



## **Asbury Church Wedding Policies and Procedures**

We pray that the wedding ceremony will be a witness to God's glory and will reflect the couple's sincere desire to be obedient disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that a wedding is not only a union between a man and a woman, but even more, is an act of worship. As such, the wedding is both a joyful and solemn occasion. In the course of Asbury's existence, we have had hundreds of weddings. Experience has taught us a great deal. By abiding by the policies listed, we feel Christ will be honored, the marriage ceremony will be done well, and the needs of our facility and staff will be respected. Please read the following material carefully and cooperate fully with Asbury in upholding these high standards which we all desire.

### **Scheduling Your Wedding**

After talking to the Events Associate and receiving the policies and procedures, both bride and groom should carefully read it so there is no misunderstanding on anyone's part. Then, upon receipt of the Wedding Contract and Information Form and payment of the required deposit, the wedding date is confirmed on Asbury's calendar. We ask that the times for rehearsal and wedding be fixed at the time the facilities are reserved. If, for any reason, the couple needs to cancel the wedding at least three (3) months prior to the wedding date, the deposit will be fully refunded; however, if the wedding is cancelled and the church is not notified, or it is less than three (3) months from the date, the deposit will be forfeited. Should it be necessary to retain the deposit due to damage or policy infractions, the couple will be notified by e-mail. Otherwise, the deposit should be returned by mail within 2-3 weeks following the wedding. The Wedding Contract and Information Form must be completed and returned to the church, along with the required fees at the time of booking but no less than four (4) weeks prior to the wedding. Any checks mailed should be marked: Attention, Jennifer Barnes, Events Associate. All couples desiring to marry at Asbury will need to establish the date on the church calendar a minimum of three (3) months prior to the wedding. Any exceptions to this time period must be pre-approved by the Pastor or the Director of Operations.

### **Non-Member Weddings**

Unless the bride or the groom, or parents, guardians or grandparents of the bride or groom, have been members of Asbury for six (6) months at the time of the deposit, the wedding is regarded as a non-member wedding. No non-member wedding can be scheduled in excess of nine (9) months prior to the date desired as our members have priority until that time. Within nine (9) months of the date of the wedding, a non-member wedding can be scheduled following steps listed under "Scheduling Your Wedding."

### **Ministers**

It is required that one of Asbury's ministers conduct any wedding held at Asbury church. Any other requested minister may assist in the service, but Asbury's minister will be the presiding pastor. Another minister should only be contacted after consulting with the presiding pastor. The couple planning to be married is to arrange a visit with the pastor in order to plan the service and receive pastoral counsel. Any exceptions to this policy would need to be approved by Asbury's Senior Pastor or Executive Pastor.

### **Rehearsal Information**

Knowing best how to conduct a religious ceremony, the pastor (or Asbury's Events Associate, should the pastor choose) shall be in charge of the rehearsal, which must begin promptly, and will be limited to one (1) hour. We suggest the wedding party arrive 15 minutes before their scheduled time. It is also recommended that the couple give the marriage license to the Events Associate at the rehearsal. This lets her know they have completed the legal requirements and also relieves them from that responsibility on the wedding day.

### **Holiday Information**

Decorations for the Easter or Christmas season will remain in place for any weddings scheduled during that time. No weddings or receptions may be held in the church on Sundays, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, any time during Holy Week, Memorial Day, Pentecost Sunday weekend, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thursday or Friday of Thanksgiving week, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. There are no exceptions.

### **Pre-Marriage Counseling – Couple to Couple**

Asbury Church feels a responsibility to prepare couples for marriage and has established a "Couple to Couple" mentoring program for this purpose. Every couple getting married at Asbury Church must participate in this program, or other Asbury approved pre-marital counseling. The Events Associate will obtain the needed information from the couple at the time of deposit, and then they will be contacted by the Couple-to-Couple ministry. Special arrangements may be made for those living out of state to complete an abbreviated program by mail. Couples are financially responsible for the cost of the materials for the program. The cost is \$50 per couple but completion of Couple to Couple allows for a \$45 discount on the marriage license. Financial scholarships may be available for those unable to bear this cost.

### **Music**

The organist or Events Associate must have all music, vocal and instrumental, at least three (3) weeks prior to the wedding, including any recorded music. No music will be played or performed "at the last minute." All couples who wish to use the organist will have a meeting with her to select hymns and discuss logistics of the wedding music. The organist of Asbury Church will be utilized at all weddings requiring organ music. Any other organist used must be approved by our organist, and with the knowledge that the couple must pay a bench fee to our organist (the regular fee paid for wedding and rehearsal).

The Music Department of Asbury Church is available to recommend a soloist, if desired. A guest soloist is welcome. The soloist may rehearse with the organist prior to or immediately following the wedding rehearsal (time permitting). If the organist is required to make a special trip to the church to rehearse with the soloist, this needs to be arranged with the organist, and an additional fee will be charged. The couple is responsible for paying the soloist and/or other musicians, and this should be taken care of at or before the rehearsal. Be sure to check with them about additional fees for additional songs, as most charge by number of songs.

If the couple wishes not to use live music, pre-recorded music may be played by the sound technician during the ceremony. Remember, the purpose of music in a church wedding is to glorify God, and to

honor His presence as the marriage vows are exchanged. It is our desire that the wedding ceremony contain music that is conducive to the worship of God. All music must be submitted and approved by the Events Associate prior to the rehearsal.

### **Decorations**

Flowers are used as a floral offering and should be in keeping with the dignity of this church. All decorations, rentals, etc. may be delivered no more than two (2) hours before the wedding and must be removed from Asbury no more than one and one half (1 ½) hours after the wedding. Due to limited storage in the facility, nothing may be dropped off or left to be picked up on another day. The church has several candelabras, aisle candles and a unity candle, which the couple may use at no additional cost. This includes candles.

The entrance to the chancel area should be kept clear for the wedding party, and the altar table should not be concealed. All real candles must be "chase" candles (metal candles with wax refills). If the couple chooses not to use Asbury's candelabras, they must provide their own "chase" candles. Aisle candles must be approved by the Events Associate, and flower stands may not be attached to the pews. The use of tacks, pins, nails, tape or glue to fasten decorations to the furniture or building is not allowed. The flower girl should drop only silk flower petals. All floral arrangements should be kept behind the altar rail, and the rail itself is to remain free of decorations, such as greenery, flowers, and candles. Nothing may be placed on the piano or organ. The altar is the focal point of the wedding ceremony. Nothing is to be placed or removed on the altar table without the Event Associate approval. The florist will be held responsible for any damage to the building or furniture, as well as for cleaning any stains, etc., resulting from their actions. Removal of Chancel furniture, including media equipment, is not allowed at any time. No glass vases or containers may be used in the chapel foyer. The Events Associate must approve all outside decorations.

For safety reasons, Asbury requests that no rice, birdseed, confetti, glitter, sparkles, or anything that litters is thrown inside or outside the building. Animals (including doves) are not allowed inside the building, except for approved pet assistants.

### **Photography**

All photographers, amateur and professional, are asked to reverence the ceremony. Access to the church is granted not more than two (2) hours before the start of the wedding, and the church must be vacated no later than one and one half (1 ½) hours after the time set for the service to begin. In order to keep distractions from the couple, no manned cameras (still or video) will be used in the choir loft or on the chancel during the service. The photographer may take pictures before or after the ceremony in any part of the building. Pictures may be taken of the bridal party as they PROCESS into the chapel and after the end of the service as they RECESS from the chapel. Photographers may not be farther forward than halfway up the side aisles to take these pictures. Photographers may sit on the front row of the pews as long as they enter the pew on the side aisles. No photographers or videographers are to be down the center aisle or across the front during the ceremony. All pictures during the service (still and video) must be taken from the back or the crowd's nest. An unmanned video camera may be set in the choir loft. Photographers may not use a flash during the ceremony. The ministers request that as many pictures as possible be taken BEFORE the wedding. Photographers may not move candelabra or decorations and should check with the Events Associate if something needs to be moved. Nothing is to be placed on the

organ or the piano. Friends and family are welcome to take pictures at any time EXCEPT during the ceremony. Exceptions to this policy will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Events Associate.

Photographers and videographers who do not adhere to this policy, will not be able to shoot future weddings at Asbury.

### **Receptions**

The Family Room or CLC are available at Asbury Church for wedding receptions following a Saturday afternoon wedding, if not already booked on the church calendar. No receptions will be held at Asbury for weddings held elsewhere. No bands, DJs, or lighting may be used in any of these locations. This is to protect the facility (carpet, etc.) and other events which may be occurring simultaneously within the church. The church will be open two (2) hours prior to the reception. If more time is necessary, please consult the Events Associate for special arrangements. Additional fees will be required. No serving pieces or place settings are available. Only caterers approved by the Events Associate will have access to the main kitchen for receptions. Candles may not be used in any reception area. Our buildings and grounds are to remain alcohol-free, and smoking is allowed only outside the building. The couple is responsible for leaving all facilities clean and orderly. The church custodians will be responsible for setting up and taking down tables and chairs and sweeping the floor but are not available to wash or put away dishes or to clean kitchen counters. Receptions must be over, and the church vacated by 5:00 pm. Reception facilities are not available for evening weddings.

### **General Information**

Weddings may be held on Friday evenings, Saturday afternoons or Saturday evenings. If the couple wishes for another day, please consult the Events Associate.

The evening times to choose from are 4:00, 4:30, 5:00, 5:30 and 6:00 pm. The afternoon times to choose from are 1:00, 1:30 and 2:00 pm. The building will be unlocked two (2) hours before the wedding. If more time is needed, you must discuss this with the Events Associate at least four (4) weeks prior to the wedding. Additional fees will be required. No food or drink is allowed in the chapel; however, it is permitted in the bride's room and the groom's room. Alcohol is strictly prohibited.

Childcare and/or Nursery facilities are not available for weddings.

### **Communion**

If you'd like Holy Communion to be included in the wedding ceremony, it will need to be part of the service and open to the congregation—in other words, no private communion for the bride and groom alone. If included in the wedding service, Holy Communion will take place after the exchange of vows and the declaration of marriage, which means the first act the newlyweds will share together is partaking in the sacrament of Holy Communion—a beautiful sign of their commitment to share God's love with the world. With a few extra servers, hundreds of people can be served communion in less than 10 minutes, and it is very easy to add Holy Communion to a wedding service. The reason why we do not offer Holy Communion only for the bride and groom and not for the congregation is because Holy Communion is a gift from Jesus to his church that is meant for the entire body of believers who are gathered in that place. Holy Communion is a sacrament that is meant to draw the church into *communion* with the Lord. Separating out some people to receive the communion elements from

the entire body that is present therefore undermines the purpose of Holy Communion. This is why we never celebrate private communion, and in fact “private Holy Communion” is a contradiction in terms. There is a small additional fee that will be added if you choose to have communion served at your wedding to cover the cost of the elements and to prepare them for your ceremony.