

Music:

The music selected for the wedding ceremony should be appropriate for use in a worship service. It is important to discuss the music selections with the Wedding Facilitator as the ceremony is being planned. The church organist will normally be available to provide his or her services. It is important that the organist be consulted in order to allow sufficient time for practice and establishing dates and times when his or her services are needed.

Decorations:

Decorations are to be appropriate for use in the sanctuary. The chancel furniture is to remain in place. Items may be attached by using plastic clamps only -- no tape, tacks, nails or glue. When candles are used, protective material is to be used in order to protect the carpet. Decorations should be removed from the sanctuary and other buildings, if used, as soon as possible following the wedding ceremony in order to facilitate cleaning and preparation for services at the church.

The person or persons responsible for floral decorations should contact the Wedding Facilitator in order to establish times when the church facilities will be available for decoration.

Floral arrangements to be left for use in the worship services the following Sunday should be cleared through the church office when the date for the wedding is scheduled (floral arrangements for worship services are scheduled weeks in advance).

Photography and Video Recording:

Pictures may not be taken during the ceremony. Pictures may be taken prior to and after the ceremony. Video recording of the ceremony is to be arranged with the Wedding Facilitator at least one week before the wedding date. All equipment locations must be approved by the Wedding Facilitator.

**Guidelines for Weddings at
First United Methodist Church
Athens, Texas**

Christian marriage is a very special and sacred event. It is the desire of Athens First United Methodist Church to be of service to those who are to be married and their families. It is important that there be mutual understanding of what is involved in the ceremony and the use of church facilities prior to setting a date for the wedding.

A Service of Christian Marriage:

The service of Christian marriage is an official rite of the United Methodist Church; it is understood that all weddings will conform to United Methodist theology, and it is recommended that weddings follow the stated ceremony of the United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Book of Worship outlines theology, authority, and actions related to weddings:

The service of Christian Marriage is provided for couples who wish to solemnize their marriage in a service of Christian worship, parallel in its structure to the Sunday service, which includes the proclamation of the Word with prayer and praise. Christian marriage is proclaimed as a sacred covenant reflecting the Baptismal Covenant. Everything about the service is designed to witness that this is a Christian marriage.

Both words and actions consistently reflect the belief that husband and wife are equal partners in Christian marriage and that they are entering into the marriage of their own volition.

Those present are understood to be an active congregation rather than simply passive witnesses. They give their blessing to the couple and to the marriage, and they join in prayer and praise.

approved by Board of Trustees 03/08 / Executive Committee 04/08

When Holy Communion is celebrated, not only the husband and wife but the whole congregation are to be invited to receive communion.

The decision to perform the ceremony is the right and responsibility of the pastor, in accordance with the laws of the state and the United Methodist Church. All plans should be approved by the pastor. Any

leadership roles taken by other clergy should be at the invitation of the pastor of the church where the service is held.

Ethnic and cultural traditions are encouraged and may be incorporated into the service at the discretion of the pastor.

In the case of couples who are not church members or are not prepared to make the Christian commitment expressed in our services, adaptations may be made at the discretion of the pastor.

Clergy:

The pastor of the church is in charge of the wedding ceremony; all other personnel involved in the wedding will work under the guidance of the pastor. Other ministers may participate in the ceremony at the invitation of the pastor.

After contact with the pastor, the dates for the wedding and rehearsal are to be placed on the church calendar. Following the scheduling of the wedding date, the Wedding Facilitator is to be contacted.

The couple desiring to be married will arrange conferences with the pastor in advance of the wedding date. The first counseling session should be made at least forty-five (45) days prior to the ceremony. During counseling sessions, decisions will be made as to the order of the service. The pastor conducting the ceremony is authorized to make temporary decisions when there are no policy regulations existing for a situation, or if a special consideration makes it expedient.

Wedding Facilitator:

After meeting with the pastor, the couple will meet with the Wedding Facilitator in order to work out details for the wedding (and related events if held on premises).

The Wedding Facilitator is the person designated by the Staff Parish Relations Committee to assist the couple and their families in making arrangements. This person serves as the pastor's liaison in communicating with the musician, photographer, caterer, custodian,

and other designated personnel. Also, the Wedding Facilitator is responsible for church facility access, lighting, and heating and cooling.

The Wedding Facilitator will be available to assist in planning the procedure for the ceremony. This person will assist in suggesting designated places for each person in the wedding party to stand. Direction will be given by this person during the rehearsal, and she will assist at the ceremony in directing the entry of each member of the wedding party at the proper time.

Arrangements for service fees and building use fees that may be involved are to be made through the Wedding Facilitator. Guidelines regarding facility use and fee assessments will be discussed with the Wedding Facilitator. Wedding rehearsal dinners are considered to be private parties. As such, they are subject to General Guidelines for Use of the Facility and Campus, which will be made available if needed.

The total sum of all fees is to be paid in the church office at least thirty (30) days prior to the wedding.