

# **A Guide to Planning Your Wedding**



## **Wedding Policies and Information From First United Methodist Church, Lansing, Michigan**

Updated/Approved August 2013



## **A Word to the Bride and Groom:**

As you prepare for your wedding, you undoubtedly have dozens of details to work out. In the days and weeks ahead, you will be busy-so busy that it is important to take some time here at the outset of this journey to consider why you are seeking to married at this church.

A wedding is a sacred religious worship service acknowledging God's presence in your lives and marriage. During the wedding, the couple covenants with God to build a lasting relationship. As the spiritual leader of this faith community, the pastor has the responsibility to guide all arrangements for the ceremony, which includes pre-marital counseling, the rehearsal and the ceremony itself. It is expected that in coming to the church to be married, the couple desires a sacred rite rather than a secular ceremony. This decision will affect your wedding plans, including the choice of music, readings, and other creative elements.



## **On the Pre-Marital Counseling Requirement**

When you meet with the pastor in your introductory meeting, general details of your wedding will be discussed, the wedding date confirmed, and the potential for continuing the process will be ascertained. If the pastor agrees to perform your wedding, a minimum of four counseling sessions will be scheduled. During these sessions you and your fiancé will reflect upon your relationship and your expectations for marriage. You will be challenged to discuss potential areas of conflict as you learn to become better communicators and life partners. We hope that through your pre-marital counseling and planning for the future you will be able to build on your skills and gain new insights that will enable your marriage to be a life-long growth experience.



## Planning Check-List

- **Date and Time:** Contact the Church Office to check on the availability of your chosen date.
- **Introductory Meeting:** Contact the Pastor to set up an introductory meeting. If the decision is to proceed, a date for the first counseling session will be determined at this meeting. You will also complete a general wedding information form at this time.
- **Pay the Deposit:** A \$50 deposit secures your date. The balance of fees will be due at the last counseling appointment.
- **Complete the Counseling Sessions.**
- **Marriage License:** Within thirty (30) days of the planned ceremony, you may apply for the marriage license. One person may apply if both reside in Michigan. In Ingham County, the clerk requests that birth certificates be presented at the time of application. *Application for a marriage license must be made in the county of residence of one of the persons applying.* Non-residents of the State of Michigan must apply in the county in which the ceremony is to be performed.
- **Pay the Remainder of the Fees:** All fees are expected to be paid by the final counseling session.
- **Rehearsal:** The rehearsal is typically scheduled for the evening before the wedding. All participants, including ushers, should be present. The rehearsal will begin promptly at the scheduled time. Either dress or casual clothes are appropriate for the rehearsal. Plan on approximately one hour for the rehearsal. Bring the marriage license with you to the rehearsal. **The rehearsal will not begin until the license is in the Pastor's hand!** Please do not plan on leaving dresses, tuxes or other valuables in the church overnight. We are not equipped to provide a secure environment for these items!
- **The Wedding:** The building will be opened at the time you request on the day of your wedding, up to **two hours** in advance of the ceremony. The Pastor or Wedding Facilitator will be present to assist you and answer your questions regarding the facility. Unless you are holding your reception in our fellowship hall, the Facilitator will lock the doors of the Church approximately one hour after your wedding. **Please inform your photographer of these restrictions.**



## Responsibility for the Building

When a couple decides to hold their wedding at First UMC, they assume responsibility of leaving it in the same condition as they found it. To this end, the couple will be expected to sign a building use form and file it with the Church Office. Other information regarding building use is listed below:

- There are designated dressing areas for the wedding party in the building. You will be shown these areas when you tour the church with the Pastor. Please use only these areas of the church for your wedding preparations.
- Do not leave valuables unattended in these dressing areas. First UMC is not responsible for lost or missing items. Please see that dressing areas are in order before you leave the building.
- Food and beverages are not allowed in the sanctuary of the church at any time.
- If you find the conditions for the church climate to be unacceptable, please inform the Pastor or Church Facilitator and adjustments will be made. **Please do not attempt to make these corrections yourself.**
- **No smoking** is allowed inside the church building or within 20 yards of the doors. **No drugs (including alcohol)** are permitted at any function on church property. *This includes the parking areas.* Violators will be asked to leave.
- **The throwing of rice or confetti is not permitted in or around the building.** The present celebration of choice is bubbles.
- The sanctuary is enhanced by simplicity in flowers and decorations. Chancel paraments or furniture are not to be removed or arranged by the florist or members of the wedding party. All decorations should be in place one hour before the service is to begin. You and your florist are responsible for protecting the church furnishings. **No tape or other injurious materials are to be used anywhere in the building.** Pew clips for attaching bows/flowers to the pews are available from many sources, but check the style with the Pastor in advance to assure that they are acceptable. Please talk with the pastor if you wish to decorate in this way.



## The Church Facilitator

The Church Facilitator is a representative of First UMC who is here to help you prepare for your wedding day. This person is trained in our church policies and can answer your questions regarding the building and the ceremony itself. The Facilitator will be on hand for both your rehearsal and wedding, instructing the ushers, helping the Pastor, providing security, and reminding you of all the details you tend to forget when you get nervous (like where to stand, when to move, who goes first, etc.). If there's something you need, we hope you will ask our Facilitator.



## Planning Your Wedding Music

Music is an enjoyable part of every wedding service. If you wish, the services of one of the First UMC Staff Organists may be sought to provide this music. However, if one of them is not available for your wedding, **it is your responsibility to arrange for a musician.** We ask that the musician(s) you select make prior arrangements to set up practice times through the Church Office. **Only musicians approved by the organist of First UMC shall supply organ music for wedding services.** Other musicians will be asked to play the piano only.

We encourage you to select the music that will be part of your special day. You should visit a website such as [www.myweddingmusic.com](http://www.myweddingmusic.com) and choose your music at least a month prior to your wedding. This site will guide you through appropriate choices for processional, recessional, and preludes. Our organist has a repertoire that includes most of the traditional wedding pieces as well as many of the popular contemporary selections. However, if he does not have the sheet music for the pieces you choose, it will be your responsibility to provide that music (most can be downloaded directly from the website). **The Pastor reserves the right to disallow any music deemed inappropriate to the sacred nature of the wedding service.**

If you should choose to use recorded music in lieu of a live musician, our Church Sound and Tech staff will be glad to assist in playing your music. Please provide your music on a single CD that is clearly marked with each song and its cue position. CDs will be returned following the ceremony.



## Photography

- Formal wedding pictures may be taken prior to the wedding ceremony, but must be completed at least 30 minutes before the ceremony is scheduled to begin.
- No flash or flood lights are permitted during the ceremony.
- Videotaping, if it is to be done, must take place from the balcony or the rear of the sanctuary.
- Pictures using flash may be taken from the front aisle as the parties in the processional enter, but at no other time during the service may pictures be taken from the front of the sanctuary. Your photographer is welcome to attend the rehearsal to discuss these restrictions.
- Please inform the pastor prior to the service if his/her presence will be needed for posed pictures following the ceremony.
- **Prior to pictures following the ceremony, the wedding couple will need to sign the Marriage License.** This should be done immediately after all guests have been received.



## Financial Responsibilities

A Balance of Fees due will be provided during your counseling sessions. The fees for a wedding at First UMC are as follows:

Use of the Church Building	\$150*
Pastor's Honorarium	\$300*
(\$25 per session; \$200 rehearsal and ceremony)	
Church Facilitator	\$ 50*
Custodian	\$100*
Use of Candelabras	\$ 15
Organist	\$200
<u>Sound &amp; Tech Personnel</u>	<u>\$ 50*</u>
Total Fees: Minimum: \$650    Maximum: \$865	

\* Denotes required fee