



## A Guide for Weddings

@ Midway Hills Christian Church

*Disciples of Christ*

11001 Midway Road ♥ Dallas, Texas 75229

214.352.4841

[MidwayHills.org](http://MidwayHills.org)

# MIDWAY HILLS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

be inclusive do justice embrace diversity



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# CORE MHCC TENETS



Midway Hills Christian Church is a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) seeking wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us. ([www.disciples.org](http://www.disciples.org))

We are a progressive faith community, building bridges to transform the future by striving to be inclusive, do justice and honor diversity. Grounded in worship, Bible study, and prayer, we seek to be instruments of God's healing through efforts to eliminate poverty, injustice, hunger, and social ills that afflict our community locally and globally.

We are an Open and Affirming congregation celebrating diversity, seeking to transform our world as we build bridges across race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, religions, and barriers that divide God's people.

We are a Shalom Community, unified in our love for Jesus Christ and his teachings. We understand biblical shalom as a call to act for justice and to respect God's creation. We cherish the gift of life and support each other in our spiritual journey.

We have been involved in many projects over the years, and we invite you to learn by example about how you can help your community together with Midway Hills Christian Church.

Midway Hills Christian Church sets the foundation for strong communities in Dallas. We believe that each of us is called to a spiritual journey. How we walk that journey is left up to us and God. We understand that our journeys will be filled with joys, successes, questions and fears. As a faith community in North Dallas, we want you to know that you are welcomed just as you are. The picture of our church family has many colors. We are white, black, brown, young, middle age, mature, straight, gay, questioning, progressive, conservative, and open to you. We strive to be a picture of God's inclusive love for all.

# GUIDE FOR WEDDINGS AT MIDWAY HILLS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Welcome! Midway Hills Christian Church (MHCC), Dallas, Texas, provides a worship service and setting for couples seeking a Christian ceremony solemnizing their lifelong commitment to each other.

This congregation believes that these ceremonies are a service of worship before God and that these relationships are primarily a spiritual one and should be entered into seriously. The wedding vows you will be making are made in the presence of God. We believe God is Love and that it pleases God when two adults, after careful consideration and guided counseling, choose to commit themselves to a lifelong relationship. This Guidebook for Christian Weddings applies to ceremonies solemnizing such relationships, regardless of the sexual orientation or gender identity of those seeking God's blessing.

You have chosen to have your wedding in the church by a Christian minister because you also believe that your lifetime relationship is primarily a spiritual one. Members of this congregation and non-members are welcome to be married in this church. A *member wedding* is one in which one of the couple, or a parent of either, is a member of the church.

The ministers and staff will assist you in every way possible to make your wedding happy and memorable. We wish your service to be characterized by dignity, reverence, joy, and the Spirit of Christ.

We have prepared this booklet to guide you, and we ask you to read it carefully. If you have questions, please call the church office Monday through Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at 214.352.4841 or [davidh@midwayhills.org](mailto:davidh@midwayhills.org).

The Ministers, Staff, and Members of  
Midway Hills Christian Church

# RESERVATIONS

Read this booklet and inquire about an available date with the Administrative Assistant. Reservations for **non-members** must be accompanied by a \$500.00 deposit that will be refunded after the wedding if all equipment belonging to the church and the church facilities are in good order and all fees have been paid. A \$200.00 deposit will be required for members and will be refunded under the same circumstances. The deposit will be refunded in full if the wedding is canceled thirty days prior to the scheduled date of the wedding. One-half of the deposit will be refunded for cancellations less than 30 days prior to the scheduled date. Payment in full is required to be received by the church office 48 hours before the event.

Your wedding and rehearsal date and time and reservation for the reception facility must be on the church calendar. Reservations are made on a first come, first served basis. It is important that you arrange well in advance for use of the sanctuary and Community Hall. Fees are to be paid in full at least two weeks prior to the wedding. A fee schedule is included in this booklet.

The church facilities are available:

Wedding - 4 hours prior to the time of the service and 3 hours after the time of the service. For example: 9AM building open, 1PM wedding ceremony, 4PM clean-up complete. Additional time is billed as stated in the fee schedule.

Reception – 4 hours prior to the time of the service and 6 hours after the time of the service. For example: 9AM building open, 1PM wedding ceremony, 2PM reception, 7PM clean-up complete. Additional time is billed as stated in the fee schedule.

The Kitchen, Community Hall and rooms in the Education Wing are not available for receptions Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday after 5PM. A Saturday afternoon or evening wedding can be scheduled using the Gathering Space and

the Entrance Hall for a small (100 guests) stand up reception.

## **THE MINISTER**

**Ministers of a church expect to perform all weddings in the church they serve.** When a guest minister is included: contact a minister of Midway Hills Christian Church; a minister of Midway Hills Christian Church extends the invitation to a visiting minister; and, the couple is to request that the visiting clergy contact the senior minister for conversation at least two weeks prior to the wedding.

The Midway Hills Christian Church minister you ask to perform your ceremony will require at least two conferences before the rehearsal. If the couple desires pre-marital counseling, four additional conferences may be arranged to deal with topics including the deeper meaning of Christian marriage, human relationships, and plans for the service.

The minister will inform you of choices available to you in the service. However, you will find the minister receptive to suggestions and ready to discuss your ideas within certain limits. The minister must have a finalized order of the ceremony at least 24 hours prior to the rehearsal.

If you have a rehearsal dinner and wish to include the minister, be sure the minister is invited. Otherwise, the minister will not plan to attend. It is also appropriate to mail a wedding invitation to the minister.

### ***The Marriage License***

If the marriage is recognized by the State of Texas, a marriage license is to be purchased from the county clerk and is valid after 3 days and up to 90 days. Persons securing a marriage license are required to have proper identification and be at least eighteen years of age. A parent must be present to purchase a marriage license for persons under eighteen years of age. A license to marry is issued by the clerk of a given county; however, the license is valid in any Texas county. A marriage license can be issued to a

divorced person after thirty days following signing the divorce judgment.

Cash is generally required to purchase a marriage license.

The couple must deliver the marriage license to the minister at the rehearsal. The minister will complete and sign the license and return it to the county clerk, as required by law. The county clerk will record it and return it to the couple.

## **MUSIC**

Music for the service should be appropriate for Christian worship. This congregation utilizes a wide variety of musical styles and instruments for its own worship life and realizes that couples may desire such for their ceremony. The minister conducting the ceremony, in consultation with music staff, will assist in determining the suitability of music to be used in the ceremony. The Director of Music Ministries can suggest a variety of music which will accentuate both the joy and reverence of the service.

It is the couple's responsibility to contact the Director of Music Ministries and to arrange for other musicians if desired. The church organist/pianist is preferred to play for weddings at the church. If special music is requested that is not in the organist's library, it will be the responsibility of the couple to furnish the organist with a published edition at least one month prior to the ceremony. Congregational hymnals can be used for weddings.

The couple may select a soloist or the Director of Music Ministries may recommend a qualified singer. The soloist must contact the organist for a rehearsal time. There will not be time at the wedding rehearsal for the soloist and accompanist to rehearse.

It is acceptable for the couple to choose, in addition to the organ/piano, other musical instruments to accompany the service. The selection and cost is the responsibility of the couple.

If recorded music is to be used during the ceremony, special arrangements will need to be made with church staff at least two weeks prior to the ceremony.

## **WEDDING COORDINATOR**

The Wedding Coordinator is the MHCC liaison to the couple and those organizing the event on the couple's behalf. A Wedding Coordinator will be assigned to each wedding. The MHCC Wedding Coordinator will perform the following duties:

Coordinate and allow access to the building.

Provide up to 2 hours consultation prior to the service. Additional time will be billed as stated in the fee schedule.

Attend the wedding rehearsal.

Serve as a resource regarding use of space and resources prior to and during the event.

The bride and groom must confirm with the Wedding Coordinator an order of service for the wedding no less than 2 weeks prior to the wedding.

Will be present at the facility walk-through 2 weeks prior to the event.

Will be on-site 4 hours prior to the event and minimum of 1 hour after the event, or until the wedding party has completed clean-up. For example: 9AM building open, 1PM wedding ceremony, 4PM clean-up complete. A reception adds 3 hours to the schedule. Additional time will be billed as stated in the fee schedule.

Ensure the wedding party is in place pre-ceremony.

Facilitate transition from the ceremony to the reception area.

Conduct a final walk-through after the event to ensure that the building is left clean and in good order. Any damages or issues will be documented.

## ***Wedding Consultant***

Sometimes a Wedding Consultant is employed by the couple to assist in planning. The consultant may assist in the plans for the wedding, reception, and the rehearsal dinner. At no time is the consultant expected to give advice about the religious service. The consultant may assist the wedding party as participants enter the church according to the directions of the minister.

The Wedding Consultant:

- Must contact the MHCC Wedding Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the event, and preferable before.
- Is expected to work with and coordinate activities with the MHCC Wedding Coordinator.
- Must be present at the facility walk through prior to the event.
- Is expected to accompany the MHCC Wedding Coordinator in a post-event walk through of the facility.

## **REHEARSALS**

Participants in weddings may use the sanctuary for rehearsals. The minister will conduct the religious portion of the rehearsal as well as the actual service.

The rehearsal should begin promptly. The rehearsal is under the direction of the minister and should last no more than 45 minutes.

If the couple desires that their marriage be recorded with the State of Texas, the marriage license must be given to the minister at the rehearsal. The minister is required by law to mail the marriage certificate to the courthouse.

# RECEPTIONS

If the reception is to be at the church, reservations for the facilities should be made at the time the sanctuary is reserved. As stated earlier, the Kitchen, Community Hall and rooms in the Education Wing are not available Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday after 5PM. A reception can be held on those evenings in the Gathering Space and Entrance Hall adjacent to the Sanctuary.

If a caterer is used for the reception, the caterer must provide all necessary equipment. All equipment must be removed from the church immediately following the reception. Neither the MHCC Wedding Coordinator, Sexton, nor minister is expected to clean the kitchen or any equipment provided by a caterer. Please have the caterer contact the MHCC Wedding Coordinator at least 2 weeks prior to the wedding to make sure they understand the available facilities. The florist and caterer should contact the MHCC Wedding Coordinator whenever access is required.

As stated earlier, at the end of the event the Wedding Coordinator, preferably with a member of the wedding party or the Wedding Consultant, will inspect the building to ensure it is clean, for any damage, and that any furniture that may have been moved is returned to its proper place. (A document with the MHCC Sanctuary seating set up is available in the office.)

Confetti, rice, and/or bird seed are not to be distributed or thrown inside or outside of the buildings. If bubbles are used, containers are to be disposed of properly.

## ***Alcohol Policy***

Wine, champagne, and beer may be served and consumed within the main MHCC building and the Terrace, but not in the Sanctuary.

MHCC requires that the caterer or you must have liquor liability insurance. If you do not have a caterer or the caterer does not have this type of liability insurance, then you are required to have a General Liability policy (event

policy) that includes Host Liquor Liability. The liability insurance must include a waiver of subrogation clause that waives any right to sue Midway Hills Christian Church for any actions by you or your guests. MHCC must be named as an additional insured on the policy. Proof of insurance or a Certificate of Insurance must be given to the MHCC Wedding Coordinator before any alcoholic beverages are brought onto the premises.

## ***Decorations***

No alterations or additions, other than flowers, candles, or a prie-dieu (kneeler) are to be made in the chancel area of the sanctuary.

Seating may not be re-arranged for the service. The communion table and other furnishings must not be removed from their proper place in the sanctuary.

Seasonal floral decor [Poinsettias at Advent and Christmas or Lilies at Easter] and other liturgical appointments will pre-empt wedding decorations.

Use NO decorations that require tacks or tape on furniture or walls.

Use ONLY drip-less candles. The carpet and furniture must be protected with adequate covering.

All decorations and flowers must be removed from the premises the day of the wedding. Note: If a wedding is conducted on Saturday, and with prior arrangements, the family may choose to leave a floral arrangement for Sunday. Please remember that neither the Sexton nor minister is expected to do the clean-up work for the caterer, florist, or others providing services for the event. MHCC staff is here to conduct the service, to take care of air conditioning or heating, to prepare the building for the next activity and to secure the facility.

The MHCC sound/lighting technician is responsible for controlling lights and sound during the rehearsal and ceremony.

The person making the reservation for a wedding will be responsible for damage to walls, furniture, floors, and carpet in any part of the building and grounds used for the wedding or reception.

Fresh flower petals are not to be scattered in the aisles because the oil will damage carpet.

### ***Photography***

The couple, prior to the wedding, should provide the photographer with a list of desired pictures. Posed pictures are best and are most conveniently taken immediately after the service is over, as soon as the guests have cleared the sanctuary.

Flash photography may not be used during the service. Photographers will not be allowed beyond the last row of seats or at the Communion Table during the ceremony. Settings may be restaged after the wedding. The photographer may take pictures before and after the service in any part of the building.

The service may be videotaped from the balcony or from the rear of the sanctuary. The video camera must be unobtrusive so as not to distract from the service. All photographers must be informed of these rules.

### ***Child Care***

Child care is not provided for wedding rehearsals, wedding ceremonies, or wedding receptions. Due to child care policies and liability issues, MHCC facilities are not available for use by outside parties to provide child care during wedding rehearsals, ceremonies, or receptions.

# FACILITIES

A diagram of the MHCC facilities is included at the end of this document.

MHCC has 190 seats available in the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is usually set up to seat approximately 140, but has space for more with chairs brought in from Community Hall with seating for 300 being the maximum allowed by the City of Dallas Certificate of Occupancy.

A wedding reception at the church may be in the:

Community Hall which will accommodate 150;

Weather permitting opening the Community Hall onto the Terrace allows for an additional 100 attendees. In the event of bad weather the reception can be expanded into the Central Hall, Entrance Hall, and the Gathering Space, or

Gathering Space and Entrance Hall adjacent to the Sanctuary which will accommodate 100 for a stand up reception.

The church will not be responsible for garments, food items, flowers, or other decorations left at the church.

Nothing should be placed in or removed from the chancel area of the sanctuary to obscure or detract from the communion table, baptistery, or other liturgical appointments.

Confetti, rice, and/or bird seed are not to be distributed or thrown inside or outside of the buildings. If bubbles are used, containers are to be disposed of properly. Glitter should not be used on decorations or floral arrangements.

Adjustment of temperature, lighting, sound, or church musical instruments will be made by MHCC staff only.

The Sexton is required to be at the facility a minimum of one hour after the event. Additional time will be billed as stated in the fee schedule.

## ***Pre-Event Walk Through***

Two weeks prior to the event the MHCC Wedding Coordinator will conduct a facility walk through for the Wedding Consultant, those responsible for the event, photographer, caterer, florist, or others providing services for the event. This is an opportunity for everyone involved in planning the event to further familiarize themselves with the facility, finalize decoration details, and ask questions.

Every effort will be made to accommodate requests. Where an expense will be incurred the MHCC Wedding Coordinator will consult with the wedding party as that expense will be billed to the wedding party.

## ***Guest Parking***

There are 150 marked parking spaces in the MHCC parking lot. If space for more vehicles is required please notify the MHCC Wedding Coordinator who will contact The da Vinci School to make arrangements to use their parking lot.

If more than 100 vehicles are expected, our experience has shown that two or three people are required to direct traffic. They would be located: at the entrance, at the rear of the main parking area, and at the turn by the Mi Redentor building. It is also suggested that the central hall of the Education Building be opened to make it easier for guests to get to the main building.

If the parking lot at The da Vinci School is to be used an additional person should be located there to help direct traffic.

## ***Smoking Policy***

MHCC is a smoke free facility. Smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes, is not permitted in the buildings.

Smoking is permitted on the Terrace 25 feet away from the rear exit of the Community Hall. Smokers are to use the receptacles provided for disposal of their cigarette butts, packages, etc. A fee of \$75 will be assessed if cigarette butts are found in the Terrace or on the MHCC grounds.

## ***The Terrace***

The Terrace is the open space between the Community Hall and the Education Building. It is the only place on the MHCC grounds where smoking is permitted.

Weather permitting it can also be used as a setting for photographing the wedding party. Opening the Community Hall onto the Terrace allows for an additional 100 attendees. The wedding party is expected to restore the Terrace to its original condition at the end of the event.

The plants, herbs, and flowers are the work of members of the Dallas County Master Gardeners Association (DCMGA). [www.DallasCountyMasterGardeners.org](http://www.DallasCountyMasterGardeners.org). A small sign identifies each plant. The fenced area behind the Terrace is used by the DCMGA as a nursery, work/storage, green house, and staging space for planting. Guests are not to enter this area.

The plants, herbs, and flowers are there for all to enjoy. Please inform your guests that picking the flowers or disturbing the plantings is strictly prohibited.

## ***Recycling***

MHCC participates in the Dallas Single Stream recycling program. Blue trash bins for recyclable materials are placed throughout the building. A description of recyclable items is placed on or near each bin. MHCC requests that the caterer and others providing services for the event use the recycling bins and at the end of the event place all recyclable material in the blue dumpster at the rear of the building.

# TIMELINE

Following is the suggested timeline for the event.

What	When	Notes
Reserve date / space with church office	ASAP	Deposit due
MHCC Wedding Coordinator meets with event planners	ASAP	
Visiting minister contacts the MHCC Sr. Minister	at least 2 weeks prior to the event	
Couple provides the MHCC Wedding Coordinator with an order of service for the wedding	at least 2 weeks prior to the event	
Couple meets with the MHCC minister	at least 2 weeks prior to the event	
Walk through with MHCC Wedding Coordinator	2 weeks prior to the event	
Guest minister meets with MHCC senior minister	2 weeks prior to the event	
Payment in full received by the church office	48 hours prior to the ceremony	
Wedding rehearsal	Scheduled with the minister	
MHCC Coordinator arrives / building available for decorating / caterers / other service providers	4 hours prior to the ceremony	
Sexton arrives	1 hour prior to the ceremony	
Wedding Ceremony		
Reception	After ceremony	
Post-event walk through	After wedding party has completed clean up	
Sexton and MHCC Wedding Coordinator leave / lock up		
Deposit refund	2 business days after the event	less any charges

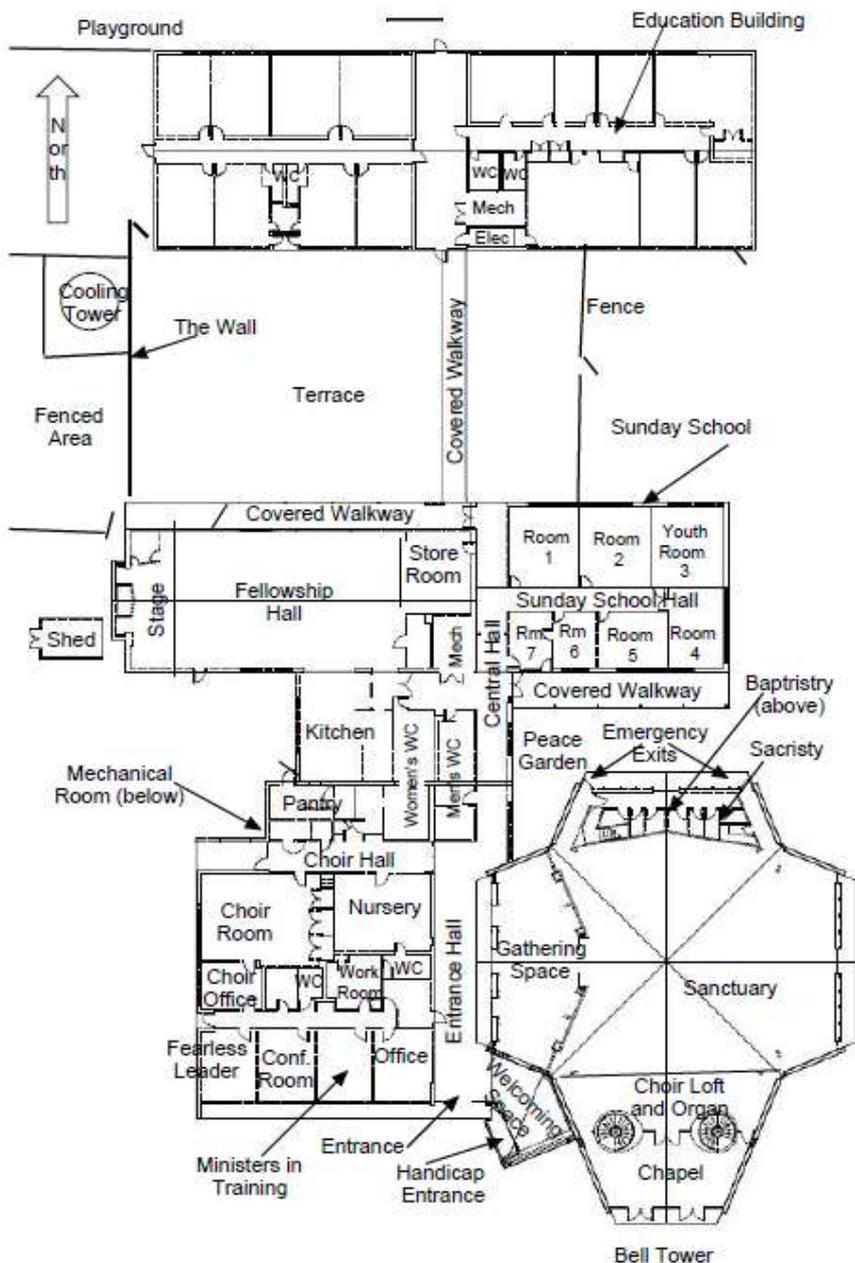
# FEES

Payment of the following fees is required prior to the service.

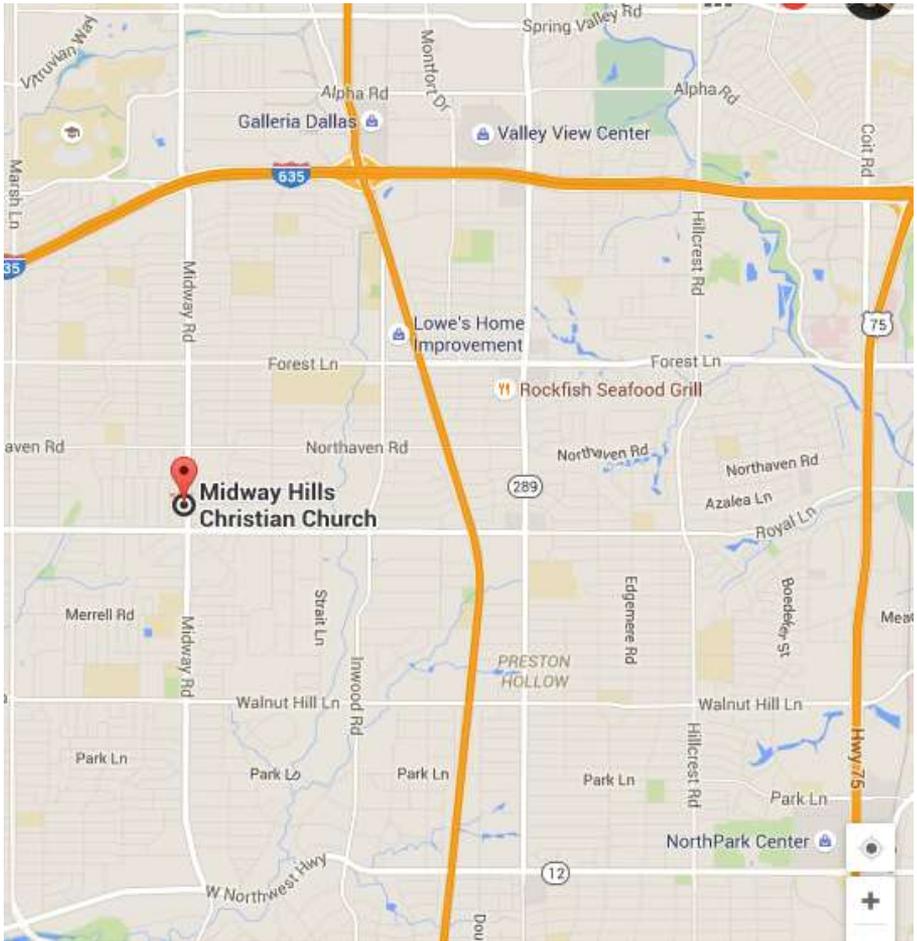
	<b>Member</b>	<b>Non-Member</b>
Refundable Deposit **	\$ 200	\$ 500
<b>Building Use Fee</b>		
Ceremony and Rehearsal		\$ 750
Community Hall (3 hrs)	\$ 500 at the couple's discretion	\$ 750
Gathering Space and Entrance Hall (3 hrs)	\$ 200 at the couple's discretion	\$ 300
Additional time	\$ 100/hr	\$ 100/hr
Organist/Pianist (if MHCC provides)	\$ 150	\$ 150
Soloist (if MHCC provides)	\$ 150	\$ 150
Sound/Lighting Technician	\$ 150	\$ 150
Minister	At the couple's discretion	\$ 300
<b>Wedding Coordinator (includes 2 hrs pre-event consultation and walk through)</b>		
Rehearsal and Ceremony (max 7 hrs)	\$ 250	\$ 250
Rehearsal, Ceremony, and Reception (max 10 hrs)	\$ 350	\$ 350
Additional Time	\$ 30/hr	\$ 30/hr
<b>Sexton Fee (includes 1 hr after the wedding party has completed clean-up)</b>		
Max 6 contiguous hrs	\$ 200	\$ 200
Additional Time	\$ 30/hr	\$ 30/hr
Ministry Assistance	At the couple's discretion	\$ 150

\*\* The deposit will be refunded by check the 2<sup>nd</sup> business day after the event minus any charges for damage or additional time for the Wedding Coordinator and/or Sexton.

# MHCC FACILITY DIAGRAM



# MAP AND LOCATION



## OUR HISTORY

In the 1950's the North Texas Area of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) began planning for a new church in Northwest Dallas. In 1954 the property at 11001 Midway Road was purchased (at the time, it was in the middle of a field).

Ray Bristol, our first minister, conducted our first worship service on March 6, 1955. The service was held in a local

elementary school. As he visited with prospective members, he handed them a brochure with this quote:

*"It is my hope that this church will seek to preach and practice a religion as devoted to justice as the prophets, as concerned for persons as Jesus, as responsible to truth as science, as beautiful as art, as intimate as home and as indispensable as the air we breathe."*

That spirit has guided this congregation over the years as members have remained focused on working for justice for all people. Here are a few examples of how our members have lived the message of Jesus:

Participating in Block Partnerships (1960's)

Being the first church in Dallas County to elect a female chair of the board, as well as two women elders

Sponsoring Refugees (Vietnam, Poland, Kenya, Uganda, Cuba, Laos)

Holding forums on sexuality, race relations, Islam, peace and war

Becoming an Open and Affirming Congregation

Sharing our worship space with other congregations

Being a founding congregation for Family Gateway and North Dallas Shared Ministries

Providing an AIDS care team

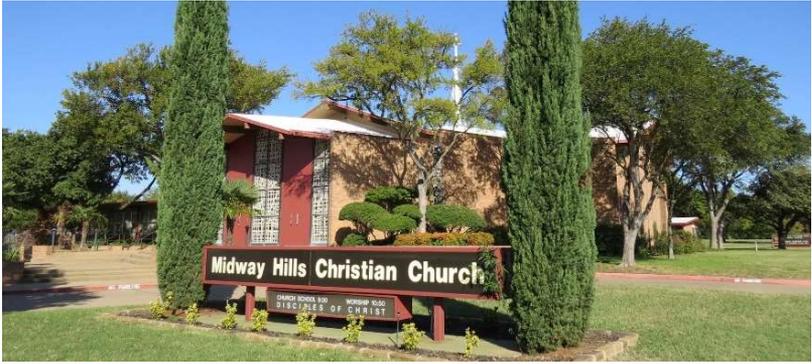
Serving meals at Austin Street Centre and delivering Meals on Wheels

Hosting a PFLAG group

Hosting the largest Primary Purpose group (AA and Al-Anon) in Dallas

Partnering with the Dallas County Master Gardeners Association to create the Raincatcher's Garden in Midway Hills.

# THE BUILDING



Today, members of Midway Hills Christian Church worship and commune with God and each other in a sanctuary with sunlight streaming through magnificent stained glass windows and hear the spoken word and share communion under a suspended cross. We share music, and sometimes focus on the baptistery and its cleansing waters of life.

Our buildings and campus were designed by the architect, William E. Benson, A.I.A.

# THE ORGAN



The organ was originally installed in 1967 by the McManis Organ Company of Kansas City, KS and built by Charles McManis.

# A NOTE FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

Hello,

If you're reading this, you're considering Midway Hills Christian Church as a venue, and, I hope, me as the officiant, for your wedding. Thank you for that.

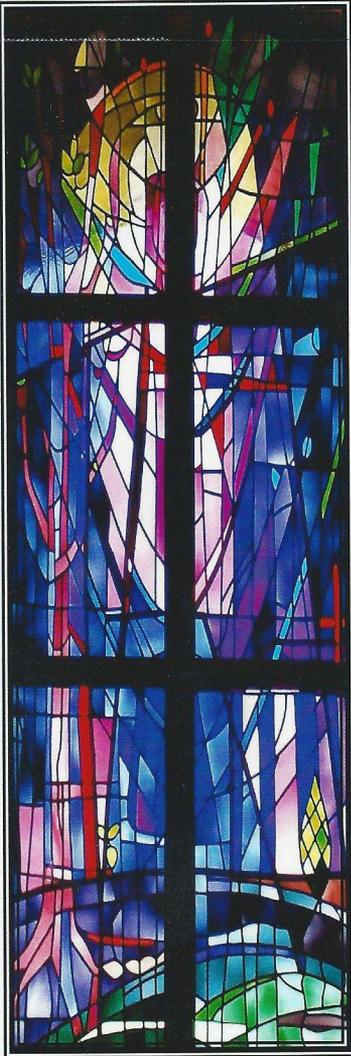
I asked for this space to let you know three things: first, we take weddings very seriously here. Weddings are a holy moment linking two people together in full, done in the presence of God, friends, families and a few people you felt obligated to invite. It is serious work, and it is less burdensome to do that work in community with people who take it as seriously as you.

But also, we understand weddings are about joy. Unbridled, ridiculous moments of grace and beauty happen in every single wedding. You will not be able to plan for every contingency, no matter how serious your preparations are. And there will be at least one moment where everyone will just have to lean in, embrace the beautiful chaos, and move forward. We're a community of experts on that, too.

And finally, weddings are finite; marriages are not. In planning and preparation, you and your partner will hit a point where it's time for the wedding to be done. Usually that happens about an hour before the service starts. And that's all right. But remembering, in joyful seriousness or serious joy, that the wedding is not the marriage, but the temporary precursor to it, is vital. We like to help folks remember that when the trees become much bigger than the forest.

Let us know if we may serve you in our wedding ministry. I look forward to hearing from you. And please don't order toothpaste blue ties or dresses for your wedding party—no one looks good in toothpaste blue. Trust me.

Rev. Arthur Stewart



Stained and etched glass  
designed by John Kebrle.