

# **Saint John's United Methodist Church**

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## **Policies and Guidelines for Weddings**

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## **Welcome**

Welcome to Saint John's United Methodist Church! We rejoice in your decision to marry and hope this handout will help make your wedding day a joyful, stress-free (or at least stress-reduced) day.

## **Introduction**

We at Saint John's understand the service of marriage as a holy covenant between God, the woman and the man. A decision to be married at Saint John's UMC indicates that you are in accord with Christian beliefs and will make thorough preparation for the wedding service and your life together. You also agree to take seriously the procedures of this particular church as well as those of the United Methodist Church. We will use The Book of Worship in structuring the service, but material of personal significance may be incorporated as well.

## **The First Step**

Knowing where to begin in the preparation of a wedding can be overwhelming. Saint John's wishes to make this task as easy as possible. Below is a list of steps which will help facilitate your day.

1. The bride needs to contact Saint John's wedding coordinator with the requested wedding date to determine the availability of the church and clergy.
2. Once the wedding coordinator has determined the requested date is available, the bride needs to schedule a meeting with the coordinator. The reservation form, the reservation fee, the wedding coordinator's fee and the refundable damage deposit are to be turned in at that time. A second meeting with wedding coordinator will be scheduled two weeks before the wedding. All remaining fees will be collected and the final wedding details reviewed.
3. Upon receipt of the above initial fees, the wedding date will be placed on the church calendar and the church facilities reserved.
3. The bride will contact the pastor directly to schedule a meeting to discuss the rehearsal and ceremony.

## **General Policies**

Saint John's provides a wedding coordinator to guide the couple in making decisions regarding the churches role in the ceremony, rehearsal, and reception.

The following policies have been adopted by Saint John's UMC. Please read each item carefully.

### **Membership Status**

- Member status is determined the first time the bride or groom talk to the wedding coordinator.
- Children of current members are eligible for Member fees.

### **Scheduling of weddings**

- Weddings will not be scheduled on the following days:
  - Sundays
  - New Year's Eve
  - New Year's Day
  - Friday, Saturday before Palm Sunday
  - Friday, Saturday before Easter
  - Memorial Day
  - Independence Day
  - Labor Day
  - Thanksgiving
  - Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving
  - Christmas Eve
  - Christmas
- Weddings scheduled on Saturday evening should begin no later than 6 pm.

### **Building Use**

- No alcoholic beverages are allowed on or around the church premises.
- Smoking is prohibited in the buildings, including restrooms.
- The wedding party is liable for any damage to property or grounds.
- The church cannot be responsible for personal items, wedding apparel, gifts, serving items or accessories brought to the church, nor will it be liable for such items. No items can be left overnight.
- No furniture (big bulky furniture such as heavy tables, bookcases) will be moved.
- No posters will be removed.
- No aisle runners are allowed.

### **Cancellation Policy**

- If the wedding is cancelled less than thirty days before the scheduled wedding date then the damage deposit will not be returned.
- If the wedding is cancelled thirty or more days from the scheduled wedding date then the damage deposit will be returned.

### **Clergy Consultation**

- At the initial meeting with the pastor a schedule for further counseling sessions will be discussed.
- Guest pastors are permitted.
- The pastor's experience in planning the wedding service is offered to insure that the Christian meaning of the service is present. Once the components of the wedding service have been agreed upon, the pastor is in charge of the wedding ceremony. It is the responsibility of the couple to interpret this to the florist, wedding consultant, photographer, musicians or any other involved parties.

### **Music**

Music is one of the most significant factors in establishing the proper environment for meaningful worship. The music selected should be in keeping with the mood of reverence, joy and dignity of the Christian life and faith. Wedding music should be consistent with music used in Sunday morning worship; the singing of hymns is encouraged.

- Saint John's expects the couple to use our organist. Any exceptions must be okayed by the wedding coordinator. The wedding coordinator will determine availability of organist and reserve the date. The couple will be responsible for contacting the organist direct to discuss the music.
- Request from a guest musician for access to the sanctuary, sound system, music library or organ should be directed to the wedding coordinator. There is a \$20 rehearsal fee if the rehearsal is a time other than the normal office hours, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm weekday.
- Fees for the guest musicians (not including the \$20 rehearsal fee) are solely the responsibility of the couple. The wedding coordinator will not be involved in delivering payments to the guest musicians.
- If a guest soloist is present, the soloist can only rehearse thirty minutes before the start of the rehearsal, not during the rehearsal.
- For services in the chapel it is recommended that an electronic keyboard be used.
- The final decision as to the music selected for the service, organist and musicians will be made in consultation with the pastor.

### **Childcare**

If requested, Saint John's can provide childcare during the rehearsal, wedding and reception if held at Saint John's.

- If childcare is requested for the rehearsal, wedding or reception the bride must notify the wedding coordinator three weeks before the wedding. The bride must provide the following information to the coordinator: the number of children and the number of children under two.
- If the couple want childcare for everyone at the wedding then the fee will be based upon the number of invited guests. At least two sitters are required for all weddings. Additional sitters will be scheduled as needed.
- No childcare will be provided for off-site receptions.
- Each childcare coordinator must be paid at least a minimum of two hours.

### **Rehearsal**

- The bride must coordinate with the pastor to set the rehearsal date and time, typically no later than 6 pm.
- The Saint John's pastor and the wedding coordinator are in charge of the rehearsal, including instructions and guidance for the wedding party.
- The bride and groom should insure that all members of wedding party are on time. This is very important. The church will be open one-half hour before the rehearsal. Rehearsals will last no more than one hour and will begin and end on time.
- All participants in the wedding, including ushers, should be present for the rehearsal.

### **Day of Wedding**

- The church will be opened three hours before the start of the wedding.
- We strongly encourage all pictures be taken before the wedding. Pictures will stop thirty minutes before the scheduled time of the wedding. Any remaining pictures may resume after the service.
- The sanctuary/chapel must be cleared immediately following the wedding. A member of the family or wedding party needs to be designated to clear the sanctuary of all decorations and personal items.

### **Reception**

The reception area must be cleared no later than 10 pm on the day of the wedding.

### **Decorating**

- Decorations are an enhancement of the beauty and dignity of the wedding service and the church sanctuary. The liturgical centers and Christian symbols are important to underscore the meaning of a Christian wedding and will remain intact.

Decorating may occur an hour before the rehearsal. Also the church will be open three hours before the ceremony for the florist and all other decorating. The bride must schedule with the wedding coordinator any additional time two weeks before the wedding.

- Do not move any church furnishings.
- No tacks, pins, nails or glue should be used to fasten decorations to furniture or walls.
- Only silk flowers may be thrown on the aisle.
- The florist will be held responsible for any damage done to the building and furniture due to decorations. If no florist is used then the family will be responsible.
- Only dripless or votive candles are to be used with protective covering over the carpet. Only votive candles can be used on or outside the chancel rail. Votive candles can be placed in the sanctuary windows.
- Decorations should not obscure the altar table, baptismal font or pulpit. Any decorations in the choir area should be removed and the area left the way it was found. Flowers or greenery should not be placed on the chancel rail.
- All decorations are to be removed immediately following the service.

### **Photographer**

- Pictures are permitted during the processional and the recessional provided the pictures are taken near the back of the sanctuary.
- No flash pictures are to be taken during the reading of the ceremony.
- Unobtrusively (camera on tripod only) video recording is allowed during the ceremony.
- The church will be opened 3 hours prior to the wedding. Photography sessions before the wedding will need to stop 30 minutes before the scheduled time of the wedding. Photography sessions can resume after the service.