

Renting our Facilities

Those wishing to use our facilities are encouraged to make reservations in a timely manner to best ensure availability on your preferred date(s). Rental of First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Chelmsford is initiated by application and must be approved by the Building and Events Coordinator and/or Standing Committee.

Priorities for Use

- 1: The primary use of First Parish Church is to serve the needs and interests of our mission and membership. These include religious and spiritual ceremonies such as worship services, member weddings, child dedications, funerals, memorial services as well as events in support of faith formation and spiritual development.
- 2: The church building also serves for our own outreach, committee and church-sponsored events, as well as our own on-going administrative needs including the preservation and maintenance of our historic property.
- 3: Next, we give priority to religious services for non-members, including weddings, funerals and memorial services (fees apply), and occasional one-time uses sponsored by a member that are unrelated to church activities.
- 4: Next, space and facilities are also available for not-for-profit organizations that have principles compatible with our own Unitarian Universalist principles (fees may apply).
- 5: Finally, organizations and groups with goals and principles that are not counter to our own. For-profit business owners and companies may also be permitted to use our facilities (fees apply). Users of our facilities whose events are not affiliated with First Parish Church of Chelmsford may not claim or imply in any form in any medium that they are affiliated with or endorsed by the Church. In some cases users may be required to state explicitly and publicly that no such relationship exists.

Spaces Available

Sanctuary

Our second floor Sanctuary is available for weddings, child dedications, funerals, memorial services, concerts, and other ceremonies. Seating capacity is 200. Our building is fully accessible and an elevator is available to provide access to the Sanctuary if needed.

Children and Youth Chapel

Our Children and Youth Chapel is a large open space on the first floor of the building. The Children and Youth Chapel is available for various types of events, but is first and foremost a space for the young people of our congregation. As such, the decorations in the Chapel may only be moved with prior approval of the Building and Events Coordinator and must be returned to their prior state upon leaving. Approximately 40 chairs are available for use in the Chapel, with more benches along the walls. Other chairs can be brought in from the Vestry if another event is not using them. The Children and Youth Chapel has a full seating capacity of 90.

Vestry

This is a large open room on the first floor, beneath the Sanctuary. It is suitable for gatherings of up to 100 people. Approximately 80 chairs and 14 tables are available for use in an adjoining storage closet.

Kitchen

This is a full sized, Board of Health certified full service kitchen adjoining the Vestry. Facilities include a gas range, two small standard ovens, two commercial-grade convection ovens, a commercial-grade dishwasher, double-sink, countertop space, large coffee makers, pots and pans, cooking utensils, serving dishes and flatware.

Parlor

This is small, welcoming second floor meeting room suitable for up to 12 people. The Parlor (and our entire building) can be accessed by elevator and ramps if needed.

Bathrooms

Bathrooms are occasionally available for rental use to groups hosting events on the town common, outside of the church. Our facilities are fully wheelchair accessible. This use is subject to approval, and fees apply.

Reservations and Payment Procedure

Use of the Church facilities is by permission only, coordinated by the Building and Events Coordinator (BEC) in conjunction with the staff and Building Management Sub-Committee. Decisions are made by the BEC in conjunction with the Building Management Sub-Committee, which is a sub-committee to the Standing Committee (the church governing body). Decisions may be subject to review by the full Standing Committee. The process of obtaining approval may take several days or even weeks depending upon the intended use, number of people, affiliation of the individual or group making the request, and other factors. Spaces are often in high demand, and it is necessary to reserve them as far ahead of the intended use as possible.

Both Church members and outside groups are required to submit a Building Use Request form in order to reserve time and space for their use/event, even if there are no rental fees due or if rental fees are waived. Submitting the form does not mean you have reserved the space; no spaces are reserved until approval has been granted and the BEC signs off on the event. You will receive confirmation by phone or email.

Any special setup, including the placement of tables and chairs, is the responsibility of the applicant. The church requires that all individuals and groups who use church space will return those spaces to their original condition upon leaving. The church expects also that all individuals and groups will treat all the spaces with respect and care and will supervise children participating in their events, especially in the sanctuary and the parlor.

Process

The first step is to contact the BEC (Building and Events Coordinator) to determine if your requested date and space is available. The BEC can be reached via email at sexton@uuchelmsford.org, or by phone at (978) 256-5133. You will be provided with a

Building Use Request form to fill out and return by a specified deadline. If the form is not returned, your space and date request will not be placed on the calendar.

The Building Use Request form will list the rental fee, and requirements for a security deposit and/or the presence of a First Parish representative. If a security deposit is required, the security deposit must accompany the Building Use Request form. The security deposit will be returned to the renter within 14 days of the event, as long as there is no damage done to the building/grounds and the space is appropriately cleaned after use.

All fees and security deposits (if applicable) must be paid in advance for a single use. Security deposits are due with the Building Use Request form, and rental fees are due 14 days prior to the event. Note that the payment schedule for weddings is different; please refer to the Weddings section for information on wedding fee payment deadlines.

For continuing use, arrangements may be made with the BEC for monthly payments.

Rental Fee Waivers

Members of the Church may use church space and facilities for many purposes without charge. Fees and deposits may be required of members in some cases, however. For example, in the case of weddings, memorial services and other major events, BEC (Building and Events Coordinator) and Music Director fees still apply even though the facility rental fee is waived. Fees would also be required to a member holding an event for profit. The BEC can provide details of when fees are or are not required and can coordinate special requests with the Standing Committee.

Occasionally, the Church will waive the customary rental fee for not-for-profit organizations that have principles compatible with our own Unitarian Universalist principles. A fee waiver or fee reduction request is made by the not-for-profit group to the Building Management Subcommittee of the Standing Committee through the BEC. Fee waiver requests are taken up by the Standing Committee at their monthly meeting, usually held on the second Tuesday of the month. Please keep this schedule in mind when making your request.

Payment

All payments must be by check, payable to First Parish UU Church. Mail payment to: First Parish Church, Attn: Administrator, 2 Westford Street, Chelmsford, MA 01824.

Keys

The BEC will either make arrangements to have the building open or will provide a key (a refundable deposit of \$10 may be required to borrow a key).

Cancellation Policy

In the event of cancellation of any reservation including a wedding, advance payments will be dealt with as follows:

- More than 60 days before the date of the use, or due to the Church's need for the space, all rental and security deposit payments will be refunded in full;
- less than 60 days and up to 14 days prior to the event, 100% of the rental payment, 100% of the BEC fee payment and 0% of the security deposit payment will be refunded;
- less than 14 days prior to the event, no payments will be refunded.

General Procedures and Rules

These rules apply to all individuals and groups using Church buildings. It is the responsibility of the person signing the Building Use Request form to make certain that these rules are followed. Where "prior approval" is mentioned in the procedures and rules, it means written approval of the Standing Committee. The BEC arranges such approvals and has information about special conditions such as (but not limited to) extended hours, insurance policies, the presence of a church representative, and consuming alcoholic beverages on church property.

Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages are permitted on church property only with prior approval of the Standing Committee. Along with SC approval a signed Liability Waiver must be returned to the Building and Events Coordinator at least 14 days before the event. It is the responsibility of the person signing the Building Use Request form (and Liability Waiver) to ensure that alcohol is only served to those of legal age, and that all alcohol is immediately removed from Church property at the end of the event, including empty alcohol containers. Contact the BEC for more information.

Before You Leave...

Before you leave please clean up, turn off all lights and lock up behind yourself.

Clean-up

All furniture and other property must be cleaned and returned to original locations, and trash, debris, and decorations must be removed and bagged for disposal. If the Kitchen is used, rules posted in the kitchen must be followed. Failure to clean up may result in additional fees and/or forfeiture of your security deposit. Please respect our building and return it to the condition in which you found it.

Damage

In the event of any damage to any Church property, you must notify the BEC immediately. You can call the Church Office at (978) 256-5133 and leave a message on the answering machine or you can email the BEC at sexton@uuchelmsford.org. Cost of repairs will be the personal responsibility of the individual who signed the Building Use Request form. This responsibility will be joint and several with any organization or business on whose behalf the form is being signed.

Decorating

Please use only painters' tape on the walls of our building to hang any decorations. If other tools are needed for your decorations you must clear this with the BEC prior to using them.

Food and Beverages

No food or beverages are allowed in the Sanctuary at any time. No alcoholic beverages are permitted without prior approval (see Alcohol).

All food must be appropriately labeled for allergens, and if nuts or nut butters are present they must be labeled and surfaces appropriately cleaned after use.

Insurance

Some uses will require an insurance policy be obtained by the user. These uses include but are not limited to businesses, for-profit rentals by individuals, and some long term rentals.

Non-Church Publications

The pamphlet racks, bulletin boards and tables throughout the buildings are for Church materials only. Please do not leave any pamphlets, brochures or fliers anywhere in the Church. The Church maintains a community bulletin board in the entryway for posting non-church-related materials. If you have material that you would like posted on the community bulletin board, you must submit it to the Office Administrator for approval and posting. Under no circumstance should you post your material yourself.

Out of Bounds

Renters may only use the room(s)/space(s) they have reserved; the remainder of the buildings and grounds are out of bounds. All Church property must remain on the premises and may not be taken outdoors without prior approval.

Parking

Parking is available in our lot, in marked spaces around the town common (across the street) or in several surrounding parking lots. Parking is NOT allowed in the following lots: the Gingerale Plaza lot, the lot behind the yellow house, the Brickhouse Pizza lot or the Center for the Arts lot (when there is sign for an event that day). If you anticipate your event needing more parking than the Church lot and spots around the Town Common can provide, contact the BEC for recommendations on the best places to find additional parking.

Pets and other Animals

Service Animals are permitted on church property. Due to safety and allergy concerns, pets are not allowed without prior consent.

References

Individuals and groups unknown to the Church may be required to provide references.

Repeat and Long Term Rentals

Fees for repeat and longer term rentals are determined by different factors than a single-use rental. Factors into this decision include the organization's status and purpose, and fair practice/market value.

Representative of the Church Present

If the group or individual requesting use of church space is unknown to the church, the presence of a church representative during the event may be required. The Building and Events Coordinator will notify you of this requirement at the time the Building Use request is initiated. The Church may have a representative on the premises at any time during any use. Fees may apply.

Respect

All who use the Church buildings and grounds are expected to conduct themselves and their activity in an orderly manner, respecting the heritage of the place, its mission as a Church, and its policy of nondiscrimination in membership, staff, and guests. The Church reserves the right to terminate any activity and/or summon public safety officials at any time if in the

opinion of a Church representative there are sufficiently serious violations of policies, rules, safety, and/or manners to warrant corrective action.

Smoking

Smoking is only permitted in the designated area outside of the church. If it is needed, the area is outside of the Kitchen/Vestry door.

Storage

Storage is at a premium at First Parish and is not available for non-Church items without prior approval.

Time-Limits

All functions must start after 7:00am and conclude by 11:00pm unless prior approval is obtained.

Weddings

First Parish Church of Chelmsford is a popular setting for weddings, and they require special planning and preparation. Contact the Building and Events Coordinator for available dates and updated details of policies, procedures, and fees.

Agreement to the Church's Policies, Procedures and Rules

It is understood that wedding/reception applicants agree to the general use and special wedding procedures, fees, terms, conditions and rules stated here and all other written documents of the Church including the Wedding Service Request Form. Both partners in the marriage must sign the Wedding Service Request Form acknowledging this understanding.

Wedding Reservation and Deposit

Contact the Building and Events Coordinator to determine if your wedding date is available on the Church calendar. If it is, the BEC will provide you with a Wedding Service Request form. The form must be returned before the reservation will be added to our calendar. A signed Wedding Service Request form and security deposit are required in order to confirm a wedding reservation. See the Wedding Service Request form for the current security deposit fee. (Security deposits cannot be deducted from the facilities fee. Security deposits will be returned no later than 14 days following your wedding; any incurred costs for repairs and/or clean-up will be deducted from the remittance.)

Fees

There are facilities rental fees and personnel fees associated with all weddings. Facilities fees are waived for church members and active friends, as determined by the Minister. For current facilities fees, see the Wedding Service Request form. Personnel fees include fees for the Minister, Music Director and BEC. It is customary for the Minister to waive his/her fee for members and active friends. The Music Director's and BEC's fees are not waived. For current personnel fees, see the Wedding Service Request form. Facility and personnel fees include up to 90 minutes rehearsal time and up to 3 hours for gathering before the wedding, the ceremony, and after-ceremony guest-greeting and picture-taking.

The facilities fee and the BEC's fee must be paid 60 days prior to your wedding date. The Minister's and Music Director's fees are payable by check or cash DIRECTLY TO THE INDIVIDUALS AT THE WEDDING REHEARSAL before the rehearsal begins.

Personnel Substitution

The Minister and Music Director retain the right of first refusal for ALL events held at First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Chelmsford. Occasionally substitutions may be made under very specific circumstances, but this is a Unitarian Universalist congregation and we expect weddings to be officiated in the spirit of this tradition. *All substitutions must be approved by the FPUUC Minister and/or Music Director. Note that the Minister and Music Director are entitled to their customary fee even if you choose to use a third party.*

Meeting with the Minister

All couples must meet with the minister two to three months before their wedding takes place. Make appointments directly with the Minister.

Marriage License

A valid marriage license issued by the Clerk of a town or city in Massachusetts must be given to the Minister at the wedding rehearsal.

Church Representative

The Building and Events Coordinator is required to be present at all weddings and wedding receptions.

Cancellation Policy

In the event of cancellation of any reservation including a wedding, advance payments will be dealt with as follows:

- More than 60 days before the date of the use, or due to the Church's need for the space, all rental and security deposit payments will be refunded in full;
- less than 60 days and up to 14 days prior to the event, 100% of the rental payment, 100% of the BEC fee payment and 0% of the security deposit payment will be refunded;
- less than 14 days prior to the event, no payments will be refunded.

Clean-Up

All decorations and flowers must be removed from the Church after the ceremony.

Decorations

No decorations may be attached to the walls of the Sanctuary or placed on the piano and/or organ.

Flower Petals & Rice

Flower petals are permitted in the aisles as part of the wedding ceremony. Rice may not be thrown as part of the wedding ceremony. Birdseed is allowed outside only, on the pavement and grass in front of the Church.

Music

If using musicians other than the FPUUC Music Director, these participants must be approved by the Music Director. The use of pre-recorded music (CDs, tapes, etc.) is permitted only with prior approval.

Photos

Photography is welcomed during ceremonies in our Sanctuary. The Minister requests that the photographers show respect for the ceremony and participants, as well as our space.

Time

Facility and personnel fees include up to 90 minutes rehearsal time and up to 3 hours for gathering before the wedding, the ceremony and after-ceremony guest-greeting and picture-taking. An overtime charge will be assessed if more time is needed/taken.