



*Wedding Policies
& Guidelines*

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Introduction

The service of Christian marriage is a sacred and beautiful covenant-making ceremony of the Church. It is a religious service in which a man and woman, already in communion with God and now desiring His blessing upon their marriage, pledge themselves to each other and are united by God in Holy Matrimony. It is a time for the couple to ask Jesus Christ to be the foundation of their home and to show their dedication and commitment to Him, as well as to one another.

Marriage is God's chosen way of illustrating the relationship between Christ and His Bride, the Church. Additionally, it pictures the personal relationship one is privileged to have with Him as Savior and Lord.

The people of faith at First United Methodist Church want your wedding ceremony and your marriage to reflect the wonderful love God has given His children through Jesus Christ.

We urge you to make careful preparation for both your wedding and your life together. This guide is written to assist you with your wedding. Our pastoral staff is always ready to counsel you in your daily living so that you may experience abundant life in this world and eternal life through Jesus Christ.



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Steps for Your Marriage Ceremony

1. **Read carefully the contents of this booklet.** It is presented to you to establish a uniform and regular practice with regard to weddings in our Church. You may call the Wedding Secretary to arrange for completion of the arrangements for your wedding ceremony after you have read this material and when you are prepared to share a Christian life and marriage.
2. Speak with the Wedding Secretary to:
 - a. Discuss your wedding plans.
 - b. Get tentative approval for the requested date and time for your wedding. She will make contact with the Minister of your choice and get back with you.
 - c. Review the rules and regulations regarding church receptions.
3. Speak with the Director of Worship Arts to:
 - a. Discuss the music for your wedding. The Director of Worship Arts must approve all music.
 - b. Receive additional information concerning our Church's musicians and other services provided.



Calendar

Dates and times for your wedding service and rehearsal need to be made in consultation with the Wedding Secretary. One hour is scheduled for a rehearsal. The Church will be opened three hours prior to the ceremony.

The Church does not schedule weddings on a Sunday, holiday, Palm Sunday to Easter week, the weekend before Christmas through Christmas Day, or during CCA's graduation. An exception would be a Parlor service.

Reservations by members may be made up to 9 months prior to their selected wedding date. Non-members may make reservations up to 5 months prior to their selected wedding date. We welcome these weddings but feel we must minister to our own congregation first.

The Minister

Normally only ministers of our Church will officiate a wedding at First United Methodist. Non-member couples may ask one of our ministers or another regularly ordained minister to officiate. Use of a guest minister must be approved by the church staff.

The Wedding Secretary must approve the involvement of other ministers in the ceremony. Your chosen FUMC minister has final authority over all aspects of the wedding including the florist, photographer and any other consultants. He will coordinate the rehearsal, as well. His approval is required for all proposed wedding arrangements as a part of the pre-marital consultation.

Counseling

If a guest minister is used, he is expected to uphold the standard Christian commitment by both bride and groom as outlined in the "Introduction," and he or she will care for the portion of the wedding service assigned and agreed upon.

Our ministers require counseling sessions with the bride and groom prior to the wedding. Call to schedule the first appointment as early as possible before the ceremony. This is extremely important since the schedules of three persons must be coordinated to conduct the sessions. ***Please allow time for your counseling to be done over several weeks.***

Your minister looks forward to a continuing relationship in the years ahead. He desires to help you have the best and happiest marriage possible. Premarital counseling is required. If you are in counseling with another pastor or Christian counselor, or in a pre-marital counseling program at another church, please let your First United Methodist pastor know this.



Focus

Since a Christian wedding is a worship service, all elements, including decorations, should contribute to focusing on God's glory.

Movement and Protection

The choir risers and other miscellaneous musical equipment will be removed for a wedding. The piano should not be moved without permission from the Director of Worship Arts.

Decorations must not hinder movement of the minister or wedding party.

Do not use tacks, pins, tape or similar items anywhere in the building. Nothing can be hung from the ceilings or walls.

Candles with flames may only be used in the chancel area. No candles may be carried down the aisle or placed in or along the aisle. Use only votive candles in candelabras.

Stage backdrops to choose from are: silver, black, or the burgundy velvet curtain that is closed in the front.

Foyer and Sanctuary trees are not to be moved, nor may any foyer furniture be moved.

Florists & Caterers

Florists & Caterers are allowed no more than **3 hours** access to the building prior to the wedding for decorating and food preparation unless special arrangements have been made with the Wedding Coordinator.

All flowers and decorations should be removed immediately following the wedding and reception to allow our custodial staff to prepare facilities for the next use. We cannot be responsible for loss or damage to anything left unattended.

You or your florist will supply any needed flower stands, candelabras, or votive candles.

Pew bows should be attached to chairs with ribbon or the plastic clips which can be borrowed from the church. These clips go gently over the chair backs.

The electronic lift is not available for decorating purposes.

Seasonal Decorations

The Sanctuary and Foyer are normally decorated four weeks prior to Easter Sunday, and for the month of December. You are invited to use these seasonal decorations as a part of your wedding; however, these decorations are not to be moved either temporarily or permanently.

Use of Ladders

We would prefer that you do not use ladders in your decorating if at all possible. More than 500,000 people a year are treated for ladder-related injuries in the U.S. according to the Am. Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. Of these 500,000 injuries approximately 300 people in the U.S. die from ladder related injuries. If use of a ladder is absolutely necessary, please know that you do so **at your own risk and liability**. Please take certain precautions when using a ladder, such as:

- >Only wear rubber-soled shoes while using a ladder (i.e. no sandals)
- >Inspect the ladder before using
- >Do **not** use a ladder taller than 6 ft; **extension ladders are not allowed**
- >If you feel dizzy or light headed, please get off of ladder immediately
- >Carry ladders parallel to the ground
- >Use only for the purpose for which the ladder was designed (refer to manufacturer's labeling and recommendations)
- >Barricade traffic areas in vicinity of ladder use
- >Do **not** move, shift or extend ladder while occupied
- >Never 'walk' a ladder
- >Do **not** use top or top step for standing/stepping
- >Do **not** stand on cross bracing
- >Always face the ladder when ascending or descending
- >Never allow more than one person on a ladder at a time
- >Place ladder firmly on the floor; do not set on paper or fabric which could slide while ladder is in use.



Because a Church wedding is a worship service, only music suitable for worship may be used. The text (words) of any selection should be in praise of God or prayers for his presence, blessing and guidance in the founding of a Christian home. Christ should be honored. Hymn singing by the congregation is acceptable, but secular texts are inappropriate.

A suggested list of appropriate music is available in the Music Office. It contains pieces suitable for pre-nuptial music, solos, anthems, hymns, processions and recessions. ***Our Director of Worship Arts must approve the music used if it is not on the suggested list.*** Contact the Church Music Office to arrange for selection of the music for your wedding. The Director of Worship Arts can also assist in finding musicians for your wedding.



Photography / Video Taping

Professional photographers or video operators should clarify any questions about procedures with the staff member in charge (minister or Wedding Coordinator). Violation of Church policy can result in denial of the privilege of working weddings here.

Please advise your photographer, relatives and friends of these procedures listed below.

Photography

Because of the nature of the Christian wedding, we do **not** allow flash photography once the ceremony begins.

No flash pictures may be taken during the wedding ceremony by anyone, whether a professional photographer or a guest. A flash is permitted as the bride enters and as the bride and groom leave. The wedding party may return after the wedding for pictures. Pictures including the minister should be taken first. Photographers are not permitted to come down the aisle during the wedding processional or ceremony.

Consider doing most of your pictures before the ceremony. If that cannot be arranged, it is suggested that the bride and groom, in consultation with your photographer, predetermine the exact sequence, types and number of photographs to be taken after the ceremony. This will allow the bride and groom to promptly arrive at the reception.

Timed exposures may be made from the very back of the sanctuary, providing there is no noise or distracting motion.

Video taping

Videotaping is permitted from the back of the sanctuary at a side aisle, provided the flow of worshippers is not blocked. Taping from the front must be done at direction of Wedding Coordinator, with no lights. Operator will be seated.



Rehearsal

The rehearsal is an integral part of your wedding preparation. All persons participating in the wedding, including ushers, need to rehearse to avoid any embarrassment during the ceremony.

Please ensure that your rehearsal begins and ends within the allotted times. Unless otherwise arranged, all rehearsals will begin between 6:00 and 8:00 PM. Allow one hour for the rehearsal and remind your wedding party to be punctual.

Helpful items to consider **before** the rehearsal:

1. The minister or the Church's Wedding Coordinator directs the rehearsal.
2. Consider the number of rows to reserve for the family.
3. Have a written list of participants in the wedding party in order of entry into the ceremony. Please include names of parents, grandparents, etc., who should be seated.
4. Designate in advance which ushers should seat family members.
5. If candles are used, designate persons to light them.
6. In some situations, simple maps and/or written directions to the rehearsal dinner location are useful and appreciated by members of your wedding party. A reproducible map of the Church's location is found at www.firstchurch.net/ourlocation.asp
7. If your officiating minister and his wife are invited to the rehearsal dinner, please extend a specific invitation; however, remember that his schedule will often prohibit acceptance.



Wedding License

Deliver the marriage license to the officiating minister at the time of the rehearsal. No minister is allowed to perform a legal marriage without an official license from the State of Texas.

The license needs to be obtained ***at least 72 hours prior*** to the Wedding Ceremony. The license can be requested at any of the Dallas, Denton, or Collin County Courthouses.



Wedding Rental Rates

Room Capacities	Seated/Rows	Banquet Seating
Worship Center (<i>Sanctuary</i>)	500	400
Fellowship Hall (<i>Large Reception Room</i>)	300	250
Parlor (<i>sm. Reception Room</i>)	50	

Wedding Package	Amount
Damage Deposit (<i>see page 10</i>)	250.00
Worship Center	100.00
Fellowship Hall	100.00
Parlor	100.00
Wedding Coordinator	100.00
Audio / Lighting Wedding Only	100.00
Audio / Lighting Rehearsal & Wedding	150.00
Audio / Video / Lighting Wedding Only	175.00
Audio / Video / Lighting Rehearsal & Wedding	225.00
Janitor (<i>see page 10</i>)	100.00

Room Usage Times	
Friday & Saturday	1:00 – 10:00 PM
Sunday	Not Available

Payment for Weddings

Damage Deposits are due at the time your wedding is scheduled in order to secure the particular date and time of your wedding.

The balance of the fees ***must be paid in full no less than 14 days prior to the date of the wedding.*** Fees cover partial expenditures and overhead for building use not provided in the Church's operating budget. The reservation of any facility is confirmed only when the Church office has received the deposit. Other fees must be paid prior to the time of the wedding. Checks should be made payable to First United Methodist Church.

Damage Deposit

The refundable damage deposit covers any excess cleanup charges and damages that may occur. Damages and charges that exceed the amount of the deposit will be covered by the bridal party. If the janitorial setup and teardown requires additional time beyond the 4 hour minimum, it will be deducted from the deposit fee at \$25 per hour. Any expenses that exceed the deposit total, will be billed back to the bridal party.

Refund of Damage Deposit

The deposit will be refunded due to the cancellation of a reservation if the following criteria are met:

- Full Refund*** - 30 or more days prior to event
- 50% Refund*** - 2 to 30 days prior to event
- No Refund*** - Less than 48 hours prior to event

Rehearsal Dinners

Please take note that the above rates ***do not*** include rehearsal dinners. We would prefer that rehearsal dinners be held off campus.

Janitorial Staff

The Janitorial Staff's primary function is to setup and teardown the rooms. ***They are not to assist in decorating.*** They are at the Church during the rehearsal and the wedding. Rehearsals, weddings or receptions lasting until 10:00 p.m. will incur an additional \$104.00.

Audio / Lighting Technician

The Audio / Lighting Technician will be provided by the church. This person is responsible for setting up and adjusting the sound system for the pastor and musicians. ***If the wedding is held in another room other than the Worship Center, the wedding party is responsible for providing their own sound system and technician.***

Wedding Coordinator

The Church Wedding Coordinator will assist the couple with plans for the ceremony, aid the minister in conducting the rehearsal, and coordinate all activities of the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator will conduct the rehearsal if the minister is unable to attend. She wants to help make your wedding special and can advise on Church policy and procedures, as well as answer many of your questions.

Responsibility for Goods

The Church cannot accept delivery of dresses or tuxedos or be responsible for personal items such as clothing, purses, silver, wedding cakes, etc., brought to the building before or left at the building after the wedding.

Use of Petals / Bubbles

The Flower Girl is allowed to scatter only fresh flower petals during the ceremony. Only **Fresh** flower petals or bubbles may be used for the Bride & Groom's departure. Also, these **must be used outside the building. No birdseed or rice is permitted.**

Smoking / Alcohol

Smoking in the building is not permitted. In adherence to the beliefs of The United Methodist Church as set forth in The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, it is the policy of this Church that under **NO circumstances may alcoholic beverages be served or permitted on the premises.** No one under the influence of alcohol will be allowed to participate in either the rehearsal or the wedding.

Use of Kitchen

Unless the caterer has been trained on our particular kitchen equipment by one of the authorized FUMC kitchen trainers, they are only allowed to use the kitchen for staging purposes. **Whether our equipment is used or not the caterer is responsible for leaving the kitchen in a clean condition.** If the kitchen is not left clean, charges for cleaning will be deducted from the wedding deposit. A kitchen checklist is available on a clipboard in the kitchen.