



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2416 W. Cloverdale Park • Montgomery, Alabama 36106 • 334.834.8990 • www.fumcmontgomery.org

Wedding Policies and Procedures

First United Methodist Church is pleased and honored to offer the Wedding Ministry for the very special occasion of holy matrimony. A wedding is one of the happiest and most sacred moments in a lifetime. The wedding ceremony is a worship service where the bride and groom pledge themselves to one another in the presence of God and join their lives to establish a Christian home. The church rejoices with them, their family and their friends and is eager to help make the occasion of the wedding ceremony beautiful and memorable. The true beauty lies in the spirit and attitude of those who take part in the ceremony. In making plans, it should be remembered that the wedding ceremony itself is the most important and sacred part of the occasion.

The following policies and procedures have been formulated to help your wedding go as smoothly as possible.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MARRIAGE AT FUMC

Because of our commitment to encourage strong Christian marriages, First UMC ministers will discuss premarital counseling options with the bride and groom.

The minister can only perform weddings in full accordance with the law. Please do not overlook the necessity for careful compliance. **The wedding cannot take place without a marriage license.** It is valid for 30 days from the date that you acquire it. The license is to be given to the minister or the Wedding Coordinator before or at the rehearsal.

SCHEDULING THE WEDDING

Please contact the Administrative Assistant to the Senior Minister at 334-834-8990 to reserve a date for your wedding. A wedding coordinator will be assigned and she will contact you to make an initial appointment. The coordinator will be responsible for directing your wedding rehearsal and ceremony and will assist you if you desire to hold your reception at the church.

The rehearsal and wedding may not be scheduled later than 6:00 p.m. or on Sundays, holidays or weekends immediately preceding or following a holiday, unless approved by all staff persons associated with the wedding.

Members of FUMC have committed their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness to the church for at least one year prior to scheduling the wedding date.

Church members wishing to schedule a wedding the Saturday before Thanksgiving or during the holiday season may do so provided the date is available on the church calendar.

For non-members, the wedding date **will not be confirmed until four (4) months** prior to the wedding. Receipt of the deposit will secure your wedding date on the church calendar.

WEDDING CEREMONY

Most weddings at First Methodist are held in the sanctuary. The sanctuary seats up to 750 guests. For smaller weddings, Duffey Chapel is a popular choice. Duffey Chapel seats approximately 50-60 guests.

REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal should be scheduled with care, with attention given to the availability of the entire wedding party. **One hour** will be allotted for the wedding rehearsal. The entire party is expected to arrive promptly. **If the starting time is delayed due to late arrivals, the rehearsal will be shortened accordingly.**

RECEPTION

If interested in having your wedding reception at FUMC, reservations for the reception should be made through the Administrative Assistant to the Senior Minister at the time wedding arrangements are made.

Plans for the reception will be discussed in detail with your wedding coordinator.

Access to the Fellowship Hall and kitchen is granted four hours prior to the start of your wedding ceremony until two hours following the ceremony.

NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OR DRUGS ARE ALLOWED ANYWHERE ON CHURCH PROPERTY. SMOKING IS NOT PERMITTED ON THE CHURCH PREMISES.



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MINISTERS

It is the policy of First United Methodist Church that a member of the clergy staff be present at both the rehearsal and the wedding service. When desired, a guest minister may participate in the ceremony, if his/her participation is approved by a minister of our church. Please be sure that approval is received prior to issuing an invitation to a guest minister. Upon approval, a letter of invitation from the senior minister of FUMC will be sent to the guest minister.

When a guest minister participates in the service, he/she may lead the service by himself/herself at the sole discretion of the Senior Minister. Otherwise, a member of our clergy staff will lead the service with the guest minister. On occasion it may not be possible for the officiating minister to attend the wedding rehearsal and/or rehearsal dinner (when invited). The wedding coordinator has a thorough knowledge of the church facilities and policies and can conduct the rehearsal in a professional manner.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

A wedding coordinator is required for all weddings at First United Methodist Church to assist you in the planning of this important day. The wedding coordinator represents the church in coordinating the many details of the wedding and rehearsal within the church. She serves as your advisor of church resources and church policies regarding florist, caterers, photographers, and any others who have a role to play in your wedding.

Once a wedding coordinator has been assigned, all inquiries should be made directly with the Wedding Coordinator. The Wedding Coordinator will schedule a consultation to discuss plans and answer questions. Financial arrangements will be discussed thoroughly at this consultation.

The responsibilities of the wedding coordinator include: ensuring the wedding venue is ready for the rehearsal and wedding, assisting the minister with rehearsal, orchestrating processional and recessional, monitoring time schedules related to the ceremony and overseeing any other facilitation needs within the church.

Outside bridal consultants are welcome to help the bride with her wedding plans and assist the bride and her attendants in the Bride's Room the day of the wedding.

Once the bridal party leaves the Bride's Room please rely on the Wedding Coordinator from FUMC to coordinate the activities of the wedding party.

WEDDING MUSIC

The wedding is a service of worship. All music played or sung, including pre-ceremony music, is a sacred ritual of the United Methodist Church. For this reason, **all music selections must be approved.** The selection of all music is accomplished through consultation with the Organist/Assistant Director of Music who will provide final approval of all wedding music.

Secular music will not be permitted. Such music is as out of place here as it would be in a service of Holy Communion, Baptism, or other rituals. Suitable music choices are virtually unlimited.

All music must have live accompaniment. There will be no taped or pre-recorded music.

The church organist plays for the wedding ceremony. This will assure that the ceremony runs smoothly and in accordance with the Order of Worship. If the organist should be unavailable, he/she will engage another local organist for the occasion. **You may not engage your own organist.**

The organ is the primary instrument used for weddings at First Methodist. A piano or string quartet may be used in portions of the ceremony.

The fee for the church organist includes a conference with the bride, one rehearsal with any soloist, the rehearsal and the ceremony. If the responsibilities of the organist are expanded, the organist's fee will be negotiated. Other services, if desired, are not included in the fee and will be charged for as agreed between the two parties.

Professional soloists and additional musicians are available through the Music Department. Other guest vocalists and instrumentalists may be invited to participate in the wedding but **must be approved by the Organist/Assistant Director of Music of First Methodist.**

PHOTOGRAPHERS

First Methodist encourages the couple to employ a professional photographer for the wedding. The wedding ceremony is one of the most important events in the lives of most couples and they want to preserve the memory of it in pictures. We want to cooperate in this procedure, and at the same time preserve the beauty and dignity of the wedding service. In order to accomplish this goal it is necessary that certain policies be set which will ensure that the sacredness and beauty of the ceremony will not be marred.

Please be certain that your photographer receives the policies and guidelines containing specific information prior to the wedding.

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SOUND AND RECORDINGS

The sound equipment at First Methodist is a highly technical system and a trained technician is needed to operate the sound system the day of wedding. Your wedding coordinator will discuss this need and associated fees with you.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Both our sanctuary and chapel are of dignified and exquisite beauty and neither requires elaborate decorations for effectiveness. All decorations should enhance the spirit of worship and strict adherence to the policies set forth by First Methodist is required. In the scheduling of weddings, reasonable time will be allowed prior to the wedding for decorating. Restraint in the use of flowers is expected.

The florist will have access to the church up to five hours prior to the start of the wedding.

Please be certain that your florist receives the policies and guidelines containing specific information prior to the wedding. First Methodist reserves the right to restrict the privileges of any florist to decorate who violates these regulations.

The bride is invited to leave the wedding flowers for the following Sunday worship services, **provided there is a vacancy on the church floral calendar for that particular Sunday.** A representative from the church will contact the bride once the wedding date has been confirmed to determine her wishes regarding flowers. Wedding flowers will be acknowledged in the worship bulletin.

Flowers left in the sanctuary following the ceremony must be appropriate for the Sunday morning worship services. If arrangements are left on the pedestals on each side of the altar they must not interfere with the choir.

Two arrangements may be left in the narthex.

CATERER

The use of outside caterers is allowed, but **your wedding coordinator must approve the outside caterer. If the kitchen is needed, the Kitchen Manager must be on hand to open and close the kitchen and to answer questions about the kitchen facilities and equipment.** This individual will oversee the operation of the kitchen only and will not be available to perform work requested by the caterer or wedding party.

The caterer will provide his/her own equipment, including tablecloths. Banquet tables of varying sizes

will be provided by the church for no additional charge. The caterer will also provide enough manpower to handle his/her needs. The staff is not available to assist in unloading or loading wedding materials, or assist in food preparation or kitchen clean-up.

It is the responsibility of the caterer to leave the kitchen clean and straight, including the floor. Cleaning supplies will be provided by the church.

DRESSING ROOMS

The bride and her party may dress at the church in the Friendship Room. We encourage the bride and bridesmaids to arrive with hair and make-up already done as the dressing area is not equipped to handle these services.

Customarily, the groom's party dresses away from the church, but they may gather in the Reception Room until time for the wedding.

The wedding party will have access to these rooms **three hours** prior to the time of the wedding. We hope that knowing these hours will assist you in planning your schedule on the day of the wedding.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to arrange for the care of the property of the wedding party before, during and after the wedding, as well as the removal of such items immediately following the ceremony. The church will not be responsible for any articles belonging to any person in the bridal party, any guest at the wedding or any vendor serving the wedding.

ALCOHOL/TOBACCO POLICY

All members of the wedding party and friends should be reminded:

- **There shall be no smoking on the church premises including parking lots.**
- **No alcoholic beverages in any form may be served or consumed on the church premises including parking lots. At the discretion of the First Methodist minister and/or wedding coordinator, a rehearsal or wedding ceremony may not proceed if any member of the wedding party has been consuming alcoholic beverages or is under the influence of an illegal substance.**

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NURSERY

First Methodist is happy to make arrangements for a nursery if one is needed. The Wedding Coordinator will be happy to discuss this service with you.

CHARGES

Wedding fees and charges are outlined in the Financial Responsibilities and Fees. Only usual charges are outlined. If the bride or the family desires additional services, charges for these services will be determined by the Wedding Coordinator, Director of Hospitality, and/or the Church Business Administrator.

An invoice of your financial responsibility will be sent to you **three** weeks before the wedding. Final payment is due **one** week prior to the wedding date. Make all payments in the form of a check payable to First United Methodist Church.

A 10% late fee will be incurred if payment is not received as stated above.

The church business office also accepts credit cards and money orders. A 3.5% processing fee will be charged for all electronic payments.

MISCELLANEOUS RESTRICTIONS

Because of city ordinances and other restrictions, artificial or natural petals, confetti, rice, birdseed, balloon release, potpourri, or other hazardous materials may not be distributed and/or thrown inside or outside of the church. Only bubbles used outside the church may be used for this tradition.

Bibles, pew cards, hymnals and kneeling cushions are permanent fixtures and are not to be moved.

Chancel furnishings and seasonal decorations (such as banners, altar arrangements, Thanksgiving arrangements/topiaries, Chrismon trees, and Christmas flowers) are not to be moved or dismantled for any reason.

Food and/or drinks are not permitted in the sanctuary at any time.

No carpentry work will be permitted in the building and no temporary construction can be allowed in any part of the church facilities.

The individual or family scheduling the wedding will be held liable for any damages to the carpet, furniture, or building.

No pets may be attendants.

Any policy herein stated is subject to change by the First United Methodist Church Board of Trustees.