

# **Guidelines and Policies for Weddings**

## **First United Methodist Church of Cedar Falls**

319-266-1713    [umchurch@aboutfirst.com](mailto:umchurch@aboutfirst.com)

### **Guidelines and Policies**

The First United Methodist Church of Cedar Falls has been providing ministry in the name of Jesus Christ for over 160 years in our community. An important part of the ministry has been the celebration of weddings. We celebrate with you on your upcoming occasion and pray for God's blessings on your new marriage. Our building is very special to us because it provides our congregation a place for worship and growing together in our faith. We hope you will respect our church, and we ask that you follow our guidelines and policies.

We are eager to help make the occasion of your wedding beautiful and meaningful. The wedding is a service of Christian Worship and as such, our Christian faith and traditions must be respected. It is not necessary for a wedding to be elaborate in order to be beautiful. The true beauty lies in the spirit and attitude of those who share in your special day.

The church and the staff want to do everything possible to help your wedding be such an experience. There are, however, certain guidelines and policies that have been designed to preserve the dignity of worship, to protect church property, and to insure the integrity of our heritage as United Methodists in Cedar Falls.

### **Minister**

All services held in our church must be officiated by the pastors appointed to serve our congregation unless a guest pastor has been approved by our pastors. The wedding service must meet with the approval of our pastors and follow within the guidelines of our Wedding Policies and traditions of the United Methodist Church.

We expect our pastors to meet with an inquiring couple for the minimum of four times prior to the wedding. All wedding services will be developed by the pastor in consultation with the couple. All elements of the service must meet with the approval of the pastor.

The honorarium is at the discretion of the wedding party. This is typically \$150 and should be made out directly to the pastor.

## **Arrangements**

A tentative date for a wedding may be scheduled by calling the church office at 319-266-1713. The tentative date will not be officially reserved until the officiating pastor has been consulted and have their approval after confirming date is available on their calendar. It is recommended that a premarital appointment be made with the officiating pastor within one to two weeks after the date is reserved.

**Again, before announcing any date for a wedding, please clear the date with the pastor.** We recommend that you clear this date as far in advance as possible. Be advised that seeing that the date on the church calendar is open does not automatically mean you have the date reserved for your wedding.

**Nonmembers** will not be able to reserve a wedding date until 6 months before the wedding. This is established to insure our members have first opportunity to reserve their wedding date, and protects our church calendar from being filled with weddings on every weekend.

The Church is not available for weddings on the following days:

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day

Holy Week

Thanksgiving Day and day after

December 24, 25 and 26.

Please note: Christmas decorations will be in the sanctuary beginning the first Sunday in Advent (end of November) through twelve days after Christmas.

There is an extra fee for scheduling weddings after 6:00 p.m.

## **Facilities Available**

The Sanctuary, Chapel, Fellowship Hall and Gathering Place are available for weddings. The Sanctuary can accommodate approximately 350. (350 is everyone sitting close.) The Chapel and Gathering Place maybe used for a small wedding. The Fellowship Hall can accommodate 250. Our building is not for rent.

Receptions and rehearsal dinners may be held in the Fellowship Hall or Gathering Place.

The Parlor is available for the Bride's Room. The Groom's Room is in the Choir Room. Both rooms are located on the same level as the Sanctuary, and can be locked. The church recommends taking all precautions in bringing personal items to the church. The church will not be responsible for personal items brought to the church for use in the wedding, nor shall the church be liable for such items if lost, stolen or damaged.

## **Music**

All music must be submitted at least one month prior to the wedding and meet with the approval of the officiating pastor. Because the wedding ceremony is a service of Christian worship, we believe that the wedding music should be consistent with such a spirit. The religious significance of the service should be reflected in the music by lifting up the holiness of marriage and the relationship of husband and wife.

If you choose organ for your service our organist will play for weddings at our church. If he is unable to play at your wedding, you may choose someone else, and they must meet with the approval of our organist. It is your responsibility to contact the church organist and schedule your wedding. Please do this as soon as you have your wedding permanently scheduled on the church calendar. Our organist will gladly meet with you to plan music for the service. The organist fee is negotiated personally with the organist and is based number of songs, soloists, etc. He also plays piano and electronic keyboard.

## **Sound and Video System**

Our church has a sophisticated sound and video system that can only be operated by our technician. We ask that members of wedding party or even professional videographers not to adjust, operate, or plug into our audio or video systems.

Wedding planners are encouraged to make contact with First UMC Media office early in their planning process for a full understanding of our audio and visual capabilities. Our technician can be contacted at [chris.congdon@aboutfirst.com](mailto:chris.congdon@aboutfirst.com) or calling the church office at 266-1713.

### **What requires a technician?**

A technician is required if the in-house audio or video system is to be used to play recorded music, slideshow or video during the event. A technician is required if live performers require real-time audio mixing. A technician is required to operate the live-feed or recording cameras of the video system.

**The basic facility fee includes** setting up and activating microphones. Microphone requests must be received by First UMC media office seven days prior to the event.

**Basic facility fee does not include** operations which require an audio/video technician to be present at rehearsal or ceremony. Playing recorded music, live audio mixing, displaying video content, recording the ceremony and names on electronic sign are all items which require an A/V technician to be present. A/V technician fees and payment are to be arranged through the First UMC media office, and will be based on the time and involvement of the technician.

Recorded music, slideshows and videos to be used in the event are due in the First UMC media office seven days prior to the ceremony.

Event planners are welcome to have 3rd party audio/ video production crews involved, and those crews must bring their own equipment. Again, we ask that members of the wedding party or even professional videographers not to adjust, operate, or plug into audio or video systems.

### **Picture Taking and Video**

Since your wedding is a worship experience, we ask all family and guests to respect the ceremony and service. Photographs are not permitted during the ceremony. Photographs may be taken during the processional and recessional only.

Video equipment must be used from the balcony unless given special permission by the officiating pastor. We do not allow roving “videographers” during the service

### **Wedding Photographer**

Photographer is the only one permitted to use time exposure with no flash during the ceremony. This is a worship service and nothing is to distract from the ceremony. It is very important that the photographer remain inconspicuous during the service. Remote control cameras are not allowed to be attached to the pews or in the chancel area. Remind the photographer that you want at least 45 minutes to an hour between taking pictures and the ceremony, so you have time to prepare for the service and you open the Sanctuary for guests to be seated.

### **Church Wedding Hostess**

To insure the integrity and responsibility of the church and its property, the Administrative Council has required and approved the need of a Church Wedding Hostess. This person is an assistant to the pastor. The wedding hostess attends your rehearsal and is present for pictures before the wedding. The hostess will work with the Pastor and the Bride and Groom to see that your wedding is a special celebration. She will assist the wedding party whenever possible. She will serve as a host on behalf of the church to be available in case you need assistance or help as you prepare for the wedding. Duties will include: serve as a timekeeper to let the wedding party know when to prepare to move from their rooms to line up for the processional, helping with decorations and flowers, directing from the back of the church during rehearsal and the wedding by organizing the wedding party to process in order, seating grandparents and parents in proper order, giving instructions to the ushers in their duties, seeing that candles are lit at

the proper time, and organizing the receiving line. Once the receiving line has started, the hostess' job is done.

As your wedding date approaches a Church Wedding Hostess will be assigned to you. The pastor will give you the name, phone number and email address of the hostess.

### **Wedding Hosts or Greeters**

Since our remodel we have learned from experience that there is the need for Wedding Hosts or Greeters to be stationed at the front doors and the intersection that leads to the Sanctuary. The Wedding Hosts need to be recruited by you. Many wedding parties have utilized their reception hosts. They can greet your guests as they arrive to let them know they are at the right church, and direct them to the Sanctuary, bathrooms, etc.

### **The Rehearsal**

Members of the wedding party need to be reminded that throughout the wedding rehearsal they are in a holy place dedicated to the worship of God and should act accordingly. The officiating pastor is in charge of rehearsal and wedding. All rehearsals will begin promptly at the scheduled time, and all members of the wedding party are expected to be present. The marriage certificate should be delivered to the pastor on the night of rehearsal. Rehearsal usually lasts for one hour.

### **Wedding Decoration Guidelines**

In decorating for the wedding celebration, it is important that all symbols of the church be respected. Such significant church symbols such as the altar and cross cannot be moved or covered with decorations. Arrangements for decorating the church need to be made with the church office.

- Nails, tacks, staples, pins, tape or anything which will mark the wood work or walls cannot be used.
- Wrapped wire or ribbon that will not mark the surface maybe used on the ends of the pews to fasten bows. Do not use tape.
- Aisle Runners are not recommended for safety reasons.
- All decorations and equipment must be removed immediately following the ceremony. The church will not be responsible for decorations left after the wedding. The church must be left in the same condition in which it was found.
- Glitter and confetti are banned.
- In case of damage, you will be held responsible charges necessary to repair the damage.

- Items available for the wedding:  
Two brass Candelabras - \$15 fee for use  
Unity Candle Holder – no fee, but you must provide the unity candle and two tapers  
White altar clothes will be used  
Guest book table  
Kneeling Bench

### **Wedding Bulletins**

Printed bulletins containing the order of worship and names of the participants can be used. You are responsible to seeing they are printed.

### **Wedding Receptions**

The Fellowship Hall and Gather Place are available for wedding receptions. Our United Methodist Women are willing to help serve. The church office can get you in touch with the Reception Committee.

### **Other Policies**

- Alcoholic beverages may not be served anywhere on church property either prior or following the wedding.
- Smoking is not permitted in any part of the church.
- Rice, confetti, bird seed, bubbles, glitter, etc. may not be used inside any part of the building. It is recommended that these items be passed out following the service, and used outside. The wedding party is responsible to any personal injuries due to the use of these items.
- To preserve the beauty of the Sanctuary or Chapel beverages or food are not allowed. Food and beverages are allowed in the dressing rooms. Please make your wedding party aware of this policy.

### **Rehearsal Dinner**

Those whom you want to attend the rehearsal dinner should be intentionally invited at least one week before the wedding, for example: pastor, organist, accompanist, vocalist, and their spouses.

## **Wedding License**

Please note that the Marriage License must be given to the officiating pastor on the day of rehearsal. The Marriage License can be obtained from any Court House in Iowa at the County Clerk's Office. There is a 3 day waiting period between the time of application and the issuing of the license, and may be used anytime within 6 months after it is obtained.

## **Wedding Fees**

The wedding fees are to help cover the utility costs of maintaining our building. To qualify for member fees the Bride and/or Groom or one of their parents must be a member of the church. If you are not a member and you wish to become one, you must go through the current new member class. The Rates for Wedding Form are available through the pastors or church office.

If your wedding plans change, (postponed or cancelled) be sure to notify the church office or pastor at once.

Our church is not for rent.

## **Address to use on your Wedding Invitation**

First United Methodist Church  
718 Clay Street  
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613