

Planning Your Wedding With First United Methodist Church of Austin



We believe: Every human being is on a journey toward God with God.





Dear Bride and Groom:

For almost a century, First United Methodist Church has provided beautiful spaces for weddings in our present location. We are very proud of our grand sanctuary in the traditional Greek Revival style, as well as Murchison Chapel, our beautiful contemporary space. Our location next to the Capitol in downtown Austin is a prime place for taking advantage of what our unique city has to offer.

Generations of couples have had their unions blessed by God and their friends in these spaces, and now we understand that you are considering doing so as well. We welcome your inquiry and hope that this handbook for planning a wedding here will provide much of the information you need.

Here you will find policies and guidelines to assist you, your wedding party, and your vendors in planning your service. They also serve the church in preserving the sanctity and durability of our facilities.

Our wedding coordinator will be your guide throughout the process of reserving space and carrying out your plans. She intends to ensure your wedding proceeds smoothly and will be a memorable and joyful occasion, so please don't hesitate to ask questions throughout this process.

As pastors of First Church, we celebrate both this significant decision to join your lives in marriage and your desire to begin that lifelong journey with your wedding in a church. Our role is to counsel you and help you plan for that service of worship, if needed.

May God bless the wedding plans you make and the married lives you lead together!

In Christ,
Pastors
First United Methodist Church, Austin

Table of Contents

Wedding Spaces	
Sanctuary	4
Murchison Chapel	4
Receptions.....	4
Decorations	4
Candles.....	5
Flowers.....	5
Parking	5
Wedding Coordinator	5
Your Ceremony	6
Consultations	6
Guest Pastors	6
Rehearsal.....	6
Music.....	6
Photography	7
Making the Reservation	8
Fee Schedule	9
Sample Reservation Form.....	10

Our historic church stands across the street from the most famous address in Texas, the State Capitol Building.

The Sanctuary has a seating capacity of 750, including the balcony area. However, the average wedding size is normally 200 – 300 guests. The setting is very traditional with a center aisle and four side aisles. We have a magnificent pipe organ as well as a beautiful baby grand piano. The stained glass windows are stunning. The acoustics are exceptional. The Sanctuary is, indeed, a glorious place for a wedding.

Murchison Chapel is a small chapel suited for smaller, more intimate gatherings. It has beautiful stained glass windows and a seating capacity for 120 guests. It is a cozy, warm space equipped with an electric piano and perfect for acoustical music.

Facilities Available for Your Reception

The Great Hall of the Schmidt-Jones Family Life Center, located across the street at 13th and Lavaca, can accommodate up to 300 guests for a seated reception. The nearby kitchen is available for an additional charge. For smaller receptions, **the foyer of the Family Life Center** can accommodate up to 100 guests, depending on arrangement. **Garrison Chapel** of the Family Life Center accommodates around 80 guests. **Wesley Hall**, located in the main building, is available for receptions only for weddings held in the Murchison Chapel, since it is the bride's dressing area for sanctuary weddings.

If you plan to have your reception in the church, you should reserve space with the Facilities Coordinator. Arrangements for the reception are made with the Facilities Coordinator who will help with details such as chair and table arrangement, time and delivery for food, flowers, and other items. First Church can provide 60-inch round tables, 6-ft serving tables, and chairs. All other equipment and material is the responsibility of the wedding party. If a caterer uses the First Church kitchen for food preparation, a refundable kitchen deposit is required. The Facilities

Coordinator may be reached at the church office, 512-478-5684 extension 204.

Alcohol and Smoking

No alcoholic beverages may be served or consumed anywhere on the church premises. Use of tobacco or tobacco products is not permitted in any building or within 20 feet of any entrance.

Dressing Areas

For Sanctuary weddings, the groom and his groomsmen may dress in the Parlor, located behind the Sanctuary. However, we suggest that groomsmen come dressed to church. The bride and her attendants may dress in Wesley Hall and adjacent classrooms located downstairs in the Sanctuary building. There are two nearby restrooms, one with a sitting area, and two floor length mirrors. A small elevator goes from this area directly up to the Sanctuary.

Responsibility for Valuables

First Church cannot be responsible for personal items, such as wedding dresses, coats, purses, silver, or glassware brought to the church for use in the wedding or reception, nor will it be liable for such items. Valuables should be removed from the dressing rooms prior to the ceremony or the wedding party may provide an attendant to remain in the dressing area.

Decorations

Decorations should not obscure the simple beauty and dignity of the wedding service or the Sanctuary. The pulpit and the altar table and candles maintain their positions of prominence in the marriage service as traditional symbols of the Christian faith. Nothing may be placed on the altar table, however, a floral bouquet may be placed on a stand beside the altar table. Sanctuary decorations for church seasons and special church days will not be taken down. Please clarify with the Wedding Coordinator if there will be any special liturgical decorations present on the date you desire for your wedding. Flowers and other decorations may be placed on the choir rail but are

not permitted on the communion rail or on musical instruments. If the organ is used, flowers must not obscure the organist's view.

No tacks, nails, tape, or any other material may be used to affix any item to any First Church property. The bride and groom will be billed for any damage to carpet, furniture, or buildings caused by their wedding party or their vendors.

Candles

When and where candles are used, proper protection must be provided for all carpet and property. Sanctuary aisle candles are not allowed.

Candles placed on choir rail or window sills must be in glass containers.

First Church has two brass candelabra that may be reserved for wedding ceremonies. Each holds seven candles provided by First Church. Additionally, two brass candle lighters and a small table-top brass unity candle holder are available. Each couple must provide their own candles for the unity candle holder.

Flowers

Please inform your florist or person decorating the Sanctuary that the church will be available for decorating three hours prior to the ceremony. If more than three hours is required, an additional hourly fee will be charged. It is your responsibility that the florist know the policies of the church and abides by them. First Church reserves the right to restrict privileges of any florist who violates these regulations.

Due to a lack of First Church storage facilities, immediate removal of all decoration is required. Florist or designated members of wedding party must remove all decorations after pictures. First Church is not responsible for any lost or damaged items.

Parking

On the day of your wedding, free parking is available in the First Church parking lot adjacent to the building, and in the parking garage at 13th and Lavaca. When consulting with the wedding coordinator during the week it can be

difficult to find convenient parking near the church. The parking lot immediately north of the Murchison Chapel has spaces marked "For Church Business Only." Feel free to park here, but do not park in a reserved space during business hours. Please use caution when parking on the street, and be prepared to pay for parking if our lot is full. No parking is allowed on the east side of Lavaca Street.

Wedding Coordinator

First Church has a wedding coordinator to assist the bride and groom with the plans and details of their wedding from the day it is put on the church calendar to the day of the ceremony. Her job is to assist you in reserving all necessary facilities and equipment, to ensure that the custodial staff is informed of times and details for rehearsal and wedding day activities, and to interpret the fee schedule and wedding policies.

The wedding coordinator also attends all rehearsals and ceremonies to answer any questions that may arise concerning First Church's wedding policies and to assist the minister, wedding party, and guests. The wedding coordinator works directly with the minister to conduct the wedding rehearsal. *Outside wedding coordinators must work in consultation with the First Church Wedding Coordinator.*



When a couple decides to be married at First Church, more is involved than simply the use of the facilities and the presence of one of our ministers. In that decision, a couple indicates that they are in accord with Christian beliefs and that they will make thorough preparations for the wedding service and for their life together. They also agree to take seriously the procedures of this church as well as those of The United Methodist Church. The "Order for the Service of Marriage" from the Book of Worship or the Book of Services will be used as a basis for structuring the service.

The marriage ceremony in the church is a worship service. It is the coming together of a congregation to glorify God and to celebrate the vows of a lifelong marriage commitment. The bride and groom express their intention of faith and love in the midst of friends and family who gather as a supportive community. The service of marriage is, therefore, a congregational event.

Each First Church pastor has developed his or her own wedding ceremony based on the official United Methodist order of worship. It is what he or she believes to be most effective in expressing the Christian understanding of marriage. At the same time, each pastor is eager to work closely with couples to incorporate elements into the service that will make the service personal to them. However, the pastor reserves the right to decide what adaptations of the basic service are appropriate.

Pre-Wedding consultations

Pastors in the United Methodist Church officiate at weddings only after a conference with the bride and groom. In most cases, three pre-marital counseling sessions will be needed. Conferences should be arranged well before the wedding date.

Guest Pastors

Guest ministers and priests who are duly ordained by a recognized denomination are permitted to conduct wedding ceremonies at First Church. Couples who desire a guest pastor to officiate will provide

the minister's name, church affiliation, address, and telephone number to the wedding coordinator. Our Senior Pastor will send a letter of invitation to the guest pastor authorizing him or her to officiate at First Church. Guest pastors must follow the policies in this booklet and use a marriage service that accords with a mainline Protestant order and understanding of marriage as reflected, for example, in the use of the United Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Lutheran, Disciples of Christ, or United Church of Christ denominations. Both words and actions must reflect the belief that husband and wife are equal partners in Christian marriage, neither subservient to the other. If Holy Communion is celebrated in the service, the entire congregation must be invited to receive communion. If the wedding bulletin is printed by the bride and groom, the bulletin must include the name and church affiliation of the officiating pastor.

To preserve the sanctity of the ceremony, we ask that your guests turn off all electronic devices and refrain from flash photography during the ceremony.

Rehearsal

It is extremely important that the exact time indicated for the rehearsal and wedding be observed, and care should be taken to have all members of the wedding party in their places at the time indicated. The wedding fee includes one hour scheduled for your rehearsal. Any additional time will require an additional \$100.00 fee. Keep in mind that a rehearsal scheduled at 5:00 p.m. will require the wedding party to plan for Austin's Friday after work traffic. No rehearsal or wedding will be conducted if any member of the wedding party is intoxicated.

Music

Music is an integral part of your wedding service and enhances the beauty, joy, and celebratory nature of the service. When considering choices of music to be used in your wedding ceremony, we offer the following guidelines to assist you.

- The wedding ceremony is a service of worship.
- Reverence and dignity appropriate to a Christian

service of worship should be the basis for selecting the music.

- There are many sacred compositions written specifically for wedding services in classical, traditional, and contemporary Christian musical styles. Secular “pop” tunes and Broadway show tunes are more appropriately used at rehearsal dinners and wedding receptions. They are not considered to be appropriate for the religious ceremony.
- Recorded music is not allowed.

Soon after receiving confirmation of your wedding date, the bride and groom should make arrangements to meet with First Church’s organist, if you desire organ music at your wedding. Outside organists are permitted only as approved by First Church’s organist. It is your responsibility to contact the organist to discuss music selection. Wedding service agreement includes 20 minutes of pre-service music. If the wedding start is delayed significantly, there will be an additional charge.

Those couples not desiring organ music at their wedding may engage one of First Church’s pianists, or invite an outside pianist or instrumental ensemble. However, **the music selection guidelines and approval by the First Church Director of Music remain in effect.** The pianist or a representative of the instrumental ensemble must attend the rehearsal.

If you would like to have a soloist for your wedding and desire assistance in securing a vocalist, the First Church Music Director will be happy to make arrangements with one of the professional singers on staff. However, if you have a friend or relative or desire to use a vocalist not on staff at First Church, the soloist(s) must have thoroughly prepared all of the vocal selections before the wedding rehearsal and provide the organist/pianist with music in the key that the soloist(s) will sing. (Please note that photo copies are not permitted as they are illegal.) The organist/pianist will rehearse with the soloist(s) in conjunction with the wedding rehearsal.

The fee for the organist/pianist/vocalist is paid in advance directly to musicians.

Wedding Photographs

All weddings are services of worship and must be treated with reverence. Photography and videography may begin up to three hours prior to the service and/or immediately following the service. Photos being made in the Sanctuary or Murchison Chapel should be completed a minimum of 45 minutes before the service is to begin to allow time for guests to be seated.

The photographer and videographer may not be in the chancel area during the ceremony. They may stand behind the last pew or in the balcony to take all photographs during the processional and the recessional. A flash may be used for these photos, but NO FLASH is permitted between the processional and the recessional.

Available light photos (no flash) are permitted during the ceremony from the balcony or from the back of the church behind the congregation.

Photographers are asked to be as unobtrusive and as quiet as possible. No movement should take place during the ceremony.

Please include the following statement in your wedding program: *To preserve the sanctity of the wedding ceremony, please refrain from flash photography and turn off electronic devices.*

It is the bride and groom’s responsibility to see that the photographer, relatives, and friends are informed of these photo policies.



It is important to schedule the wedding as far in advance as possible, giving the exact dates and hours for the rehearsal, ceremony, and reception, as well as the facilities desired. Once you have reserved the church facilities, you may NOT change the time of the wedding or rehearsal without contacting the Wedding Coordinator. To ensure availability of date, facilities, and the personnel you desire, please follow these steps to make your reservation. In order to avoid disappointment, dates should not be announced until a reservation is confirmed.

1. Call the church office, 512-478-5684, and leave a message for the wedding coordinator to see if the preferred date is available.
2. Secure the services of the minister. (Guidelines for guest pastors are addressed on page 5.)
3. Deliver a \$150.00 non-refundable deposit, payable to First United Methodist Church, to the church office. Dates cannot be entered on the church calendar until steps #2 and #3 are completed.

Weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays or on the Thursday, Friday, or Saturday of Holy Week. Normally, weddings or rehearsals will not be scheduled on holiday weekends or between December 15-25. Weddings may be scheduled concurrently in the Murchison Chapel and the Sanctuary area.

Legal Information

State law requires that each couple obtain a marriage

license from the State of Texas. The Travis County Clerk issues marriage licenses at the 5501 Airport Boulevard Office in Austin, Texas. For details visit www.traviscountyclerk.org or call 512-854-9188. The marriage license should be given to the minister at the wedding rehearsal.

Summary of Fees

Fees are necessary to defray custodial and utility expenses. Please see the attached Fee Schedule for more information. A non-refundable deposit of \$150.00 is required to reserve the church facilities. The remaining balance should be paid in full to the church no later than one month prior to the ceremony. Checks should be made payable to First United Methodist Church with a notation of the wedding date in the memo section.

Member Weddings and Non-Member Weddings

We welcome non-members who wish to have their weddings here. Membership status is determined at the time of your initial inquiry. A member of First Church is considered someone who has joined this congregation at least one year prior to scheduling their wedding. This determination also includes parents of the bride or groom.

Planning Guide

A sample reservation form for your planning purposes is on pages 10-11. The Wedding Coordinator will fill out this form during consultation.



Wedding Guidelines Agreement

Please fill out and return

Dear Couple,

After you have read the information regarding the use of our church and facilities, please look over the paragraph below and sign.

I (WE) agree to follow all requests as explained in the First United Methodist Church Wedding Policies and Guidelines. I (We) understand that if any directions regarding decorations and wedding photos are not followed, I (we) will be responsible for any repair or damage to the church facility.

I (We) also know that it is my (our) responsibility to pay any balance due one month prior to the ceremony.

Signed: _____

Fee Schedule

Reservation Deposit \$150.00

Non-refundable, applies toward total fees

Sanctuary..... \$2,000.00

(Includes one hour for rehearsal and four hours for day of wedding. Additional time \$100 an hour)

Murchison Chapel \$1000.00

Candelabra (Candles provided) No Fee

Brass Unity Candleholder (Candle not provided) No Fee

Organist \$400.00

Includes one-hour consultation, rehearsal, and ceremony with 20 minutes pre-ceremony music. Additional consultation or rehearsal time \$50.00 per hour

Bench Fee \$150.00

If a guest organist is used, the music director will be paid this fee to defray costs of arranging rehearsal time, reviewing music, and other activities required to accommodate the guest organist

Pianist, Soloists, and Instrumentalists Charge Additional Individual Fees

First Church Minister Honorarium \$500.00

Includes three pre-marital counseling sessions, conducting rehearsal, and performing ceremony

Payment of wedding fees is due no later than one month prior to the ceremony. Checks should be made payable to First United Methodist Church with a notation of the wedding date in the memo section. Payment are mailed to FUMC, 1201 Lavaca Street, Austin, Texas, 78701. Remuneration for the minister, organist, and soloists are handled separately. Please include checks made payable directly to the individuals and mail to First Church at 1201 Lavaca Street, Austin, TX 78701.

SAMPLE WEDDING RESERVATION PLANNING FORM

Ceremony Information

Wedding Date _____ Rehearsal Date _____

Wedding Time _____ Rehearsal Time _____

Location ___ Sanctuary ___ Chapel

Wedding Party

___ Bridesmaids ___ Groomsmen ___ Ushers ___ Flowergirls ___ Ringbearers

Anticipated Number of Guests _____

Bride Information

Bride Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Cell Phone _____ Home Phone _____

work Phone _____

church affiliation _____

Parent's name(s) _____

Grandparent's name(s) _____

Groom Information

Groom Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Cell Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Church affiliation _____

Parent's name(s) _____

Grandparent's name(s) _____

Couple Information

Address after the wedding

Minister performing the ceremony _____

Church affiliation _____

Address _____

Email _____ Work Phone _____

Organist/Pianist _____

Solist(s) _____

Instrumentalist(s) _____

Florist _____

Email _____ Work Phone _____

Delivery time (usually 3 hours before ceremony) _____

Photographer _____

Email _____ Work Phone _____

Photo start time _____

Videographer _____

Email _____ Work Phone _____

Photo start time _____

Equipment

- Wedding Banners
- Reserved parking
- Lapel Microphone
- Pulpit Microphone
- Stand Microphone
- Candelabra
- Unity Candle Holder
- Votives
- Candle lighters

Special Requests

*First United
Methodist Church
1201 Lavaca Street
Austin, TX 78701
512-478-5684
www.fumcaustin.org*

