

First United Methodist **SARASOTA**

Wedding Policies & Guidelines

104 S. Pineapple Avenue
Sarasota, FL 34236
941-955-0935



A Joyful Welcome from Pastor Brett

Congratulations on your engagement! This is a joyful and meaningful season in your life, and I am honored that you are considering First United Methodist Church of Sarasota as the place where you will make your vows.

A wedding is far more than a ceremony—it is a sacred act of worship, a moment in which two lives are joined together in the presence of God. It is our hope that your wedding day will not only be beautiful, but deeply spiritual, filled with a sense of God’s grace and presence.

In the Christian tradition, weddings often begin with the words, *“Dearly beloved, we are gathered together in the sight of God to witness and bless the joining together of (insert your names here) in Christian marriage.”* These words remind us that everything we do in the service is centered on God’s love and faithfulness, which will sustain your marriage in the years to come.

Our desire is to walk alongside you throughout this process. Our Wedding Coordinator will guide you through the details and help you plan a meaningful service.

I look forward to sharing in this sacred moment with you.

Blessings,

Brett

Rev. Brett DeHart

RESERVING A WEDDING DATE

To reserve a definite wedding date, a \$500 deposit must be made within two weeks of reserving a date on the church calendar. Securing the date is made by filling out a Wedding Application Form and paying the deposit to First UMC Sarasota. All other fees and their due dates are noted on the Wedding Fee Schedule. Reservations are delineated as member or non-member weddings. To be considered a member, you must be a member or the son/daughter of a member for TWELVE months prior to scheduling a wedding.

WEDDING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Within 14 days of requesting a date on the church calendar, pay the deposit to reserve wedding date and turn in wedding application form.
- ☐ Read First UMC Sarasota Wedding Guidelines and Policies.
- ☐ Request a First UMC Sarasota Pastor to officiate wedding.
- ☐ Contact the church Wedding Coordinator to discuss general wedding plans.

SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DATE

- ☐ Contact the church musician to identify selections and determine the need for additional musicians.
- ☐ Provide the church Wedding Coordinator with contact information of your outside vendors (florist, wedding planner or consultant, photographer/videographer).

TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DATE

- ☐ Schedule a meeting with First UMC Sarasota Pastor four to six weeks before the wedding date.
- ☐ Order of worship finalized
- ☐ Meet with the church musician to review timeframes, approve any contracts, make payment arrangements and decide on the musical plan.
- ☐ Schedule a final meeting with the Director of Music.
- ☐ Arrange for First UMC Sarasota Audio Technician. Specify audio needs and if videographer is to be used.

ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DATE

- ☐ Meet with Director of Music to confirm musical selections and approve all selected arrangements.
- ☐ Provide payment (cash preferred or check) for each professional musician, to the Director of Music.
- ☐ Obtain all correct titles and spelling for music to be included in the wedding program
- ☐ The bride's wedding planner will provide a detailed wedding day schedule to the church Wedding Coordinator.
- ☐ Coordinate flower delivery and set-up time with the church office
- ☐ Provide the wedding program for proofing and approval by the church. DO NOT print program until it is approved.
- ☐ Remaining balance paid in full.

REHEARSAL

- ☐ Bring marriage license to the Pastor (cannot legally hold wedding without it).

WEDDING DAY

- ☐ Wedding rings (do not place them in a ring box)

GENERAL INFORMATION

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals are limited to one hour in length. Rehearsals and weddings begin promptly at the appointed time, even if the full wedding party is not present. They are to proceed in a quiet, reverent manner. Members of the wedding party should remember throughout the entire rehearsal and wedding that they are in a Holy Place, dedicated to the worship of God, and they are preparing for a service of public worship. No matter how small the wedding is, we strongly recommend a rehearsal.

WEDDING DAY

Your wedding party may arrive to the church two hours before the ceremony begins and may stay for one hour after the ceremony ends. If more time is needed, prior arrangements can be made through the church Administrative Assistant. There will be an additional charge for extended hours. The custodian does not have to be in the Sanctuary during the service but will be available for your assistance.

Dressing Rooms are available for the convenience of all the wedding party. The bridal party will use the Choir Room or the small Sitting Room for dressing and pictures only. The groom and his party will use Room 104 in the Fellowship Hall. Please assign someone to remove all your belongings from these rooms before the wedding begins because these areas will not be secured during and after your ceremony. No food or drink other than water is allowed in these rooms or in any other room the wedding party may use.

Smoking/vaping and alcohol of any kind is not permitted on the campus. The Pastor has the right to refuse to officiate a ceremony should this provision be disregarded.

Any damage done to furnishings or furniture shall be repaired and paid for by those who contracted the church for use, to the satisfaction of the church.

No food or beverages are allowed in the church narthex (lobby), Chapel or Sanctuary.

Rice, confetti, bird seed, or flower petals cannot be used on the church premises. They are a safety hazard and a problem to clean up.

No furniture may be moved from its place or removed from the Sanctuary. This includes the pulpit, altar/communion table, pulpit chairs, etc. Choir loft chairs, if rearranged for the service, will be left as originally found.

The chancel and aisle are beautifully carpeted, and for the safety of your guests, no aisle runner may be used

Parking is available in the church's parking area in The Mark garage across the street from the church at 111 Pineapple Avenue. Please direct all guests to this address.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

First UMC Sarasota requires the church Wedding Coordinator orchestrate all weddings, assist the officiating Pastor and ensure the proper use of the church facilities. Their role is not to direct the wedding. The bride is responsible for securing a wedding planner or a bridal consultant. It is understood that if a wedding planner or bridal consultant is used, both will work along with these policies.

MUSIC

MUSIC CONSULTATION

The bride or groom is expected to meet with the church musician six months before the wedding to identify ideas for the music and determine the need for additional musicians.

Music to be played or sung is to be approved by the church's Music Fine Arts Director four weeks before the wedding. Selected songs and their text, as well as the music, should complement the wedding as a sacred service in a house of worship.

The music office maintains a repertoire of pieces that have proven successful in ceremonies held at First UMC Sarasota. The following are recommended for procession and retiring procession.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Composer</u>
<i>Rigaudon</i>	<i>Andre Campra</i>
<i>Crown Imperial</i>	<i>William Walton</i>
<i>Trumpet Tune</i>	<i>Henry Purcell</i>
<i>Trumpet Voluntary</i>	<i>Jeremiah Clarke</i>
<i>Festive Trumpet Tune</i>	<i>David German</i>
<i>Trumpet Voluntary</i>	<i>John Stanley</i>
<i>Canon in D</i>	<i>Johann Pachelbel</i>
<i>Toccata (from Symphonie V)</i>	<i>Charles-Marie Widor</i>

Eight weeks before the wedding the bride will meet or conference call with the church musician to review timeframes, approve any required contracts pertaining to the professional musicians, make payment arrangements and decide on the musical plan. Any additional music must be ordered or pulled from libraries. Appropriate arrangements will need to be made, fitting the compliment of musicians contracted.

The final appointment with the Music Fine Arts Director should be scheduled for four weeks before the wedding. During this appointment, all payments for the contracted musicians will be given to the Music Fine Arts Director. At this time obtain all correct titles and spellings for music to be included in the wedding bulletin.

HIRING OF MUSICIANS

First UMC Sarasota recommends instrumentalists from a pool of pre-approved musicians. The Music Fine Arts Director can provide contact information or may agree to contact the musicians and negotiate the details. All individual payments for the contracted musicians will be given to the Music Fine Arts Director at the final appointment four weeks prior to the wedding. Cash is preferred but a check is acceptable. It is customary for the Music Fine Arts Director to issue the payments to the musicians as they arrive to the ceremony.

OFFICIATING PASTOR

It is expected that our Pastor will officiate the wedding. If you desire a Pastor from another church to officiate the wedding, approval is needed from our Senior Pastor, preferably before reserving the church. The format and style of a wedding should be consistent with the church's tradition of worship.

CEREMONY

Appropriate scripture or poetry may be added to the ritual of the United Methodist Church, but this must be approved by the officiating pastor.

Holy Communion can be received, but it must be offered to ALL attendees using United Methodist liturgy. It can be quick powerful especially if the couple serves the bread and juice to their friends and family.

It is suggested that Ring Bearers and Flower Girls be at least five years old. The pressure of having to perform in a certain way may be too stressful for those children under five.

WEDDING PROGRAM

A wedding program is not required but if you choose to have a printed program for your wedding, you must send a .PDF copy to the Wedding Coordinator four weeks prior to the wedding for the approval of the Pastor and Music Fine Arts Director.

DECORATIONS

Flowers/Greenery: Flowers and candelabras should be carefully placed so as not to hide the altar table. The Bible cannot be removed from the altar table and no additional decorations can be used. Artificial flowers/greenery are not permitted in the sanctuary or narthex. Adequate material should be used under potted plants and arrangements to protect the hardwood flooring and carpet.

Candles: The Altar candles are to be lighted during the wedding ceremony unless replaced by floor candelabras. The use of a Unity candle in the service is at the request of the bride and groom.

Seasonal Decorations: The Christmas season encompasses the first Advent weekend through the first Sunday after New Years. The Advent Wreath and Chrismon Tree have definite religious significance and are part of the ministries of the season. Once the Christmas decorations such as Advent Wreath, Chrismon Tree, and poinsettias are in place, they will not be removed until early January. Palm Sunday, Easter, and Pentecost have distinctive decorations as well. Please consult with the Wedding Coordinator before reserving the church for these seasons.

Altar Table: No items other than what is on the altar are allowed (the Bible—except when the Bread and Cup are used for Communion).

Use of Flower Petals, Rice, Confetti, Bird Seed, Bubbles: Real petals may not be scattered or used inside any part of the church. Artificial flower petals may be scattered; however, a \$50 additional custodial surcharge is added if they are not removed. No rice, confetti or bird seed shall be thrown. Bubbles may be thrown/blown outside and away from any entrance to the building.

VENDORS

FLORIST

The time for delivery and set-up of floral arrangements must be coordinated with the church office ahead of time. Do not use any type of adhesive that will damage the finish on any furnishings (painters tape is an excellent alternative, NEVER SCOTCH TAPE). The bride/groom must receive a commitment from the florist to begin removing all decorations (floral, greenery, candles or other) within one hour after the ceremony. All decorations shall be removed after the ceremony unless prior permission has been received by the church Wedding Coordinator to leave a floral arrangement for Sunday Worship.

PHOTOGRAPHER

We ask that the photographer always cooperate with the church Wedding Coordinator to help maintain the sacred nature of your special day and so that the act of taking pictures does not inhibit the worshipful atmosphere of your wedding.

Flash photographs are not permitted in the sanctuary during the progress of the sacred service. The wedding service begins with the organ prelude. Please be sure family members and guests are aware of this policy. No additional lighting may be used for photographs during the wedding service. Photographs may be taken in the narthex of the sanctuary preceding the ceremony and the wedding party may return to the Sanctuary or Chapel after the ceremony for as many pictures as they wish. The chancel kneeling/communion cushions are not to be removed for photographs.

VIDEOGRAPHER

If you chose to hire a videographer there are certain instructions that must be followed to ensure the integrity of the wedding service is maintained and the act of filming does not take away from the service itself. The ceremony may be videotaped using a tripod in a concealed position. A videographer using wireless microphones will check with the audio technician prior to the wedding to ensure compatibility with the house wireless microphones.

AUDIO

Only a First UMC Sarasota sound technician can run the church equipment.

WEDDING ORDER OF WORSHIP

GREETING (Pastor)

Dearly beloved, (or Family and Friends) We are gathered together in the sight of God to witness and bless the joining together of _____ and _____ in Christian marriage.

The covenant of marriage was established by God, who created us male and female for each other. With his presence and power Jesus graced a wedding at Cana of Galilee, and in his sacrificial love gave us the example for the love of husband and wife.

_____ and _____ come to give themselves to one another in this holy covenant.

DECLARATION OF INTENTION (Pastor)

I ask you now, in the presence of God and these people, to declare your intention to enter into union with one another through the grace of Jesus Christ, who calls you into union with himself as acknowledged in your baptism.

Pastor to the Man

_____, will you have _____ to be your wife, to live together in holy marriage?

Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

Man: I will.

Pastor to the Woman

_____, will you have _____ to be your husband, to live together in holy marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

Woman: I will.

PRESENTATION (not required)

Pastor: Who presents this woman to be married to this man?

Presenter: I do. ***(Presenter then leaves to be seated)***

Pastor to congregation: The marriage of _____ and _____ unites their families and creates a new one. They ask for your blessing. Will all of you, by God's grace, do everything in your power to uphold and care for these two persons in marriage? If you will, please respond by saying, "We will."

People: We will.

PRAYER

Let us pray: God of all peoples, you are the true light illumining everyone. You show us the way, the truth, and the life. You love us even when we are disobedient. You sustain us with your Holy Spirit. We rejoice in your life in the midst of our lives. We praise you for your presence with us, and especially in this act of solemn covenant; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE (read by minister or friend/family member of the couple)

(listed below are three common choices, usually only one is read. You are welcome to suggest alternatives.)

1 Corinthians 13:1-8,13 - If I speak in the tongues of humans and of angels but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions and if I hand over my body so that I may boast^[a] but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.... faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

1 John 4:7-12 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Colossians 3:12-17 ¹²As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

BRETT'S BRIEF MESSAGE TO THE COUPLE- 2 minutes

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all life, Author of salvation, Giver of all grace: Bless and sanctify with your Holy Spirit _____ and _____, who come now to join in marriage. Grant that they may give their vows to each other in the strength of your steadfast love. Enable them to grow in love and peace with you and with one another all their days, that they may reach out in concern and service to the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXCHANGE OF VOWS (face each other holding hands)
(pastor will go line by line with person repeating)

Man:

In the name of God,
I, _____, take you, _____,
To be my wife,
To have and to hold,
From this day forward,
For better, for worse,
For richer, for poorer,
In sickness and in health,
To love and to cherish,
Till death do us part,
This is my solemn vow.

Woman:

In the name of God,
I, _____, take you, _____,
To be my husband,
To have and to hold,
From this day forward,
For better, for worse,
For richer, for poorer,
In sickness and in health,
To love and to cherish,
Till death do us part,
This is my solemn vow.

BLESSING OF THE RINGS (hand rings to Pastor)

The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,
signifying to all the uniting of _____ and _____ in holy marriage.

Bless, O Lord, the giving of these rings, that they who wear them may live in your peace,
and continue in your favor all the days of their life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXCHANGE OF THE RINGS (place ring on finger and repeat) (Man then woman)
(pastor will go line by line with person repeating)

_____, I give you this ring
As a sign of my vow,
And with all that I am,
And all that I have,
I honor you;
In the name of the Father,
And of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit.

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE (Pastor places his hand on top of couple's joined hands)

You have declared your consent and vows before God and this congregation.

May God confirm your covenant and fill you both with grace.

(Turn towards congregation)

Now that _____ and _____ have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, I announce to you that they are husband and wife;

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder. Amen.

UNITY CANDLE (optional)

Center candle lit from side candles. Leave all three burning (do not extinguish side candles- you still retain your personal identities as well!)

BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE

Let us pray: O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of Christian marriage that in it is represented the covenant between Christ and his church. Send therefore your blessing upon, _____ and _____, that they may surely keep their marriage covenant, and so grow in love and godliness together that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE LORD's PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastor to couple: God the Eternal keep you in love with each other, so that the peace of Christ may abide in your home. Go to serve God and your neighbor in all that you do.

Pastor to congregation: Bear witness to the love of God in this world, so that those to whom love is a stranger will find in you generous friends. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Pastor: _____, *you may kiss your bride.* (or "You may kiss")

Couple holds hands and faces congregation leaving space between them for Pastor to be seen and Pastor says:

I proudly introduce Mr. and Mrs. _____ (or _____ and _____)

(Couple exits down aisle together with music playing)

Pastor: invite congregation to reception?