



## *Your Wedding at First United Methodist Church*

*72 Lake Morton Dr , Lakeland, Florida*

*863-686-3163 x219 nwood@firstumc.org*

Your marriage is one of the most important and sacred events in your life. Our church staff is dedicated to helping you have a beautiful and meaningful wedding ceremony. In the Christian tradition, a wedding is a worship service, so these guidelines are written to ensure that the focus of the service remains on the bride and groom and the important vows they are taking.

If you have any questions as you read these guidelines, please feel free to contact Pastors' Administrative Assistant, Nicole Wood and she will be glad to help you. 863-686-3163 x219, [nwood@firstumc.org](mailto:nwood@firstumc.org) .

### **WEDDING VENUES**

The Sanctuary is large and formal, with an organ and grand piano. It has a large foyer and seats 750 people on the floor level.

The Chapel is a beautiful setting for small ceremonies. It has an organ and piano and seats up to 75 people.

The Patio overlooks Lake Morton for a pretty outdoor wedding. It holds up to 200 chairs and the Sanctuary or Chapel is used as backup in case of rain.

The wedding fees for all venues include a pastor, custodian and church wedding coordinator, dressing rooms and rehearsal. Sanctuary and Chapel fees also include an organist, and the Sanctuary fee includes a sound technician. No music or audio is provided for Patio weddings, although a sound technician is available for an extra fee if needed. Fees for additional personnel may be charged for large Sanctuary weddings.



## SCHEDULING AND WEDDING FEES

### WHEN TO SCHEDULE

If you have been an active member of First United Methodist Church for one year before scheduling a wedding, you can apply 12 months in advance. All other weddings may be scheduled 8 months before the wedding date. Send your Application for Wedding form ([www.firstumc.org/worship/weddings](http://www.firstumc.org/worship/weddings)) to the church with your deposit (see "Wedding Fees" below). After a pastor approves the application, your wedding and rehearsal will be reserved on the church calendar.

### WEDDING FEES

Please check with Pastors' Administrative Assistant Nicole Wood to discuss wedding fees (863-686-3163 x219 or [nwood@firstumc.org](mailto:nwood@firstumc.org)). One-half of the fee is paid when the wedding is reserved on the church calendar. The balance of the fee is due one month before the wedding.

### WEDDING RECEPTIONS

Receptions are offered only for weddings at our church. For information about receptions contact Angela Aguilera, 863-686-3163 x260, or [aaguilera@firstumc.org](mailto:aaguilera@firstumc.org).

### DATES TO REMEMBER

*[You may want to write the appropriate dates in the blanks.]*

\_\_\_\_\_ **10-60 days in advance:** Get your marriage license from the County Clerk's office (call 863-603-6412 for Polk County instructions).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Two months in advance:** Send wedding information sheet to Nicole. Set meetings with pastor and organist, 863-686-3163.

\_\_\_\_\_ **One month in advance:** Wedding fee balance is due (send to First United Methodist Church, 72 Lake Morton Dr, Lakeland FL 33801, Attn: Nicole). Church wedding coordinator will call you to go over final plans for the wedding.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Day before the wedding:** Take marriage license to the wedding rehearsal. Note: By state law, the pastor cannot perform a marriage unless the license is in his or her possession.



## **CHURCH WEDDING PERSONNEL**

Our staff people will be happy to answer questions and talk with you about the plans for your wedding, so don't hesitate to call when we can help.

### **PASTORS' ASSISTANT**

Nicole Wood schedules weddings and will be your contact person as plans progress. Call Nicole weekdays 8:30am-4:30pm (863-686-3163 x219), or email [nwood@firstumc.org](mailto:nwood@firstumc.org).

### **PASTOR**

All weddings at our church are performed by a United Methodist pastor using a United Methodist service. The United Methodist Church ordains both men and women called by God to serve as ministers, so we do not exclude women pastors in any worship settings, including weddings, funerals, and baptisms. If your tradition does not include women, you may want to choose a different venue for your wedding. Our pastors have busy calendars, so wedding pastors are assigned based on pastoral availability for each wedding date.

The pastor for your wedding will have a meeting with both of you before the service to talk about Christian marriage and details of the ceremony. Please call two months before the wedding to schedule your meeting. We encourage (but don't require) that you do premarital counseling — the County Clerk's office has a listing of registered counselors.

### **ORGANIST**

All wedding music must be appropriate for a worship service and approved by our organist, Matthew Corl (863-687-9856 x274, [mcorl@firstumc.org](mailto:mcorl@firstumc.org)). The use of prerecorded music is discouraged except for soloists when an accompanist is not available, or for Patio weddings, for which the church doesn't provide music.

If you are considering using soloists or musicians other than our organist, please call Matthew to request approval before you make your plans. If you are using organ music only, call Matthew two months before the wedding to make an appointment to plan the music.

*[continued on next page]*



### **SOUND TECHNICIAN**

(Sanctuary weddings only)

A sound technician will be at your rehearsal and wedding. If musicians or pre-recorded music have been approved, Tech Coordinator Shawn Joyner will call you before the wedding to discuss what will be needed.

### **CHURCH WEDDING COORDINATOR**

A coordinator will be at your rehearsal and wedding to assist with last-minute needs, help family and attendants start down the aisle, and keep things running smoothly. She will call you one month before the wedding to discuss your plans. Be sure to send your wedding information sheet to Lynn six weeks before the wedding so the coordinator will have it when she calls you. If your coordinator leaves a message, please call her as soon as possible so she can get the details needed by the church staff people for your wedding.

If you have a bridal consultant, she should contact the church wedding coordinator at least two weeks before the wedding to go over details.

### **SERVICE STAFF**

A member of our service staff will open and close the facilities, set up and take down church equipment, be available when needed while you are here and do routine cleanup after the wedding. Please note that additional staff costs may be deducted from your wedding deposit for non-routine work such as:

- Opening an extra hour before the wedding (3 hours instead of 2)
- Delayed departure of wedding party from rehearsal or wedding  
(see Photography and Videography on page 6)
- Cleanup beyond normal procedures
- Taking down and storing rental or personal items remaining after the wedding party has left the premises

**NOTE: Our staff cannot be responsible for rented or personal items that are lost or left behind, so please have someone check the dressing rooms and wedding site before you leave**



## **FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS**

**Please give your florist a copy of this information.**

### **GUIDELINES**

Decorations should be appropriate for a worship setting. All worship items will remain in place. Please do not use arches, columns, artificial settings or aisle runners. You may use ribbon or plastic clips to attach flowers, greenery and bows to the candelabra and pew ends — please do not use tape, removable tape, tacks or bare wire. Live plants and flowers in waterproof containers are fine but please use only artificial flower petals in the aisle. Candles should be oil or smokeless/dripless — no wax except unity candles. Please do not use glitter or other small pieces that are difficult to vacuum.

### **WEDDING EQUIPMENT**

#### **(SANCTUARY & CHAPEL WEDDINGS ONLY)**

Available for your use at no charge: two brass candelabra (church provides candles); unity candle holder (you provide candles); kneeler; wooden flower stands; guest book stand, display easels. Church equipment and supplies not listed above are for other purposes, so we ask that they not be used or moved. If you want to bring in personal or rental items, please contact Nicole for approval (863-686-3163 x219, [nwood@firstumc.org](mailto:nwood@firstumc.org) ).

### **CHURCH AVAILABILITY FOR DELIVERIES AND DECORATING**

The church facilities are opened two hours before the wedding (or 3 hours for an extra fee). We will try to accommodate decorators who want to come earlier, provided there are no other events at the church that day (call Nicole two days ahead to check availability, 863-686-3163 x219). Note that for 6:00 weddings there is no staff person to open for deliveries or early arrivals from 3:00-4:00 unless you have paid for the extra hour. Florists are welcome to do finishing touches in the Sacristy using their own containers and supplies.

### **SET-UP, CLEAN-UP AND EQUIPMENT REMOVAL**

Our staff does routine set-up and clean-up for weddings, which is included in your wedding fee. Additional staff costs may be deducted from your wedding deposit for non-routine work or overtime (please see "Service Staff" under Church Wedding Personnel on page 4).



## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY**

Please give your photographer & videographer a copy of this information.

### **TIME ALLOCATION FOR YOUR WEDDING**

Photographers and videographers should check in with the church wedding coordinator when they arrive. Facilities are opened two hours prior to the time your wedding is scheduled to start (or 3 hours for an extra fee). Note that for 6:00 weddings there is no staff person to open for deliveries or early arrivals from 3:00-4:00 unless you have paid for the extra hour.

Beginning at the scheduled wedding start time, two hours of staff time are allotted for the ceremony, post-ceremony photography and departure of the wedding party, guests and personnel. Please plan for indoor photography to be finished in that time frame. At the end of the two hours the service staff needs to start cleaning and locking the buildings. If cleanup is delayed, additional staff charges may be deducted from your wedding deposit to cover their overtime.

### **BEFORE THE CEREMONY**

After the first guest has been seated, all photography must be done from the back pew or the Sanctuary balcony. Exception: During the processional, photographers & videographers may stand four rows from the back of the Sanctuary/Chapel or halfway down the Patio aisle to take pictures of the wedding party as they enter the Sanctuary or Chapel.

### **DURING THE CEREMONY**

After the bride starts walking up the aisle, no artificial lighting is permitted until the bride and groom are walking down the aisle at the end of the ceremony. Photographers and videographers may work from the back row of seats or the Sanctuary balcony. Exception: One remote video camera (with no attendant) may be set up inconspicuously in the front. It should be in place one hour before the wedding begins.

### **AFTER THE CEREMONY**

After the wedding, the pastor is glad to return to the altar to recreate parts of the ceremony for flash pictures or video. Please remember that indoor photography needs to be completed by two hours from the scheduled wedding start time.



## **ATTENDANTS & FAMILY**

### **ATTENDANTS**

We do not limit the number of bridesmaids, groomsmen and other attendants you may have, but if your wedding party is large, an additional personnel fee may be charged and alternate dressing rooms may be used at our option.

### **FLOWER GIRLS AND RING BEARERS**

We recommend (but don't require) that children participating in the service be at least four years old. They must be at the rehearsal in order to practice.

### **FAMILIES AND BLENDED FAMILIES**

We want everyone involved in your wedding to feel welcome and comfortable. If you have concerns about seating arrangements or other potential sources of friction, please discuss these with the pastor. If you have children, the pastor can discuss options for including them in the service in a special way.

### **TIMELY REHEARSALS**

All participants in the wedding need to be present at the rehearsal. Please give your marriage license to the pastor at the rehearsal, as by state law pastors cannot perform weddings without the license in their possession — there can be no exceptions to this law.

To honor church staff members' time, all rehearsals begin promptly at the designated time and end one hour later; delays may result in additional fees. If participants arrive late and there is insufficient time at the end of the one-hour rehearsal to give them instructions, members of the wedding party will need to help them the next day. But this can result in confusion, so please be sure your wedding party arrives on time.

**NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE ALLOWED  
ANYWHERE ON CHURCH PREMISES AT ANY TIME.**

Persons violating this rule (including members of the wedding party) may be asked to leave the property immediately.