

The wedding ceremony is a service of worship, a couple publicly proclaiming their enduring love for each other through vows before God. The couple appeals to God to grant grace by which they may maintain their ties and strengthen their love, all the while committing their lives to God's purposes. These thoughts should have priority in the wedding.

Your wedding day should be a joyous occasion, and we want to help make it so. Experience has shown that following certain guidelines reduces confusion and helps things run more smoothly for everyone involved.

The following suggestions are offered to help make your wedding day more beautiful and more enjoyable.

Setting the Date and Meeting with the Pastor:

Weddings should be scheduled as far as possible in advance. There are some dates when the church may not be available for weddings or may only be available with no changes to seasonal decorations. Wedding dates are confirmed when the application form and security deposit is received, and the request has been processed.

The pastor desires three conferences before the wedding. As soon as you notify the pastor that you have decided to marry, a date will be set, and the first session with the pastor will be arranged.

Also at this time, rehearsal time will be scheduled. No plans for the wedding service should be made without first discussing them with the pastor.

*Note: If a pastor from another church is requested to officiate the service, it is required that one of the current pastors at FUMC McAllen co-officiate.

General Policies:

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 is a service of worship. Each aspect of the service must reflect the reverence and meaning of the service. It must meet with the approval of our pastors and follow the guidelines of our Wedding Policy and traditions of the United Methodist Church.

Church furniture and furnishings may be moved only by church personnel.

Church floral arrangements may be moved or altered.

No alcohol, weapons, or fireworks are permitted on the McAllen First UMC Campus.

Smoking is not allowed in any building.

Wedding party members who are intoxicated or under the influence of drugs will not be allowed to participate.

Bird seed, rice, silly string or confetti are not permitted (inside or outside).

Anything not covered in this policy should be discussed with and must be approved by the wedding coordinator.

First UMC McAllen cannot not be responsible for any lost or stolen items.

There is a Bride's Room available, and the Groom's party may use the choir room or the Overflow Room West.

The church recommends taking all precautions in bringing personal items to the church. Once again, the church cannot not be responsible for items brought to the church for use in the wedding, nor shall the church be liable for such items if lost, stolen or damaged.

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

Wedding Rehearsal:

There must be a rehearsal for any wedding in the church, except for small private services. The time of the rehearsal—usually done the evening before the day of the wedding—will be set by the couple and the minister.

The rehearsal is under the direction of the pastor. All persons in the wedding party are requested to be present at the rehearsal.

The marriage certificate should be delivered to the pastor on the night of rehearsal.

Sound & Technical Services:

Because our church has a sophisticated sound system, we ask you to make contact with our sound technician early in your planning process to ensure that a technician will be available on rehearsal and wedding dates. Any special requests for sound/lighting must be made a minimum of one week prior to wedding. The basic facility fee includes setting up and activation of all microphones. Only our technician is allowed in the sound booth at any given time. No outside A/V equipment may be connected to the FUMC system.

Music Policy:

Music during worship is an offering and expression of ourselves and our relationship to God. 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.

If you choose organ or piano for your service, our musician will play for weddings at our church. If she/he is unable to play at your wedding, you may choose someone else who must be approved by our organist/pianist. It is your responsibility to contact the church musician and schedule your wedding. Please do this as soon as you have your wedding scheduled on the church calendar. Our musician will gladly meet with you to plan music for the service.

If you choose to have other music such as a string quartet or soloist, this must be approved by our wedding coordinator at least 6 weeks before the wedding. It is your responsibility to contact and schedule with them.

You are responsible for any of their fees.

Flowers & Decorations:

Our church facilities are beautiful, functional, and tasteful. Decorations should complement the décor of the sanctuary and not distract from it. It is important that all symbols of the church be respected.

Symbols of the church such as the altar and cross will not be moved or covered with decorations.

Seating (pew/chair) hangers must be made of material that will not scratch surfaces.

Thumbtacks, pins, nails, glue, tape or other adhesive cannot be used on church furnishings.

Artificial flower petals may be used; real petals may not.

Floor protection must be placed under all flower arrangements.

Drink or food containers may not be placed on musical instruments.

Except for unity candle, use only liquid filled candles.

The florist is expected to remove all decorations and equipment immediately following the ceremony.

The facilities will be available two (2) hours before the ceremony and one (1) hour after the ceremony.

Photographers/Videographers:

The wedding is a service of worship.

Photographers (both volunteers and professionals) are asked to do nothing that would detract from the reverence and meaning of the service.

The photographer may take photographs before or after the service in any part of the building being used by the wedding party.

It is understood that the service begins when the family members (parents and grandparents) have been seated. Photographers are permitted to take photographs during this time provided they do so from the back of the sanctuary, do not use a flash and no noise is involved in the procedure.

Photographs may be taken from the foyer as the bridal party is preparing to enter the sanctuary.

No flash may be used during the ceremony. The photographer may take time exposures during the service by remaining in the back of the sanctuary being careful that no noise is involved in the procedure.

Photographs are permitted during the recessional. The photographer may stand behind the last row of seating for those photographs.

The photographer shall not stand on seats or place any equipment on the seating or any furniture in the church.

The facilities will be available two (2) hours before the ceremony and one (1) hour after the ceremony.

Videographers: The wedding may be videotaped, video cameras (both manned and unmanned) will be set on a tripod at a location designated by the minister or wedding coordinator and are not to be moved during the ceremony. Acceptable locations will include back of the sanctuary, and areas in the front of the sanctuary that are unobtrusive to the wedding party and guests.

Fees:

\$1,300.00 – This package includes the following:

- Sanctuary: \$700 (Includes building use, custodial fee, dressing rooms, rehearsal time, lighting and sound technician)
- Church musician: \$200
- Minister: \$250 – Wedding Ceremony
- Minister: \$150 for premarital counseling sessions
- Wedding Hostess: \$200

Optional costs in addition to package price:

- Social Room \$500 (For reception or wedding, includes use of kitchen)

Fees will not be waived if you use your own Minister and /or organist.

Deposit of \$500.00 is required to hold the date.

Balance due no later than two weeks before the wedding date.

Checks may be written to *First United Methodist Church*.

Refunds: Cancellation two (2) months prior to wedding or forfeit half of deposit.