

Weddings

GUIDELINES AND POLICIES





WEDDINGS AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Christian marriage ceremony is a worship experience in which God blesses the union of husband and wife. We are honored you have chosen First United Methodist Church for your wedding and we look forward to assisting you in this important event in your lives. Every element of a wedding at First United Methodist Church is respectful of the sacred concept and because of this, we have established guidelines to help plan your wedding here.

TO BEGIN

The first step in planning your wedding at First United Methodist Church is to contact the Administrative Assistant through the church office. The Administrative Assistant will help you select your date and facility requests. Your date is contingent upon the church calendar and the professional calendars of our Senior Pastor and Director of Music.

Administrative Assistant
704.636.3121, extension 101

First United Methodist Church has two wedding venues from which to choose – the Nave which seats 850 and the Chapel which seats 75.

First United Methodist Church requires that one of the current Pastors officiate weddings held in the Church or Chapel. If desired, a Pastor from another Church or former Pastor may be invited at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.

All weddings are held on Saturdays, with exceptions for holidays and holy days which are listed in this document.

We look forward to helping create a beautiful, sacred event with you. You will find additional information enclosed or through our Wedding Coordinator.

RESERVING YOUR WEDDING

Couples wishing to be married at First United Methodist Church will contact the Administrative Assistant to set a time and date and obtain a schedule of fees. A meeting with the assigned Wedding Director is required to discuss procedures and policies for weddings at First United Methodist Church. Though a reservation may be made up to one year in advance, confirmation is contingent upon the couple signing and returning appropriate agreements and a fifty-percent deposit of required fees.

Weddings are held on Saturday at various times, with exceptions for the following holidays and holy days: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Holy Week, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Weddings are also not scheduled during the season of Lent.

YOUR WEDDING DIRECTOR

Once the date and time of your wedding is confirmed, you will be paired with a church Wedding Director – most often, our Wedding Coordinator. The Church Wedding Director is responsible for conducting both the rehearsal and the wedding. This includes the traditions of seating, processional and retiring processional and placement of the wedding party in the chancel. On the wedding day, each Director has an Assistant to help coordinate the activities of the wedding party.

Outside bridal consultants are welcome to help the bride and her attendants prior to the ceremony. First United Methodist Church reserves the right to have final say in matters regarding the ceremony and facilities.

OFFICIATING MINISTER

The couple should contact the Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Church to arrange for premarital counseling. First United Methodist Church requires all weddings be officiated by a minister on our staff. As a Service of Worship, weddings should be consistent with the traditions of First United Methodist Church. Our staff and ministers welcome the opportunity to plan and coordinate your wedding ceremony. An honorarium to the officiating minister is included in the church fees.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING

First United Methodist Church requires that a couple have at least two premarital counseling sessions before their marriage. As part of your counseling session, couples will receive a copy of the United Methodist Order of Service. You will discuss the service and any other requests you may have. Any changes to the service must be approved by the officiating minister.

YOUR MARRIAGE LICENSE

It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain a marriage license prior to the wedding. The marriage license should be given to the officiating minister or Wedding Director no later than the rehearsal date. A wedding cannot occur without the license.

Information regarding the license can be obtained by calling:
Rowan County Register of Deeds 704.216.8236

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

It is the responsibility of the couple to provide a printed order of service for guests. The church can provide a list of local printing agencies for this purpose. The order of service must be approved by the Officiating Minister, Director of Music, and Wedding Coordinator before printing. Approval is recommended two weeks before your ceremony.

THE REHEARSAL

All rehearsals are held on the Friday evening prior to your wedding. Available rehearsal times are 4:00 pm, 5:00pm and 6:00pm. The Wedding Director will conduct the rehearsal with the officiating minister in attendance.

The Order of Worship, traditions of seating, placement of the attendants, instructions to the ushers and/or groomsmen and bridesmaids will be covered at the rehearsal. The members of the wedding party should remember they are in a holy place dedicated to the worship of God, and should act and dress accordingly.

First United Methodist Church allows 45 minutes for each rehearsal. Since there may be other church related events scheduled on the same evening, please know how important it is that the wedding party arrive on time to receive complete information and instruction. We suggest the wedding party arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time.

FURNITURE

A general rule is that appointed furniture may not be moved. Please consult with your wedding director for any specific requests.

MUSIC

The Director of Music and Organist of First United Methodist Church will coordinate the selection of music appropriate for your wedding. The Organist of First United Methodist Church will play for all weddings. An honorarium to the Organist is included in the church fees.

After you have finalized your order of worship, please contact the Director of Music and Organist at (704.636.3121, extension 104) for an appointment. It is suggested that your consultation occur three months prior to the ceremony.

The organ is the primary instrument used for weddings at First United Methodist Church. Processionals and Recessionals will be played upon the organ. The Organist will be glad to familiarize you with a variety of selections appropriate for your wedding. All music will be sacred and reflect the tradition of music at First United Methodist Church.

Professional soloists and musicians are available through the Stanback Department of Sacred Music. The Director of Music will contract approved musicians on the couple's behalf. Texts of vocal solos are limited to Scripture and sacred poetry. Vocalists must wear the choir vestments of the church. First United Methodist Church does not permit the use of prerecorded or electronically produced music.

FLOWERS, CANDLES AND PARAMENTS

First United Methodist Church is a Church of dignified beauty and thus does not necessitate additional decorations. Only fresh flowers and greenery are to be used. The church recommends one large floral display on the retable using only the standard brass urns typically used for services of worship. The baptismal font and Paschal candle are to remain in place. For the safety of our guests, the Church prohibits the use of an aisle cloth, runner, or flower petals. The Altar Guild will ensure paraments are white for all weddings. Pew torches are available if desired. Decorations shall not be attached to any furniture or walls by pins, tacks, or any form of adhesive tape. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to remove decorations and flowers from the building following the ceremony. If desired, altar flowers may be placed in the narthex for the following morning's services or remain on the altar if available. Please consult your Wedding Director and the Administrative Assistant in coordinating this extension of your wedding celebration.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Because a wedding is a worship service, First United Methodist Church does not permit photography during the ceremony. This policy is enforced and includes professional photographers, family, friends and guests. Please be sure they are informed so they may respect the sacredness of the Church and service. During the recessional, the photographer may take pictures of the wedding party from the back of the church at the double doors and gallery. Flash is permissible during the retiring procession only. We do not permit movement or positioning of the photographer during the service. All professional photography may begin no more than one and one half hours before the ceremony. Any pictures taken prior to the ceremony must be completed 30 minutes before the ceremony begins. Any pictures taken after the ceremony must be completed within 30 minutes of the ceremony ending. The officiating minister is delighted to participate in pictures taken immediately after the ceremony. The photographer must sign and agree to the official policy on photography.

VIDEOGRAPHY

Videographers must assume a fixed position in the rear gallery. Videographers may not move during the ceremony and must remain as unobtrusive as possible. No cameras, microphones, recording devices or special lighting are allowed in the chancel area of the Nave or Chapel. The videographer must sign and agree to the official policy on videography.

PLEASE NOTE

Photographers, videographers and their assistants must wear appropriate professional attire for a wedding ceremony. They agree to not inhibit the job of the Wedding Director, Minister, Organist or Wedding Assistants, particularly in regards to the timing and sacredness of the ceremony.

Photographers, videographers and their assistants violating the regulations of the church will be excused from the ceremony and forbidden from taking pictures or video at future weddings at First United Methodist Church.

BUILDING POLICIES

Alcoholic beverages and smoking are not permitted on church premises. At the discretion of the Minister and/or Wedding Director, a rehearsal or wedding ceremony may not proceed if any member of the wedding party has consumed alcoholic beverages.

Only water may be served in the Elizabeth Stanback Room. Please no food or drink in the Nave or Chapel.

No rice, bird seed, confetti, artificial or natural rose petals or potpourri may be used on church premises.

The Church is an open building and while every effort is made to maintain security, First United Methodist Church cannot be held responsible for valuables left in the building. Purses and valuables should not be left unattended.

ADDITIONAL WEDDING POLICIES

Experience has shown that having a bride's book or a receiving line at the Church delays the wedding or wedding photography. Please plan both of these for your reception.

The church is reserved two hours prior to the ceremony and thirty minutes after. Please observe the church's request that your wedding party arrive at the church no earlier than two hours before the wedding. Early arrivals cannot be accommodated. Designated waiting areas will be available two hours before the wedding. The bridal party should have hair and make-up done before arriving, but may leave final preparations for the Elizabeth Stanback Room. The groom and groomsmen should arrive dressed and ready. The Wedding Director is responsible for assisting all members of the wedding party and the families in taking their places at the proper time.

We recommend that flower girls, ring bearers and attendants be at least five years of age. Due to space limitations, having more than eight attendants is discouraged.

Please note that fraternal and/or military ceremony are not a part of our worship to God, and therefore it is appropriate for these organizations to honor your wedding in another location.

Pets may not serve as attendants or participate in the ceremony.

Following the service, the Officiating Minister will dismiss the congregation as one worshipping body.

A nursery with certified safe-sanctuary staff is available for an additional fee. Please inform your Wedding Director if this service is needed.

WEDDING FEES

Wedding fees at First United Methodist Church include a reservation fee to hold the date on the church calendar. The reservation fee is \$500 for members and \$1,250 for guests. Checks should be made payable to First United Methodist Church and given to the Business Administrator. Remaining fees, including those for contracted musicians, are due two months before your wedding date and include:

- Planning Sessions with Clergy
- First United Methodist Church Organist
- Altar Guild Supplies
- Facility Fee for rehearsal and ceremony
- Custodial fee

Member*
\$1,000

Guests
\$2,500

*To be considered a contributing member of First United Methodist Church, a person has committed their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness to the church for one calendar year.

CHECKLIST

- After receiving guidelines and policies, contact the Administrative Assistant to tentatively book date and make preliminary arrangements. The reservation fee is due in the business office at this time.
- Contact Senior Pastor
- Contact Director of Music
- Contact Videographer and have required form signed and returned
- Contact Photographer and have required form signed and returned
- Return required information forms to the Administrative Assistant
- Submit required fees as applicable to the Business Administrator
- Ensure the wedding party knows the time, place, and dress code for both rehearsal and wedding day.

NOTES



ADOPTED
NOVEMBER, 2015