

Weddings at First United Methodist Church



Policies for Your Special Day

*801 South Main Street
Jonesboro, Arkansas 72401
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Welcoming

First United Methodist Church

The staff and church family are grateful that you are giving First United Methodist Church an opportunity to share its ministries with you through the event of your wedding. Our goal is to provide a Christian worship setting that is sacred and honors the institution of Christian marriage. This service is provided for couples choosing to solemnize their marriage by proclaiming God's words of prayer and praise. Christian marriage is proclaimed as a sacred covenant reflecting Christ's covenant with the Church.

Every aspect of the wedding ceremony, including musical selections, readings and church decorations must enhance the worship experience and contribute to the sanctity of the wedding vows. First United Methodist Church has various policies and guidelines concerning the wedding ceremony itself and the use of the church facilities. These are outlined in this booklet and the accompanying agreements. It is very important that the prospective bride and groom read these materials and understand the rules applicable to the florist, the photographer, the videographer and the caterer providing services for you. You are equally responsible for seeing that all persons providing services at your wedding comply with the policies and guidelines of First United Methodist Church, as well as the wishes of the ministers.

The ministers, the organist, and the wedding liaison are all experienced in the details of wedding planning and are eager to assist you. It is our hope that careful planning and our working together with you can contribute to a joyous wedding.

At a place called Cana of Galilee, Christ "adorned and beautified" a wedding with His presence. Through our assistance with your wedding, we hope that you and all concerned will experience His presence again.

First United Methodist Church
801 South Main
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Wedding Policy

It is the desire of the Ministers, Board of Trustees, Administrative Board, and congregation of First United Methodist Church that your wedding be a memorable event-beautiful and meaningful. It is to this end that the following guidelines and policies have been established.

Note to non-members: First United Methodist Church is not in the “wedding business”. We encourage non-members to use their family churches for their weddings. We do realize there are circumstances in which the request for use of a church of which you are not a member is legitimate. In such cases we try to cooperate in making arrangements with non-members, however, additional fees apply. Please read this policy carefully before requesting the use of First United Methodist Church for your wedding so you will be familiar with our expectations.

Guidelines and Procedures for The Wedding Service

- ❖ The Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God.
- ❖ The mood, atmosphere and contents of the service are to be in keeping with the statement of the wedding vows, “Before God and these witnesses.”
- ❖ The service will be planned with careful thought and preparation in consultation with the minister and the wedding liaison.
- ❖ The date and time of the wedding and all rehearsals are coordinated with the church calendar and are approved by the staff.
A visiting minister must be approved by the Senior Pastor.
- ❖ All requirements set by the church and the State of Arkansas are to be fully met.
- ❖ Reverence is expected on the part of all present.

Wedding Planning Timetable

1. You should plan to meet with the church wedding liaison as soon as you have chosen a date so that the Liaison can secure your date on the church calendar. When you meet with the wedding liaison, you will pay your deposit, submit a wedding request form that will be submitted to the Senior Pastor for approval, and discuss the church wedding policy. The wedding liaison is required and will work under the leadership of the Officiating Minister to assist in the planning and coordination of the rehearsal and wedding. You will also discuss the style of service you have in mind and continued steps in the wedding planning process.
2. You are responsible for securing your wedding date on the officiating minister's calendar, which is kept by each individual pastor. The date on the church calendar does not guarantee availability on the pastor's calendar. Ministerial etiquette requires that visiting ministers must receive the approval and invitation of the senior pastor of the church. If you plan to use a visiting minister, there will be an additional fee of \$50 for the church wedding liaison in assisting them.
3. You should set an appointment to meet with the officiating minister no later than four months prior to the wedding ceremony to discuss the exact wedding ritual.
4. You should set an appointment to meet with the church organist no later than 3 months prior to the wedding ceremony to discuss music details including additional instrumentalists, suggestions for musical selections, possibilities for soloists or musical groups, sound system needs, etc. **You must meet with the officiating minister prior to meeting with the organist.**
5. You will want to meet with your assigned wedding liaison to discuss setup of the church facilities for the rehearsal and ceremony at least 1 month prior to your wedding.
6. If appropriate, contact your florist, photographer, and caterer. Please familiarize yourself with all policies and be prepared to interpret them to all employed and volunteer assistants.
7. Complete the wedding party list and return to the church wedding liaison no later than 1 month prior to your wedding.
8. Return signed forms to the church wedding liaison from employed florists, photographers, videographers and caterers no later than 1 month prior to your wedding.
9. All fees should be paid in full no later than 1 month prior to your wedding.

Scheduling of Weddings

Beginning

The scheduling of a wedding is arranged through the wedding liaison. He/she will explain the details of all policies and procedures. A prospective bride and groom are required to submit their completed Wedding Reservation Form at time of meeting with the wedding liaison. The wedding date will only become final once these forms and fees are received. Members of First United Methodist Church may reserve the facilities as far in advance of the ceremony as they wish. For purposes of these guidelines, "member" means the bride and groom or the parents of the bride or groom that have been active members of FUMC at least one year prior to the time the wedding is scheduled. An active member is one who has upheld his/her membership vows to serve God and His church through his/her prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Regular attendance is considered and will be checked with the membership secretary. Weddings scheduled with an on-site reception can begin no later than 5:00 p.m. Any wedding with an off-site reception can begin no later than 7:00 p.m.

Weddings During Advent / Other Christian Holidays

Advent weddings are available at First UMC to members only, and each wedding must be cleared by all church staff through the wedding liaison before being put on the calendar. Those members who choose to have their weddings in December must realize that the facilities will be used as is. The sanctuary is decorated beginning with the first Sunday of Advent. Inside decorations include two trees, poinsettias, greenery and ribbons. Outdoor decorations including wreaths, garlands, and ribbons must remain. Once these decorations are in place, they are not to be moved until after the New Year. Additional decorations may be added.

There are other times of year such as Easter and the Fourth of July, that the sanctuary is also decorated as well as the exterior of the church. In choosing your date, please make sure special holidays have been considered.

Wedding Liaison

Our wedding liaison is required for pre-wedding consultation in regard to the details of the rehearsal and of the wedding. Only our wedding liaison, in cooperation with the officiating minister, will conduct the rehearsal; she/he will also assist the minister and the wedding party in the process of the ceremony.

Officiating Minister

Only an appointed pastor in the United Methodist Church may officiate at weddings in this church. The officiating minister may invite another ordained minister to assist. If a couple has not chosen a minister, our wedding liaison will be happy to assist in arranging for one of our staff ministers to officiate at their wedding. The officiating minister must approve any other person assisting in the service. The officiating minister and organist must approve the order of service, scriptures and the program.

Pre-marital Counseling

Pre-marital counseling with the officiating pastor is required for those married at First UMC. The counseling should be arranged with the pastor well in advance of the wedding date. It has been shown that those who are willing to discuss their relationship with a pastor or other professional counselor before marriage are more likely to seek and receive help later if problems should develop. We also believe it is important to understand the Christian meaning of marriage and the importance of sharing the Christian faith.

Wedding Ritual

The wedding ritual in the United Methodist Book of Worship Wedding Service includes the following elements. Your officiating minister may discuss with you various alternatives in the wording and arrangement of these items. You may also consider the inclusion of additional items such as the unity candle, kneeling bench, communion, etc. **Please note that communion must be open to all who wish to participate. The wedding program must be approved by the officiating pastor prior to printing.**

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Processional

Greeting

Charge to the Couple

Presentation of the Bride

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Exchange of Vows

Giving and Receiving of Rings

Declaration of Union

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Prayers

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Benediction

Recessional

**Optional sacred music selections*

***Optional sacred music selection and/or Unity Candle.*

Music

The wedding is a service of worship at which a man and a woman come to unite their lives in the eyes of God and the company of those dearest to them. The music for their wedding should reflect this Christian joy. Music that is a part of the Christian worship experience should evoke the spirit of prayer and praise. While any music that celebrates the romance of Christian marriage may be considered, music that exalts an individual over God or emphasizes sensuality over the spiritual nature of worship will be considered inappropriate. Our organists are familiar with a wide variety of literature and will be happy to assist the bride and groom in finding sacred music which reflects the couple's unique feelings, yet upholds the integrity of the worship service. **The organist, in consultation with the Director of Music and Worship, must approve all music, both vocal and instrumental.**

Only the staff musicians of this church shall play the church's instruments. If the bride and groom ask a friend to sing at the wedding, a rehearsal time can be arranged with the organist. The soloist must have the music prepared before the rehearsal. Fees for the services of musicians other than the organist are separate from the fee for the use of the church. All fee negotiations and performance from extra musicians are the responsibility of the couple. The music office is available to assist you in securing instrumentalists and vocalists. **No pre-recorded music will be used for the wedding in any manner.**

Please make an appointment with the organist for consultation by calling the FUMC music office. At the consultation the following music will be selected:

- Pre-service music.
- Processional and recessional music
- Vocal and/or instrumental music (performed by a soloist, instrumentalist, or ensemble approved by the church organist).

The organist's fee includes:

- The wedding music consultation.
- A rehearsal with any soloist or instrumentalist one hour prior to the wedding rehearsal.
- The wedding rehearsal and ceremony.

Feel free to use the music office as a resource for ideas about music for your wedding.

Sound & Video Systems

Operation of the church sound and video systems must be by church staff technicians. A sound technician will be assigned to your wedding and is covered in the wedding fee.

Rehearsal

The rehearsals will be conducted exclusively by our wedding liaison, in cooperation with the officiating minister, if he or she is present. Members of the wedding party are reminded that throughout the entire rehearsal they are in a holy place dedicated to the worship of God. Wedding parties and guests are expected to dress and act accordingly. Rehearsals must begin promptly and proceed in a dignified manner. Often there is more than one rehearsal scheduled in an evening, making punctuality imperative. The rehearsal will last approximately one hour. These plans can be arranged with our wedding liaison and the officiating minister. If a program is to be used it must be given to the wedding liaison 48 hours prior to the rehearsal.

Photography and Videography

Photographs and videotapes will provide many years of enjoyment in remembering your wedding day.

The wedding ceremony is a service of worship. No photography or videotaping must interfere with the worship experience. Anyone (professional or non-professional) who is photographing or videotaping the wedding is responsible for abiding by the rules of First United Methodist Church.

The agreement form must be completed and returned. Failure to abide by the rules of First United Methodist Church property policies will cause a loss of privileges at the church. Ignorance of these rules will not be considered a valid excuse.

The bride and groom need to familiarize themselves with the terms of the agreement and the rules specified by this church. Neither the photographer, video operator, nor any assistants may move around the church, walk in the aisle, enter the chancel choir area, altar area or the wedding loft for the purpose of taking photographs or video once the wedding music has begun.

The photographer and videographer must remain in the rear of the church during the wedding processional and recessional. All chancel videography must be by remote cameras. The photographer/videographer must remain behind the last pew rows or in the balcony at all times until the wedding is over. Sanctuary filming must be done in a side aisle by remote cameras or may be manned in the balcony. No flash photographs or lighted video filming may be taken during the wedding ceremony.

As many photographs as possible should be taken before the wedding to expedite picture taking after the ceremony. Consultations with photographer/videographer should include clear instructions from you as to what photos are to be taken and the length of time the photographer needs to perform his job.

The bride and groom should inform the ushers, family members and guests that flash photographs are not permitted during the ceremony.

Wedding Decorations and Flowers

The sanctuary and chapel are beautiful facilities. Decorations need not be elaborate to be effective. The bride and groom should read and be familiar with the terms of the Florist Agreement and the restrictions regarding the decorating of the sanctuary and chapel. The florist you select must sign the agreement and send a deposit of \$100.00 to First United Methodist Church. This deposit is required to assure that any damage to church property is corrected and to ensure that the sanctuary will be clean following the wedding ceremony. (See Florist Agreement Contract). The florist will be held responsible for any damages done to the building and/or furniture and is responsible for cleaning wax from the floor and furniture should an accident occur. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of the deposit and the risk of not being allowed to provide services for future weddings at First UMC.

If you wish to leave your floral arrangements for the Sunday Worship services at First UMC, we would be delighted to use them in the sanctuary or the narthex of the sanctuary. A form for flower honorarium memorials is available for your use. Please inform your florist if you plan to leave the flowers for the church's use.

Furniture and chancel fixtures are not to be moved or rearranged, and vestments are not to be substituted. This includes altar cloths, banners, the American and Christian flags, instruments (including contemporary worship instruments, monitors, and drums) and all sanctuary decor. Furniture will be moved only after consultation with the church wedding liaison and clearance with the Senior Pastor and Director of Music and Worship. An additional charge may be incurred.

Facility Descriptions

Weddings

Sanctuary-Seating 850

Chapel-Seating 160

Small, private wedding ceremony:

This is defined as a wedding requiring no rehearsal and little or no decoration. (There is a limit of one arrangement.) The bride and groom and possibly one attendant each walk into the chapel and stand before the minister for the wedding service. Wedding guests are limited to family and possibly a few close friends totaling no more than twenty (20) guests. No wedding liaison or organist will assist. Scheduling is the responsibility of the wedding party with an officiating pastor of First UMC.

Receptions

Fellowship Hall -100

Church facilities for wedding receptions are available for your use. The Fellowship Hall will comfortably fit 100. Any person providing food for your reception, whether professional, family or friends must execute the Caterer's Agreement after consulting with the Kitchen Supervisor. A member of the kitchen staff must be present throughout the event and a charge will be incurred. Also, you will need to provide the maintenance staff with a diagram of the table set up for your reception. This can be facilitated through the wedding liaison. The reception and clean-up must be completed within four hours from the start of the wedding.

Dressing Areas

The second floor Sunday school rooms are available for the men of the bridal party and the Hon Lounge is available as a dressing room for the bride and her attendants. The Hon Lounge is available to each bride beginning approximately three hours prior to the wedding. A fee of \$15 per hour will be charged for additional time. Women are advised to come to the church with hair and make-up prepared. Our restroom facilities do not lend themselves to such procedures. Each member of the wedding party will want to bring a bag to put all of their belongings in to keep in the dressing room. Please clean up everything before leaving. Family members should take all personal items from the Hon Lounge and dressing rooms as soon as the wedding party is dressed and place them in their locked cars. Please note that First UMC is not responsible for any personal belongings left in the Hon Lounge or anywhere else on the church's premises including wedding dresses, purses, billfolds, jewelry, clothing, silver, etc.

Guest Book

As a convenience to guests, a table may be set up either in the narthex. Have two pens at the guest book so people may sign more quickly. If possible, having loose leaf pages from a guest book at two tables allowing two lines works very well. This facilitates the seating of guests.

Items of Concern

Smoking in First United Methodist Church is forbidden. Alcoholic beverages or drugs of any kind are forbidden anywhere on the premises. This includes the parking lots and dressing rooms. The officiating minister may refuse to perform a wedding at which a member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It is the responsibility of the persons making arrangements for the wedding to see that all members of the wedding party are informed concerning these matters.

Consumption of food or drink is not allowed in the sanctuary or chapel and must be confined to the Fellowship Hall or other areas approved by the church wedding liaison so as to keep custodial services to a minimum.

For safety reasons, rice, confetti and birdseed may not be thrown on the church premises. Only silk rose petals may be used in the sanctuary on the carpet and **MUST** be removed by hand immediately following the ceremony by the wedding party. This is not the responsibility of the custodian. Only real rose petals may be thrown on the front church steps and will be the responsibility of clean up by the wedding party immediately following the ceremony. Again, this is not the responsibility of the custodian.

Wedding Fees

Deposit (due within seven days of booking facility and **non-refundable**)

Members - \$75.00 (non-refundable)

Non-Member - \$150.00 (non-refundable)

\$500.00 (refundable security deposit)

All other fees are due by one month prior to the scheduled wedding date.

For First UMC Church Members

These fees include the wedding liaison, the organist, the audio technician, and the custodial staff. They do not include fees for other musicians or additional charges for arranging for special musicians and their rehearsals, nor do they include honorariums for the clergy. (\$150-200 is suggested.)

Sanctuary Wedding Fee - \$625.00

Chapel Wedding Fee - \$400

Chapel Sound Technician - \$50 if needed

Fellowship Hall Reception - \$100

Kitchen Assistant (required for receptions with kitchen facilities) - \$15/hour (\$50 minimum)

For Non-Members

These fees include the Wedding Liaison, the organist, the audio technician, and the custodial staff. They do not include fees for other musicians or additional charges for arranging for special musicians and their rehearsals.

Sanctuary Wedding Fee - \$1750.00

Chapel Wedding Fee - \$1050

Sound Technician - \$75 if needed

Fellowship Hall Reception - \$300

Kitchen Assistant (required for receptions with kitchen facilities) - \$15/hour (\$50 minimum)

Refunding of Fees

50% of above fees will be retained by First United Methodist Church for cancellations made within 48 hours of wedding date.

Policies for Wedding Related Property Use at First United Methodist Church

1. First United Methodist Church is not responsible for the loss or any damage to personal property of the wedding party, guests or any outside contractors.
2. The Hon Lounge and dressing rooms are available three hours before a wedding. As soon as you and your attendants are ready, personal belongings should be taken from the dressing rooms and locked in a car or given to a friend.
3. Smoking is not permitted inside any of the buildings or on the grounds of First United Methodist Church.
4. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is not permitted on the property of First United Methodist Church, including the parking lots and grounds. No alcoholic beverages, including wine or champagne may be served at receptions at First United Methodist Church.
5. **Weddings may not be held** on New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Easter weekend (commencing with Maundy Thursday), Thanksgiving weekend, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day or other holidays and occasions when the church is officially closed or scheduling conflicts would occur.
6. The availability of the church facilities for weddings or receptions is on a first-come basis. **Please note that other church activities and/or weddings may be held on the same day.**
7. No Sunday weddings.
8. The kneeling cushions and all other church accouterments cannot be removed from the sanctuary where they are placed, nor may they be removed for use elsewhere within the church property.
9. For pictures taken before the wedding, the sanctuary, chapel, Hon Lounge and the grounds of the church are available to the bride and her photographer and videographer. Other areas may be used if another group is not using them. No flash photography is permitted during the processional or wedding service once the music begins.
10. Both professional contractors and family or friends may provide decorations, food, photographic and video services for weddings. Anyone who provides these services must be familiar with the policies of First United Methodist Church and execute and return the appropriate forms and deposits. The bride and groom are responsible for informing all of these persons of Church policies.
11. First UMC does not supply wedding equipment (candelabras, unity candles, etc.)
12. First UMC does not supply childcare for weddings or rehearsals. Church nursery rooms are not available for use during weddings or rehearsals.