



# **First United Methodist Church**

**First United Methodist Church  
Wedding Policy**

## **The Celebration and Blessing of Marriage**

Congratulations from First United Methodist Church on your upcoming marriage! A wedding is one of the happiest and holiest moments in life. The marriage of two people is a holy union. It begins with your desire to form a lasting, lifelong partnership with another person in God's love, and continues throughout your lives as an unfolding process of intentional living and growing together. In a marriage, each of you as an individual and together as a couple, gradually transforms and matures in God's presence and image. A wedding, then, is a sacred ritual that acknowledges and celebrates your desire to enter a lifelong relationship. By uniting within the context of a faith community, you recognize that God is active in the love you feel for one another, and you place your relationship in God's care. You make your vows before God and the gathered community of family, friends and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help you fulfill your vows. Your marriage is an outward and visible sign of God's grace bringing you together and nurturing your love.

As you join your lives to establish a Christian home, our church rejoices with you and is eager to provide a setting that upholds the joy and sanctity characterizing the ceremony of Christian marriage. The staff and members of First UMC are willing to do all they can to make your wedding an event worthy of the significant and sacred commitment you bring to your marriage.

## **Weddings in The United Methodist Church**

A wedding in The United Methodist Church is governed by The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church and the laws of the State of South Carolina. The Book of Worship and The United Methodist Hymnal are the foundation for all United Methodist worship services and provides the liturgical framework in which a wedding is celebrated.

### **Requirements for Members to be Married at First United Methodist Church**

First United Methodist Church considers members, and the children and grandchildren of members to be a "Member" wedding. For the purposes of determining membership, we define the member as someone who for at least the year preceding the date of the wedding meets the following criteria:

- regularly attends Sunday worship at First Church, and
- actively participates in the life of the parish, and
- supports the ministries of the parish.

If neither of the couple is a member of the parish, nor do they have parents or grandparents who are members, we will require additional information before we can approve and schedule. It is the discretion of the senior pastor.

## Scheduling

We will schedule your wedding no more than 18 months but no less than six months in advance. This allows plenty of time to plan your liturgy, complete your series of counseling sessions, meet with the pastor who will officiate, and – if you are not already a member – become familiar with the First United Methodist community. It also increases the chance that your chosen date will be available given First United Methodist Church’s full schedule of activities. If you wish to be married in First UMC, please contact the church office at [ann.myers@fumconway.org](mailto:ann.myers@fumconway.org) to schedule a meeting and to confirm available dates. It is a policy that the couple meet with the pastor before the wedding date is placed on the calendar. While you may reschedule your date if necessary, deposits are non-refundable if you choose to cancel. Weddings are scheduled most often on Saturdays during seasons of the Church year with a particular focus on celebrating new life. and are never scheduled during Holy Week, the first week of Easter, and the final week of Advent including Christmas Eve/Day. In addition, weddings are not scheduled on any major secular holiday weekend including Mother’s Day/Father’s Day, Thanksgiving (including weekend), New Year’s Eve/Day.

## Getting Started

From your first contact with the church to the day of your wedding, clergy and staff are involved in helping you with your wedding and marriage preparation. The primary team with whom you will work includes the Wedding Coordinator, the Office Administrator, the Pastor, the Director of Music, and the Sexton.

**\*Note: All communication with regard to any aspect of the marriage preparation, wedding ceremony, or fees will be between First United Methodist Church Wedding Staff and the couple ONLY.**

## Marriage Request Form

The wedding process at First United Methodist Church begins when you have completed the Marriage Request Form (included in this booklet) and sent it to the office administrator @ [ann.myers@fumconway.org](mailto:ann.myers@fumconway.org) . This form provides us all of the initial information we need to best serve you in preparing for your wedding and your marriage. Simply complete the form as instructed.

## Weddings Fees

The basic fee for weddings at First United Methodist Church is \$600 for members and \$1400 for non-members. These fees cover the cost most aspects of your wedding including, custodial and other support staff. Additional fees may include fees for the organist, additional musicians, music rehearsal fees, reception rentals. These specific items are discussed in detail below. If yours is a “member” wedding, a gift left to the discretion of the bride and groom is a wonderful way to offer thanks for their work with you on this special occasion. Non-member weddings already have a fee for clergy built into the larger fee above. The Organist fee, payable directly to the organist, is \$250.

## **Deposit and payment schedule**

Weddings are scheduled when a non-refundable deposit of \$100 for non-members is received by the Office Administrator. The deposit is applied toward your total fee and the remainder must be paid no less than two weeks prior to your wedding date.

## **Counseling**

While your wedding ceremony is very important, our primary interest is your marriage. As soon as the wedding date has been announced, the couple should arrange for a counseling conference with the officiating clergy of First UMC. Premarital counseling is considered a requirement by the clergy of First UMC. The major concern is that the couple be prepared to take their vows meaningfully and with a sense of genuine commitment to each other and to God. The clergy of First UMC are ever mindful of the obligations to the church that has ordained them to emphasize the religious significance of the marriage ceremony and of the importance of God's continuing presence within the marriage relationship.

## **The Wedding Service**

All wedding services at First United Methodist Church to "The Service of Christian Marriage" as found in *The United Methodist Hymnal* and *The United Methodist Book of Worship*.

## **Clergy**

First United Methodist Church clergy will preside at all weddings. Therefore, the applicant should contact the Senior Pastor to engage him/her or one of the other pastors. If you would like a particular First UMC pastor to work with you, please make this request on the reservation form. Clergy other than those affiliated with First UMC may be invited to share in the wedding, with the prior approval and at the written invitation of the Senior Pastor.

## **Holy Communion**

Holy Communion may be celebrated as part of the wedding service. If Communion is desired, please discuss this with the pastor during premarital instruction. When Communion is celebrated, it is open to the whole congregation.

## **Wedding Coordinator**

First United Methodist Church's Wedding Coordinator is required for all weddings. Distinct from the role of a secular wedding planner, First United Methodist Church's Wedding Coordinator will consult with the bride no later than two weeks before the wedding regarding rehearsal and ceremony procedures in our church. The Wedding Coordinator will oversee all arrangements including directing the wedding. Outside event/wedding planners must defer to the Director.

The Wedding Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the church policies are implemented. The Wedding Coordinator will work under the supervision of the pastor in directing both the rehearsal and wedding service.

## **Attendants**

Though it is common that there be equal numbers of men and women in the wedding party, there is no requirement for such. Similarly, there is no requirement that there be the same number of attendants for the bride and the groom.

## **Acolytes**

First United Methodist Church has a team of acolytes who are willing to assist at the request of bridal/groom in carrying in the light of Christ as well as leading the procession with the Processional Cross. This request will need to be done through the pastor. If the bridal party makes use of person(s) to light the candles or carrying the Cross, the pastor and wedding coordinator will instruct.

## **Children in the Wedding Party**

Children must be supervised by a designated adult. It is recommended that each child participating in the wedding be at least five years of age, in consideration of their comfort and enjoyment of their participation. Children who are under the age of five will be asked to sit with an adult on the front side pews once they have processed up the aisle.

## **Music**

The Director of Music at First United Methodist Church will work closely with you and serve as a valuable resource as you select your music. You will be provided with expert assistance to ensure that music is appropriately planned and fitting for you as a couple. Because a wedding is a service of worship, the liturgical guidelines for music are subject to the same standards as music for any other worship service.

First United Methodist Church's staff organist plays for all weddings at which organ music is desired, unless the organist is unavailable. When not available on the date selected, he will provide you with contact information for approved substitute musicians.

Once the date of the wedding is placed on the church calendar, First UMC's Director of Music should be contacted ([billy.fallow@fumcconway.org](mailto:billy.fallow@fumcconway.org)) and an appointment made to discuss the music for the ceremony.

Sacred music selected for this service shall be that which is considered appropriate to the traditions of this parish and the United Methodist Church. Secular love songs, ballads, etc. are not appropriate for the ceremony nor is music in the gospel, contemporary, or folk rock tradition.

All music selected is subject to the approval of the Director of Music in consultation with the pastor. No recorded music may be used. Congregational singing is appropriate at a wedding, enabling the assembled worshipers to participate in the service more fully.

In addition to the organ, the grand piano in the sanctuary instead of the organ is available for weddings. Other instruments – such as harp, strings, brass, flute – may be included. 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. Musician should wear choir vestments or other appropriate garments and should use a music folder.

**Please do not invite musicians without the consent of First United Methodist Church's Director of Music.**

Note that vocalists and instrumentalists necessarily increase the fees for your wedding. Please contact First United Methodist Church's Director of Music, Billy Fallaw (billy.fallaw@fumconway.org), shortly after your first planning meeting.

## **Flowers**

To facilitate deep engagement with the worship service itself, only simple, primary symbols pertaining to the liturgy are positioned in the chancel. The Cross is the focal point and must not be obscured. Since flowers symbolize the Christian belief in the resurrections, all flowers and plants should be appropriate to the environment of worship and **NO ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS OR PLANTS** may be used. The bride must also inform the florist/decorator of rules for the floral decorations.

Flowers may be placed in the vases supplied by the church or appropriate containers supplied by the florist and placed on the suitable stands. Church vases are not to be removed from the church.

Flowers may be left at the discretion of the bride for Sunday morning worship services with a note placed in the Sunday bulletin that the flowers are in honor of the marriage of the couple. Arrangements will need to be made with office administrator at least two months in advance.

In the Narthex a wreath may be placed on each of the 'front doors'.

## **The Sanctuary**

The following regulations are given to preserve the proper atmosphere of the church and to safeguard the furnishings.

No pews or regular furniture may be moved. Under no circumstances will the pulpit, communion table, baptismal font, cross, or candelabra be moved.

No decorations may be used on the pulpit or on the Communion table.

No nails, tacks, wire, gummed or scotch tape, or thorny vines or evergreens, may be put in or on the walls, woodwork, columns, pews, chancel rail, furniture, or choir rail of the church building or any other building.

All decorations should be removed from the sanctuary immediately after the wedding unless special permission is sought, and granted, to postpone removal and cleaning until the following day.

## **Candles**

Altar candles are provided for your wedding. Candelabras are available from the church. The practice of the Unity Candle is discouraged.

## **Rice, birdseed, etc.**

Confetti, rice, birdseed, rose petals, sparklers, balloons or other such items are not permitted inside the Church or on the grounds. Bubbles are a delightful alternative and may be used outside the Church as you exit the worship space following your service.

## **Service leaflets**

Because of the participatory nature of every wedding, your service leaflet is a very important part of your wedding. It contains information that guides those in attendance through the marriage liturgy and helps them actively participate as a community supporting and witnessing your marriage. The pastor must approve the leaflet before printing to ensure it follows the “Service of Christian Marriage.”

## **Still Photography**

Use of the church buildings and grounds for photography must be limited to no more than two hours before and one hour following the wedding ceremony. Please understand that we may have halted other regularly scheduled activities on the church grounds during your wedding.

Flash photography is NOT allowed during the ceremony except for the procession into and out of the church, and all photography must be kept to a minimum during the service itself. Photographers may stand at the back of the church or in the balcony, out of view of guests, and use a telephoto lens without flash during the ceremony. All photographers (professional and otherwise) must complete and sign our Wedding Photography Form (included in this booklet) which outlines our policies for photography during weddings at First United Methodist Church. Additionally, the Wedding Coordinator or the pastor will need to speak with your photographer in advance of the wedding service to avoid any misunderstanding of our expectations.

## **Videography**

The placement of video recording devices is limited to the balcony during a wedding ceremony at First United Methodist Church. A quiet, hidden stationary 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 Wedding Coordinator or pastor prior to the wedding day.

## **Photos by Guests**

Please instruct your guests that photography during the service is NOT allowed at First United Methodist Church. Photography by guests distracts from both the purpose and solemnity of the occasion. Your wedding is a worship service of The United Methodist Church and should be respected as such.

## **Sound System**

First United Methodist Church's Sound/Video Technicians will coordinate with the pastor, Wedding Coordinator, and the Director of Music to ensure proper sound for service. The service may be live-streamed if the bridal couple request. Only our trained technicians are allowed to use our system.

## **Use of the Facilities**

The campus of First United Methodist Church includes the church, the Fellowship Hall, the Family Life Center, the Hut Chapel, and the churchyard. Your wedding may be scheduled among several activities taking place that day.

### **Use of the church**

Weddings at First United Methodist Church may use the church buildings and grounds for up to two hours before and one hour following the wedding service. The only exception to this is if your reception is on premises. If you need additional use of the buildings or grounds, please discuss this in advance with the Wedding Coordinator to determine if it is possible. Please keep in mind that other activities may be taking place on the church campus on the day of your wedding.

### **Seating capacities**

The First United Methodist Church's nave comfortably seats 500 guests including the balcony. The Hut Chapel comfortably seats 70 persons.

### **The Wedding Rehearsal**

A rehearsal, led by the pastor, will take place in advance of every wedding at First United Methodist Church. The purpose of the wedding rehearsal is to help make you and your wedding party more comfortable with their roles in the wedding liturgy. Attentive participation in the rehearsal helps every person, regardless of role, become more familiar with the worship space and the liturgy itself. Those that need to attend the rehearsal include all the attendants and anyone who will be reading Scripture participating in the service. Rehearsals customarily take place on Friday afternoons at 5:30 pm. Rehearsals may be arranged at other times in coordination with the pastor and Wedding Coordinator.

### **Receptions at First United Methodist Church**

First United Methodist Church has a reception space available. Reservations should be made at the time the wedding is scheduled. Additional fees are required for use of these facilities for receptions.

No nails, tacks, or tape should be used on walls, tables, furnishings, etc. in any of buildings, and decorations must not conflict with fire ordinances. The wedding party is responsible for securing caterers, and caterers must supply their own linens, serving trays, utensils, etc. If use of the kitchens is needed, all equipment used must be cleaned and returned to its proper place. All

counters, floors, sinks, are to be left clean. Trash and garbage should be removed to the dumpster in the FLC parking lot. It is not the responsibility of the Sexton to remove the trash. Church paper products and supplies stored in pantries are not to be used by either the caterer or the wedding party.

### **Alcohol/Smoking**

The use of alcoholic beverages is not allowed on the property. Smoking is not permitted in any buildings or on our grounds including restrooms. If alcohol is found, wedding party/guests will be asked to leave.

### **The Day of the Wedding**

In addition to the one-hour rehearsal, the standard First United Methodist Church, wedding fee includes use of the church campus for a maximum of four hours on the day of your service, including photography. Wedding liturgies without Holy Communion usually take 30 minutes. Liturgies with Holy Communion last approximately 45 minutes.

Dressing room facilities at the Church are limited, it is recommended that the wedding party arrive dressed and ready for the service.

### **Delayed start times - this is important**

Starting your wedding on time is an important hospitality to your guests. It is also imperative to the ongoing operations of First United Methodist Church. For this reason we require that you provide the pastor the appropriate phone numbers where the bride and the groom may be reached on the day of the wedding. In addition, we require that you call the pastor if any portion of your wedding party will be delayed for any reason.

### **Miscellaneous Concerns**

First United Methodist Church is not responsible for any stolen/lost items. Do not leave personal items in classrooms, Parlor, or restrooms. Please leave the rooms as you found them.

### **Parking**

First United Methodist Church has limited parking available. Your guests should be alerted to park across the street from First United Methodist Church in the Family Life Center Lot, the parking lot across the street on the corner of Fifth Ave. and Laurel St. or the lot between the bank and the Horry County Memorial Library Admin. Bldg. (only on Saturdays).

## Wedding Preparation Timeline

My wedding date is:

### **6-18 months in advance:**

- Determine and reserve date and time with Pastor and Office Administrator.
- Pay deposit.
- Arrange initial meeting with the Pastor.
- Schedule counseling sessions.
- Schedule meeting with First United Methodist Church Director of Music
- Communicate wedding plans with relatives and friends; begin securing attendants and other wedding party members.

### **3 months in advance:**

- Counseling is complete.
- Attendants and other wedding party members have been confirmed.
- Photography services have been secured.
- Photography policy statement signed and returned to Office Administrator.
- Arrange meeting with pastor to plan service.
- Meet with the Director of Music.

### **2 months in advance:**

- Music selections are complete.
- Scripture readings are chosen.
- Arrange final meeting with pastor in charge of your wedding.
- Secure rehearsal time.
- Begin work on service leaflet with pastor.

### **1 month in advance:**

- Service leaflet preparation is complete.
- Final payment to church is complete.
- Last check in with Wedding Coordinator.

## **First United Methodist Church, Conway**

### Wedding Photo Policy

#### **Flash and additional lighting during the service**

First United Methodist Church does not allow flash photography of any kind during any service as it interrupts the sanctity and flow of the service.

#### **Flash and additional lighting before and after the service**

Photographers may take flash photographs of the procession as it enters the church from about six or seven pews in from the sanctuary doors. At the end of the service photographers may stand in the narthex and take flash photographs of the procession as it leaves the Church.

#### **Location of People and Equipment**

Photographers and videographers must never move between the congregation and the liturgical action in the sanctuary. Videotaping of the service may be done only if the camera is stationary, does not come between the liturgical action and the congregation, and does not require the use of distracting lights.

#### **Group Photographs**

We understand the importance that couples place upon the preservation of their day in photographs. Therefore, the couple may make arrangements to take group photographs before the service, or immediately after the service. The couple should make these arrangements with the Wedding Coordinator and confirm them with the pastor. Note: If any photographs are to include the officiating pastor it will be greatly appreciated if she or he could be in the first photographs taken.

#### **Microphones**

No portable microphones may be used as they interfere with the Church's sound system.

#### **Photographer/Videographer's Acknowledgement and Signature**

I will be photographing and/or videotaping the service for

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and fully understand First United Methodist Church's photography policy, which I will respect and follow.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return completed form at least one month before the service to:**

Office Administrator  
First United Methodist Church  
1001 Fifth Avenue, Conway, SC 29525

Telephone: 843-488-4251

Email: [ann.myers@fumcconway.org](mailto:ann.myers@fumcconway.org)

## First United Methodist Church, Conway

Marriage Request Form (also available at [www.fumcconway.org](http://www.fumcconway.org))

Thank you for your interest in holding your wedding service at First United Methodist Church. Please complete the following.

If you have any questions about this form, please contact our Office Administrator at [ann.myers@fumcconway.org](mailto:ann.myers@fumcconway.org) or 843-488-4251.

Full Name		
Street Address		
City, State, ZIP		
Telephone	Home:	Mobile:
Email		
Date of Birth		
Member of First UMC	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, since (date?)	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Previous Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/> No, First Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Remarriage
Parents' Name	Mother's Information	Father's Information
Address		
Telephone		

Full Name		
Street Address		
City, State, ZIP		
Telephone	Home:	Mobile:
Email		
Date of Birth		
Member of First UMC	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, since (date?)	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Previous Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/> No, First Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Remarriage
Parents' Name	Mother's Information	Father's Information
Address		
Telephone		

## **Membership**

If either or both of you are members of First United Methodist Church, please check the appropriate boxes on the previous page of this form.

Neither of us are members of church but we are interested in becoming members of First United Methodist Church.

## Wedding Fees

Sanctuary or Hut Usage	No charge for members \$1000 for non-members
Fellowship Hall or Family Life Center Usage	No charge for members \$500 for non-members
Sexton Fees	\$200 for Sanctuary / Hut Chapel \$150 for Fellowship Hall \$150 for Family Life Center
Minister	\$300
Organist	\$250
Sound Technician	\$150
Wedding Coordinator	\$250
Soloist	At discretion of hired individual
Instrumentalist	At discretion of hired individual
<p>All fees will be paid in advance of the wedding by checks written to the individuals 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, fees will be determined by the Wedding Coordinator.</p>	