

Wedding Policy
First United Methodist Church
Independence, KS

Adopted: September 16, 2002

Revised: July 12, 2024

Approved: July 1, 2024

Your wedding is the Christian celebration of your love and commitment to each other and to God. At First United Methodist Church, we want to minister to you through your wedding service. We at the church would like to serve you by helping you plan and execute a wedding and reception that you will remember for the rest of your days as beautiful, meaningful, and reverent.

1. **Couples Welcome:** Members and non-members may use the buildings of the First United Methodist Church for a wedding, rehearsal dinner and/or reception if the rooms needed are not in use for ministries of the church. Members and family of members (of at least 6-month membership at time of application) will have fees for Sanctuary use waived.
2. **Scheduling and Officiating:** The pastor of First United Methodist Church will schedule all weddings held in the church. The appointed pastor or their designee will conduct all wedding services. Elders of other United Methodist Churches are invited to collaborate with the current appointed pastor. Pastors from other faith traditions will co-officiate at the discretion of and under the direction of the appointed pastor. The wedding, rehearsal, and appointments for premarital conversation should be scheduled with the pastor and the office administrator at least 60 days prior to the date desired for the wedding.
3. **Wedding Coordinator:** The First United Methodist Church has a Wedding Coordinator, available to help with the arrangement of the facilities, the rehearsal, and the wedding. The service of a Wedding Coordinator is required for non-members. The fee for the Wedding Coordinator is outlined in the Building Use Policy fee schedule.
4. **Premarital Counseling/Meetings:** A couple seeking to be married at First United Methodist Church will have premarital conversations with the pastor. The agenda for these conversations may include: time for getting acquainted, sharing stories, increasing a couple's awareness of their relationship strengths and potential work areas, and planning for the wedding service. The wedding couple should meet with the Wedding Coordinator to review the wedding plans, arranging of the facilities, setting times, etc. The coordinator can show which rooms are used to dress for the wedding, point out where the bathrooms are, etc.
5. **Ceremony:** This sacred ceremony, in which you enter into a covenant with God and one another, creates the foundation for your marriage. By choosing to use a representative of God, and God's Church, you are inviting God's presence into your wedding and purposely asking for God's blessing upon the marriage. Weddings conducted at First United Methodist Church must be in keeping with the faith traditions of the United Methodist Church.

6. **Recorded Music:** Music chosen for the service should be appropriate to the worship of God. Selections will be reviewed and approved by the pastor. Music stored electronically (CDs, flash drives, etc.) must be received two weeks prior to the wedding. Proof of music purchase is required, if copied onto electronic storage devices, to honor copyright regulations.
7. **Live Music:** Couples are responsible for contracting the services of an organist, pianist, and/or other musicians. The fees for such services shall be directly negotiated with the musicians. Guest organists must be approved by the pastor, choir director, or church organist prior to using the organ and are expected to coordinate practice times with the church organist.
8. **Furnishings:** The furnishings in the sanctuary, including the Chancel and Altar, are not to be removed or rearranged except by agreement of the pastor or the Wedding Coordinator.
9. **Candles:** Candles for the altar are provided by the church. Two seven branch candelabra and pew candle stands are available. The Wedding Coordinator will be responsible for bringing out both the candelabra and the pew candles. Lighting instruction for the candelabras will also be provided by the coordinator. The wedding couple will be responsible for providing their own unity candle.
10. **Photography:** Only the designated photographer may take pictures in the sanctuary during the processional. There will be no flash photography taken during the ceremony itself. During the service, pictures may be taken without flash from the back or the balcony. The service may be videotaped from the balcony or by a media specialist from the church. No pictures may be taken from the choir loft during the ceremony.
11. **Substance Use and Firearms:** The church and grounds are strictly non-smoking and non-vaping areas. Alcohol and illegal drugs of any kind are not to be consumed in the building or on the grounds. No beverages of any kind are allowed in the sanctuary or the chapel, with the exception of infants. Firearms are not to be carried inside the buildings.
12. **Nursery:** Couples may make arrangements with the congregation's nursery coordinator to make the nursery available during the service. Do not leave children unattended in the nursery. The fee for the nursery coordinator is outlined in the Building Use Policy Fee Schedule.
13. **Rice Throwing:** No rice may be thrown. After the service, wheat or bird seed may be distributed and thrown outside the building.
14. **Aisle Runner:** An aisle runner may be used but must not be tacked down.
15. **Personal Items:** The church is not responsible for the loss or damage of personal items brought to the church for use in the wedding and wedding reception, or for the loss or damage of gifts brought to the church. The wedding party is expected to remove personal items immediately after the wedding.
16. **Kitchen Use:** Use of the kitchen, serving equipment, and cooking equipment are governed by policy established by Methodist Women United.
17. **Other Policy to Review:** The Building Use Policy is to be reviewed and followed.
18. **Fees:** Fees shall be applied following the fee schedule established in the Building Use Policy.
19. **United Methodist Discipline:** The policies set forth above shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the United Methodist Discipline.