

Wedding Guidelines & Policies

Epworth United Methodist Church

4241 Arno Road, Franklin, TN

615-790-6695

*Celebration of
Marriage*





Dear Friends,

We are happy you have chosen Epworth United Methodist Church for your wedding. We look forward to helping you plan a special day the two of you will always remember.

This booklet should answer many of your questions. Our Wedding Advisor will be happy to meet with you to answer additional questions and help you plan the wedding. We have put much thought and prayer (two things no wedding should be without) into our wedding policies and procedures, so your wedding will be both meaningful and spiritual.

As a pastor, I look forward to meeting with you in the near future. At that time, we will discuss the concepts of marriage in our Christian setting.

May God bless you as you plan for your very important day, and congratulations!

Sincerely,

Pastor Dr. Angela Harris

THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

The service of Christian Marriage is a holy and sacred occasion. It is an occasion for the worship of God in which vows are taken. It is our deeply held conviction that all weddings should be planned and conducted in such a way as to honor the ritual, tradition and symbols of our faith and of the church. The sanctuary is a place of worship. The policies and practices that are part of a wedding at Epworth United Methodist have been thoughtfully and prayerfully established with this philosophy in mind.

We believe your wedding is important. Therefore, we have the same standards for weddings that we have for other worship services. These policies and guidelines are based on our experiences with hundreds of weddings and are here to help your wedding to be a beautiful, Christ-centered worship experience.

We are delighted that Epworth United Methodist Church is the place for your wedding. We will do whatever we can to see that this is a pleasant and very meaningful experience for you and your wedding party.

PASTOR(S)

The first step in planning a Christian wedding at EUMC is to contact the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor will schedule an appointment to ensure that the plans for the wedding and the churches philosophy about weddings are compatible.

The Senior Pastor of Epworth will normally be the “pastor in charge,” but another ordained minister may be the “pastor in charge” and perform the ceremony. Visiting pastors are welcome to co-officiate in a wedding with a pastor from EUMC. To avoid any awkwardness for the visiting pastor, the Senior Pastor of Epworth will extend the invitation. Please provide the name and address of the visiting pastor so an invitation to participate may be sent by Senior Pastor.

The pastor in a wedding is both an officiating person and a Christian pastoral counselor to assist those entering the marriage covenant. It is the philosophy of the church that the preparation for the marriage is more important than even the wedding event. Therefore, it is important time be made available with the pastor in charge for consultation and counseling. Generally, a minimum of three sessions is required.

WEDDING DATE

Reservations for your preferred wedding date must be made through the church office and well in advance of the date. The plans must be confirmed by the Senior Pastor in charge. The church Secretary confirms the date only upon receipt of forms and the \$300 deposit fee. This deposit is applied to the total wedding fee.

Weddings are scheduled in the order of requests made. We will make every effort to accommodate your desired wedding date and time but extreme care will be taken to ensure previously arranged weddings are adequately protected.

Non-members may not schedule weddings more than **six** months in advance.

Regular participation in worship is also important as you approach your marriage. As stated previously in these guidelines, a wedding at Epworth is to be a Christian worship service and will be shaped by your understanding of faith and worship.

If you are already participating members at Epworth or other communities of faith, your regular presence will be encouraged and discussed in the months leading up to your ceremony. If you are not presently participating in a community of faith on a regular basis, the minister at Epworth will be asking for your commitment for regular presence either at Epworth or another congregation as you prepare your wedding.

Weddings will not be scheduled on the following:

- Sunday
- Holy Week
- Easter
- The week of Thanksgiving
- The month of December (unless approved by pastor and staff)
- The week of Christmas Eve through New Year's Day

WEDDING ADVISOR

Epworth United Methodist Church has a Wedding Advisor who works with each couple prior to and during the rehearsal and wedding. This is a very important element in the success of the wedding service. This person has a working knowledge of church policies at EUMC and for this reason must be present at the rehearsal and the wedding.

After the initial conference with the Senior Pastor, the Wedding Advisor will contact you regarding your wedding. This person will meet with you to discuss the logistics of your rehearsal and the wedding day. Any questions you have regarding the policies of the church can be answered by the Wedding Advisor.

On the day of the wedding, the Wedding Advisor will open the church **four** hours prior to the wedding for the florist and members of the wedding party. The bride and groom are responsible for seeing that the florist, photographers and others know when they can arrive for preparations. See the sheets at the end of these policies and guidelines to give to the florist, photographers and videographers.

REHEARSAL

A rehearsal for the wedding party is scheduled the evening before the wedding. Rehearsals should begin no later than 6 p.m. The rehearsal should begin promptly; however, other arrangements may be made through consultation with the Senior Pastor and the Wedding Advisor. One hour is allotted for each rehearsal. We ask brides and grooms to emphasize with the participants for everyone to be on time. Be sure that they allow plenty of time to negotiate traffic in the area.

Prior to the rehearsal the bride and groom need to make an outline of the order in which the wedding party will process into the sanctuary and where each will stand.

MUSIC

Music is a traditional part of a wedding and makes a unique contribution to the ceremony. Since the wedding is a religious service, all music used should be in keeping with the sacredness and dignity of the occasion. The Minister will work with you to select music that is meaningful and appropriate for your wedding and to help you understand the following:

- All music should direct one's thoughts toward God and the ideal of Christian love.
- All solos, duets, etc., must receive prior approval from the minister.
- **Accompanist services include music consultation, the rehearsal and the wedding.**

Photography and Videography

The photographer is an important person for weddings and is welcome at our church. In keeping with the sacredness of the service, there are certain guidelines to remember:

1. Pictures may be taken anywhere in the church or on the grounds preceding and following the ceremony.
2. Photographers may not stand on pews or any other furniture. Because the wedding is a sacred worship service, no distractions will be permitted.
3. Your photographer may take pictures of the bride and her escort(s) from the back of the sanctuary as they prepare to walk down the aisle.
4. Pictures may be taken without the flash from the back of the sanctuary while the wedding party is at the altar.
5. Flash photographs may be taken at the back of the sanctuary as the wedding party is recessing up the aisle after the service.

Pictures should be completed *one hour* prior to the ceremony. A minimum number of pictures should be taken after the ceremony. Photography after the service should last no more than **30** minutes.

- Videotaping of the wedding is allowed from two stationary locations: from the back of the sanctuary and by a remote, unmanned video camera in the Chancel area, obscured from congregational view.
- All videos must be done using only the natural light available.

FLORAL DECORATIONS

Floral decorations are a part of the wedding and we are pleased to work with the florist of your choice. Please be aware that decorations should be used with restraint to preserve the theological and faith symbols within the chancel. The following policies are provided to guide the couple and the florist in making plans for the wedding:

- Because flower petals stain the carpet, a flower girl should only drop silk flower petals down the aisle.
- The florist may begin decorating the church the morning of the wedding.
- Care shall be given to protect the furnishings of the church. Only floral tape, wrapped wire or ribbon shall be used to fasten pew bows or decorations. No tape, nails, tacks, or staples may be used to attach decorations to walls, woodwork, pews, floors or other furniture.
- The florist is responsible for cleaning once the decorating is completed. The florist should remove all equipment **within two hours** of the conclusion of the ceremony.
- To avoid hazards, an aisle cloth (runner) is not permitted.
- All candles should be metal mechanical candles to prevent wax from dripping on the carpet.
- The use of bubbles or dry-ice machines in the Sanctuary is strictly prohibited.

OTHER INFORMATION

- EUMC is a smoke-free campus.
- Alcohol is strictly prohibited on church property at all times.
- Food or beverages may not be brought into the sanctuary.
- No chancel furnishings may be moved or hidden from view without pastor approval.
- Furniture, including tables, is ONLY to be moved by a church staff member. (This prevents any damage to furniture, walls and floors.)
- Throwing rice is not allowed. A popular substitute is birdseed, however, it must be distributed and thrown outdoors only.
- Bibles and hymnals in the sanctuary are not to be removed or used as props.
- Children must be under the direct supervision of a responsible adult at all times.
- Because the church cannot safeguard personal property, wedding attendants must remove all personal possessions from dressing areas before the wedding begins.
- The church is not responsible for any materials left behind or lost at the church.

FEES

All fees are to be payable to Epworth United Methodist Church and given to the church secretary. The church requires a deposit of \$300 to be made at the time the wedding is scheduled on the church calendar. This deposit is applied toward the **total** wedding fee. All other fees for the church must be paid in full, at least 60 days prior to the date of the wedding.

MEMBERS Fee (immediate family members) - \$700

NON-MEMBERS - \$1250

*The services of the accompanist, custodian, sound technician and wedding advisor are covered under this fee.

HISTORIC SITE EVENTS: (limited parking; 40 cars max.)

If you wish to have a wedding in our historic chapel, please contact our church office.

Members:

*No fee for use of the Fellowship Hall

Non-members:

- \$300 Fellowship Hall for rehearsal dinner
- \$400 Fellowship Hall for reception

*If any property is damaged, the bride and groom will be assessed additional charges.

To be given to PHOTOGRAPHER and VIDEOGRAPHER

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WEDDING RESERVATION
(Please turn in to the church office)

Name of person making reservation _____

Address _____

Phone number (home) _____ (work) _____

Member of this church _____ Non-member of this church _____

If not a member, name of church where requesting party is a member:

EUMC requires a deposit of \$300 to be made at the time the wedding is scheduled on the church calendar. This deposit is applied to the total wedding fee. All other fees for the church must be paid in full, at least 60 days prior to the date of the wedding.

I hereby request the use of the following:

- _____ Sanctuary
- _____ Fellowship Hall (rehearsal dinner/reception)[40 car maximum parking]
- _____ Historic Chapel [40 car maximum parking]
- _____ Accompanist

I understand that the wedding date will not be confirmed until I:

- _____ Meet with the Pastor of Epworth United Methodist Church
- _____ Meet with the Wedding Advisor
- _____ Pay the deposit; complete and return the wedding reservation and wedding information forms to the church office.

_____ I understand that if any property is damaged, the bride and groom will be assessed additional charges.

If the wedding is canceled and a notice of cancellation is given 30 days prior to the original date reserved all fees will be refunded.

I have received and have read a copy of the wedding guidelines and policies of Epworth United Methodist Church and I agree to abide by all of the regulations reviewed in the booklet.

Date _____ Signature _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Amount tendered as deposit _____ Date received _____ Check No _____

Copy to: Pastor _____ Wedding Advisor _____ Treasurer _____

WEDDING INFORMATION FORM

(Please turn in to Church Office)

Bride

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____ (h)
_____ (w)
_____ (c)

Groom

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____ (h)
_____ (w)
_____ (c)

Date of Rehearsal _____

Date of Wedding _____

Time of Rehearsal _____

Time of Wedding _____

Location of Wedding Ceremony _____

Location of Reception _____

Officiating Minister _____

Guest Minister _____

Florist _____ Phone _____

Photographer _____ Phone _____

Caterer _____ Phone _____

Organist _____ Phone _____

Vocalist/Other Musicians _____

DJ/Band _____ Phone _____