

First United Methodist Church – Bixby

Wedding Policy

We pray that the wedding ceremony will be a witness to God's glory and will reflect the couple's sincere desire to be obedient disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that a wedding is not only a union between a man and a woman, but even more, is an act of worship. As such, the wedding is both a joyful and solemn occasion. Experience has taught us a great deal. By abiding by the policies listed, we feel Christ will be honored, the marriage ceremony will be done well, and the needs of our facility and staff will be respected. Please read the following material carefully and cooperate fully with FUMC Bixby in upholding these high standards.

Scheduling Your Wedding

After talking to the Office Administrator and receiving the proper materials, both bride and groom should read the wedding policy so there is no misunderstanding on anyone's part.

Please note: the church wedding coordinator is only here for the rehearsal on Friday evening for two hours prior to wedding time on the day of and for only 30 minutes following the wedding. She is not present for the reception. If you want the church wedding coordinator there for the reception, there will be an additional fee of \$25 per hour. She will consult with the bride/groom during the planning period concerning best usage of the building during a wedding.

The custodian will arrive following your wedding and reception to clean up. Upon payment of the **required deposit**, the wedding date is confirmed on the church's calendar. The contract is signed at that time. We ask that the times for rehearsal and wedding be fixed at the time the facilities are reserved. If for any reason, the couple needs to cancel the wedding at least 6 months prior to the wedding date, the deposit will be fully refunded; however, if the wedding is cancelled and the church is not notified, or it is less than 6 months from the date, the deposit will be forfeited. Should it be necessary to retain the deposit due to damage or policy infractions, the couple will be notified by mail. The **required fees** are due one month before the wedding date. Any exceptions to this time period must be pre-approved by the senior pastor.

Member Weddings

Unless the bride, groom, and/or parents have been active and contributing members of First United Methodist Church for a minimum of 12 months at the time of the deposit, the wedding is regarded as a non-member wedding. Non-member weddings may be held on Friday evening or Saturday afternoons. Saturday evening weddings are reserved for members. In the planning meeting with the wedding team, the family church members must be present. (i.e., If bride & groom are not members then the parents of either bride & groom must be present.)

Music

The FUMC pastors are the final authority for approval or rejection of the music selection so that it is in keeping with the sacredness of the ceremony. He or she must approve all music for the ceremony and reception, vocal and instrumental, at least (8) weeks prior to the wedding, including any recorded music. A guest soloist is welcome. The soloist may rehearse with the organist prior to or immediately following the wedding rehearsal (time permitting). The organist of FUMC Bixby will be utilized at all weddings requiring organ music. Any other organist used must be approved by our organist and Minister of Music. If the organist is required to make a special trip to the church to rehearse with the soloist, this needs to be arranged with the organist, and an additional fee will be charged. The grand piano and the organ cannot be moved.

Decorations

Flowers are used as a floral offering and should be in keeping with the dignity of this church. Delivery of all decorations, rentals, etc. should be coordinated with the Office Administrator and must be removed from FUMC Bixby no more than two hours after the wedding. If possible, it is preferred that flowers, cakes, food, etc. be delivered during office hours. If it is not possible, scheduling will need to be coordinated with the wedding coordinator who can check on when the building will be open. Nothing may be left to be picked up on another day. Baskets of flowers may be placed on either side of the altar area. The entrance to the sanctuary should be kept clear for the wedding party, and the altar table should not be concealed. It is preferred that the altar not be moved, but if need be, the altar may only be moved to a position against the modesty rail of the choir loft. **All candles must be “chase” candles (metal candles with wax refills).** The use of tacks, pins, nails, tape or glue to fasten decorations to the furniture or building is not allowed. The flower girl should drop only silk flower petals. The altar rail itself is to remain free of decorations, such as greenery, flowers and candles. Nothing may be placed on the piano or organ. The altar is the focal point of the wedding ceremony. The florist will be held responsible for any damage (resulting from their actions) to the building or furniture, as well as for cleaning any stains, etc. Removal of Chancel furniture and adornments is not allowed at any time. No glass vases or containers may be used in the foyer.

Photography

All photographers, amateur and professional, are asked to reverence the ceremony. Access to the church is granted not more than two hours before the start of the wedding, and the church must be vacated no later than two hours after the time set for the service to begin. The photographer may take pictures before or after the ceremony in any part of the building. Pictures may be taken of the bridal party as they PROCESS into the sanctuary and after the end of the service as they RECESS from the sanctuary. The ministers request that as many pictures as possible be taken BEFORE the wedding. Photographers may not move candelabra or decorations, and should check with the Wedding Coordinator if something needs to be moved. Nothing is to be placed on the organ or the piano. Exceptions to this policy will be dealt with on a case by case basis by the Wedding Coordinator. Flash Photography is not allowed unless approved by the pastor.

Rehearsal Information

Knowing best how to conduct a religious ceremony, the pastor shall be in charge of the rehearsal, which must begin promptly, and will be limited to one hour. We suggest the wedding party arrive 30 minutes before their scheduled time. It is also recommended that the couple give the marriage license to the wedding coordinator a few days before the rehearsal. This lets her know they have completed the legal requirements and also relieves them from that responsibility on the wedding day. A minimum of one usher for every 50 guests is suggested. Rehearsal dinners are allowed only if catered by a professional caterer, and may require an additional fee.

Holiday Information

Decorations for the Easter or Christmas season will remain in place for any weddings scheduled during that time. No weddings or receptions may be held in the church on Sundays, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, any time during Holy Week, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thursday or Friday of Thanksgiving week, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. There are no exceptions.

Pre-Marriage Counseling

Pre-Marital Counseling is facilitated by the pastor who is marrying the couple. Contact the pastor performing your ceremony for information.

Receptions

The gym, if not already booked on the church calendar, is available at FUMC Bixby for wedding receptions. No receptions will be held at First United Methodist Church with the marriage ceremony held elsewhere. You will need to coordinate your reception with the church for use of the kitchen and associated facilities. This is to protect the facility and other events which may be occurring simultaneously within the church. The church will be open two hours prior to wedding. If more time is necessary, please consult the wedding coordinator for special arrangements. Additional fees may be required. Only approved caterers will have access to the main kitchen for receptions. The couple is responsible for leaving all facilities clean and orderly. The church custodian will be responsible for setting up and taking down tables and chairs and sweeping the floor, but is not available to wash or put away dishes or to clean kitchen counters.

For safety reasons, FUMC Bixby requests that no rice, confetti, rose petals, or anything that litters is thrown inside or outside the building, and bubbles may be used only outside the building. Receptions must be over and the church vacated by designated time allowed. You are asked to not open gifts at the church during or after the reception due to time constraints.

General Information

Our buildings and grounds are to remain alcohol-free, and our buildings are smoke-free. Removal of Chancel furniture and furnishings are not allowed at any time. There will be no construction of a trellis, floral arch or addition of other equipment in the chancel area. Members of the wedding party may not carry lighted candles. There must be protective coverings on the floors and furniture beneath the stationary candles. Weddings may be held on Friday evenings, Saturday afternoons or Saturday evenings. The evening times (for members only) to choose from are 6:00, 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. The afternoon times to choose from are 1:00, 1:30 or 2:00 p.m. The building will be unlocked two hours before the wedding. Wedding couples are allowed in the building for a maximum time of six hours. (i.e., if your wedding is at 2:00 p.m. and you have come into the church at noon, you must complete your wedding and reception by 6:00 p.m.; if your wedding is at 7:00 p.m. and you have come into the church at 5:00p.m., you must have completed your wedding and reception by 11:00 p.m. The set time for the building to be vacated and locked, with security is 11:00 p.m. For every minute into the next hour you will be charged **\$100.00** for that hour additional fees. (i.e., if you are in the building 5 minutes after the next hour, you will be charged.) **The security deposit for reserving the facilities for a wedding is required. This amount will be returned within 10 working days following the wedding, unless the facility is damaged or misused.**

No food or drink is allowed in the sanctuary; HOWEVER, it is permitted in the bride's room and the groom's room. Do not leave valuables unattended in the bride's or groom's room during the ceremony or reception. The church is not responsible for loss of valuables. Our facilities are multi-use areas; please do not leave the bride's dress, tuxes, etc., overnight. Alcohol is strictly prohibited.

If communion is a part of the ceremony, a United Methodist pastor must officiate and, in accordance with The United Methodist Book of Discipline, it must be offered to the whole congregation. The bride and groom are responsible for providing the elements. You will need at least four communion stewards (six are preferable).