



PLYMOUTH CHURCH

FORT WAYNE + UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Building Usage Policy

Plymouth Congregational Church of Fort Wayne, UCC is a faith community called to reach out to others through sharing and service. It is our goal to ensure a space that is synonymous with peace, justice, and equity for all with emphasis on those of us who have been traditionally marginalized. We seek to be active members of our local and global community, and good stewards of the planet that God has given us.

Preference of building usage is given to Plymouth Members, Plymouth Boards, committees, and allied organizations (organizations that align with Plymouth's goals and values and have an established relationship with the church.) Outside organizations that would like to use our space that are not yet allied organizations may request usage of our building. This is handled on a case-by-case basis with approval of the Senior Pastor and the Office Manager. Plymouth reserves the right to reject building usage to any organization that we feel poses a danger to the community or world at large, presents misinformation, or does not align with the goals of our faith community. Our space is not available for private events of non-members unless there is a clear case of discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, race, religion, or other protected status. Waiving of this policy is under the discretion of the Senior Pastor. All building usage is constrained by availability and staffing. Reservations are on a first come, first served basis. The rental of space to any group or organization cannot be interpreted or construed as sponsorship and agreement with all policies or actions of the group/organization.

Church office staff (hereafter referred to as the office) are responsible for the church calendar, and will process, approve, or reject, any and all requests for building usage at their discretion. Any group or organization that wishes to use the building must first submit the appropriate meeting or event form to the church receptionist. No event will go forward or be scheduled, internal or external, without proper documentation.

The office shall create an application process that is accessible and fair while also working to ensure the stable day-to-day operation of the Church. The office is invested with authority from the Property Board to change this policy to fit the needs of the office in regard to the amount and collection of fees, use of the space, scheduling, the application process, equipment, and hours available. The Building Usage Policy shall be reviewed every three years by the Property Board. The office shall provide a document detailing what has changed in the policy in the last few years along with the reasoning behind those changes for their approval/amendment.

Scheduling Policies

1. Anyone may request to use an area of the building either in person by filling out the Meeting Scheduling Form (Blue) or the Event Scheduling Form (Purple), or the online version of the form which is accessed through the Contact Us page of the Church website.
 - a. The representative filling out the form must first speak with the receptionist to confirm the time and availability of the space. Failure to do so may result in your request being denied if the space is already in use.
 - i. The receptionist will place a placeholder for your event on the calendar.
 1. Placeholders expire two weeks before the event.
 - b. The form must be completed no later than two weeks prior to the event in order for the office to ensure proper staffing and building availability.
 - i. Requests received after the deadline may be declined based on staffing and discretion of the Office Manager.
2. The form must be completed in full before any scheduling may take place.
 - a. Half-finished or unsigned forms will not be accepted and will be returned to the representative filling out the form for completion.
3. Amendments to the form must be completed in writing and emailed to the receptionist no later than one week prior to the event/meeting.
4. Cancellations of events must be submitted in writing no later than 72 hours before the event.
5. Plymouth Church is open for events Tuesday - Thursday from 9am-8pm.
 - a. Events scheduled on Monday, Friday, or Saturday shall be scheduled only by the discretion and approval of the Office Manager and are subject to staffing and availability. Events taking place on Sunday are subject to the approval of the Senior Pastor.
 - b. Events should end before 8pm as there is no guarantee of staffing past that point. Exceptions are rare and at the discretion of the Office Manager and subject to staffing and availability.
 - c. The church is closed on the following Holidays and is not available for an event.
 - i. New Year's Day
 - ii. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 - iii. Good Friday (After Noon)
 - iv. Thanksgiving Day and the day after
 - v. Christmas Eve (After Noon)
 - vi. Christmas Day
6. Outside groups meeting on a regular basis during the programming year (September – May) must register their events with the receptionist no later than one month before the start of the programming semester.
 - a. Fall programming deadline is August 1
 - b. Spring programming deadline is December 1
7. Spaces can only be reserved for up to six hours (including set up and teardown)
8. 30 minutes will be built into the schedule between rooms to provide for adequate changeover between one event and the next.

General Building Use

1. Alcoholic Beverages and Smoking are **not permitted** in the building.
 - a. No alcoholic beverages are permitted on Church property.
 - b. Smoking is prohibited 20 ft from any entrance to the building.
2. Weapons are not permitted on Plymouth Church property.
3. Harassment, Intimidation, or Assault of Plymouth Church Staff will not be tolerated in any manner.
4. Parking
 - a. Handicapped parking
 - i. The parking lot on the west side of the building is designated as handicapped parking. Additional spaces are available in the north lot across from the church on Berry Street.
 - b. Westberry Apartments parking
 - i. The parking west of the Berry St. entrance is reserved for Westberry Apartments. Vehicle owners may be towed at owners' expense.
 - c. Parking Validation
 - i. Plymouth does not verify, validate, or stamp any tickets from other parking lots.
5. Equipment and Tech Personnel
 - a. All instruments (the Steinway pianos, the Organ etc.), audio equipment, projectors, screens, and other technical equipment may be used for your event only with the express permission of the music director. Staff will contact the director, and they will contact the representative to discuss usage.
 - b. Technical personnel will be coordinated via the Senior Pastor. Staff will contact the Senior Pastor, and they will contact you regarding your needs.
6. Printing
 - a. The office does not supply printing and copying services for non-members and outside organizations.
7. Classrooms
 - a. The office does not supply classroom/office supplies.
 - b. Please only use white board markers on the white boards.

Fees

Plymouth provides access to the building at no charge to Plymouth boards, committees, and organizations, and at a reduced fee to Plymouth Members for private events. All allied groups and organizations will be charged the following fees for every event scheduled. The office may waive or reduce fees at the Office Manager's discretion. Fees are due the day of the event to the Office Manager (unless prior arrangements have been made.) When paying fees, one check should be made out to Plymouth Church.

1. Custodial Fee (\$100)
 - a. In the event of a cancellation, outside organizations may receive a refund of the custodial fee if no set up has taken place for the event.
 - b. The church will not collect a custodial fee for meetings unless the room requires extensive cleaning after.
2. Damage Deposit (\$125)
 - a. Church members may have this refunded for private events as long as the space is restored to the condition it was found in, the trash taken out, and the room clean.
 - b. A damage deposit is not collected for meetings but may be charged if there is damage done to the space.
3. Technician Fees (\$100)
 - a. You may use our projectors, sound system, or AV system, but a Plymouth technician is required.
4. Additional Damage Fees
 - a. All groups enter into an agreement to protect the space they are in and are liable for damage to the space and our equipment. The damage deposit will cover the initial \$125 of either repair or replacement. In the event that the damages exceed \$125, the organization will be charged the difference.
5. Late or Delinquent Fees
 - a. Plymouth Church does not charge interest or late fees.
 - b. In the event that the organization or individual does not pay their fees on time, the church will make every reasonable effort to reach out to the organization.
 - i. At their discretion, the Office Manager will negotiate payment plans, or even forgiveness and waiving of fees.
 - c. In the event that the organization or individual refuses to pay the agreed fees, or they cannot be reached, staff will refer the matter to the Property Board who may consider legal action.

Kitchen Usage

1. A member/group/caterer seeking to use the kitchen must first participate in a Plymouth kitchen training session before use.
2. Misuse of the kitchen, appliances, and dishware may result in loss of future use of this area.
 - a. Additional time needed for the custodian to clean the area after misuse shall be taken out of the damage deposit along with any other damages incurred.
3. The group is welcome to use the items in the kitchen, but no food and drink shall be provided by Plymouth.
4. The group is responsible for washing dishes, floors, and counters in the kitchen as well as putting clean dishes away.
5. Please help in our Earthwise endeavor by doing the following
 - a. The church does not stock or provide paper products, such as plates or cups or Styrofoam containers, and discourages their use.
 - b. Use of washable and/or recyclable items is strongly encouraged.
 - c. All groups are expected to use the recyclable containers for disposal of glass, aluminum, steel, plastics one and two, paper and cardboard.
 - d. Scrape all food and other compostable items into our compost container.
 - i. A guide to what qualifies as compostable can be found in the kitchen.
 - e. Please use our recycling bins for any recyclable material.

Loss of Privileges and Appeals

Losing Privileges

While Plymouth seeks to serve the greater Fort Wayne community, it also has a duty to create a safe space for the congregation and protect our faith community first. While Plymouth rarely revokes event hosting privileges, office staff can bar organizations from doing so at their discretion. Reasons to revoke privileges include (but are not limited to) excessive damages, engaging in discriminatory behavior, vandalism (especially including hate speech, symbols, or slurs), harassment or intimidation of Plymouth Staff or Church Members.

Appellate Process

If you feel that you have been unfairly barred from building usage for any reason, you have the right to appeal the decision:

1. You may appeal to the Senior Pastor in writing. The pastor will review the situation, speak with office staff, and then get back to you with a decision.
2. If you wish to appeal the Senior Pastor's decision, you may appeal to the Property Board in writing. The Property Board chair will confer with the Senior Pastor, and present both sides to the board who will decide. The board chair will then get back in touch with you with the final decision.