

Highlands United Methodist Church

Wedding Policy

Use of HUMC Facilities

A wedding is one of the happiest and holiest experiences of life. As two Christian people join their lives to establish a Christian home, HUMC rejoices with them and is eager to help make the occasion of their wedding beautiful and memorable. Foremost, it should be remembered that a Christian wedding ceremony is a service of worship.

In the happy excitement of planning a wedding, many questions arise. The following guidelines are provided to assist in planning and to clarify what is appropriate for HUMC. In addition to these written guidelines the HUMC wedding facilitator will answer any questions and assist in any way possible.

In accordance with The United Methodist Book of Discipline, the use of alcohol/tobacco products are prohibited on the grounds or in the facilities of HUMC.

Eligibility

Weddings at HUMC are open to any couple who wishes a Christian marriage service, in accordance with The United Methodist Book of Discipline, and at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.

Reserving the Church

Every couple planning to wed at HUMC must have a completed application on file. The minister will review each application. A final date will be confirmed in writing with the church secretary and with the minister. As soon as plans have been finalized with the HUMC minister, please contact wedding facilitator for further important details. **It is the wedding couple's responsibility to relay all HUMC guidelines to their wedding party.**

Pre-Wedding Counseling

Counseling sessions will be held at the Pastor's discretion.

Holy Communion

The United Methodist Church observes an open table practice regarding Holy Communion. Any celebration of the Eucharist during the wedding ceremony requires a duly ordained or licensed clergy, shall not be exclusive to the couple, and must be offered to all in attendance.

Staffing of HUMC Weddings

The HUMC minister and other staff members consider weddings an essential part of the church ministry. Each wedding consumes a great deal of time, e.g., scheduling, preparation for the ceremony and rehearsals, preparing for dinners/receptions, and conducting the ceremony.

Minister: The minister from HUMC typically performs the weddings. However, it is acceptable to invite another minister to assist in the ceremony and, if another minister is requested, the HUMC minister may contact the guest minister.

Wedding Facilitator: A wedding facilitator will be available to ensure (a) weddings proceed reverently, and (b) all HUMC Wedding Guidelines contained herein are followed. The wedding facilitator will not act as a wedding director or coordinator, but rather will be present to answer any questions that may arise from the wedding party.

Music: The church wedding is a sacred service. Music of a classical or sacred nature is preferred.

The couple's wedding consultant/director/bride's assistant, additional musicians, soloists, photographer, and florist are the responsibility of the couple, along with the appropriate permissions as stipulated in these Guidelines. Any fees due and payable by the couple to such persons shall be between these individuals and the couple and are not the responsibility or obligation of HUMC.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal is an integral part of the wedding preparation and should be conducted in a reverent manner. The following serves as a guide for rehearsal preparations:

1. The minister is in charge of the rehearsal. However, a wedding consultant/director/bride's assistant and HUMC wedding facilitator will be present.
2. Must begin promptly and end in one hour.
3. All members of the wedding party should be present and on time.
4. The marriage license will be delivered to the minister before or at the time of the rehearsal.
5. Before arrival at rehearsal, please have the following duties planned and information available as required for the facilitator:
 - a. Who will light the candles?
 - b. Who will seat the mothers?
 - c. How many family pews need to be reserved?
 - d. A list of attendants in the order of processional and recessional one week prior to the wedding.
6. No food or drinks are allowed in the sanctuary.

Decorations and Flowers

Your florist must contact the wedding facilitator one month prior to the wedding with final approval given by the facilitator. Please keep decorations to a minimum. No decorations are allowed within the chancel proper except flowers and candles in the candelabra. Dripless or chase candles must be used. The florist may supply the type of candles needed. No decorations or flowers are allowed on the altar table or on the railings.

Ceremony

The wedding ceremony may take place in the Sanctuary or the Faith & Fellowship Center. All arrangements should have been made and all persons present and ready at least one (1) hour before the ceremony is to begin. Any written programs for the ceremony are the responsibility of the wedding couple.

Other information to note for the Sanctuary please:

1. A wedding banner and a white altar cloth are available upon request.
2. Choir chairs, altar table, altar railing, and the cross may not be moved.
3. Pins, tape, nails or glue shall not be used on the pews.
4. Candles or ornamentation may not be placed on windowsills.
5. Aisle cloths are not allowed.

All decorations must be removed immediately following the ceremony unless special permission is granted to postpone removal and cleaning until the following day. The building must be left in the same condition in which it is found.

Reception/Rehearsal/Wedding

The Faith & Fellowship Center is available for the reception and rehearsal dinner, if desired. Arrangements for its use are made with the church office staff and the following guidelines apply:

1. The use of greenery, flowers, and candelabra is at the discretion of the bride and florist. Note that all floors, walls, and church furniture must be protected at all times from wax, water, scars, and other damage by the wedding Party or florist.
2. Under no circumstances shall any type of alcoholic beverages be served before, during, or after a reception or wedding-related function (e.g. bridal

showers), on church property. All smoking and alcoholic beverages are prohibited on the grounds or in the facilities of HUMC. **Evidence of the use or presence of alcohol or tobacco products on church property is prohibited and will result in the forfeiture of the Refundable Damage Deposit.**

3. The family is responsible for removing the decorations on the church property promptly, unless arrangements are made for their removal at a later date.
4. Rice may not be thrown in the church building or on the church grounds. Birdseed is acceptable.
5. If kitchen facilities are used, you and/or your caterer are responsible for cleaning the kitchen area, removing all food, and bagging and tying all trash.

Exit Checklist

The Sanctuary, Faith & Fellowship Center, kitchen, bathrooms, and any other HUMC property and grounds used by the wedding party must be left in the same condition as they were found – neat, orderly, and clean. Within the approved number of hours following the wedding ceremony and reception, please use this checklist to ensure that all items below have been completed. Mark NR if not relevant to your wedding:

- ___1. All personal items are removed from the church, including any areas where the bride/groom and attendants dressed.
- ___2. Silk flower petals dropped during the wedding are removed.
- ___3. Flowers are removed from the Sanctuary/Faith & Fellowship Center unless other arrangements have been made.
- ___4. Candles are removed.
- ___5. Personal audiovisual equipment is removed.
- ___6. Wedding programs and personal music are removed.
- ___7. Decorations, containers, florist materials are removed.
- ___8. Food from the kitchen/reception that was not used or eaten is removed.

Notes:

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