

Wedding Policies of First United Methodist Church

THE CHURCH WEDDING

We of the First United Methodist Church are happy that you desire to have your wedding in the church. The altar is a place where great decisions are made in the presence of God. It is a holy place and is appropriately used for the uniting of persons in matrimony. We wish you every happiness as you plan and live in a Christian marriage.

The Christian Wedding is a worship service as well as a civil ceremony. The service is to be planned with the awareness that it is by the grace of God that two persons are able to make such life-long commitments to each other and to live together in the sight of God to offer special thanks and praise, to make vows, and to ask God's blessings upon the marriage. This dictates that the wedding service itself is to be viewed with reverence as well as a time of celebration and happiness. "It is therefore not to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly and within the will of God." The United Methodist Church has given authority to pastors to conduct wedding services.

The church is eager to help make the wedding beautiful and meaningful. In the happy excitement (and mounting pressures.) that precede a wedding, many questions arise and must be answered. This guide is to help you in planning your wedding.

Please feel free to ask questions concerning the rationale behind any policies or regulations which bother you. Each of them has a history!

SETTING THE DATE

When the initial call is made to the church secretary, the bride's preference of date and church's availability and pastor availability can be compared. A tentative date is set. This will be confirmed by the pastor in a letter to the bride, including the guide "When You Marry." Scheduled church services, certain seasonal conflicts, and prior arranged weddings sometimes require adjustments. At the convenience of the bride and groom, an early conference should be scheduled with the Pastor and Coordinator. This can be done through the church secretary. The earlier you talk with the church secretary, the better! Two weddings cannot be scheduled for the same day.

THE PASTOR

As a matter of etiquette, the pastor is to be consulted about all weddings in the local church. The Pastor is in charge of the wedding. If an additional minister is requested to share the service, the host pastor will be responsible for offering the invitation and consulting with the bride and groom concerning the order of worship. The conference with the pastor is a time for establishing rapport, building a personal relationship, and previewing the wedding vows. Subsequent counseling sessions shall be arranged at the discretion of the pastor, bride and groom.

The Official Wedding Ceremony of the United Methodist Church is known throughout our society as one of succinct language, beautiful phraseology, and deep meaning. A product of long evolutionary life, the words take deep personal feeling and expression in a religious context. Upon scrutiny, you will probably be able to adopt it as your own. However, some alterations can be made in consultation with the pastor. If the wedding party wishes to incorporate the wedding vows within the context of a modified worship service, this can be arranged. It is appropriate to have printed bulletins for this purpose, if desired. Fee: Non-Members \$150.00

THE WEDDING COORDINATOR

After you have reserved the church and engaged the pastor and organist, the church can provide a trained wedding director, if one is desired. You may use someone of your own choosing as long as they follow the guidelines established by the church. The church wedding Coordinator will be available for assistance and to answer any questions when needed. The wedding coordinator will assist you before the wedding and will direct the wedding rehearsal, in conjunction with the pastor. She is a key person for you. She takes many burdens off you, acquaints you with the church facilities available to you, and help combine your personal taste with wedding etiquette and church policy. She is your friend. Fee: Non-Members \$100.00

MUSIC

The Director of Music or pastor will be happy to work with you in selecting your music. You do not have to use the church's organist; however, the Director of Music will approve and set the times for practice for the guest organist.