

First United Methodist Church  
- Wedding Policy -

## **Choosing First Methodist**

First United Methodist Church is pleased to be the site for your wedding. We want to help in every way to make your wedding a significant and joyous event. This book of church policy will help answer questions you may have, and it will inform you of specific policies and procedures for weddings at our church.

The church is happy to offer its facilities to members, and others, who want to have a sacred ceremony. We hope you will have beautiful and meaningful memories of your ceremony here in our church.

Anyone wishing to be married at First United Methodist Church must first consult with the Minister several months before the ceremony. The Minister is the person who will give permission for the church to be used for your ceremony.

If a couple would like to get married in the sanctuary in a simple, private ceremony, it is at the discretion of the Minister to allow this.

## **Church Calendar**

Reservations for church facilities for rehearsal, ceremony and or reception must be made through the church wedding coordinator. However, the Minister should be the first contact for the bride or a representative for the bride who wishes to reserve the church.

Weddings will not be scheduled on the following holidays: Holy Week, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving weekend (including Wednesday night), Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day. There will be limited availability for the sanctuary during the month of December due to the many seasonal church Christmas programs.

The Church Sanctuary may be reserved on year in advance of the wedding date.

## **Arrangements for the Wedding**

1. If you wish to have your wedding at First Methodist, call the Minister to request that the church grant permission for the wedding to occur and to determine the availability of the church. If the wedding is in the Hut, the same process will occur.
2. Ask that the Sanctuary/Hut be reserved for the rehearsal as well if a rehearsal will be necessary.
3. If you plan to use the church facilities for a reception then a reservation for the selected space must also be made at that time.
4. No announcement of wedding dates to the public should be made before the church is officially reserved and you have been contacted by our Wedding Coordinator to confirm all dates.

## **The Minister**

The Minister of First United Methodist typically will officiate at weddings in our sanctuary, however, if the bride or groom desire to have a visiting Minister officiate or assist in the service, then permission and an invitation must be extended by the Minister of First United Methodist Church.

1. The church wedding coordinator will reserve the sanctuary for your wedding after the Minister has first determined that his calendar is clear on the given date. Dates and time are usually first arranged directly with the Minister and next with the wedding coordinator.
2. The Minister will make appointments for pre-marital counseling as well as for plans for the wedding and preparation for marriage.
3. The Minister is responsible for interpreting the policy of the church and for conducting the rehearsal and the wedding with the assistance of the Wedding Coordinator.

## **The Wedding Ceremony: Ritual and Service**

The Minister is responsible for conducting the rehearsal and the wedding. The First Methodist Wedding Coordinator will assist and will work under the direct supervision of the Minister. The two will work together to coordinate plans for the ceremony.

The official, authorized and approved rituals of the First United Methodist Church will normally be used at weddings in the sanctuary. The Minister will be happy to work with couples who want to personalize their wedding.

If the sacrament of Holy Communion is desired as a part of the service, all persons present must be invited to commune.

## **Wedding Coordinator**

The policy of First United Methodist is for the church's Wedding Coordinator to direct all arrangements for the ceremony. This is to insure that our church policies are implemented and that the ceremony is a service of worship. The Wedding Coordinator is employed by the wedding party and will direct the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony under the supervision of the minister. If you are using a written program, then the wedding coordinator must have a copy one week before the ceremony.

At the end of the ceremony the duties of the Wedding Coordinator will be completed. Typically the photographer will then take charge for pictures following the ceremony.

It is not necessary for you to invite the coordinator, organist, or the minister to your rehearsal party or reception. Please understand that due to personal schedules, they may or may not be able to attend additional functions.

## **Music for Your Wedding**

Music for your wedding will be arranged through consultation with the Church Organist. The Minister will check with the organist for availability when the wedding is placed on the calendar. The Organist will help you plan appropriated sacred music for the service and can also assist you with soloists or instrumentalists if you want to include others in the service. The Organist will play for both the rehearsal and the ceremony as he knows the organ and the order of service.

Consultation with the Organist should be done no later than two months prior to your wedding.

If for any reason the church organist cannot participate in your wedding, other recommendations for an organist will be suggested. Should another organist be desired, the approval of the regular organist is required.

All music shall be of a sacred nature and must be approved by the Church Organist. All music shall reflect that a wedding is a worship service of covenant and commitment between a man, a woman, and God. Therefore, all music must reflect the worship, honor, and praise of God, not just the love of a man and woman. Secular music (i.e. Rock and Roll, Rap, Easy Listening, Country, etc.) is not allowed. Taped music may not be used in this sanctuary, however should the couple desire a different musical atmosphere for their wedding, the use of the piano and/or guest instrumentalists is permissible. The use of the grand piano in the sanctuary instead of the organ is allowed for weddings. At times, weddings may use a harpist or a string quartet in place of the organ or the piano, or all may be used together. If a vocalist is used it is helpful for them to sing from the choir loft and assist the organist since the organist cannot see when the wedding party is in place. Musicians should wear choir vestments or other appropriate garments and should use a music folder to hold their music. All music, even with guest musicians, must still follow the approval process.

## **Use of the Sound System in the Sanctuary**

The sound system of the church facility is available and is recommended for all weddings, especially those with soloists. The acoustics of this sanctuary require the use of a sound system so both the soloists and the ceremony can be heard. Only our trained technicians are allowed to use our system, and the Wedding Coordinator will arrange for a technician to be available at both the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony. This technician is to be paid by the wedding party.

## **Decorating the Sanctuary for a Wedding**

The sanctuary is first and foremost a sacred place of worship – it is the house of God. It is a place of beauty and elaborate decorations are not necessary. The Cross is the focal point of the sanctuary and must not be obscured. Since flowers symbolize the Christian believe in the resurrection, all flowers or plans should be appropriate to the environment of worship and no artificial flowers or plants may be used in the sanctuary. If flowers are placed on the altar table, the arrangement may not obscure the Cross. The Cross may be placed on the gold box for added height if needed.

- 1.) The Communion Table, the Pulpit, and the chairs may not be moved. None of the articles on these tables can be moved. The Baptismal Font may be shifted slightly if necessary, but may not be removed from the chancel or obscured by decoration.
- 2.) No decorations should conflict with local fire ordinances. All candles must be in approved holders or candelabras. Florists should use Chase candles in the candelabras with the exception of the Unity Candle.
- 3.) Flowers may be placed in vases supplied by the Church or appropriate containers supplied by the florist and placed on the appropriate tables or suitable stands. Church vases are not to be removed from the Church.
- 4.) Flowers must not be placed where they block the limited view of the organist.
- 5.) No nails, tacks, wire, or tape may be used in the walls, woodwork, pews, furnishings, or other parts of the building. If church property is damaged then the bride will be held responsible.
- 6.) Your florist must supply traditional candle lighters if needed.
- 7.) Care must be taken to protect furnishings and carpet from moisture if potted plants, palms, ferns, etc. are used.
- 8.) No decorations should be placed that would prevent free movement of the Minister, the Organist, the Vocalist, or members of the wedding party during the ceremony.
- 9.) The color of the church season or white pulpit paraments may be used.
- 10.) If Acolytes are used, the wedding coordinator and minister must approve and instruct them.
- 11.) Flowers used for a Saturday wedding may be left at the discretion of the bride for the Sunday morning worship service. The bride should notify the church secretary at least a week before the ceremony so that the church flower calendar can be checked and so a note can be included in the Sunday bulletin that the flowers are in honor of the marriage of the couple.
- 12.) Decorations should be removed promptly after the ceremony, especially if the wedding is on a Saturday, so the sanctuary can be cleaned and prepared for the Sunday worship services. The sexton is not responsible for moving or removing decorations from the sanctuary, and the church can take no responsibility for decorations or equipment left in the church after the wedding.

## **Pictures of the Wedding**

Pictures are treasured possessions, and the Minister will gladly cooperate so that beautiful pictures may be taken, but photographers must not interfere with the worship experience of the congregation during the ceremony. Individuals in the audience may not take pictures during the ceremony. Pictures and/or movies should be discussed and coordinated with the Wedding Coordinator.

- 1.) Pictures may be taken in the sanctuary prior to the actual ceremony or after. The ceremony begins after the mother of the bride has been seated. The ceremony ends when all members of the wedding party have completed the recessional and the congregation is dismissed.
- 2.) Photographers are not to stand in the pews or on any furnishings in the sanctuary.
- 3.) Flash pictures may not be taken during the ceremony either by a photographer or by guests. Organize your wedding in a timely manner so that pictures will either be taken before the guests arrive or just following the wedding ceremony. If the bride desires to have the minister in any pictures, please make those pictures the first ones taken after the service so the minister may be free for other responsibilities.
- 4.) Videos from the balcony may be made during the ceremony if no additional light is required and if equipment is quiet and will not interfere with the ceremony. A quiet, hidden, stationary video camera may be placed in the choir loft but it must not require the use of a light or remote control device. Anyone video-recording should check with the church office prior to the wedding day. Our sound technicians will assist with any of our church equipment that may be required for the ceremony.
- 5.) The photographer may take flash pictures of the bride and her escort as they enter and as they leave the sanctuary.

## **The Reception at the Church**

Other church facilities are also available and may be used for wedding receptions. Reservations should be made at the time the wedding is scheduled if any other spaces will be utilized. Receptions outside on the grounds are discouraged.

- 1.) No nails, tacks, or tape should be used on walls, tables, furnishings, etc. in the Fellowship Hall, and decorations must not conflict with fire ordinances.
- 2.) The wedding party is responsible for securing caterers, and caterers must supply their own linens, serving trays, utensils, etc.
- 3.) If FUMC kitchen equipment is used, it must be washed, dried, and returned to its proper place. All counters, floors, sinks, etc. are to be left clean. Trash and garbage should be removed. It is not the responsibility of the church sexton to remove the trash.
- 4.) Church paper products and supplies are stored in the kitchen and are not to be used by either the caterers or the wedding party.
- 5.) The throwing of rice, confetti, or bird seed on church grounds and in the church building is strictly prohibited.
- 6.) No use of alcoholic beverages may occur on our property or in our facilities.
- 7.) Smoking is not permitted in any building or on our grounds, including the restrooms.

### Miscellaneous Concerns

- 1.) Members of the wedding party may use our classrooms for dressing. Please tell the wedding coordinator how many rooms will be needed.
- 2.) Do not leave your personal items or clothing in the classrooms after you dress there. Store your personal items in the trunk of your vehicle during the service. First Methodist cannot be responsible for any stolen or lost items. Please leave the rooms as you found them.

### Wedding Fees

First United Methodist Church makes no charge to its members for the use of its buildings. However, a schedule of fees has been set to compensate staff for extra duties involved in your wedding. Non-members who may wish to use our facilities are asked to pay a usage fee in addition to the service fees. Non-members are defined as couples with no member of the immediate family being a current member in good standing of FUMC, Conway. Where families have been members for less than six months, usage fees may be required. Non-members are reminded that the honorarium for the Minister is in addition to the facility fees.

Sanctuary or Hut Usage	No Charge for Church Member \$500.00 for Non-members
Fellowship Hall, Family Life Center Usage	No Charge for Church Members \$500.00 for Non-Members
Janitorial Fees	\$150.00 for Sanctuary \$150.00 for Fellowship Hall or Family Life Center \$125.00 for Hut
Minister	At Discretion of Minister
Organist	\$200.00
Soloist	At Discretion of Hired Individual
Instrumentalist	At Discretion of Hired Individual
Sound System Technician	\$100.00
Wedding Coordinator	\$250.00

All fees will be paid in advance of the wedding by checks written to the individual members who assisted with the service. The Wedding Coordinator will supply the names and fees of these individuals and will collect fees and disperse them on the night of the rehearsal. If the wedding is cancelled after consultations with individuals assisting in planning the service, the fees will be determined by the Wedding Coordinator.