

Wedding Policies & Guidelines

First United Methodist Church | 518 19th St N Birmingham AL 35209 | 205.254.3186

(Adopted by the Birmingham First United Methodist Church October 13, 2008)

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.

It is the desire of our church to be helpful to all who desire a church wedding. The bride, groom, and their families should read carefully the following policies governing weddings in our Sanctuary and Chapel.

SCHEDULING THE WEDDING

- a.** Request a meeting with the Wedding Director to determine the location (either Chapel or Sanctuary) of your wedding and to schedule a date and time. The Wedding Director can place the date on the Church calendar only after you have completed the application form. All fees must be paid at that time, and a meeting with the Director of Music/Organist will be scheduled so that music may be chosen.
- b.** Wedding dates should not be scheduled for Sundays, New Year's Day, Holy Week, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.
- c.** If the bride, groom, their parents or grandparents have been a member of FUMC for at least one year prior to the date scheduled for the wedding, they may pay the member rate.
- d.** If the bride, the groom, their parents or grandparents are not members of FUMC or have been members of FUMC for less than one year prior to the date scheduled for the wedding, they will pay the non-member rate.
- e.** If a cancellation is made six months or more prior to the date reserved, there will be a refund of 50 percent of the total fees. If a cancellation is made less than six months prior to the date reserved, no refund will be made. The church will retain 100 percent of the fees.
- f.** It is customary that an honorarium be given to the ministers performing the ceremony, and this honorarium should be given prior to the rehearsal. This honorarium is in addition to other fees.

MUSIC

After the Wedding Director has received the application and fees and placed the date and time of the service in the Sanctuary or the Chapel on the church calendar, a consultation with the Music Director/Organist will be scheduled by the bride. Together, they will select the music for the wedding and make arrangements for additional musicians if desired.

The Birmingham First United Methodist Church Organist plays the organ for all weddings in the Sanctuary or the Chapel. If she should be unavailable, she will engage another local organist for the occasion. Selection of an alternate organist is the sole discretion of the FUMC Church Organist. No one else may engage another organist for the ceremony.

- a.** Secular music, recorded music, or music amplification may not be used during the ceremony in the Sanctuary or Chapel.
- b.** The Director of Music/Organist will provide other musicians (and notify you of their fee) if desired.
- c.** The Organist's fee includes one consultation for music planning, rehearsal with extra musicians if needed, up to thirty minutes of prelude music for the service, and the service itself.
- d.** Additional fees will be required for extra planning meetings, other rehearsals with soloists, and/or the wedding rehearsal.
- e.** All music fees will be handed to the Church Organist prior to the wedding, and she will be responsible for distribution to other musicians hired for the occasion.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS

The Wedding Director will be responsible for making the following procedures known to the photographers, video camera operators, and friends:

- a.** No flash pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary or Chapel from the time that guests begin to arrive throughout the ceremony.
- b.** Flash pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary or Chapel only before or after the ceremony. Non-flash pictures may be taken from the back balcony of the Sanctuary and the back of the Chapel during the wedding if strict quiet is maintained.
- c.** 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 to distract attention from the wedding ceremony.

DECORATIONS

Both the Sanctuary and Chapel provide a spiritual atmosphere and need little additional decoration. The following rules must be observed.

- a.** All decorations must be discussed with the Wedding Director prior to the wedding and the florists or others providing decoration must sign the Floral Policy Information Sheet provided by the Wedding Director.
- b.** Decorations in the Sanctuary and Chapel will be limited to appropriate flowers in the flower stands or chalices. Flowers used to mark reserved seating must be tied to the pews. No pins, tacks, tape or nails may be used. The candles in the candelabra on the altar, a Unity candle, and the Christ candle may be used. Decorations in the narthex will be limited to flowers on the two stands next to the stairway.
- c.** No furniture in the Sanctuary, narthex, Chapel or parlor may be moved or removed for the wedding. This includes the pulpit, pulpit chairs, organ console, baptismal font, communion table, altar candles, cross, American flag, and Christian flag. No additional furniture may be moved into the above areas.
- d.** Items that may be placed in the Sanctuary or Chapel for the liturgical season may not be removed. The only exception shall be free-standing liturgical banners, which may be removed. Banners must be replaced in their original position after the ceremony. The paraments will be white for the ceremony, and the wedding banner is available for use. For Saturday weddings, seasonal items, including poinsettias and Easter lilies that have been placed in the Sanctuary or Chapel for the next day's worship service will not be removed.
- e.** No tacks, nails, tape of any kind, or glue may be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture or walls.
- f.** The furniture and floor must be fully protected at all times from moisture and candle drip. The florist will be held responsible for any damage done by their decorations to the building and furniture. They are also responsible for cleaning the floor and furniture after arranging and placing flowers and other decoration.
- g.** All decorations should be removed from the building immediately after the wedding unless special permission is granted by the Wedding Director for extenuating circumstances.

PARTICIPANTS

- a.** The Senior Minister or Associate Minister of FUMC will perform the ceremony. If they are not available on your chosen date, the Senior Minister will invite another ordained United Methodist Minister to perform the ceremony.
- b.** The Senior Minister must approve the inclusion of any minister outside the currently appointed First United Methodist Church clergy staff. This restriction applies to United Methodist clergy, clergy of other denominations, and non-denominational clergy. The Senior Minister will then issue an invitation to the approved minister to assist at the ceremony. Any minister performing a marriage ceremony in the Sanctuary or Chapel shall wear either a pulpit robe or business suit.
- c.** The Wedding Director will direct all weddings at FUMC. Her fee will include a consultation with the bride and/or the bridal party, a 1 hour wedding rehearsal, and the wedding ceremony. If other meetings are desired, a fee of \$50 per hour, payable at that time, will be charged. She will be available on the day of the wedding no earlier than three hours prior to the wedding.
- d.** The FUMC Organist will play for all weddings. (*See Music section*)

HOLY COMMUNION

The service of marriage is a worship service and only those things that would be appropriate in a regular service in the United Methodist tradition are appropriate in the marriage ceremony. When the bride and groom request the sacrament of Holy Communion, the following options are available.

- a.** If the sacrament is to be a part of the marriage service, all persons present 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 we do not serve the sacrament in the presence of a congregation without inviting all to receive it.
- b.** The bride and groom may receive the sacrament at a time separate from the marriage service, on the same day as the service.
- c.** 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.

WEDDING BULLETIN

The wedding bulletin must be appropriate for a service of Christian worship. The proof must be approved by the Senior Minister, Organist and Wedding Director before being printed. No changes may be made after approval.

ADDITIONAL CHURCH POLICIES

- a. No smoking is allowed in any building at any time. Those participating in rehearsals, providing decorations, bridal party and guests should be made aware of this by the bridal party.
- b. No alcoholic beverages will be allowed on church premises under any circumstances.
- c. No rice, birdseed, or confetti will be thrown inside or outside the buildings.
- d. No food or drink will be allowed in the Sanctuary or Chapel. Refreshments for the wedding party will be allowed only in rooms indicated by the Wedding Director.
- e. No modifications may be made to the existing sound system in the church.
- f. FUMC assumes no responsibility for ANY items of clothing, jewelry, money, materials, equipment, gifts left at the Church at any time.
- g. Free parking is available in the FUMC parking lots, and on weekends, in the metered spaces on the streets near the church. FUMC can not guarantee that the parking decks near the church will be available on the day of the wedding.

