

## **Wedding Policy**

### **First United Methodist Church Birmingham**

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A church wedding is a service of worship and consecration – a religious ceremony – and all preparations should be made with this in mind. All components of the wedding service should be of a spiritual nature and appropriate for a Christian service of worship based on The Book of Worship of the United Methodist Church.

The First Church Wedding Director will review this policy with the applicants. We recommend that the bride, groom, and their families carefully read this document governing weddings at First Church. We also want you to be aware that First Church is an open place for all, meaning that we welcome and affirm everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity. From time to time, we hang banners outside of our church that communicate our desire to be welcoming and open to all. These banners, along with any other First Church signage or communication, will not be removed or obscured in any way for weddings.

#### **Scheduling the Wedding**

The applicant must request a meeting with the Wedding Director to determine the location of the wedding (Sanctuary, St. John's Chapel or Loft) and to schedule a date and time. The Wedding Director will reserve the date on the Church calendar only after an application form is completed and the deposit is paid. Sanctuary and Chapel weddings require a meeting with the Music Director/Organist. Loft weddings require a meeting with the Loft Worship Leader.

Weddings will not be scheduled for Sundays, New Year's Day, Holy Week, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day, except by express approval of the Senior Minister.

If the bride, groom, their parents or grandparents have been members of First Church for at least one year prior to the scheduled date of the wedding, the applicant may pay the member rate.

If the bride, groom, their parents or grandparents are not members of First Church or have been members of First Church for less than one year prior to the scheduled date of the wedding, the applicant must pay the non-member rate.

If a cancellation is made six (6) months or more prior to the date reserved, the applicant will receive a refund of fifty percent (50%) of the total fees paid. If a cancellation is made less than six (6) months prior to the date reserved, no refund will be given and First Church will retain all fees paid to date.

#### **Clergy**

The First Church Senior Minister or Associate Minister will perform the wedding ceremony. If neither of them is available on your chosen date, the Senior Minister will invite another ordained United Methodist minister to perform the ceremony.

The Senior Minister must approve the inclusion of any minister not appointed to First United Methodist Church Birmingham. This restriction applies to United Methodist clergy, clergy of other denominations, and non-denominational clergy. The Senior Minister will invite the approved minister to assist at the wedding ceremony.

Any minister performing a marriage ceremony in the Sanctuary or St. John's Chapel must wear either a pulpit robe or appropriate business attire.

The minister(s) performing the wedding ceremony customarily receives an honorarium. The honorarium is paid directly to the minister(s) and is not part of the wedding fees collected by First Church. The honorarium should be given to the minister(s) prior to the rehearsal.

### **Music for Sanctuary and St. John's Chapel Weddings**

For Sanctuary and St. John's Chapel weddings, the applicant must schedule a consultation with the Music Director/Organist. Together, the applicant and the Music Director/Organist will select music for the wedding and make arrangements for additional musicians if desired.

The First Church Organist plays the organ for all weddings in the Sanctuary and St. John's Chapel. If he is unavailable, he will engage another local organist for the wedding. Selection of an alternate organist is at the sole discretion of the First Church Organist. No one else may engage an organist for the ceremony.

Secular music or recorded music may not be used during the ceremony in the Sanctuary or St. John's Chapel. The First Church Organist must approve instrument or vocal amplification.

The Director of Music/Organist will provide other musicians as agreed and will notify applicant of the extra fee.

The Organist's fee includes one consultation for music planning, rehearsal with extra musicians if needed, up to thirty (30) minutes of prelude music for the ceremony, and the ceremony itself. Additional planning meetings, extra rehearsals, and attendance at the wedding rehearsal will incur additional fees.

### **Music for Loft Weddings**

For Loft weddings, the applicant must schedule a consultation with the Loft Worship Leader. Together, the applicant and the Loft Worship Leader will select music for the wedding and make arrangements for additional musicians if desired. After consultation with the applicant, the Loft Worship Leader will determine the number of technicians necessary for sound, lights and video. Either the Loft Worship Leader or the Wedding Director will provide this information to the applicant. If the Loft Worship Leader is unavailable, he will arrange a suitable substitute.

The Loft Worship Leader fee includes one consultation for music planning, rehearsal with extra musicians if needed, and the ceremony itself. Additional planning meetings, extra rehearsals with soloists, and attendance at the wedding rehearsal will incur additional fees.

### **The Wedding Director**

The Wedding Director will provide to the applicant the contact information for the Senior or Associate Minister, the Music Director/Organist or the Loft Worship Leader, and the Sound Technician.

The Wedding Director will direct all weddings at First Church. The Wedding Director's fee includes two (2) consultations with the bride and/or bridal party, a one (1) hour wedding rehearsal, and four (4) hours on the day of the wedding (ceremony included). Other meetings for any reason will incur an additional.

### **Sound Technician**

Due to the expense of the equipment and the knowledge and training required to operate the audio-visual systems in the Sanctuary, St. John's Chapel and the Loft, a First Church approved Sound Technician is required for all weddings where a microphone or other audio or visual equipment is used.

### **Holy Communion**

The service of marriage is a worship service and only those things that are appropriate in a worship service in the United Methodist Church are appropriate in the marriage ceremony. If the bride and groom request the sacrament of Holy Communion, the following options are available:

- All attendees will be invited to participate and the sacrament will be served to all who respond to the invitation. It is the policy of the United Methodist Church that if served in a congregational setting, all are invited to receive Holy Communion, or
- The bride and groom may receive the sacrament at a time separate from the marriage service, on the same day as the service, or
- The entire wedding party (or those who wish to receive the sacrament) may receive Holy Communion together at a separate time on the wedding day.

### **Decorations in the Sanctuary and St. John's Chapel**

All decorations must be discussed with the Wedding Director prior to the wedding. The florist or others providing decoration must sign the Floral Policy Information Sheet provided by the Wedding Director. Florists are allowed into the building three (3) hours prior to the ceremony. Florists must make an appointment with the Wedding Director to see the Sanctuary or St. John's Chapel for planning purposes.

Decorations should be limited to appropriate flowers in the flower stands or chalices. Flowers or decorations that are used to mark reserved seating must be tied to the pews. No pins, tacks, tape, staples or nails may be used on the pews or in any woodwork. The candles in the candlesticks on the altar, a Unity candle, and the Christ candle may be used. Decorations in the Sanctuary narthex should be limited to flowers on the stands beside the stairwells.

No furniture in the Sanctuary, narthex, St. John's Chapel or the parlor may be moved or removed for the wedding. This includes but is not limited to the pulpit, pulpit chairs, organ console, baptismal font, altar, altar candles, cross, American flag, Christian flag, Bibles, and Hymnals. No additional furniture may be moved into the above-named areas.

Items already in the Sanctuary or St. John's Chapel for the liturgical season may not be removed. The only exception to this rule shall be the free-standing liturgical banners. Banners must be replaced in their original position after the ceremony. The paraments will be white for the ceremony and the wedding banner may be used.

For Saturday weddings, seasonal items placed in the Sanctuary or St. John's Chapel, including poinsettias at Christmas and lilies at Easter, shall not be removed.

No tack, pins, nails, tape of any kind, staples, or glue may be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture, walls, or woodwork.

The furniture and floor must be fully protected at all times from moisture and candle drips. The florist will be responsible for any damage done to the building and furniture by their decorations. The florist will be responsible for cleaning the floor and furniture after arranging and placing flowers and other decorations for the wedding.

All decorations should be removed from the building immediately after the wedding unless the Wedding Director grants special permission.

### **Decorations in the Loft**

All decorations must be discussed with the Wedding Director prior to the wedding. The florist or others providing decoration must sign the Floral Policy Information Sheet provided by the Wedding Director. Florists are allowed into the building three (3) hours prior to the ceremony. Florists must make an appointment with the Wedding Director to see the Loft for planning purposes.

No furniture, musical equipment, or audio-visual equipment may be moved or removed for the wedding without express approval of the Wedding Director or the Loft Worship Leader.

No tacks, pins, nails, tape of any kind, staples, or glue may be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture, walls, floors, windows or ceiling.

The furniture and floor must be fully protected at all times from moisture and candle drips. The florist will be responsible for any damage done to the building and furniture by their decorations. The florist will be responsible for cleaning the floor and furniture after arranging and placing flowers and other decorations for the wedding.

All decorations should be removed from the building immediately after the wedding unless the Wedding Director grants special permission.

**Photographs and Videos**

The Wedding Director will be responsible for making the following procedures known to photographers, videographers, and friends.

Flash photographs may be made only before or after the ceremony. Flash photographs may not be made in the Sanctuary, St. John's Chapel or the Loft from the time the guests begin arriving through the end of the ceremony. Non-flash photographs may be made from the back of the Sanctuary balcony, or the back of St. John's Chapel or the Loft during the wedding.

Videography is permitted with the same restrictions as still photography. Use of additional lighting is not permitted during the wedding ceremony. Photographers and videographers shall make no movements that distract from the wedding ceremony.

**Use of a Wedding Bulletin or Program**

The wedding bulletin or program must be appropriate for a service of Christian worship. The Senior Minister, Organist or Worship Leader, and the Wedding Director must approve the bulletin or program before printing. No changes may be made after it is approved.

**Additional Policies**

No smoking is allowed in any building at any time.

No alcoholic beverages are allowed in the building or on the church grounds, including the parking lot.

No rice, birdseed, or confetti may be thrown either inside or outside the buildings.

No food or drink is allowed in the Sanctuary or St. John's Chapel. Refreshments for the wedding party will be allowed only in rooms indicated by the Wedding Director.

No modifications may be made to the existing audio-visual systems in any buildings or rooms.

First Church assumes no responsibility for any items of clothing, jewelry, money, materials, equipment, gifts or any other items or valuables left at the Church at any time.

A security guard is required for all weddings. The Wedding Director will arrange for this service.

Babysitting service may be provided upon request.

Free parking is available in the First Church parking lot contiguous to the Education Building and in the lot across from Alabama Power Company at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and 18<sup>th</sup> Street. On the weekends, metered spaces on the streets by the church are free.

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Signature of Applicant

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Date

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Signature of Applicant

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Signature of Wedding Director