



Wedding Policy and Procedures

First United Methodist Church

300 North Main Street

Midland, Texas 79701 * 432.682.3701 * www.firstmethodistmidland.com

First United Methodist Church of Midland is honored that you have chosen to be married in our church. We have prepared these policies and guidelines to assist you in planning your wedding. It is the church's desire to be as helpful as possible to you on this momentous occasion.

You have turned to the church because you are interested in a Christian wedding. Please keep in mind that a church wedding is a service of worship. It is a religious celebration and all preparations should reflect that truth. Together, we shall plan for beauty, dignity and reverence.

*Please review the following policies and guidelines listed below. **This policy was updated as of June 19, 2015.** After reading and reviewing, if you would like more information or would like to see if your chosen wedding date is available, contact Kara Harris, Coordinator of the Relationship Center and Weddings, at karaharris@firstmethodistmidland.com or 432.682.3701 ext. 228 to schedule an appointment.*

WEDDING PLANNING

Officiating Pastor

A member of the pastoral staff of First United Methodist Church shall officiate all weddings held in the Sanctuary and Chapel. The pastors rotate in officiating duties. A pastor will be assigned depending on the date of the wedding. A pastor will commit to a wedding no earlier than three (3) months prior to the date.

If a request is made for a guest pastor to assist in the wedding, the officiating/senior pastor must approve any such request. The officiating/senior pastor will determine the appropriate role for the guest pastor. This request by the couple shall be made to the officiating/senior pastor through the Wedding Coordinator prior to consulting the guest pastor.

The officiating pastor representing First United Methodist Church is always in charge. Wedding services, bridal consultants and other persons of similar position must confer with the officiating pastor of First United Methodist Church through the Wedding Coordinator regarding all plans at least two (2) weeks prior to the rehearsal.

Marriage License

The pastor can only perform weddings in full accordance with the law. Please do not overlook the necessity for careful compliance. The wedding cannot take place without a marriage license. The license is to be given to the pastor at the rehearsal. *A copy of the completed and signed license must be submitted to the Church Office.*

Bulletin/Program

Special programs or bulletins should be ordered from an outside source as they are not provided by the church. However, the officiating pastor must approve the Order of Worship before the order is placed. Prior to placing your program order, please submit it for review to Kara Harris, Coordinator of the Relationship Center and Weddings, at karaharris@firstmethodistmidland.com.

WEDDING VENUES

On-Site Ceremony

There are two worship areas available at First United Methodist Church for wedding ceremonies: the Glass Memorial Chapel and the Sanctuary. The Glass Memorial Chapel seats approximately 100-150 guests and the Sanctuary seats approximately 500-600 including the balcony area.

Use of the following facilities is included in the wedding fees:

Sanctuary Wedding:

1. Bride's Room for Bride & Attendants
2. Parlor (if available) or Room 107 for Groom & Attendants
3. Restrooms adjacent to each

Chapel Wedding:

1. Bride's Room for Bride & Attendants
2. Parlor (if available) or Room 100 for Groom & Attendants
3. Restrooms adjacent to each

The Fellowship Hall and Parlor are available for wedding **receptions**. Please see the '**receptions**' section for more information and fees regarding these facilities.

Dressing Rooms

A Bride's Room (closet, restroom, dressing tables and dressing mirrors, etc.) is available adjacent to the Sanctuary and Chapel. This room is available for the bride and her attendants and is included in the wedding fees.

The Parlor will be used for the groom and his attendant when it is available. Otherwise, Room 107 (Sanctuary Wedding) or Room 100 (Chapel Wedding) is available for the groom and attendants, if they should choose to dress at the church.

Personal items must be removed immediately following the wedding or reception and the church is NOT responsible for damage or theft of personal items left in the Bride's Room, Room 107, Room 100, or any other room, before, during, or after an event. **A person must be designated to be responsible for the bride's and the rest of the wedding party's belongings.**

If the bride and groom wish to have snacks (finger foods, etc.) for the wedding party, the groom and attendants may be served in the groom's dressing room; the bride and attendants may be served in the Bride's Room Hallway. A table will be set up if requested. Only bottled water is allowed in the Bride's Room. All other food and drink should remain in the hallway.

Reception

The Fellowship Hall and Parlor are available for wedding **receptions**. The size of your reception and number of guests will help you determine which facility would be best for you. The maximum capacity for a Parlor wedding reception is 50. The maximum capacity for a Fellowship Hall wedding reception is 250 and 350 when Room 101/102 is also used. Reservations and arrangements for a reception must be made at the time the wedding is scheduled. This would include any media requests.

The bride's caterer or other designated person is in charge of the reception and must meet with Lew Dingman, Director of Operations, to discuss use of Kitchen facilities and equipment. This discussion must take place no later than one (1) month prior to the wedding. Only non-alcoholic beverages may be used.

Reception Fees are to be paid at the time of booking along with the deposit. All other fees must be received no later than two (2) weeks prior to the wedding date.

Off-site Ceremony

If you would like your ceremony at an off-site location, at least one meeting with the pastor is required. A traditional United Methodist Service of Marriage will be used by the pastor. An honorarium fee for the Pastor of \$300 is to be paid no later than two (2) weeks prior to the wedding date.

WEDDING SCHEDULING

Booking

All arrangements for the rehearsal, ceremony and reception shall be scheduled as far in advance as possible with the Coordinator of the Relationship Center and Weddings, Kara Harris at 432.682.3701 or karaharris@firstmethodistmidland.com. This includes dates, times, facilities desired and completion of appropriate forms along with a photograph of the couple. **Appointments must be made in advance and will typically be scheduled between 3-5 PM on Thursdays.**

Weddings are typically held on Saturday with the rehearsal always the Friday evening before at 6 p.m. Other arrangements may be discussed upon request. The Sanctuary is opened two (2) hours prior to the wedding and the Chapel one (1) hour; however, these facilities may be opened earlier upon request as well.

Weddings are scheduled on a first come, first serve basis; therefore, the earlier arrangements are made, the better the church can serve your needs. However, church events do take priority. Please be aware that if a scheduling conflict arises, church functions do take priority over outside bookings.

A deposit must be made along with the appropriate paperwork completed, including the policy signed and dated by both bride and groom confirming they have read and understand the wedding policy in full, in order for the event to be officially booked on the church calendar.

Weddings are not scheduled on major holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and/or Christmas Day. Weddings scheduled on a holiday weekend such as a weekend following Thanksgiving, etc. will be charged an additional \$200 facilities use fee and \$100 extra pastor's fee. **Please note that NO weddings will be scheduled on Good Friday –Easter weekend, this includes both the Chapel and Sanctuary.**

Saturday evening events shall conclude by 9 p.m. including clean-up. All decorations should be removed following the event. A \$100 per hour charge will be added after 9 p.m.

All fees are due two (2) weeks prior to the wedding date and all wedding forms must be completed and filed in the Church Office at least three(3) months before the wedding date. **A couple will not be scheduled to meet with a pastor until all completed forms are turned in to the Church Office.**

Rehearsal

All rehearsals for Saturday weddings will be at 6 p.m. on the Friday before and are to last thirty (30) minutes to not over one (1) hour. Therefore, it is imperative that all wedding party members arrive on time.

The First United Methodist Church officiating pastor and Wedding Coordinator are in charge of and will conduct the rehearsal. Our Wedding Coordinator will assist with the rehearsal and the wedding.

Absolutely no alcoholic beverages are permitted on church property. Any member of the wedding party under the influence of alcohol at the rehearsal or ceremony will be asked to leave the building.

The Sanctuary or Chapel will be opened one (1) hour before the rehearsal, unless other arrangements are made in the Church Office with the Wedding Coordinator.

WEDDING CEREMONY

Wedding Music

While bearing in mind that a wedding is a service of worship and that music must be appropriate to the occasion, we try to accommodate the tastes and preferences of the bride and groom. As soon as a wedding date has been approved by the Wedding Coordinator and the deposit has been paid, the Wedding Coordinator will link the couple with a member of the Worship Office to discuss musical selections – including musicians and vocalists as needed.

The Worship Office will make every effort to honor any special musical requests up to and no later than two (2) weeks prior to the wedding date.

A staff organist plays for all weddings requiring organ music. This typically includes a 15 minute prelude, processional, recessional, and a postlude.

One solo by a performance quality vocalist on our church staff is included in the wedding fees. To select a solo, or to engage a particular soloist not on our church staff and/or additional musicians, they must consult with the Wedding Coordinator, who must approve all music and musicians with the Director of Worship Arts. **Please note: pre-recorded music is not permitted.**

Please remember that the final test of the suitability of a piece of music is not its beauty, popularity or sentimental meaning, but its appropriateness to worship in the church. The Worship Office is charged by the congregation with the responsibility for making these decisions.

Photography

It is the bride's responsibility to explain the following church policies to photographers, family members and guests with cameras.

Pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary or Chapel as indicated below:

- ❖ Pictures may be taken before or after the ceremony. *If taken before, they must be finished thirty (30) minutes prior to the ceremony. If taken after the ceremony and before the reception, forty-five (45) minutes is sufficient.*
- ❖ Only one flash is allowed as the bride enters before proceeding down the aisle.
- ❖ At no time and under no conditions shall flash photographs be made during the Service of Marriage.
- ❖ Photographers using silent equipment, not requiring flash, may take exposures inconspicuously from the balcony of the Sanctuary, after proper arrangements are made for access. Photographers may NOT be stationed in the Chancel area.
- ❖ No flash photography by attending guests is allowed. Please make sure all guests are aware of this policy. *A suggested way to inform guests is by placing it on the program/bulletin or invitation.*

Bridal Portraits may be scheduled at no additional room rental fee for any bride having her ceremony at First United Methodist Church of Midland. However, any bride who is having her wedding at another location will be charged a room rental fee of \$100 per hour for using a church room/space for a photography session.

Videography

Videotaping must be inconspicuous and is allowed ONLY from the back of the Chapel, the balcony of the Sanctuary, or the corner of the choir loft of the Sanctuary. The wedding party is responsible for providing personnel for this service. For more information regarding the policy and procedures on videotaping, contact Lew Dingman, Director of Operations.

Media Projection

At this time, First United Methodist Church does not accommodate for media display/projection during a wedding ceremony in the Chapel or Sanctuary.

Decorations

The design of the Sanctuary and Chapel give spiritual significance and meaning to all services conducted therein. All wedding décor is subject to final approval by the Church Office through the desk of the Wedding Coordinator. Recommendations are below.

We prefer and recommend the following with regard to flowers and decorations:

- ❖ In both Sanctuary and Chapel, floral arrangements on the flower pedestals provided in designated areas are usually sufficient.

- ❖ In the **Sanctuary**, additional flowers may be placed inside the communion rail, in front of the organ console and piano to avoid blocking the view of the altar-chancel area. Please also consider the organist's and pianist's needs to see participants.
- ❖ In the **Chapel**, additional flowers may be placed immediately inside the communion rail, to avoid blocking the view of the altar-chancel area.
- ❖ Flowers (without water) and bows with protective materials are acceptable on the ends of pews. Do not use tacks, nails, or staples on pews, furniture, or walls.
- ❖ In both Sanctuary and Chapel, burning candles including the unity candle, when used, may **only** be placed on the altar table.*
- ❖ A prie-dieu (prayer kneeler) is available for use in front of the altar table. This matches the color and style of the Sanctuary pews.

The florist shall make arrangements in advance with the Church Office through the desk of the Wedding Coordinator for decorating time as this will enable the church to unlock necessary doors.

Because we want the wedding to focus on Christ and the Covenant of Christian Marriage, the Church encourages adherence to the above recommendations. However, if additional decorations are desired, we ask that you follow these supplementary guidelines:

- ❖ Flower arrangements on the platform must be positioned even with (in line with) or behind the altar table.
- ❖ Floral decorations, suitable for the brass table urns, may be placed on the altar table.
- ❖ Flowers and decorations are not to be placed in the choir loft.
- ❖ All decorations, flowers and candles must be removed from the facility before the last member of the wedding party leaves for the reception. This must be no later than two (2) hours after the ceremony or prior to 9 p.m.
- ❖ Burning candles may only be used on the altar table and they must be of the drip-less type and/or must be in containers to catch all drippings.*
- ❖ No burning candles may be placed in the aisles or on the ends of the pews due to fire and safety regulations. Electric candle light is a safer option and can be used in place of burning candles with less restriction.*
- ❖ Decorations of any kind may not be attached to the pews or any other furniture by gluing, nailing, pinning or taping.
- ❖ Fire codes prohibit folding chairs in the Chapel or Sanctuary. However, those arriving late may stand around the walls and entrance.
- ❖ The Chancel Choir Loft may **not** be rearranged. Any items or banners moved or removed from the Sanctuary, for the ceremony, must only be moved by the pastor, a member of the custodial staff or the Wedding Coordinator.

Restrictions

Throwing rice, birdseed, or confetti is not permitted inside the building. Birdseed or other similar material may be thrown outside the building as the wedding couple departs. A member of the wedding party should be asked to ensure that seed is not scattered inside the building.

WEDDING FEES

Church custodians are required at all weddings. Their fees are included in the wedding cost. However, additional fees may be charged at the rate of \$100 per hour when the total hours of the rehearsal and wedding exceed six (6) hours. Use of the facilities fees includes the use of the Sanctuary or Chapel, Bride's Room and groom's dressing room. An additional \$200 facility fee and a \$100 clergy fee will be added to weddings scheduled on holiday weekends. As mentioned, no weddings will be scheduled on Good Friday-Easter weekend.

First United Methodist Church of Midland reserves the right to charge additional fees to cover other requests not originally agreed upon. Deposits are to be made at the time of booking, with all fees due two (2) weeks prior to the wedding.

All fees including the deposit are payable to:

**First United Methodist Church
c/o Kara Harris, Wedding Coordinator
300 North Main Street
Midland, Texas 79701**

Please note the name of the wedding party and date in the memo. Example: Smith/Jones Wedding 1/01/13