



Wedding Guidelines



GREENSBURG *First*
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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CHURCH WEDDING GUIDELINES

We are pleased that Greensburg First United Methodist Church will be hosting your wedding. Our congregation and Pastor will do all we can to make your wedding day as perfect and as sacred as it deserves to be. To make that happen, couples preparing for marriage will need the following information.

SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING

Congratulations on the plans for your upcoming wedding! Since you have chosen to celebrate the covenant of Christian marriage at Greensburg First United Methodist Church, there may be some questions you have concerning procedures and church policies. The following guidelines will attempt to answer as many of these questions as possible. Weddings need to be scheduled at least six (6) months before the ceremony date.

- 1) Schedule a meeting with our church's Pastor.
- 2) Fill out and return to the church a Wedding Information Form.
- 3) After the date is approved by the Pastor, please pay the Church/Sanctuary fee as your deposit.
- 4) Contact the church office immediately after meeting with the Pastor in order to set up an initial premarital counseling meeting at least two (2) months before the wedding date.
- 5) The Church Organist should be contacted as soon as possible to arrange music after the first meeting with the Pastor.

Your wedding date will be considered tentative until it is approved by the Pastor, the Wedding Information Form is completed and returned to the church office, and your deposit has been paid. **Note:** Weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays or major holidays (New Year's Eve, Holy Week, Easter, Memorial Day, July 4TH, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Advent or Christmas).

ALL WEDDINGS HELD AT GREENSBURG FIRST ARE CONDUCTED UNDER THE APPROVED POLICIES OF THE CHURCH, AND UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE OFFICIATING PASTOR.

Every effort will be made to allow couples maximum latitude in fulfilling their wedding wishes. However, religious services require certain standards of decorum that must be upheld. Wedding plans involving the ceremony or church use must be approved by the Pastor. All participants, including florists, photographers, and family members are understood to be guests of the church. Their services and behavior must meet church standards. If there are questions regarding what is acceptable, ask.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING

The United Methodist Book of Discipline (our denomination's policy and polity book) requires that all couples receive premarital counseling. You will be asked to meet with the Pastor to complete a Premarital Counseling Questionnaire form. This form will help indicate any areas in which you as a couple may need some additional counseling and guidance. This will fulfill the premarital counseling requirement. Christian marriage is more than the exchange of vows and the legalizing of a relationship; it is essentially asking Jesus Christ to be directly and dynamically involved in your married lives, and promising to live for Christ together as a couple in the world.

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

This is the spiritual union of two persons who vow, before God, their family, and the friends, to faithfully love and cherish one another. The wedding is a worship experience in which the couple seals a covenant modeled after the covenant between Christ and the church. Every wedding shall respect scriptural principles, the customs and policies of the Greensburg First congregation and the theology of The United Methodist Church. While wedding ceremonies performed by clergy will be legally binding, the primary role of the clergy is to conduct sacred worship in which a couple is joined in the eyes of God.

USE OF ANOTHER PASTOR, READERS, ETC.

The Pastor of Greensburg First UMC will preside over all services. While requests for other United Methodist clergy to assist are usually granted, permission is not generally granted to use another Pastor exclusively. Clergy from other denominations may participate at the discretion of the current Pastor; any individuals who have received any ministry credentials on-line are not permitted to officiate. Thus, the Greensburg First United Methodist Church is not to be used as a rented venue. Lay readers are welcome. When an exception is granted, all of these guidelines for use of the church facilities still apply.

WEDDING COORDINATORS

Greensburg First is blessed to have a team of people who serve as Wedding Coordinators. Two Coordinators will be assigned to each wedding and will help to coordinate the rehearsal and the wedding, under the guidance of the Pastor. They will help to ensure that everyone is where they need to be when they need to be there.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

For a marriage to be registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a license is required. Licenses may be obtained through any county office and are valid throughout the Commonwealth. There is a 3-day waiting period for the marriage license, and it is then valid for 60 days from the date of issuance. The license needs to be in our church office **at least three days** prior to the wedding.

MUSIC

The Organist of Greensburg First United Methodist Church gives oversight to all music for weddings. If the couple requests another organist rather than ours, the request must be approved by our Organist. While a variety of music is acceptable, sacred music is preferred over secular music selections so as to maintain a worshipful nature of the wedding service. Selection of music will be discussed with our Organist, as some popular music may not be appropriate in a worship setting (this music may be more appropriate for the reception rather than in the Sanctuary). Our Organist will give trustworthy advice on musical selections. When other Organists are used, or when there is a doubt over the acceptable nature of a piece of music, the officiating Pastor should be consulted. Other musicians, soloists and ensembles may also be included in the ceremony. If in doubt, consult with the Pastor. It is the responsibility of the couple to contact the Organist to discuss any music planned for use before, during or after the wedding service.

WEDDING PREPARATION

This is absolutely essential to insure that a wedding service flows smoothly. The church will provide trained Wedding Coordinators for each wedding. The Pastor and Wedding Coordinators will do everything possible to assure the beauty and sacredness of the day, as well as to insure that all wedding plans proceed smoothly. The best insurance toward a beautiful day, however, is preparation. We pride ourselves on helping couples cover all the details, from reserved seating to the receiving line. The Wedding Coordinators will coordinate all aspects of the wedding in the church under the authority of the Pastor. Consultation with the officiating Pastor and/or Wedding Coordinators is required and is also essential.

REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is an important part of the preparation. With the exception of very small, private weddings, the need for a rehearsal is presumed. It is the responsibility of the couple to inform the wedding party of the time of the rehearsal, and to insist they be on time. Most rehearsals will take about an hour, but tardiness will extend the time of the rehearsal and delay the rehearsal dinner. Everyone participating in the wedding, including parents, should attend the rehearsal if at all possible.

THE DAY OF THE WEDDING

The building will generally be opened approximately two hours before the wedding. It is the responsibility of the couple to arrange floral delivery before the guests arrive. A crash (aisle runner) should not be used, as this can be a tripping hazard.

The bride and her attendants should schedule their arrival according to plans for dressing and photography, but never later than 45 minutes prior to the ceremony. The groom and his groomsmen should be at the church no later than 45 minutes ahead of time. The parents should arrive at least one-half hour early. Every effort is made to begin the wedding on time.

DRESSING AT THE CHURCH

The bride and her attendants may dress at the church. An air-conditioned room near a restroom on the lower level of our building is provided as a part of the church usage. The bride and her attendants are encouraged to remain in the bridal room before the ceremony until our Coordinators move them upstairs. The bride should designate someone to collect all personal items (hair spray, shoes, clothing, etc.) immediately following the service.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photos provide an important memory of the wedding day. However, photography can disrupt the sacredness of a service of worship. Our church policy places restrictions on when and how photos may be taken. It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain a copy of **Instructions for Wedding Photographers** and see that all wedding photographers (video and still) receive a copy. The photographers should also speak with the officiating Pastor before the wedding for clarification on our policies. Following the wedding ceremony, the Pastor will gladly stand for any posed photos. Studio photos may be set up in a pre-arranged room. When wedding bulletins are used, we ask that photo instructions be included in the bulletin, using a statement such as: "First United Methodist Church and the Bride and Groom ask that flash photos not be taken during the wedding ceremony."

DECORATIONS

Decorations are provided by the couple and may be used to beautify the Sanctuary for the service. However, no decoration will be permitted that deface or damage our facilities. Nails, tacks, pins and tape are not permitted on the walls or the wooden furniture, including pews. Chancel candelabra and candles are available upon request (for a nominal fee). For safety reasons, rented pew candle holders are not permitted. Any use of candles must protect against wax or fire hazards. Our church has unity candle holders available which may be used upon request (for no fee); the couple must provide the candles and should bring them to the church for the rehearsal. It is always the responsibility of the couple to inform florists and/or other service personnel of our policies. Damage claims will be charged to the couple.

RICE AND/OR BALLOONS

Throwing rice/birdseed is not permitted, as this is hazardous to the walkways as well as harmful to the birds. To protect our environment, balloon and butterflies releases are also not permitted.

OTHER ROOMS OF THE CHURCH

Wedding space includes the Sanctuary (which is not air-conditioned), the narthex, restrooms, bridal room and a waiting room for the groom. The nursery may be used upon request, provided child care is furnished which meets our "Safe Sanctuary" requirements, and the room is left in a clean condition. Use of the Fellowship Hall for a reception must be arranged through the church office.

CHILDREN

While children are often invited to be flower-girls and ring-bearers, judgment should be exercised when selecting very young children who can be quite unpredictable. Expecting young children to behave in a processional and recessional is often too much to ask of them.

RECEIVING LINE

A receiving line may be set up at the church. The Pastor/Wedding Coordinators will happily advise the couple about recommended arrangements of family members. Some couples prefer to have their receiving line at the reception hall, which is also acceptable. Another practice that is often occurring is for the couple to return to the front of the Sanctuary after the recessional, and to greet their guests in the main aisle as the guests are exiting their pews.

SMOKING/DRINKING

It is the policy of the church that smoking and drinking of alcoholic beverages are NOT permitted anywhere on the church property. This policy is absolutely enforced for weddings and rehearsals. Inebriated behavior will not be tolerated. Any member of the wedding party deemed inebriated (in the Pastor's judgment) will not be permitted to participate in the ceremony.

ACCESSIBILITY

Our Sanctuary has some accessibility issues. Ramps are available to provide wheelchair access. Parking spaces for the handicapped are provided in front of the building. If the guest list includes persons with special needs, the wedding Coordinators shall be informed so the ushers can be trained to care for special needs.

PARKING

Parking is available in the public lots near the church. For meter bags along Second Street, contact the Greensburg police department. Limos are permitted to park on the Second Avenue side of the building and Maple Avenue. Decorations to cars should be done before the ceremony, and should not be the responsibility of members of the wedding party.

FAMILY NEEDS

Special needs often arise in families. We will be happy to help and advice couples when special circumstances arise. If there has been a divorce or some family problem, please discuss the issue with the officiating Pastor. Every care will be made to provide seating arrangements that will be agreeable to the family while providing a conflict-free environment.

WEDDING FEES

When either the bride or groom is a church member:

- Church/Sanctuary \$ 50.00 (refundable) ~\$50 is the required deposit to secure the date
- Chapel \$ 35.00 (refundable)
- Fellowship Hall \$ 75.00
- Clergy \$275.00

When neither the bride nor groom is a church member:

- Church/Sanctuary \$300.00 (non-refundable) ~\$300 is the required deposit to secure the date
- Chapel \$200.00 (non-refundable)
- Fellowship Hall \$100.00 (\$50 non-refundable)
- Clergy \$275.00

Standard fees required of everyone being married at Greensburg First will include:

- *Custodian \$100.00 (If the reception is being held at the church, add \$15 per hour)
- *Organist \$175.00 (When accompanying a soloist, an additional fee will need to be negotiated with the Organist)
- *Other musician/s (this fee set by and paid to musician/s)
- *Soloist/s (this fee set by and paid to soloist/s)
- *Wedding Coordinators \$100.00 (two @\$50 each)
- *Bulletin layout/printing \$ 50.00 (if they are produced/printed here at church)
- Candelabra \$ 10.00 (if they are to be used)

Notices regarding the fees:

- **Before a date is considered reserved, all deposits must be submitted.**
- The fee for the church includes use of the Sanctuary for the rehearsal and wedding, utilities, bridal room and groom's room.
- **Checks payable to the church are to "FUMC."**
- ***Other checks should be made directly to the individuals (names will be supplied by the church office).**
- **The total amount for all fees is required two weeks prior to the scheduled wedding date.**