

WEDDING POLICY

First United Methodist Church Clover, South Carolina

Christian marriage is one of the greatest occasions of joy and celebration in human life. It is appropriate for the covenant of marriage to be made by couples before God and in the company of friends, family members, and the community of faith. It is always an honor to witness and bless the union of two people who love each other and are committed to life-long fidelity and mutual support.

First United Methodist Church is honored that you are considering having your wedding ceremony in our sanctuary. We offer these guidelines so that you will know what we expect as you make your preparations for this blessed event.

Purpose of the Wedding Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all weddings will respect the Christian values of FUMC, keeping with its traditions. The wedding policy incorporates the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* as a source of guidance and shall be the basis of all wedding ceremonies.

The services and facilities of First United Methodist church are offered to members and to non-members in accordance with the approved policies of the Trustees and or Administrative Counsel. The policy is subject to revision as needed with a projected review every two to three years. This policy and procedure is meant to work in conjunction with the Facilities Use Policy.

Reservations Required

The Officiating Pastor should be contacted as soon as possible to secure the dates on his/her calendar. In accordance with the policies developed by the church Trustees, arrangements for use of the church facilities are to be made through the church's Business/Technical Coordinator (803 222-3496). Due to the size of our congregation and the fact that non-members also are welcome to use our facilities (for an appropriate fee), we recommend one year's notice and require at least six month's notice prior to your wedding date. Usually, it will take a least six months to conveniently arrange the meetings for the required planning, including pre-marital counseling. Please start early.

Officiating Pastor

The Pastor of FUMC feels it is a privilege to officiate at your marriage. The Pastor is available for members as well as non-members. An ordained Pastor, other than the appointed Pastor of FUMC, may assist or officiate the wedding; however, prior approval must be obtained from the appointed Pastor of FUMC.

People ask, "What shall we give the Pastor?" It is customary to give a monetary gift. The following factors should be taken into consideration: time spent in the preliminary discussion of your wedding plans; time spent in pre-marital counseling and in working through the details of your ceremony; and, the extent of the Pastor's responsibility for the rehearsal and the ceremony itself. The suggested minimum fee to a non-member is \$175.00. This should be discussed with the Pastor.

Required Counseling

We believe that marriage is a tremendous responsibility and, in the traditional language, "is not to be entered into lightly". Therefore, we require pre-marital counseling. Our ministers provide this service free of charge. You are not required to use our ministers, but he or she will need to know whom you plan to use for your counseling. This is an opportunity for you to enrich your relationship even before your marriage begins.

For non-members, counseling is also required. Our church mission does not permit First UMC to function as a wedding chapel. If you do not wish to counsel with one of our ministers, a reference including phone number and address from your minister or licensed counselor is required before your ceremony will be scheduled.

Regarding the Ceremony

Our ministers will be happy to perform your ceremony. If another minister is to officiate or participate, the church requires that an invitation be issued through our minister so that he or she can extend professional courtesies to the visiting clergy. We do not permit non-clergy to perform ceremonies in our church. However, our ministers can discuss with you many meaningful options for participation by friends or family members in the ceremony.

Rehearsal

A rehearsal is required. Normally it is held the night before the wedding beginning between 6:00 and 7:00 and lasting about an hour. The bride and groom are responsible for the prompt arrival of the participants and informing them of the importance of being attentive to the purpose of the evening.

Communion

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is an act of corporate worship. If the sacraments are desired, all members of the wedding party and the congregation will be served. It is our tradition to invite all Christians to the Lord's Table. No "private communion" will be served to the couple during the ceremony. If the sacrament is desired, please, discuss this with the Pastor early in the wedding planning stages.

Music and Organist

Music selections, both instrumental and vocal, must be appropriate for a service of Christian worship and express praise, joy, love and marriage themes.

Should the services of the FUMC music director or the organist be desired, a representative of the wedding party must contact each of them directly. They will offer suggestions and review the specific musical desires. They will attend the rehearsal.

Although the music director and organist are salaried church employees, weddings are functions outside their responsibilities to the church. Therefore, each should be compensated for their time and talents. The amount of the compensation and payment method is to be discussed directly with the organist or music director. At a minimum, the compensation should be no less than \$150.00. If a substitute organist is required, the fee may have to be adjusted. In addition, compensation to any vocalist should be considered.

Selection of an organist is the responsibility of the bride and groom. Should a guest organist be selected, contact will be necessary with the church office to make arrangements for practice times.

Sound System

The sound system will be essential during the wedding. A sound technician from FUMC is trained and experienced on the equipment. We cannot allow someone other than the FUMC sound technician to operate the system. Arrangement for use of the sound system must be made through the Business/Technical Coordinator.

Proper compensation to the sound technician for time and expertise is expected. The suggested minimum fee is \$ 100.00.

Photography and Videography

Photographers and videographers are welcome to take appropriate photos without flash or floodlights in the sanctuary. A single flash picture of the bride as she enters and another of the couple as they leave are permitted. None of the participants are to be posed or “paused” after the ceremony begins. No floodlights may be used at any time. Photographers and videographers must remain stationary throughout the ceremony. Only an unaccompanied camera is permitted in the choir loft. We suggest that the other camera be set up in the balcony where it will not interfere with your guests. The minister and/or Wedding Director Coordinator will assist you in making these decisions for your videographer. It is the responsibility of the couple to inform the photographers and videographers of these requirements and make them an addendum to the contract. We have attached a separate set of instructions that you can present to your photographer. Discuss these requirements prior to entering into the contract with the photographer/videographer. If there is hesitation and resistance, we suggest you find another photographer. Our ministers have in the past and will continue to interrupt a ceremony to correct errant photographers and guests who stand up and take flash photos. That is an indication of how important this issue is to our congregation and its ministers. To place our position in the clearest possible terms: this is a service of worship, not a photo session or television production.

Finally, your program should clearly indicate to your guests that no flash pictures are permitted in the sanctuary at any time and that no movement or standing to take non-flash pictures is permitted. The following statement is a gracious way to make this clear to your guests and we recommend its use in your program and suggest that the person at the guest register emphasize these requirements (including pager/cell phone instructions):

“First United Methodist Church welcomes you to this service of Christian worship. In order to preserve the worshipful spirit of this important moment, the bride and groom request your cooperation in two important matters:

1. This wedding ceremony is Christian worship which takes place in the sacred space of the sanctuary. No photography or videography is permitted in the sanctuary. The bride and groom (you may insert your names here if you prefer) have contracted with a photographer and videographer who operate under strict church guidelines. They will be happy to provide you with contact information if you wish to obtain any of the images captured by these artists.”
2. Please turn off your pagers and cellular telephones for the duration of the wedding ceremony. If your phone features a silent vibrating alert feature, please switch to that but kindly refrain from answering until you have slipped out of the sanctuary into the vestibule.

Thank you for making our day more enjoyable by following these guidelines.”

Again, our ministers have and will continue to interrupt ceremonies to correct those who violate this requirement. They do this graciously and with a loving spirit, but our position is firm and anyone who persists will be escorted from the sanctuary.

Seating capacity

The sanctuary seats approximately 250 to 300 people, including the balcony area.

Altar ware & Brassware, Care of

When handling all brassware, altar wares, or candelabras, please, use gloves. This helps to prevent tarnishing and scratching.

The Lord's Table and other furnishings

The altar area, its furniture and banners are significant parts of the sacred space in the chancel area. The Lord's Table may not be removed from the chancel area. With the exception of the Christian and American flags, moving any of the furnishings, especially the Lord's Table and altar ware, are to be discussed with the Pastor or Worship Committee chairperson.

Flowers and Decorations

Perhaps the most attractive feature of our sanctuary is its simplicity. Many couples find that additional decorations are not necessary. Due to the limited space in our chancel area, our experience is that a maximum of two live flower or fern arrangements enhances the overall appearance of the wedding. Likewise, two or three candelabra are sufficient. We encourage the use of wedding decorations that are modest and do not take away from the central focus on the bride and groom. We require that no decoration cover or detract from the central symbols of our faith. Here are some guidelines for you to use in planning your decorations:

1. We prefer that the furnishings of the chancel area remain in place. We require that the Communion Table with all of its symbols remain in place. Rearrangement of other chancel furnishings can be accomplished only in consultation with the minister or Wedding Director Coordinator. Please note that the church does not have a kneeling bench or Unity Candle stand. If you plan to include the Unity ceremony and/or to kneel for the prayers, you will need to rent these items and obtain candles.
2. Please protect the carpeting from wax drippings by specifying "dripless candles" to your florist when ordering candelabra. Please protect the carpet from any moisture or droppings from ferns, plants or live floral arrangements from remaining on the carpet.
3. Please help us protect our furnishings and walls by not placing tacks, nails or scotch tape anywhere in the sanctuary. Only masking tape or drafting tape are permitted.
4. On the day of the wedding, the families of the bride and groom are responsible for removal of all decorations, and any trash, boxes and garments left behind by the wedding party. Sometimes the florist can be instructed to perform these tasks. We require a fee for cleaning the sanctuary following a wedding, but this does not include discarding flowers and their residue. Sometimes couples desire for some of the flowers to remain in the sanctuary for worship the next morning. If this is your desire, please let us know when the wedding is scheduled so we may enter your gift of flowers on the flower calendar.
5. To emphasize again, nothing such as rice or confetti may be thrown inside any church facility. Live flower petals may be dropped in the center aisle during the processional ONLY IF the couple has rented a runner for the entire length of the aisle. Artificial petals may be used without a runner. In either case, flower petals are to be removed by the wedding party along with the other decorations following the ceremony. Birdseed may be thrown outside the church but the parents of the bride and groom are responsible for sweeping the remaining seed from steps and walkways. Exterior cleaning is not included in the cleaning fee.
6. The dates of Advent vary from year to year, but begin four Sundays before Christmas Day. Christmas decorations will remain in the sanctuary from the first Sunday of Advent through the first Sunday following New Year's Day.
7. We discourage any decoration of the exterior of the church. Any exterior decorations must be approved by the Board of Trustees or its representative.

Wedding Director

The bride is responsible for securing a qualified wedding director who will be present for the full rehearsal and the wedding. The church defines “qualified” as a person who satisfactorily demonstrates to our Wedding Director Coordinator that he or she has sufficient knowledge and experience to direct the wedding. Attached is a list of approved Wedding Directors. They have been pre-qualified and are completely familiar with our facilities and procedures.

The minister is in charge of the wedding and the rehearsal, but he or she will not direct the wedding. The wedding director will be given ample time in the rehearsal schedule to inform the ushers of their duties and assist in placing attendants at the front of the church. The minister will be fully responsible for the service from the moment of entrance of the wedding party into the sanctuary until the wedding party departs from the chancel area. The wedding director is responsible for all elements of the wedding procedure outside of the ceremony.

Our FUMC Wedding Coordinator or a representative will be notified and must sign off on the initial reservation of all non-member weddings or weddings that involve other visiting clergy, unless approved by the Sr. Pastor. In these weddings, the Wedding Director should be approved by our Wedding Coordinator and communicate with her on any aspects related to the sanctuary or building. In conjunction with the FUMC Church Business Tech, arrangement of deposits, expectations, policies, space needed, keys, reception, sound system needs and expectations should be relayed to guests through these two persons. If there is a violation of the usage of the building observed by the Wedding Coordinator this should be relayed to the Business Church Tech in writing no later than 10 days following the ceremony.

Approval for Outside Clergy at Weddings

All outside clergy must be approved by the Sr. Pastor of the church. Adequate Christian Based Pre-marriage counseling is a requirement of FUMC and must be approved by the Sr. Pastor.

Candelabras

The candelabra may be placed to accommodate the wedding party. If a non-member of FUMC is using candelabras belonging to the church, candles will be provided for a fee. There is no charge for candelabra candles to members of FUMC congregation.

When handling candelabras, or any brass altar ware, please, use gloves.

Candelabras from an outside source may be used. All candles are to be of the dripless variety. The bride and groom will be responsible for any damage resulting from candles.

Receptions and Rehearsal Dinners

Our Missions and Fellowship Center is available for rehearsal dinners and receptions. It has a capacity of 600 for a stand-up reception and 400 for a sit-down reception around tables. A separate cleaning fee is required for the Center, kitchen, and lobby area (lobby only if used separately from the Center, for example, for small stand-up receptions). The wedding parties are responsible for securing caterers. The kitchen is available for use by the caterer as a matter of convenience. The caterer is to provide all necessary tableware, flatware, dishes, all supplies and preparation items. Permission to use items belonging to FUMC must be approved prior to the event date. All items used must be cleaned and stored in their appropriate places.

Tables and chairs are available for use in the fellowship hall. Arrangements for set-up and use of these items are the responsibility of the wedding coordinator. Linens are NOT provided.

In all cases the person reserving the facility will be responsible for any cost of repairs, replacement or special cleaning required.

The facility must be vacated no later than 10:00 p.m. so that the cleaning can begin.

Clean Up and Lock Up

Clean up is the responsibility of the bridal couple. If you choose, the church can provide a cleaning service for you. However, weddings are not part of the FUMC Sexton's paid responsibilities. The bridal party will be responsible for \$100 for the custodian's services and must be paid prior to the wedding. Checks should be made to FUMC.

Cleaning of all facilities after the wedding and/or reception includes but may not be limited to the following:

1. Removal of all decorations,
2. Vacuuming,
3. Washing of all utensils/dishes and returning them to their proper place, and,
4. Removing all items brought with you. Please, make sure the church grounds are left in order after the ceremony.

The wedding party is responsible for locking all doors if a Church Staff Member is not available.

Fees

Church facilities are available free of charge for members of FUMC. A member, for purposes of this policy, would be defined as either the bride or groom, or both. There are deposits required for Facility Usage that are refunded after event, if no damages were found. Non-church members will be expected to pay a fee for the use of the facilities. FUMC Trustees have established a fee schedule, which is available at the church office. Facility use fees are to be paid at least 24 hours in advance of the function.

Unless otherwise stated within this policy, checks are to be made payable to First United Methodist Church and received by the church no later than date indicated on invoice.

The following summary of fees represents the least amount of compensation expected

| | <u>Member</u> | <u>Non-member</u> |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
| FUMC Pastor | discretion | \$175.00 |
| FUMC Organist | \$ 75.00 | \$ 75.00 |
| FUMC Vocalist | \$ 75.00 | \$ 75.00 |
| FUMC Music Director | \$150.00 | \$ 150.00 |
| FUMC Sound Technician (No outside technician may be used) | \$100.00 | \$100.00 |
| FUMC Wedding planner/Hostess | negotiable | negotiable |
| FUMC Sexton | \$100.00 | \$100.00 |

Damages

Damages to buildings, equipment or church property should be reported immediately to the church office. Any damaged property must be refinished or replaced to the satisfaction of the Trustees.

It will be the responsibility of the bride and groom to convey this information to the wedding party and all wedding guests.

Restricted Activities

No alcoholic beverages or drugs of any kind are permitted anywhere on the church property.

Smoking is not permitted within any of the church buildings. Smoking is allowed outside the buildings.

Food is not allowed in the sanctuary or the parlor area. Food is allowed in the Fellowship Hall only.

Miscellaneous

Confetti, rice, bubbles or other materials may not be thrown or used within any of the church facilities. Birdseed may be thrown outside.

FUMC is not responsible for items lost, stolen or damaged. Do not leave valuables unattended.

Current Wedding Personnel

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Ministers: | Alex Stevenson | 222-3496 |
| Facilities Scheduling: | Christine Payseur | 222-3496 |
| Director of Music: | Cheri King | 222-3496 |
| Administrative Assistant: | Shirley Davis | 222-3496 |