

# *Congratulations*

*On your decision to be married!*

A marriage ceremony is the joyous occasion when two people unite in the mutual exchange of covenanted promises. It is a service of worship and gratitude for all the blessings that you have been given, as you promise to go forward in faith.

The wedding couple are married, not by themselves in a solitary effort, but in the presence of a gathered community, which supports them in their new life together. You will be taking your vows, not only to each other, but before a greater Spirit that is with you always — through this sacred act, this Spirit will bless you, equip you, and guide you in your journey into the future in marital relationship.



We consider marriage to be a most holy and special bond, and are pleased that we can play a part in this special time for you. These materials are intended to give you some helpful information that will make the occasion go as smoothly as possible, and to provide a good foundation for many years of wedded bliss.

We look forward to meeting with you both, and assisting you in making this a very special, memorable, and meaningful experience for all concerned.



## *Your officiant...*

...is the Rev. Tom Nalesnik, an ordained pastor in the United Church of Christ. He has performed weddings that range from traditional to multi-faith and interdenominational, in settings that have been indoors, outdoors, under tents, and even in a vineyard!



## *An invitation to create a community. . .*

Marriage takes place in a special setting chosen by the bride and groom and their families, and is nurtured by a unique, caring community they've assembled for this occasion. A distinctive location should not be chosen simply because it is pretty or convenient, but because you both believe that it represents a meaningful place where you would feel mutually inspired in this beautiful beginning of your faith journey together.

Knowing that the beliefs you bring to this occasion, the theme of the service, and even the friends and families who make up this community will be part of the whole picture for you, will help you and your partner to fully appreciate and share in all the blessings that a wedding makes possible in this place you've chosen together.



# *Your Wedding*



*a very special day!*

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*Rev. Tom Nalesnik, officiant*

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**W**eddings are occasions steeped in traditions that can govern everything from flowers to music to location. Your decisions about the ceremony should reflect your feelings and beliefs, with choices that come from an understanding that the love you have in each other is a reflection and expression of a powerful spirit that binds the entire universe together.

## Getting to know you

As part of your wedding, you will need to meet with the officiant at least three times, for pre-marital conversations.

This is important for several reasons. First, it will give you an opportunity to get to know one another better, and this will make for a much better wedding ceremony. Secondly, it will enable you to discuss issues that will play a central role in your marriage — common values, hopes and dreams, children, religious background and spiritual beliefs. Thirdly, it will enable you to talk about marriage in general and your wedding service in particular.

And finally, it helps to establish a relationship that may be beneficial to your marriage in the months and years ahead — learning that you have personal resources deep in yourselves that you can draw upon, after the honeymoon is over and life returns to normal.

## The process

### Session 1 - Getting Acquainted

This meeting will focus on gathering some information that the officiant will need, discussing some basic questions and issues (expectations, mutual goals for the relationship, questions of faith, etc.), and going over a few practical matters like location or building rules, elements of the wedding service, etc.

### Session 2 - Your Life Journey

In this meeting, we will talk about how your own personal life stories intersect with your faith journey, and how this has an effect on your relationship together. We'll also discuss how you hope to continue growing in your faith, strengthening your spiritual selves, and nurturing the love which originally brought you together.

### Session 3 - Final Concerns & Details

As the wedding date fast approaches, we'll sit down and go over those last-minute questions, concerns, worries, and fears (including following up on any issues raised in the earlier sessions).



You'll also have a chance to give the text of the wedding service one last look, and check in regarding the various details of the ceremony that still need to be finalized.

Note: this session does *not* take the place of the rehearsal.

### The Rehearsal

This is customarily scheduled the day before (or, sometimes two days prior to) the actual wedding date. All members of the wedding party are expected to be present for the rehearsal, which usually lasts about an hour.

Accompanists, soloists, or other musicians involved in the wedding may also find it helpful to attend. Please inform them of the date and time of rehearsal.

