

# *Americus First United Methodist Church*

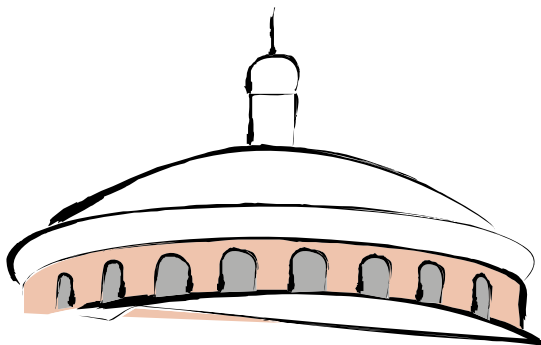
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## *Wedding Policy and Guidelines*



### *The Christian Service of Marriage*

*A Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship in which is celebrated the most sacred human covenant into which two persons can enter. God has ordained that a man and a woman may enter together into marriage, pledging their love and promising fidelity each to the other, so long as they both live. When a marriage is performed in the context of Christian worship, the relationship is blessed by God and the couple receives the promise of God's help as they begin the joys and duties of life together.*

*The members and staff of First United Methodist Church desire that your wedding on this sacred site be a deeply spiritual Christian ceremony. We wish for you all the joy and true happiness which Christ is able to bring to your relationship and home.*

*To that end the following guidelines have been instituted.*



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## *Scheduling the Wedding*

A couple wishing to be married in First United Methodist Church should first contact the church office. In order to rule out the possibility of conflicting dates, the sanctuary may be reserved for particular dates only after staff consultation. The church secretary will go over the requirements and clarify any questions you may have at the time of your request.

Reservations for weddings are scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis for members of First United Methodist Church. The church is available on a limited basis for non-member weddings. Holiday weekends are available for church members only, and then only if staff is available for your needs. We encourage you to avoid holiday weekends.

We request that weddings be placed on the church calendar no less than four weeks before the wedding, not more than 12 months in advance.

Your **wedding date** will be considered *tentative* until you have completed the following:

- ❖ The bride and groom have signed the Wedding Policy Agreement.
- ❖ You have completed and submitted the Wedding Registration and Wedding Information forms and the Wedding Policy Agreement.
- ❖ You have paid your deposit.
- ❖ The date has been granted approval for addition to the church calendar.

The **bride and groom** are responsible for assuring that:

- ❖ They obtain a marriage license and present it to the minister AT THE REHEARSAL to be signed.
- ❖ The wedding party is familiar with the church policies.
- ❖ No alcoholic beverages, drugs or illegal substance are allowed anywhere on the premises, including men's and women's dressing areas and the parking lot.
- ❖ No smoking is allowed inside any of our buildings.
- ❖ Damages done to the church decorations, furnishings, buildings or grounds will be charged to the wedding party for repair or replacement.
- ❖ The church is not responsible for lost or stolen articles or equipment. Please advise your wedding party and participants not to leave valuables such as jewelry, cameras, money, etc., unattended.

## *Deposit*

A refundable damage deposit of **\$500** is due when you request your wedding date. Your payment will be deposited when your date is booked on the church calendar. Your request will be considered by the church staff, and the church secretary will then be able to confirm your date. This damage deposit is required to secure the date and reserve the facilities and is required of both members and non-members. Damage to facilities or excessive untidiness will be billed additionally.

## *Wedding Fees*

The fees for the Custodian, Wedding Coordinator and Sound Technician, and if applicable, Nursery Fees, are to be made payable to First United Methodist Church and are due two weeks prior to the wedding. The Organist and/or Pianist fee and Minister honorarium should be made payable to the individual. All fees, other than the Deposit which will already have been paid, are due to the Church Secretary two weeks prior to the wedding.

<i>Members</i>		<i>Non-Members</i>
\$500	Deposit	\$500
<i>not applicable</i>	Sanctuary	\$750
\$150	Wedding Coordinator	\$200
\$200	Minister	\$200
\$250	Organist	\$250
\$100	Custodian	\$100
<i>additional fee</i>	Sound Technician	<i>additional fee</i>
<i>additional fee</i>	Nursery	<i>additional fee</i>
<i>additional fee</i>	Social Hall	<i>not applicable</i>

Our Wedding Coordinator and Custodian are required for all weddings. These are the persons responsible for our church and facilities. Directions to anyone in your wedding party are to be followed if directed by the Custodian or Wedding Coordinator. Our Sound Technician is required if you need anything more than a microphone for your officiating minister.

## *Sanctuary*

Maximum seating on the main floor is about 400 persons. The balcony will seat approximately 300 persons. Church furnishings, including pew hymnals and Bibles, are not to be removed from the pew racks. Only the chairs and flower pedestals may be removed from the chancel (pulpit area). Moving the church furnishings may damage them and will result in a loss of your deposit. The church reserves the right to assess additional clean-up fees.

## *Minister*

Typically, one of the ministers of our church performs the ceremony. However, other clergy may conduct weddings with the consent of the senior minister. When clergy outside the staff of First United Methodist are involved it is proper for our senior minister to extend a formal invitation to the guest clergy. The church encourages each couple to participate in premarital counseling and this is up to the discretion of the officiating minister.

If the Senior Minister of First United Methodist is to officiate the service, you will need to plan for an initial pastoral consultation and two pre-marital counseling sessions in addition to your rehearsal and wedding.

The honorarium for the minister is left to the discretion of the groom. For guidance, however, a suggested amount is \$200. Additional travel expenses should also be considered for an out of town minister.

## *Wedding Coordinator*

Once your wedding date is confirmed by the Church Secretary, your Wedding Coordinator will become your primary contact for the church, your arrangements and the wedding.

The Wedding Coordinator will review customary procedures of Americus First regarding weddings. The Wedding Coordinator will attend the rehearsal and wedding to assist the wedding party and to supervise the use of the facilities.

The Wedding Coordinator is not expected to direct the wedding, but rather to consult with the director regarding church procedures and will help in the following ways: open and lock the church facilities;

attend the rehearsal and assist the wedding party on the day of the wedding; supervise the use of the facilities; and make sure the heating or air conditioning is comfortable for rehearsal, preparations and wedding.

## *Sound Technician*

A microphone for the officiating pastor can be provided without a Sound Technician. Any other needs require one of our Sound Technicians to be present.

You will make arrangements for your Sound Technician through the Minister of Worship Arts. *Only our* operators, trained and approved by the church, may operate the sound systems. The fee is \$25 per hour. The Sound Technician may be needed only on the wedding day, or for rehearsal as well. An amount of time can only be estimated once we know all of your wedding day needs.

## *Music*

The music used in a wedding service should be of a nature that is reflective of the highest standards for any act of worship in the house of God. Secular texts are often inappropriate for the sacred occasion of worship. Wedding music requires advance approval by the Pastor or Director of Music.

Our church musicians are available for weddings on a limited basis. Please ask the Minister of Worship Arts for suggestions and assistance in contacting musicians. The bride may engage musicians and vocalists of her choice, though all must be approved by the Minister of Worship Arts.

## *Rehearsal*

A qualified director is recommended for all rehearsals and weddings. The bride is responsible for making arrangements with the director for the rehearsal and the wedding. Rehearsals should begin on time and last no longer than one and one half hours. We recommend that all members of the wedding party gather at least fifteen minutes before the scheduled time of a rehearsal so that the rehearsal may proceed on schedule.

## *Decorations*

The family of the bride is responsible for making its own arrangements for flowers with a florist or with friends. **It is suggested that sanctuary floral arrangements be left for use during Sunday morning worship services. Information regarding your flowers is gathered on the Wedding Information Form.** Flowers may be picked up after noon on Sunday following the wedding. If the church urns are used for the wedding flowers, they are not to be removed from the premises after the wedding. The most appropriate church decoration will always be the simplest. In all cases, however, the following restrictions must be observed:

- ❖ Decorators must check with the Wedding Coordinator prior to placing decorations in any church building. Only dripless (chace) candles may be used, and these must be placed in containers preventing dripping on floors or elsewhere. (Our wedding guidelines will be on file with all local florists, but you may need to remind your florist of these restrictions.) If the church must clean wax from carpet and furnishings, the professional cleaning fee will be deducted from your deposit. NAILS, PINS, TACKS, GLUE, and TAPE may not be used to attach decorations to furniture or woodwork in any part of the buildings; use of any of these for attaching decorations will result in forfeiting your deposit. (Check with craft stores for new products for attaching decorations.) All decorations should be removed from the church immediately following the ceremony unless previous arrangements have been made with the church.
- ❖ Only chairs, flower pedestals, and flags may be moved from the chancel (pulpit area).
- ❖ No rice may be thrown at weddings. Birdseed is an acceptable alternative *OUTSIDE* the church.

## *Photographs*

Photographs taken during the ceremony may be taken only from the balcony of the sanctuary. NO FLASH PICTURES are to be made during the ceremony. Professional photographers carry high-speed film that may be shot during the service, which will insure very good

pictures. Please ask your friends not to take pictures with flash or cell phones during the service. Standing on church furniture to make pictures is not permitted. Video photography may be done from the balcony during the wedding, but without camera lighting. Stationery video cameras may be placed elsewhere, but they must not obstruct the view of the congregation or distract attention. Photographers are not to be in the aisles or in the front of the sanctuary during wedding services.

## *Nursery*

Should you wish to use the church nursery for your wedding and/or rehearsal, our church nursery staff must be used. Please call the church secretary to schedule nursery workers. The nursery is only available during the time the parents are in church buildings.

We are required to have at least two child care workers at all times. If you expect infants less than 1 year old, you must have one child care worker for every 3 infants.

The fee for our nursery workers is \$12 an hour (minimum of 1 hour per event, per worker), is to be paid with other wedding fees to the church office. An amount of time can only be estimated once we know all of your wedding day needs.

## *Social Hall*

We regret that our Social Hall is not available for luncheons or receptions for non-members.

Church Members: Please inform the church office if you wish to host the rehearsal dinner or wedding reception in the Social Hall. The request will be forwarded to the weekly church staff meeting, and you will be called promptly with a reply. Weddings with a reception in the Social Hall should be scheduled no later than 4:00 p.m. with the reception lasting no later than 9:00 p.m. A custodial fee of an additional \$150 applies for use of the Social Hall for a reception and/or rehearsal dinner. As members, your damage deposit will cover events in the Social Hall as well.

If there will be more extensive use of the kitchen, for example cooking and food preparation, you must meet with the Church Hostess. Additional fees may be warranted.

## *Facilities*

The facilities of First United Methodist Church have been made possible by the sacrificial gifts of members for many years, and they provide a beautiful, holy setting for a wedding planned with serious Christian commitment. Please note that the buildings will be unlocked and unattended at times during your wedding day. Please do not leave valuables unattended.

**No alcoholic beverages are allowed in church facilities or on the premises. Please instruct all members of your wedding party of this policy. We suggest you ask your officiating minister to mention this policy at the wedding rehearsal. Failure to follow this policy will result in the loss of your wedding deposit.**



**This, the Wedding Policy and Guidelines of First United Methodist Church, Americus, Georgia is adopted and approved by the Board of Trustees on April 13, 2010.**



*We regret that our Social Hall is available for members only due to an early worship service in the Social Hall on Sunday mornings.*

*Wedding fees include wedding rehearsal and use of the church parlor and choir room for members of the wedding party on the day of the wedding.*

Your deposit is due before your wedding date will be booked.

Dates are not secured until deposit is made.

Wedding fees are due two weeks prior to the wedding.

Please make your check payable to First United Methodist Church and drop it off or mail it to the church office at  
200 S Lee Street, Americus GA 31709.

Questions? Call the Church Secretaries at 229-924-3169.