

Your Wedding At First United Methodist Church

Policies and Guidelines



FIRST CHURCH
A UNITED METHODIST FAMILY

12/02/2015

INTRODUCTION

A Christian wedding ceremony is first and foremost a service of worship. By getting married in the church, you are creating a covenant between you, your new spouse, and God – a promise of eternal love, trust, and commitment. The clergy and staff of First Church are dedicated to seeing that your wedding is a distinguished, sacred, and memorable occasion. This wedding policy provides information and regulations regarding the use of the facilities and the services offered by the ministry team at First Church.

SCHEDULING

Your wedding will be put on the official church calendar after the pastor and staff has approved the date and the fee has been paid in full. Weddings must be scheduled at least four months before the date of the ceremony.

Wedding ceremonies and rehearsals on national or church holidays are discouraged, but may be scheduled if paid participants are available.

It is the policy of First Church to do no more than one wedding per weekend.

Rehearsals will be scheduled for the day before the wedding; the one hour rehearsal may start no earlier than 4:00 p.m. and end no later than 7:00 p.m. Weddings may begin no earlier than 10:00 a.m. and end no later than 7:00 p.m. Any time changes must be approved by all involved clergy and staff.

Access to the church on the day of the wedding includes three hours before the ceremony and one hour following the ceremony for pictures, setup, and clean-up.

It is the responsibility of the couple to schedule meetings with the clergy, Wedding Coordinator, and organist to properly prepare for the ceremony. The first meeting with the clergy must occur **at least** four months prior to the wedding. The first meeting with the wedding coordinator must occur **at least** four months prior to the wedding. The first meeting with the organist must occur **at least** two months prior to the wedding.

If the wedding is cancelled more than 90 days before the scheduled ceremony, the couple will be refunded all but \$50.00 of the wedding fee. If the wedding is cancelled within 90 days of the scheduled ceremony, all but \$150 will be refunded to cover administrative costs.

The First Church office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Couples in which the Bride or Groom has been a member for at least 12 months prior to the wedding reservation will be charged the member fee. No reductions or refunds are given for persons who became a member prior to the wedding and after the reservation has been made.

PEOPLE TO KNOW

The First Church clergy and staff are committed both to the wishes of the couple and to the sanctity of marriage. Their suggestions and policies are in place because it is their responsibility to regulate what occurs in a house of worship according to the traditions and standards of this church. Please allow the pastor, Wedding Coordinator, and organist to use their expertise and experience to help you make your wedding a suitably holy occasion.

A wedding deserves to be planned thoroughly and with plenty of time. First Church recommends that you contact the pastor, Wedding Coordinator, and organist well in advance of your wedding. This policy suggests a timeline for contacting these professionals; however, **the First Church staff and clergy appreciate being contacted as early as possible so that they may work with you to plan your wedding in a relaxed and comfortable fashion.**

Officiant

A First Church pastor will be assigned to officiate all weddings. Another pastor may be invited to participate in the wedding ceremony at the pastor's discretion.

The couple must contact the clergy *at least* four months prior to the wedding to schedule meetings for pre-marital counseling and wedding preparation.

The Pastor's role in the wedding extends past leading the rehearsal and officiating at the ceremony. He or she will work hand in hand with the couple to plan the ceremony as best fits the sacredness of the occasion and the personalities of those being married. This includes selecting prayers, scripture, and vows.

The pastor will also meet with the couple for two mandatory pre-marital counseling sessions. The first of these meetings is to occur no later than four months prior to the ceremony.

Wedding Coordinator

You will be assigned a Wedding Coordinator when you have reserved a date on the church calendar for your wedding. Please do not choose a coordinator of your own to work in conjunction with your assigned coordinator. (Wedding parties desiring early arrival must arrange this with the Wedding Coordinator. Extra time costs \$25 per hour.)

The couple must contact the Wedding Coordinator *at least* four months prior to the wedding to discuss the rehearsal, ceremony, decorations, etc.

The Wedding Coordinator is the person in charge of the facility and the Sanctuary at the rehearsal and on the day of the wedding. This person will also organize the family and wedding party at the rehearsal and ceremony.

The Wedding Coordinator must approve all use of facilities and decorations by one week before the rehearsal.

Musicians

The organist/pianist of First United Methodist Church will play at all weddings and has the right of first refusal.

All music for the wedding must be approved by the organist and/or pastor at First Church.

The couple must contact the organist *at least two months prior to the wedding to discuss the music for the ceremony.*

If the organist has not been contacted by two months before the ceremony, he or she will select appropriate wedding music for the ceremony.

Other musicians may be involved in the wedding at the discretion of the organist.

The couple must contact the organist well in advance of the wedding to discuss ceremony music. **All musical selections and guest musicians must be approved by the organist.** With this in mind, please do not finalize plans for any music or invite guest musicians without first meeting with the organist at First Church.

Sound Technician

A sound technician will be provided by First Church to set up any microphones for clergy or soloists and operate the soundboard during the ceremony. If needed at the rehearsal, notify the Church Office and an additional fee will be assessed.

If a pre-recorded CD or cassette or Power Point presentation will be used at the ceremony, the materials must be delivered to the church no later than one week before the rehearsal.

REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal should be held on the day before the wedding. It is a time for the wedding party and family to become familiar with the setting of the wedding and their roles in the ceremony. The wedding will run more smoothly if all of the participants (couple, wedding party, ushers, readers, soloists, family) are present at the rehearsal and arrive promptly.

The rehearsal will be led by the pastor and Wedding Coordinator.

The organist will be present at the rehearsal to play necessary music. He or she can be available to rehearse with soloists prior to the rehearsal upon request.

In order to respect the busy schedules of all of the wedding participants, **the rehearsal will begin promptly when scheduled and will not exceed one hour.**

All decorations must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator by one week prior to the rehearsal. The rehearsal time is not meant for decorating or rehearsing with soloists. The couple may arrive a half an hour before the rehearsal to begin decorating if they wish.

FACILITIES

All questions or requests regarding the facilities may be directed to the Wedding Coordinator.

The Sanctuary, gathering area, restrooms, the youth room (near the bride's room) groom's room (Room 203), and bride's room are available to you on the day of your wedding. This is subject to change if other groups are using the church building at the same time as the rehearsal or ceremony.

The Sanctuary seats 600 people. The total length of the central aisle is 77 feet. The front section of the central aisle is 41 feet (this is the distance from the center aisle to the bottom of the first step near the chancel rail).

Access to the church is limited to three (3) hours prior to and one hour following the wedding for decorating and set-up, pictures, and clean-up. All participants and vendors (rentals, florists, photographers) must adhere to this time frame. (Wedding parties desiring early arrival must arrange this with the Wedding Coordinator. Extra time costs \$25 per hour.)

Since First Church is located in downtown Lawrence, parking is available in 2 hour lots and at meters. Parking downtown is free on Sundays and after 6 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays. The Wedding Coordinator will reserve some metered parking spaces for the wedding party and guests.

MUSIC

The musical selections for the wedding must be in keeping with the sacredness of the occasion. Music that would be inappropriate for a church service will not be allowed.

Do not finalize music or hire musicians prior to discussing your plans with the organist.

The couple must contact the organist *at least two months prior to the wedding to discuss musical selections.* All musical selections (prelude, service voluntaries, hymns, solos) and guest musicians must be approved by the organist; decisions regarding music must be finalized by one month prior to the ceremony. Keep in mind that the music for the ceremony will be best planned and prepared if the arrangements are made early.

If you are uncertain about the music you would like for your wedding, the organist will be more than happy to discuss options with you in the months before your ceremony. The organist is available to meet with you at First Church to discuss any ideas for music and to play through possible selections for you to hear.

If the organist has not been contacted by two months prior to the wedding, he or she will select appropriate wedding music for your ceremony.

If the couple has unique musical requests, it would be helpful if they contacted the organist earlier than two months prior to the wedding. This gives the organist time to find and prepare the music.

The organist's fee as part of the cost of the wedding includes one (1) rehearsal with the soloist prior to the wedding rehearsal. Time will not be taken during the wedding rehearsal for the organist to rehearse with the soloist. Additional rehearsals will cost \$25 each and will be deducted from the deposit.

The organist will begin the prelude music 15 or 20 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony. It is important that decorating and picture taking be completed 30 minutes prior to the start time so that guests may be seated in time for the bridal procession to begin promptly at the scheduled time.

SANCTUARY DECORATION AND ALTAR

All wedding decoration and furniture placement must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator no later than one week prior to the rehearsal.

There are wedding banners available that fit on the pulpit, lectern, and behind the organ. Speak with the Wedding Coordinator if you are interested in having them displayed during the ceremony.

No flowers, candles, or other decorations may be placed on the organ, piano, or upper window sills.

Altar

The altar is a communion table. The altar candles and Bible will be on the altar during the ceremony and may not be covered by any items.

A unity candle may be placed on either side of the Bible. Flowers may be on the altar if they do not block the sightlines of the clergy and organist.

The floor around the altar will be kept clear of plants, flowers, pots, etc.

Candles

The only candles provided by the church are the two altar candles. All other candles must be provided by the couple. All candles must be in containers that will catch and hold melting wax. Wax may not be allowed to run onto any of the carpet or wood floor of the Sanctuary or chancel.

Hurricane candles may be placed in the windows of the church.

The only unenclosed wax candles permitted are the unity candles.

No candles may be placed on the railing at the front of the church.

Candelabras may be placed to the right or left of the altar. Only mechanical candles (wax candles within a plastic or metal casing) may be used in candelabras. They must have a wax collector beneath them.

Flowers

Only artificial flowers or petals may come in contact with the floor or carpet (scattered prior to the ceremony or thrown by a flower girl). Real petals will stain the carpet and the deposit will not be returned.

The couple is responsible for clearing any flowers and petals from the floor following the ceremony. If remnants are left after the ceremony, the couple will be fined for extra cleanup time. This will be deducted from the deposit.

Floral arrangements may not be placed so that sightlines between clergy, musicians, Wedding Coordinator, and wedding party are interrupted.

Any flower arrangements must be removed immediately after the ceremony. If you would like to leave the floral arrangements to be used in the Sunday worship services, please inform the wedding coordinator.

Other

If you are getting married during a season of the church year for which the Sanctuary is decorated (e.g. Poinsettias during Advent), those decorations may not be moved for your wedding. You may use the decorations in your wedding and add your own with the approval of the Wedding Coordinator.

Decorations may not be placed in the Sanctuary prior to the date of the rehearsal. The rehearsal time is not intended to be used for decorating. Check with the church office and wedding coordinator for availability of the sanctuary for decorating. Keep in mind that the sanctuary is not locked.

For the safety of the wedding party, runners will not be permitted up the steps to the altar.

No wire, tape, nails, tacks, screws, glue or any adhesive may be applied to *any* surfaces, including pews, windows, railings, walls, or floor in the Sanctuary. Keeping in mind the space that guests will need to enter and exit the pews, decorations may be held to pews by string, ribbon, wrapped wire, florist clips, or rubber bands. Candles may not be attached to pews.

Upon leaving the church, do not throw rice, birdseed, or flower petals (real or artificial). Bubbles are an excellent alternative.

All decorations must be removed from the Sanctuary immediately following the ceremony. It is the responsibility of the couple to see that all flowers, flower petals, candles, other decorations, and rentals are removed directly following the ceremony. Failure to do so will result in a loss of a portion of the deposit.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

The following regulations apply to both photography and videography.

Setup must occur within the three hours prior to the ceremony and be completed by 30 minutes prior to the ceremony.

All cameras must remain at the back third of the Sanctuary (where the aisle cuts across). No manned cameras may be in the chancel (the area in the front of the sanctuary behind the communion railing) during the wedding service.

Natural lighting photography is permitted once the service begins – no flash. Artificial lighting and flash may be used before and after the ceremony.

The couple should meet with the photographer prior to the ceremony to plan the pictures that are to be taken. All pre-wedding photographs should be taken before 30 minutes prior to the ceremony. Up to one (1) hour after the ceremony is allowed for remaining pictures and clean up. First Church suggests that you complete all or as many of the pictures as you can before the ceremony so as to not leave your guests waiting for you at the reception.

Any pictures with clergy may take place directly after the wedding. If you desire a picture with the clergy, please notify the officiant prior to the ceremony.

Pictures may be taken from the aisle before and after the ceremony **ONLY**. They may not be taken from the pulpit, chancel, or aisle during the ceremony. Photographers and videographers are to be unseen, unheard, and absolutely unnoticed by the worshippers. An unmanned camera on a tripod may be placed in the chancel in a set position or to be operated remotely.

Standing on or placing equipment on the pews or other furnishings in a way that would damage them is not permitted. If any part of First Church is damaged, the couple forfeits the deposit.

Family, friends, and photographers should be notified of these guidelines so that the service is not disrupted.

MISCELLANEOUS

The marriage license must be given to the Wedding Coordinator at the wedding.

The church is not responsible for lost or stolen purses, wallets, clothes, or other valuables left on church property during the rehearsal or on the wedding day.

The couple is responsible for seeing that the facilities are left in the condition that they were found, with all trash in receptacles and with no clothes, food, decorations, or other objects left behind. Should the facility require cleaning by a church staff member or outside party, the couple forfeits the deposit.

Flower attendants, ring-bearers, junior bridesmaids and groomsmen, and other participants must be of an age to understand their roles and follow the instructions given by the pastor and Wedding Coordinator. Participants younger than three years old tend to be problematic during the ceremony.

A working cell phone **MUST** be present and available during all activities held at the church facilities.

NO dogs or other pets will be allowed in the church. Service animals will be permitted.

Fireworks and sparklers are prohibited on church property.

All use of smoking and chewing tobacco products on church premises, both inside and outside of buildings, is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. The possession and/or use of any alcoholic beverages and all illegal drugs on church premises, both inside and outside of buildings, is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. It is the responsibility of the couple to inform attendants and other guests and family of this policy. Any family members or members of the wedding party that violate this policy in any way will not be permitted to participate in the ceremony, **and the ceremony may be cancelled immediately at the discretion of the pastor or Wedding Coordinator. Fees paid will not be refunded.**

FEES

The fee for a member wedding is \$860.00.

The fee for a non-member wedding is \$1,660.00

This fee includes the use of the facilities and the services of the Wedding Coordinator (rehearsal and wedding), clergy (counseling, rehearsal, and wedding), organist (music consultation, preparation, rehearsal with soloist, rehearsal, and wedding), sound technician (wedding), and custodian (after ceremony). If the couple requests that the sound technician be present at the rehearsal, there is an additional charge of \$25. If the couple requests that a church member or staff sing a solo, there is an additional charge of \$85.

This fee also includes a deposit of \$300.00 that will be returned to the couple if the facilities are left clean and undamaged. A portion or all of the deposit may be retained by First Church if damages are discovered, extra cleaning is required, or the soloist requires more than one rehearsal with the organist.

In agreeing to use the facilities at First Church for your rehearsal and wedding, you agree to adhere to this wedding policy in its entirety.

TIMELINE and CHECKLIST

- [] Reserve rehearsal and wedding date after reading wedding policy and paying fee in full.
- [] Contact pastor (as early as possible, at least four months before wedding)
- [] Contact Wedding Coordinator (as soon as possible, at least four months before wedding)
- [] Contact organist (as soon as possible, at least two months before wedding)
- [] Meet with pastor (at least four months before wedding)
- [] Finalize music with organist (at least one month before wedding)
- [] Finalize decorations with Wedding Coordinator (at least one week before rehearsal)
- [] Drop off media materials at church (at least one week before rehearsal)

***First United Methodist Church
Lawrence, KS
Wedding Application***

Date: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Bride's Name (please print): _____

Bride's Signature: _____

Your signature acts as your agreement to abide by the wedding guidelines set forth in the packet if the church accepts your wedding application.

Bride's Address: _____

Phone-Work: _____ Home: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Groom's name (please print): _____

Groom's Signature: _____

Your signature acts as your agreement to abide by the wedding guidelines set forth in the packet if the church accepts your wedding application.

Groom's Address: _____

Phone-Work: _____ Home: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Name & Address of Who to Mail the Refundable Deposit to: _____

Once the church receives your application and full payment for your wedding, the Administrative Assistant will add your wedding to the calendar and send you a confirmation and instructions for you to contact the necessary persons.

Pastor of First United Methodist Church: _____
(Signature)

Administrative Assistant of First United Methodist Church: _____
(Signature)

Assigned Wedding Coordinator: _____

12/2015