

WEDDING GUIDELINES



First United Methodist Church

12 21st Avenue

P.O. Box 807, Isle of Palms, South Carolina 29451

843-886-6610

Wedding Guidelines
First United Methodist Church
Isle of Palms, South Carolina

Christian marriage is a holy contract, a sacred covenant established by God. The wedding ceremony is a service of Christian worship and as such should be simple, reverent, and in keeping with the liturgy, ritual, and traditions of the Church. This booklet is designed to inform you of the specific policies and procedures for weddings at First United Methodist Church, Isle of Palms.

Scheduling a Wedding

If you wish to request a date to be married at First United Methodist Church, call the church office and speak with the pastor. Read these guidelines and become familiar with them before your first appointment with the pastor. The pastor considers it a privilege to officiate at the marriage of church members, and under special circumstances, at the marriage of sponsored non-members. The church is not considered reserved until 50% of all fees (nonrefundable) have been paid and the pastor has confirmed the date on his/her calendar. If there are more than 50 members of the wedding party, including guests, a professional wedding planner is required.

Weddings will not be scheduled for the period of time from Holy Week through Easter Sunday. Weddings will not be scheduled during the Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day weekends, due to the traffic on the island.

The Pastor

The pastor considers weddings to be a very special time in the life of our church. Your wedding is indeed an act of Christian worship, and a considerable amount of the pastor's personal time must be devoted to pre-marital counseling, rehearsal, and the wedding itself. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church requires a pastor to counsel with the couple to be married. These sessions include both parties. The pastor reserves the right to decide the scope of counseling needs, number of sessions, etc. The pastor also reserves the right to refuse to perform a marriage when he/she does not consider it in the best interest of the couple or the ministry of

the church. The pastor is also responsible for interpreting the policies of the church, conducting the rehearsal of the ceremony, and officiating at the wedding.

Pastors from Other Churches

The pastor conducts all worship services, including weddings. If you wish to have another pastor participate in your wedding service, please discuss this with the pastor. The pastor alone may invite other clergy to participate in a service.

Ritual and Liturgy of Christian Marriage

The ritual and liturgy of the United Methodist Church is to be used for worship. The traditional language and liturgy of the United Methodist Church provides for sacred worship on the occasion of a wedding. The Sacrament of Holy Communion is an act of corporate worship. If the Sacrament is to be celebrated, it must be offered to the entire congregation.

Church Wedding Coordinator

It is the policy of the church that the Church Wedding Coordinator handles all weddings in the sanctuary. She/he will implement the church policies and be ready to assist the pastor and the wedding party. She/he will assist the pastor in directing the rehearsal and the wedding. She/he is the only person with a key who has access to the church. She/he will be responsible for opening the church and/or the fellowship hall for the rehearsal.

Music

Appropriate music should be used for all weddings. It should be sacred or classical music, not secular transcriptions of “love songs.” Please consult the Director of Worship Arts about the nature of the music and suggested selections.

Decorating the Church

The sanctuary is a place of worship. No decorations should prevent free movement of the pastor(s) and members of the wedding party. The cross is the focal point, and decorations must not obscure or detract from it. No decorations of any kind may be placed on the altar. The candles that remain on the altar are lighted for the ceremony. Candles may only be placed by church staff on the Communion Table. The various pieces of furniture will not be removed or rearranged for any wedding.

The flowers, palms, greenery, and a maximum of two candelabra may be placed in the chancel area and out of the way of the pastor and the wedding party. They must not obstruct the view of the altar. No wax candles may be used, and the carpet must be protected. Wreaths, flowers, etc. may not be attached to any part of the church by nails, tacks, or tape. Bows or other arrangements used to mark the pews may be tied on with ribbon. Care should be taken to protect the carpet from candles, potted evergreens, etc. Proper bases and/or plastic must be under all containers. No aisle runners may be used.

Photography and Videography

Video equipment is not permitted in the chancel area. It should be stationary and located at the rear of the church. No flash photography.

Rehearsal

Every wedding, regardless of size, should have a rehearsal to adequately plan for the placement of the attendants, seating of the guests and a reviewing of the marriage vows by the couple. Preferably, the rehearsal should be held on the evening before the marriage. It is necessary for the bridal party and those being formally seated to attend the rehearsal. The bride and groom share the responsibility for having their attendants arrive on time. Rehearsal plans must be approved by both the pastor and the church wedding coordinator.

Facilities

The sanctuary will seat 248 guests. ABSOLUTELY NO smoking, vaping or use of alcoholic beverages is permitted on church property. Liability insurance is required for any on site third party usage to include property damage and personal injury. Use of the facilities are expected not to exceed two hours for the rehearsal and four hours for the wedding.

Wedding License

A marriage license must be secured from the probate court in Charleston County prior to the wedding. A wedding cannot be conducted without a valid wedding

license.

Please bring your marriage license with you to the rehearsal. The pastor will keep the license and ensure it is returned to the proper probate court.

Fees and Payments

Sanctuary and Lupo Fellowship Hall rental (for rehearsal and wedding):

\$4,500 (sponsored non-members)

\$1,825 (members in good standing)

The Fee includes the use of the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, and required classrooms to accommodate the preparation and execution of the wedding ceremony. Also included in the fee are the following:

Cleaning: The cleaning team ensures that all facilities used for the wedding are returned to proper order after the event. They handle trash removal, restroom refreshment, vacuuming, mopping, and basic resetting of the space. Their work ensures the church is ready for regular ministry activities or the next scheduled event. They do not handle personal items or décor removal unless specifically arranged.

Sexton: The sexton handles any lighting, HVAC, plumbing or any other physical issues prior to the wedding, They remain available to assist with general building readiness before and after the event. Their focus is on maintaining a safe, functional, and welcoming environment.

Church Wedding Coordinator: The church wedding coordinator serves as the primary church liaison for the couple, helping them understand church guidelines and navigate the wedding process. They coordinate logistics such as the ceremony timeline, rehearsal flow, facility use, and interaction with church staff. The coordinator ensures all parties know where to be and when, providing direction so the day runs smoothly. They do not replace a private wedding planner but handle church-specific coordination. ensures the church is ready for regular ministry activities or the next scheduled event. They do not handle personal items or décor removal unless specifically arranged. The coordinator oversees the physical building during the wedding, ensuring doors are unlocked and locked according to schedule and that heating, cooling, and lighting are set appropriately and reports any issues to sexton/ board of trustees if identified.

Director of Worship Arts (Music): The Director of Worship Arts oversees all music-related components of the ceremony, including working with the couple to select appropriate Christian music. They coordinate with instrumentalists, vocalists, and

audio personnel as needed to ensure musical excellence. The director may also provide musical guidance that aligns with the church’s mission and worship standards. They ensure all musical elements enhance the spiritual tone of the service.

Pastor: The pastor provides spiritual leadership and officiates the wedding ceremony. The pastor will meet with the couple for pre-marital counseling, ceremony planning, and review of vows and liturgy. The pastor ensures that the ceremony reflects a Christian understanding of marriage and follows church theological guidelines. They lead the rehearsal time related to the order of service and ceremonial elements.

Audio/Video Technician: The use of the church’s audio/video equipment and technician is an optional add on expense. The audio/video technician manages all existing Church audio-visual elements related to the wedding ceremony. They operate cameras, livestream equipment, or video recording systems depending on the church’s available technology. The technician ensures sound levels are appropriate, visual feeds are clear, and recordings are properly captured. The video technician is NOT responsible for wedding videography which will be provided by a non-church related vendor.

Damage Deposit (refundable): \$1,000

Fifty percent of the total fees and the completed, signed wedding reservation form are required to book a wedding date. The fee and damage deposit should be paid by check made payable to First United Methodist Church, IOP. Designate “Wedding” with the wedding date on the memo line. The balance must be paid no later than ten days prior to the rehearsal. The certificate of insurance should be provided at this time as well.

WEDDING RESERVATION FORM
First United Methodist Church, Isle of Palms
P.O. Box 807
Isle of Palms, SC 29451
843.886.6610

All parties involved have reviewed and acknowledge they have read and understand all pages of the WEDDING GUIDELINES.

Wedding Date and Time _____
Number of Guests Expected _____
Wedding Planner Name _____ Phone _____ email _____

Note: Non-members MUST have a sponsor who is a member in good standing of UMC, IOP and be a guest at the wedding.

Members

Bride Name _____ Phone _____ email _____
Groom Name _____ Phone _____ email _____
Member Name _____ Phone _____ email _____
Relationship to Bride or Groom _____

Sponsored Non-Members

Bride Name _____ Phone _____ email _____
Groom Name _____ Phone _____ email _____
Sponsor Name _____ Phone _____ email _____
Relationship to Bride or Groom _____

Bride _____ Date _____
Signature
Groom _____ Date _____
Signature
Member _____ Date _____
Signature
Sponsor _____ Date _____
Signature