

Weddings Guidelines  
First United Methodist Church  
1928 Ross Avenue  
Dallas, Texas 75201



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## Introduction - Christian Marriage

The Service of Christian Marriage is one of the sacred rituals of the church. A worship service which marks the beginning of a lifelong covenant of grace for the bride and groom and legally establishes a contractual relationship. In Christian marriage, the church adds the blessing of the faith community and invokes God's blessing on the covenant established between the bride and groom.

First United Methodist Church is committed to upholding the holy joy of persons making such a commitment to each other. We want to help you prepare not only for the wedding service but also for your marriage relationship. Thus, we offer premarital/newly married classes on a regular basis, and all couples are required to meet with a member of the FUMC clergy before the wedding.

To emphasize the Christian view of marriage within the life of the church, the Service of Christian Marriage from the United Methodist Book of Worship shall be followed.

## Scheduling of Weddings

The scheduling of a wedding is arranged through our Wedding Coordinator, Vicky Benish, where the details of the policies and procedures will be discussed. Contact Vicky at 214-220-2727, ext. 255 or [ybenish@fumcdallas.org](mailto:ybenish@fumcdallas.org).

## Facilities

The Sanctuary has a seating capacity of 1,200 guests, including the balcony. Dickerson Chapel has a seating capacity of 80 guests.

The wedding party has the use of the facility for 1 hour on the evening of the rehearsal and 3 hours (2 hours prior to the start time and 1 hour after the start time) on the day of the ceremony. Sanctuary ceremonies are conducted on the floor at the Chancel Rail.

## Definition of a Member

A member wedding is defined as one in which the bride or groom, or one of their parents, grandparents, or children has been a member of FUMC for one year before the wedding is scheduled. This membership criterion is used to determine the respective fee which the applicant will be charged.

## Member Scheduling Policies

Members of First United Methodist Church of Dallas may reserve the facilities as far in advance as the church calendar permits.

## Definition of a Non-Member

Non-members are persons who either do not attend First United Methodist Church of Dallas or who have been official members for less than a year at the time of scheduling.

## Non-Member Scheduling Policies

Non-members may reserve the facilities as far in advance as one year from the date of the ceremony.

## Scheduling a Wedding Date

Tentative dates may be checked by contacting Vicky Benish at 214-220-2727, ext. 255 or [vbenish@fumcdallas.org](mailto:vbenish@fumcdallas.org).

Once an available date has been agreed upon, the receipt of the wedding fee and completion of the wedding application must be received to initiate the booking process. The wedding and wedding rehearsal will then be scheduled on the church calendar. Upon final processing, a letter will be sent to the couple to confirm the scheduled event. The application is not considered complete until the confirmation letter has been sent to the bride. Public announcement that a wedding will take place at First United Methodist Church should not be made until this process has been completed.

"Walk-in" weddings may be performed by staff ministers. A "Walk-in" wedding is defined as one in which there is no music, flowers, reception, rehearsal and with a maximum number of 10 guests. Only the staff minister will participate. No other church staff is involved.

## Receptions

Receptions may be scheduled by contacting by contacting Vicky Benish at 214-220-2727, ext. 255 or [vbenish@fumcdallas.org](mailto:vbenish@fumcdallas.org).

The wedding party has the use of the reception facility for two hours. For an additional fee, these rooms may be scheduled for a longer period.

## Wedding Fees

Fees for non-members and for those persons who have been members for less than one year at First United Methodist Church of Dallas at the time of scheduling:

Sanctuary                      - \$3000                      Dickerson Chapel – Please call for pricing.

For those person who have been members for a year or more at the time of scheduling:

Sanctuary                      - \$2000                      Dickerson Chapel – Please call for pricing.

Fees are to be paid ½ upon booking and ½ 30 days prior to wedding. The fees include:

- Facility for 1 hour on the rehearsal evening.
- Facility for 3 hours on the day of the ceremony. Two hours prior to the ceremony and 1 hour from the start time of the ceremony.
- Fees for six staff members: minister, wedding coordinator, organist, sound and light technician, custodian and security guard.
- Unity candle and candles provided.
- LED candles available for evening ceremonies.
- Extensive pre-planning with staff wedding coordinator.
- An additional staff fee may apply determines on the number in the wedding party, guests or complexity of the ceremony.

## Refunding of Fees

In the event of a cancellation, 50% of the wedding fee will be refunded.

## Right of Refusal

All weddings in the Sanctuary or Dickerson Chapel take place at the discretion of First United Methodist Church of Dallas. First United Methodist Church reserves the right to refuse to book either venue for weddings at any time.

## Code of Conduct

The bride and groom are responsible for ensuring that all members of the wedding party, family and friends behave in a manner appropriate for a worship service. Members of the wedding party are reminded that throughout both the wedding rehearsal and service they are in a holy place dedicated to the worship of God. Wedding parties and guests are expected to dress and act accordingly. The officiating minister may halt a wedding service if improper behavior occurs. If this happens, all fees remain the property of First United Methodist Church and are not refundable. It is the policy of the church that no one possess or consume alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or be in possession of a weapon on church property. Smoking is not permitted in the building. No one under the influence will participate in the rehearsal or the wedding.

## Deliveries

First United Methodist Church of Dallas assumes no responsibility for gowns, tuxedos or other wedding items delivered to the church. If the bride/groom wish to have a delivery made, the bride/groom must select a person to accept it and keep it in his/her custody until the wedding party arrives. There is no secure space that can be made available.

## Safekeeping of Personal Items

Every possible effort will be made to protect personal items. However, the church cannot be responsible for any items lost, stolen or damaged. It is imperative that money, jewelry and other valuables not be left unattended. It is suggested that you appoint someone to be responsible for collecting personal items and removing them before the ceremony.

Members of the church staff are not permitted to sign for wedding dresses. Dresses must arrive with the responsible wedding party. Items must not be left in the building overnight.

## Children Participating in Wedding Ceremonies

Flower girls and ring bearers ages 6 and under are to be seated immediately into a pew after processing. In accordance with the FUMC Child Protection Policy, an adult or guardian must be in attendance with the child at all times.

## Officiating Minister

All weddings at First United Methodist Church will be conducted by one of the United Methodist clergy on staff. Members may request any of the clergy staff to perform their

wedding. Non-member weddings will be assigned a clergy staff member according to the church's schedule.

Upon request, the FUMC host minister may invite another ordained minister to assist in the wedding as a guest minister. The guest minister is prohibited from changing or altering the service which is from The United Methodist Book of Worship. The FUMC host minister will establish the role of the guest minister. Pre-marital conferencing between the couple and FUMC clergy is required before the wedding and may be held at the church. Couples should contact the FUMC host minister to schedule these conferences.

The FUMC host minister and the FUMC wedding director must approve the Order of Worship, scriptures and all bulletins before final printing.

## Wedding Coordinator

The wedding coordinators at FUMC are paid professionals and take pride in the appearance of the ceremony and the details involved in the planning process. Due to the nature of planning a worship-filled wedding ceremony, we do not plan wedding ceremonies with outside wedding coordinators, family members or friends as a substitute for the bride. It is the bride and groom's responsibility to maintain contact with the FUMC coordinator to ensure the ceremony is presented at its best. The staff coordinator, in conjunction with the minister, will conduct the rehearsal and the ceremony and has final approval on the wedding program and the format of the service. She will be present during the entire period booked for the wedding. Without specific, prior arrangements, the wedding coordinator will not be present for receptions at the church.

## Wedding Rehearsals

Rehearsals will be conducted exclusively by our staff wedding coordinator, in cooperation with the officiating minister, if he or she is present.

They will begin promptly and not extend beyond the 1 hour reserved time. Often there are several rehearsals scheduled in an evening, making punctuality imperative. It is suggested that you tell your wedding party to arrive 30 minutes in advance as a safeguard against delays with downtown traffic. If a wedding party is more than 15 minutes late to a rehearsal, it may result in cancellation of the rehearsal.

Please park in the San Jacinto parking lot directly behind the church. Easy access is through the ramp entrance directly to the security area. The Ross Avenue doors will be locked during the hours of the wedding rehearsal.

## Childcare

For an additional fee, childcare may be arranged. A minimum of 2 trained childcare workers may be scheduled for a 2 hour event minimum. No outside workers will be allowed. There is a \$80 minimum for two staff members for two hours.

## Music

A wedding ceremony is a worship service of the church. Music should serve to enhance the consciousness of God's presence both in the minds of those who witness and those who participate in the service. Our standard is that the music chosen for the service be consistent with what is used regularly in worship services. All music selections, vocalists and instrumentalists will be discussed with and approved by the organist, Associate Director of Music at FUMC. To aid in the planning process for the ceremony, the bride will be sent a CD entitled "Wedding Music Sampler" which will provide specific musical selections to enhance the ceremony. All musicians and vocalists will be approved by the organist and rehearsal times scheduled prior to the date of the ceremony.

Taped music is not allowed. Additional services for musicians or vocalists may be contracted with the organist.

## Decorations

An approved florist may decorate the Sanctuary or Dickerson Chapel. The florist will be held responsible for any damage done to the building and/or furniture and is responsible for cleaning wax from the floor and furniture should an accident occur. No tacks, pins, glue, nails or tape of any kind may be used to fasten any decoration to the furniture or building. No decorations will be hung from walls or pillars. Flower arrangements on the altar table are prohibited. Worship furnishings including the pulpit, communion table and accessories, pulpit chairs, altar candles and candlesticks and seasonal banners may not be moved.

The unity candle and stand is available through the wedding coordinator and is included in the fee. Additional candles and candelabra furnished by the florist may be used with approval of the wedding director. All candles must be drip-less, spring-loaded and placed well away from walls, furniture and banners. No candles are allowed in aisles, walkways or in the Sanctuary choir loft. Due to space limitations in Dickerson Chapel, only two candelabras may be placed behind the communion rails and minimal flower arrangements. Polyethylene or similar material must be placed under all candelabras to protect carpeting and furnishings.

For safety reasons, scattering of petals, flowers, bubbles, bird seed, rice, streamers or confetti is not permitted in or outside of the church building. An aisle cloth may not be used. After the ceremony, flowers and equipment must be removed from the building

within the time allotted for the wedding. The church assumes no responsibility for items left in the building.

The bride and groom are responsible for ensuring that the florist is aware of the church policies. Any florist who fails to uphold these policies may incur an additional charge or may be denied the opportunity to provide future services at FUMC.

## Photography

First United Methodist Church recognizes the value of wedding photographs as a lasting remembrance of this most special occasion, and we expect photographers to respect, honor and abide by the rules and regulations which follow. An approved photographer may participate in wedding services of First United Methodist Church.

- FUMC will not allow flash photography in the Sanctuary or Dickerson Chapel from thirty minutes before the ceremony start time until after the dismissal of the congregation.
- In the Sanctuary time exposures may be taken during the ceremony from a single, stationary position in the rear of the balcony. No auto-winding or motor-driven cameras are allowed during the ceremony. The wedding party may return to the altar for photographs after the ceremony if they so desire, following the conclusion of the recessional.
- In Dickerson Chapel no photographs are allowed during the ceremony. The wedding party may return to the altar for photographs after the ceremony if they so desire, following the conclusion of the recessional.
- To maintain the quality of the furnishings in the Sanctuary no one is to stand on the chancel railing, kneeler or pews.
- To respect the spiritual atmosphere of a church wedding, please advise your friends and relatives not to take flash photographs during the ceremony.

## Videotaping

Videotaping is allowed in the Sanctuary and must be done from a stationary position in the rear balcony, must not involve any lighting changes or additional portable lighting. Aisles must be kept clear. Care must be taken to ensure that there is not noise or other distraction. Audio will not be supplied from the Sanctuary sound system for recording on an outside photographer's videotape. The Sanctuary sound engineer has final control over the type, number and position of microphones for music before and during the wedding.

Videotaping in Dickerson Chapel is not allowed due to size and noise constraints.

The Communications Department of FUMC can arrange to videotape your wedding. For more information, please contact Kurt McClinchie at 214-220-2727 or [kmclinchie@fumcdallas.org](mailto:kmclinchie@fumcdallas.org).

## Parking

While church's central location in the heart of the Arts District is conveniently located within walking distance to numerous reception locations, parking is that of any downtown location. The parking lot behind the church on San Jacinto, which accommodates approximately 30 cars, is complimentary. Additionally, there is a paid parking lot across the street at the corner of Harwood and Ross. The cost per vehicle is approximately \$3-5 per car. Couples can either choose to have their guests pay to park or negotiate prepaid parking with the parking vendor.

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