

# Wedding Policy for Non-Members

## First United Methodist Church of Beaumont, Texas

I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. *The Song of Solomon 6: 3*

Marriage in a church is a worship service with all of the elements having spiritual significance. The responsibility of the church, both to God who is served and to those to whom the church ministers, is to provide for the expression of the meaning of marriage. Those seeking to be married in First United Methodist Church are asking specifically for a Christian marriage and are expressing their intention to remain part of the Christian community after the marriage ceremony.

In planning the marriage the bride and groom will work with the members of the church staff and Altar Guild who are dedicated to helping make each wedding a significant and joyful act of Christian worship. The Altar Guild is a group of the church which helps with all of the church's rites and sacraments (weddings, funerals, Holy Communion, etc.). Two Altar Guild Wedding Coordinators will assist with all weddings. In everything we do as Christians, our personal preferences in planning a marriage service are disciplined by our commitment to honor God in worship and to witness with integrity to the special character of Christian marriage.

The facilities of First United Methodist Church are available for weddings to non-members. The facilities of the church for receptions are not available to non-members. **A member is defined as one who has joined our church at least six months prior to the scheduling of the wedding, or is a son or daughter of an FUMC member.**

The congregation, clergy and staff are honored that you have chosen First United Methodist Church for the worship service of your wedding. Those planning the wedding will have a certain freedom to plan a service that is particularly meaningful to those attending. However, in return for this privilege, it is important to be mindful that you are using facilities that have been constructed, furnished, and decorated by the members of this church to worship God in their own unique way. It is very important that you plan your wedding within the parameters of this wedding policy. Couples that have already been married in a civil ceremony are asked to consult with the Senior Pastor regarding the appropriateness of a worship ceremony prior to making a reservation.

### Making the Reservation

Availability of dates, times and facilities may be obtained by phone from the Assistant to the Pastors. It will be necessary for the bride or her designated representative to confirm with one of the Pastors before the reservation is placed on the calendar as **“tentative.”** For non-members, the reservation will be changed to **“final”** after the “Pre-wedding Conference” with the Pastor and the payment of one-half the fees, but in no case more than eight months prior to the requested date. The exact hour of the rehearsal and the wedding are to be set at the time the reservation is made for facilities.

When choosing a date for your wedding at First United Methodist Church, keep in mind the following:

- Scheduling weddings on or around major holidays or holiday weekends is discouraged. However, the final decision is left with the Senior Pastor.
- The church will be decorated appropriately for the church season on the Christian calendar. These decorations are to be included in your decorating plan. After your wedding date has been confirmed, one of the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinators will contact the bride-to-be to give assistance in the planning of the service.
- Two hours are allowed for the wedding. The church will be open two hours before the wedding. Earlier access requires additional compensation for the custodial staff and utility expenses.
- On occasion, there may be two weddings on the same day. At least 5 hours are needed between wedding starting times to allow ample time for set up of the second wedding.

## **Pre-Wedding Conference**

A couple planning to be married should arrange a conference with the officiating Pastor as soon as possible after a tentative date for the wedding has been set. **No weddings are conducted without this step.** The initiative for the first conference should be taken by the bride and groom. Additional conferences will be arranged, if desired, in consultation with the Pastor.

## **Guest Ministers**

A pastor from another United Methodist church or minister from a church of another denomination is welcome to assist with the wedding ceremony and will be extended an invitation by the Senior Pastor. However, **one of the Pastors of First United Methodist Church will lead the rehearsal and will be the officiating pastor in every wedding, but will welcome guest pastors to assist.**

## **Music**

Music is an important part of the wedding service. It is our desire to assist the couple in selecting music that will enhance the nature of the service and give praise to God for the love they share. Songs selected as vocal solos, duets or choral pieces should be Christian music, and the words must be not only appropriate to a Christian worship service/wedding ceremony but also theologically in line with United Methodist and Christian practice and tradition. Within these parameters, there is a wide variety of music of different styles and genres that will be acceptable to the officiating Pastor and/or one of the Coordinators of Music Ministries.

The sanctuary and chapel have high quality acoustics for music. The sanctuary is equipped with an excellent pipe organ and grand piano. The chapel is equipped with a Clavinova, a most versatile keyboard-type instrument. Other instruments, such as strings, brass, woodwinds, harp, etc. may also be used in the worship service, with the approval of the Pastor or one of the Coordinators of Music Ministries. Pre-recorded music on cassettes, CDs or DVDs may not be used except in rare instances as accompaniment for a

soloist, and only then after approval by the officiating Pastor and one of the Coordinators of Music Ministries.

The securing of an organist is the responsibility of those being married, and should be done as soon as possible. Because the church's 77 rank, 4-manual Aeolian-Skinner organ is a large, complicated instrument, the regular First Methodist organist generally should play for weddings. The approval of the officiating Pastor and the organist is required if someone other than the regular church organist is asked to play. The couple will schedule a consultation with the organist no later than six weeks before the wedding date to choose music for processional, recessional, vocal music (if used) and any additional instrumental music.

Arrangements for vocalists or instrumentalists must be made by the couple to be married.

- The music staff of First Church is familiar with a number of vocalists and instrumentalists, and will be happy to make recommendations to the couple. The couple will pay the additional fees for the vocalists/instrumentalists.
- Vocalists are often family members and friends of the couple. Necessary rehearsal time will be scheduled after the couple and organist select the music.
- The music staff has at its disposal a wide repertoire of organ, vocal, and instrumental music. Selections will be discussed at the organist consultation.
- It may be possible for the music ministry to provide a choir or hand bell ensemble for the wedding. These arrangements must be made no later than four months in advance of the wedding. An additional fee will be assessed as stated in the fee structure.

## **Decorations**

**Please review this section with your florist/decorator.**

A beautiful place of worship requires only very simple decorations. The sanctuary, chapel and parlor at First United Methodist Church have a dignified, simple beauty. Elaborate decorations are out of character and take away from the beauty and detract from the Christian motif of the church setting and symbols of worship as well as detract from the simple dignity and elegance that characterize a church wedding. The addition of a maximum of two flower arrangements on stands in the chancel area, or one flower arrangement on a stand behind the organ in the choir loft, and a maximum of two candelabra stands on either sides of the altar is acceptable in both the sanctuary and/or the chapel. It is also acceptable to add pew markers to distinguish seating for family members and special guests.

It is very important that no flowers or decorations be placed in such a way as to hide from clear view all of the worship symbols, such as the cross, the Bible, the altar, or the pulpit. The area behind the altar must remain unobstructed to allow the organist to have an unencumbered view of the wedding ceremony so no arrangements are to be between the altar and the organ. All church furniture and fittings must remain in the nave and chancel areas appropriately placed and outfitted for a worship service. The ministers, and the wedding party as well as kneelers (if used) may be in front of the altar. The Communion elements are the only additional items that may be placed on the altar. All seasonal

decorations in the church are to remain in place for the wedding, with the exception of large wall banners that maybe removed by the Church custodian for a \$50.00 fee. To preserve the beauty of our church, we require that the following common sense directives be strictly adhered to:

- All greenery, real or artificial is to be used in a free-standing manner.
- Communion Cushions cannot be removed.
- Wrapped wire ribbon or plastic clamps are the only acceptable method of attaching bows to pew ends.
- Furniture fixtures and fittings are to remain in place, as they would be used in a worship service.
- Candelabra must be placed on clear plastic sheets to protect the floors, furniture and needlepoint kneelers in front of the Communion rail.
- Arrangements and decorations are to be non-illuminated. Only the existing light is to be used.
- The center aisle is carpeted; therefore the use of a fabric aisle cloth is acceptable, but unnecessary, unless real flower petals will be scattered.
- The flowers may be delivered the day of, or the day before the wedding. The florist is to inform the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator when the flowers will be delivered at least two weeks in advance of the wedding.
- The church will be available for decorating between 8:30AM and 1:00PM the day before the wedding, or the morning of the wedding if previously arranged with the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator.
- The wedding party's family will assist the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator in removal of all decorations and equipment promptly following the ceremony. The florist's rental equipment can be stored in the sacristy to be picked up the following week.
- If the bride wishes to leave the flowers for the Sunday worship service, it is important this be made known to the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator and/or the church administrator at least two weeks in advance to allow proper acknowledgement in the Sunday bulletin. The Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator has the final decision regarding the appropriateness of the wedding decorations.
- The Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator reserves the right to refuse the use of a florist that has previously deviated from these directives.
- The florist and the family reserving the church will be responsible for any damage done to the furniture, fixtures, or carpet.
- Real flower petals may be scattered down the aisle if an aisle cloth is used. Objects such as rice, birdseed, confetti, or doves are not to be used within the building.
- Birdseed may be used on the grassy areas outside of the church building.
- Florists who have not done a wedding at First Church previously are encouraged to contact the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator to review these directives prior to designing the decorations.

Note: *The Florist/Decorator will be required to sign and return to the Church, a copy of this part of the Wedding Policy. A copy will be provided to the wedding planner or bridal couple.*

## Photographs

Since the wedding ceremony is a religious service, photographs are to be taken only before, or after, the ceremony. The exception is the professional photographer may take photos from any of the last five pews during the processional and recessional. To avoid disruption of the beauty and mood of the service, no other photographs are to be taken during the ceremony, with or without flash. (Please inform friends and family members that photographs are not to be taken during the ceremony.) The wedding party may assemble in the sanctuary or chapel before or after the ceremony to pose for pictures as desired. In consideration of the Pastor's other commitments following the ceremony, the photographer is requested to take photographs first that include the Pastor. The Pastor then may excuse himself while other photographs are taken.

Time exposures may be made from the balcony of the sanctuary or the narthex of the chapel, provided silent equipment is used. Videos of the wedding may be taken from the balcony of the sanctuary or from a stationary position in the choir area. **Any video camera in the choir loft must be on a stationary stand. Once the taping has started, the photographer must either be seated in the choir loft or go in to the sacristy for the duration of the worship service. The choir loft is the only acceptable position for a stationary camera of any type in front of the communion rail. Hand held cameras of any type are specifically excluded from the area in front of the communion rail, and may not be placed on any of the furniture or fixtures.**

The photographer and the family reserving the facilities will be responsible for any damages caused by the photographer's equipment. Failure of the photographer and family to abide by the requests of the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinators and Board of Trustees regarding photography of the ceremony may jeopardize the photographer's ability to photograph future weddings at First United Methodist Church – Beaumont.

Note: *The photographer will be required to sign and return to the Church, a copy of this part of the Wedding Policy. A copy will be provided to the wedding planner or bridal couple*

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## Acolytes

The church has trained acolytes available to light candles. A contribution to the Altar Guild Fund is appropriate if the FUMC acolytes are used. The bride and groom may use young friends or ushers as acolytes. Children serving as acolytes will receive training and robes provided by the Altar Guild. Gloves will be provided to those lighting candles.

## Bridal Attire and Personal Belongings

The bride, in consultation with the Altar Guild's Wedding Coordinator, is responsible for determining at what hour the dresses are to be delivered to the church. The church's responsibility is limited to receiving the dresses and providing a dressing room where they may be left.

Every reasonable effort will be made by the church to assist the wedding party in the protection of personal property. Individuals must use common sense when leaving personal items such as clothing, purses, cameras, silver, glassware, etc., brought to the church. The church is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen property.

## **The Rehearsal**

Wedding rehearsals are normally scheduled for the evening preceding the wedding. The rehearsal date and time must be set with the Assistant to the Pastors at the time the wedding is scheduled.

The bride and groom must insist that all members of the wedding party be prompt. Any delay will reduce the rehearsal time for that particular wedding. Any wedding party member that cannot attend the rehearsal will need a designated substitute selected by the bride and groom.

The following information will help create a smooth rehearsal and wedding:

- First Church's Pastor will be in charge of the rehearsal, and the Altar Guild's Wedding Coordinator will be present to assist the Pastor and the wedding party.
- The Wedding Coordinator will meet with the bride concerning the attendants prior to the rehearsal to obtain information necessary for the Pastor.
- The bride and groom are to have discussed the ceremony and any special ideas with the Pastor at the pre-nuptial conference(s). Changes of plan and surprises are unwelcome in a worship service.
- Weapons of any kind, either real or symbolic, may not be brought on to church property, or used in the wedding ceremony. The use of swords in military weddings is at the Pastor's discretion.
- Animals, with the exception of seeing-eye dogs, may not be brought onto church property, or used in the wedding ceremony.
- All attendants, ushers and parents are needed at the rehearsal.
- Any vocalists or instrumentalists secured outside the church music department need to be present, unless special arrangements are made with the organist / or the Coordinators of Music Ministries.
- The rehearsal will take 1 to 1-1/2 hrs. The rehearsal dinner should be scheduled with this in mind.

**The marriage license is to be given to the Pastor at the rehearsal.**

Prior to the rehearsal, or upon arrival at the rehearsal, please furnish the following information in writing to the Pastor, or the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator:

- Who will light the candles
- Who will seat the mothers
- How many family pews are to be reserved
- A list of all attendants by full name in the order they are to process and recess
- Whether the attendants will process and stand as couples or all females beside the bride and all males beside the groom
- The full names of the bride's parents, groom's parents, and all grandparents
- Ushers' names. (The groomsmen may also serve as ushers if desired)

# The Wedding Reception

The facilities of First Church are not available to non-members for receptions.

## Fees

A beautiful facility like First United Methodist Church – Beaumont is expensive to staff, operate and maintain. The fee schedule below assists in offsetting those costs. A deposit of one half of the fees related to facilities use is required before the wedding date is considered final. The remainder of all fees is required a minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled date. Non-payment of the remainder of fees will cancel the scheduled wedding date, and the deposit will be returned.

Checks for payment of fees should be delivered to the church office at 701 Calder, between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, or may be mailed to First United Methodist Church, PO Box 3247, Beaumont, TX 77704.

## Non-Member Wedding Fees

ITEM	CAPACITY	FEE
Sanctuary	800	\$1,000.00
Chapel	125	\$500.00
Parlor	75	\$200.00
Senior Pastor	Rehearsal & Wedding	\$300.00
Associate Pastor	Rehearsal & Wedding	\$200.00
Organist	Rehearsal & Wedding	\$250.00
Soloist	Rehearsal & Wedding	\$150.00 - \$200.00
Choir or Hand bells	Wedding only	\$350.00
Wedding coordinator	Pre-wedding conference inc.	\$100.00
	Assistant for rehearsal & wedding	\$50.00
Sound	Rehearsal & wedding	\$50.00
Overtime charge	after 4 hrs	\$50.00

The building fee covers the use of the building, temperature control, and four hours of the custodian's services. The custodian must be on duty for the wedding, and may be needed at the rehearsal, at the discretion of the Pastor. If the custodian must spend more than four hours for the wedding, the additional time will be charged.

## Custodians

The custodians have an obligation to the congregation to maintain the church in a neat and orderly manner. The wedding party and guests must abide by their wishes. The custodians are compensated for time required beyond four hours for the wedding. Disposal of wedding decorations are the responsibility of the wedding party, not the custodian.

## Special Notes

Please take note of, and respect the following:

- The use of tobacco is prohibited in any part of the facilities
- The use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs is prohibited on the premises
- No rehearsal or wedding will be conducted when any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Real flower petals may be scattered down the aisle if an aisle cloth is used.
- The use of rice, confetti, or birdseed is discouraged on the church premises, but is specifically forbidden within the church building.
- No child care is available for rehearsals, weddings.
- The bride-to-be is responsible for signing an acknowledgement of receipt of this wedding policy and is responsible for obtaining the signatures of the florist/decorator and photographer acknowledging receipt of a copy of parts of this policy relevant to them.

## Insurance Requirements

Any persons or organizations other than the church staff, providing paid services performed on the church property must provide “Certificates of Insurance” satisfactory to the church, indicating the existence and extent of the following insurance coverage from well-regarded insurance companies:

1. Worker’s Compensation covering all workers providing services performed on the church property
2. General liability with a minimum general aggregate limit of \$50,000.00

The “Certificate of Insurance” must be provided to the church two weeks prior to any work or services being performed on church property. Certain specific items are listed below as examples of such work or services but are not all inclusive:

1. Florist / Decorator
2. Photographer

*NOTE: This insurance requirement does not apply to persons or organizations making deliveries only to the church.*

## Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator Services

The Altar Guild Wedding Coordinators provided by the church are able and willing to advise you concerning your wedding party, attendants, rehearsal, and other matters relating to your wedding. The Coordinators will assist the Pastor at the rehearsal and the wedding. You should consult with them well before the rehearsal. Their services are required for all weddings.

Other consultants are not necessary. If you have someone you feel you must use, they are welcome to work in a subordinate capacity to the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinators. All consultants must understand that once the wedding ceremony begins, the Pastor is in complete charge.

## **Walk-in Weddings**

A wedding is termed a “walk-in wedding” when no rehearsal is required, floral decorations are kept to a minimum and the bride and groom, with possibly one attendant each, walk to the altar together. No building use fee is required for this type of service. If organ or piano music is desired, the church organist should be used. The determination that a ceremony qualifies as a “walk-in wedding” will be at the discretion of the Pastor.

# Normal Order of Worship

Prelude  
Lighting of the Candles  
Seating of the Mothers  
(Solo, Anthem, or Hymn – Optional)  
Procession of the Attendants  
Procession of the Bride and her Escort  
The Greeting  
Declaration of Intent  
Response of the Family and People  
(or Response of the Father)  
(Solo, Anthem, or Hymn – Optional)  
Scripture Lesson(s)  
Sermon or Witness to Christian Marriage  
Intercessory Prayer  
The Exchange of Wedding Vows  
The Exchange of Rings  
The Declaration of Marriage  
Blessing of the Marriage  
The Lord's Prayer (Spoken or Sung)  
(The Unity Candle – Optional)  
Dismissal with Blessing  
The Recessional

First United Methodist Church is a congregation of people with similar beliefs, customs and traditions in their relationship with God. They are willing to share their facilities with you for your religious wedding service and ask in return that you respect their beliefs, customs, and traditions.

The Board of Trustees of First United Methodist Church – Beaumont, TX

Revised 04/2005

My signature below acknowledges receipt of this policy

\_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_