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wedding announcements may be published in local newspapers by contacting these newspapers. This is a task left to the couple. Invitations to the wedding may be obtained at any of the local printing shops that are found in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory.

12. FORMS & RECORDS

Your marriage will be recorded in our church records. Therefore, please fill out the form that comes with this booklet and return it to the pastor. After the wedding, your witnesses must sign the Marriage License and a Certificate of Marriage which is your record for having had a wedding in a religious setting.

13. MUSIC & ALTERNATE MUSICIAN(S)

Mr Christopher Sahar, our Interim Organist, should be the first considered in the selection of music: 347-742-2225. He should be notified of any special music you wish to have, or of any soloists. He can arrange for a soloist at an extra charge. If you desire an alternate musician(s), you must call Mr. Sahar. According to his contract, Mr. Sahar is entitled to a "bench fee" of \$225.00, even if you choose an alternate musician(s) or use taped or CD music.

14. THE REHEARSAL

Most large weddings require some practice in order to insure that the ceremony goes smoothly. Please plan on a rehearsal a day or two before the wedding. Some people like to follow the tradition of a rehearsal dinner either before or after the rehearsal, hosted by the groom and/or his family.

15. IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Rutherford Department of Health:	201-460-3020
Church:	201-438-6324
Pastor: Rev. Ronald E. Verblaauw	201-838-4254
Interim Director of Music: Mr. Christopher Sahar	347-742-2225

16. FEES & DONATIONS

Marriage License – \$28.00 set by the State of New Jersey.

Building Use Donation – \$150.00 for use of the sanctuary plus a \$100.00 refundable deposit. \$50.00 per hour including set-up and clean-up time for use of the Community Room for the reception.

Interim Organist Honorarium – \$225.00 (includes wedding only).

Soloist's Honorarium – \$200.00.

Pastor's Honorarium for members – \$300.00 (includes 2 or more premarital sessions, rehearsal, and wedding). This is a suggested honorarium. Either the bride's or groom's name must appear on the church active member list to be considered a member of the church.

Pastor's Honorarium for non-members – \$400.00 (includes 2 or more premarital sessions, rehearsal, and wedding).

Reception – This varies according to how elaborate you choose to be and how many guests you have.

If you are on a limited budget, some of the donations may be adjusted according to the size of the wedding and reception, your income and your resources.

The \$150.00 donation for the use of the building plus the refundable deposit of \$100.00 should be paid at the time you reserve the church for your wedding. The deposit serves to secure your date. All other payments are due at the wedding rehearsal. Bring the Marriage License to your rehearsal, in a stamped, pre-addressed envelope.

ABOUT OUR PASTOR

Ron Verblaauw studied for and received his Master of Divinity degree from the Theological School of Drew University in May 2012. Accepted as a Member-in-Discernment by the New Jersey Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ in April 2010, he was approved for ordination pending a call at an Ecclesiastical Council in November 2013. The Rutherford Congregational Church called Ron to be their Interim Pastor in October 2014.

While studying at Drew Theological School, Ron participated in the school's Partnership for Religion and Education in Prison ("PREP") at Northern State Prison. After graduation, he was invited by the Rev. Pamela Bakal to join the Prison Ministry Team of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark.

Other accomplishments during his time in seminary were the formal establishment of SPECTRUM as a student caucus for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students of the Theological School, its active presence on campus, and participation in the religious life of the community. He was presented with the 2014 Antoinette Esquire Holland Award by SPECTRUM in recognition of his ministry and advocacy for the LGBTQ community. Ron was a joint recipient of the Drew Theological School Franz Hildebrandt Award in April 2012 for combining deep faith and excellence in theological studies with effective ministry as an intern or pastor in a field education assignment (student ministry).

ABOUT OUR INTERIM ORGANIST

Christopher Sahar's love of music began when studying piano at 7 in Kearny, NJ. Although he started composing short piano pieces at 10, it wasn't until his late 30's the he embarked on serious study of music composition first with private teachers then at Julliard's Evening Division and culminating recently is earning a Master's in Music from Queens College/City University of New York with a concentration in composition.

His experience as an organist and choral accompanist arose over 15 years ago when he was accompanist to adult choirs in Long Island and Manhattan from 1999 - 2007. During this period, he secured a position as music director at an Episcopal Church in Queens which prompted him to take organ instruction with Rick Erickson, former cantor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in the Lincoln Center area of Manhattan and choir director of the Bach Singers. He has been a member of the American Guild of Organist since 2005 and earned a Service Playing Certificate in 2007. Since then he has been an interim organist at the Slovak Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, substitute organist at Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and Methodist congregations including Grace Methodist Church in Kearny, NJ.

