

Wedding Guidelines
of First United Methodist Church

930 North Boulevard
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802
225-383-4777

Revised October 1, 2026

We extend warmest congratulations and are pleased that you are considering First United Methodist Church for your wedding. Located in downtown Baton Rouge, First United Methodist has been the site of beautiful weddings for more than 100 years. The celebration of Christian marriage is an occasion of great joy and excitement, and at the same time, of great significance and reverence. It is a sacred ritual in which two persons pledge themselves to each other under the blessing of God and are united in the covenant of matrimony.

This reflection of Christian marriage comes from the United Methodist Book of Worship: "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 Christ's covenant with the church."

We celebrate the importance of this day with you and will assist you in making this a meaningful occasion. This document includes general information and specific guidelines regarding wedding policy and procedures at First United Methodist Church.

Our clergy and other professionals will work with you to prepare a service of worship worthy of the occasion and appropriate for the setting in which we gather. First United Methodist Church welcomes all people into this Christian community. Our staff, as faithful representatives of the One who welcomes us all in love, seeks to provide guidance and assistance for you in the planning of your wedding here. Our prayer for you is that you will love and honor each other all the days of your life, grow in wisdom and patience, be filled with the grace of God, and find fulfillment and happiness within the Christian community.

Wedding Arrangements at First United Methodist Church

After reading the following pages, if you choose to be married at First United Methodist Church, please submit a request for a wedding date and time. If the requested date and time is available, the wedding contract and deposit may be submitted for final scheduling. ***The wedding will not be scheduled until the wedding contract is signed by all parties and a non-refundable deposit submitted.*** The deposit is applied to the wedding fee. Once the minister, organist, and wedding coordinator have been assigned to your service, you will receive a correspondence detailing who they are and how to contact them.

- To secure the date of your wedding, complete the **Wedding Contract** by contacting Donna Robin, *Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor*. Contact information may be found at the end of this document. Available dates on the church calendar can be discussed at this time. Donna must be notified if any changes in time occur. **Weddings are not scheduled more than a year in advance.**
- Contact the assigned pastor at least three months prior to your ceremony to schedule a conference at mutually convenient times.
- Contact the *Associate Director of Music and Organist*, Holden Miller, at least three months prior to your ceremony. Responsibility for all music at First United Methodist Church is delegated to the music staff. Please see the Policies for Wedding Music and Musicians for detailed information.

Scheduling

The wedding ceremony and rehearsal are scheduled through Donna Robin. Ceremonies may be scheduled as late as 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Rehearsals are typically scheduled at 6:00 p.m. the day prior to the wedding.

Weddings will not be performed at First United Methodist Church on the following days:
New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, days during Holy Week, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Thanksgiving weekend, during Advent, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Sundays. We strongly encourage you to avoid dates of popular parades and holidays such as Mardi Gras and St. Patrick's Day.

Wedding Fees

A non-refundable deposit of $200 for the sanctuary or chapel and the signed Wedding Contract is required to reserve your wedding date. Payment of all fees is required no later than three weeks prior to the wedding ceremony. Checks should be made payable to First United Methodist Church and can be mailed to Donna Robin at First United Methodist Church, 930 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70802. Online payment may be made at www.fumcbr.org/give by selecting "Weddings" in the drop-down menu.

Member Fees:

- **Sanctuary: $1,500**
- **Aldrich Chapel: $1,200**

Non-Member Fee:

- **Aldrich Chapel: $1,500**

Includes pastor, organist, building use, custodial fees, and security on the day of the ceremony.



Sanctuary
For expected attendance between 60-750 people



Aldrich Chapel
For expected attendance under 60 people

The Pastor and Pre-marital Counseling

A pastor of First United Methodist Church will officiate at your marriage ceremony. If you desire to include a clergy relative or family friend, they may assist with the approval of the Senior Pastor. Please speak to the pastor officiating your ceremony and he or she will extend an invitation to the guest clergy.

The order of service will be finalized with the Pastor after music selections have been finalized with Holden Miller, *Associate Director of Music and Organist.*

Attend pre-marital counseling before meeting with the officiating pastor. This should occur no later than eight (8) weeks prior to the wedding date. The following counselors are recommended, or you may use another of your choice:

- Kidder Counseling Service: www.StaceyKidder.com
- Baton Rouge Christian Counseling Center: www.brchristiancounseling.com

Inform the counselor you need pre-marital counseling to be married by a minister of First United Methodist Church. Any questions may be directed to your assigned minister. The counselor will discuss your pre-marital inventory and send the minister a report of your session.

Make an appointment to meet with the minister at least three (3) months in advance of your wedding date. Once pre-marital counseling is complete, a conference with the officiating pastor is required to consider the spiritual and theological aspects of the marriage covenant. The pastor will explain the additional pre-marital requirements for couples having their wedding at First United Methodist Church at this conference.

Wedding Music and Musicians

All wedding music at First United Methodist Church is coordinated and approved by *Associate Director of Music and Organist,* Holden Miller. Please contact Holden at hmiller@firstmethodist.org or (225) 383-4777 ext. 222 to discuss musical selections at least three months in advance of the ceremony.

Because a wedding is a worship service, guidelines for music are subject to the same standards as music for any other worship service at First United Methodist Church. The following music policies are in effect for all weddings:

- Music for weddings must be selected in consultation with the Associate Director of Music.
- Texts of hymns, anthems, or solos are to be taken from Holy Scripture, the *United Methodist Hymnal,* the *Book of Common Prayer,* or shall be texts congruent with them. Only music appropriate for worship may be used. Music with secular, non-religious associations, whether textual or musical, is not appropriate. The *Director of Music* has final say as to the suitability of all music included in a wedding at First United Methodist Church.
- The *Associate Director of Music and Organist,* Holden Miller, or a substitute of his choice, plays for all weddings in the sanctuary or chapel.
- When vocal solos are desired, vocalists are selected and approved by the *Associate Director of Music and Organist.* Your preference for male or female, high or low voice will be honored.
- Additional instrumentalists such as strings, trumpet, etc., must be coordinated with and approved by the *Associate Director of Music and Organist.*
- The services of the *Associate Director of Music and Organist* are covered by the church's wedding fee. Payment for other contracted musicians such as vocalist or instrumentalists are made directly to them before the start of the ceremony.
- A cancellation fee will be incurred if you wish to cancel a musician after the church has contracted them.
- Hymns may be sung as part of the wedding ceremony. If you anticipate having a large gathering of family and friends, many of whom are church goers and likely to sing, you may include a hymn. Suggestions are available.
- Recorded music of any kind is not permitted in the church.
- Musicians do not attend wedding rehearsals.

The Rehearsal

The date and hour of the rehearsal must also be set when scheduling your wedding to avoid conflicts with the church calendar. Weddings and wedding rehearsals are reserved on the church calendar on a first-call basis, and if changed, the date or time relinquished immediately becomes available. If you would like to request a change in the time of your wedding or rehearsal after the Wedding Contract has been submitted, you must contact Donna Robin to request the time change and for approval.

The wedding party should arrive 15 minutes prior to the designated rehearsal hour. One hour is allotted for wedding rehearsals. The rehearsal begins promptly on the hour in a quiet, dignified, and reverent manner. Members of the wedding party are reminded that, while the wedding is a joyous occasion, the service takes place in a sacred space that is consecrated to the worship and glory of God.

A pastor and a wedding coordinator of First United Methodist Church will be present to direct the rehearsal. Service logistics and seating should be decided upon before the rehearsal for maximum efficiency.

Ushers should be present at the rehearsal.

The pastor must receive the marriage license at the rehearsal.

No wedding rehearsal will be conducted when any member of the wedding party is under the influence of any intoxicating substance.

Guidelines for Photographers

First United Methodist Church welcomes photographers and videographers provided they do not distract attention from worship. The following are strict policies designed to support that goal. A copy of these guidelines is provided for you to supply to your photographer. By signing the Wedding Contract, you and your photographer agree to adhere to these policies. It is your responsibility to see that the photographer, relatives, and friends are informed of these photo policies. First United Methodist Church reserves the right to deny access–present or future–to photographers who violate these policies.

Photographers are expected to maintain a low profile to avoid distracting those participating in or observing the ceremony. Noise and movement must be kept to an absolute minimum as the sanctuary's acoustic makes any noise distracting.

Photography sessions inside the chapel or sanctuary before the ceremony must end 45 minutes before the service begins. Members of the wedding party are not to stand or pose on kneeling cushions; or sit, kneel, or lean on pulpit, altar, or altar rail. No one is to stand on the pews or any church furnishings.

No flash photographs may be taken from the time guests arrive until the entire ceremony is completed. Guests should be informed of this policy.

During the ceremony, available light (without flash) photographs may be made from the center of the balcony.

First United Methodist Church's Director of Television Ministries can film your ceremony for an additional fee. The use of any church television facilities or equipment must be arranged in advance with the Director of Television Ministries. Only members of the Television Ministry may use this equipment.

Pictures following the ceremony should be completed within 30 minutes after the conclusion of the ceremony.

Photograph poses should be planned in advance to respect the time of the wedding party, guests, and church staff.

Policies for Wedding Florists and Decorations

The sanctuary and chapel of First United Methodist Church are themselves an offering of praise to God. They are sacred places of dignity and beauty consecrated for the worship of God. The soaring arches, beautiful stained-glass windows, and majestic organ are designed to draw worshippers' thoughts and attention upward to the divine. The richness of this architecture requires little enhancement; therefore, wedding decorations and flowers should be kept as simple as possible.

All arrangements should be delivered and completed at least two hours before the wedding ceremony. All decorations must be removed immediately following the wedding ceremony. The wedding flowers are, of course, yours to keep; however, if you wish to donate your flowers to the church for the next days' Sunday services, or for use by the Flower Ministry, please let Donna Robin know in advance. A fee of $100 will be charged if any decorations are left. The florist is responsible for any damage to the church building or furnishings. Flower arrangements may be placed in the two urns flanking the pulpit at your expense.

Billy Heroman's Florist provides arrangements every Sunday morning and is familiar with urn dimensions and scale. Their information is listed below. Sanctuary flower urns receive 7.5" diameter inserts. Aldrich Chapel flower urns receive 5.5" diameter inserts.

Billy Heroman's Florist
10812 N Harrells Ferry Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70816
(225) 272-7673

Church furnishings may not be moved. This includes seasonal banners, baptismal font, altar, altar rail, pulpit, chairs, and pews. Pedestals for flowers or greenery may not restrict the minister's movement behind the altar rail. Flowers and greenery may not be placed on the altar rail.

Flowers, plants, candles, and candelabra shall not be placed on church furnishings: organ, piano, pulpit, altar, altar rail, baptismal font, or kneeling cushions.

Protective material must be placed under any candelabra or pedestals anywhere in the sanctuary. Felt pads are recommended. Items will be removed if they do not have protective material upon delivery.

No tape, tacks, nails, staples, plastic, or glue may be used at any time to secure any decorations to any part of the church or its furnishings.

Candelabra are not permitted within three feet of the altar rail and kneeling cushions. Candelabra are not permitted in the aisles.

Altar candles and paraments (cloths) remain where they are and may not be removed. No other items may be placed on the altar. Only candleholders supplied by the church may be used on the altar.

Aisle cloths are prohibited due to safety concerns for both the wedding party and departing guests.

Arches, gazebos, vases, screens, columns, or other such free-standing decorations are not permitted.

Rice, bird seed, flower petals (real or artificial), sparklers, or anything of this nature may not be thrown anywhere on church property, including parking lots and sidewalks. These are safety hazards, and a fee will be incurred.

A copy of these guidelines is provided for you to give to your florist. By signing the Wedding Contract, you and your florist agree to adhere to these policies. It is your responsibility to see that the florist is aware and agrees to these policies. First United Methodist Church reserves the right to deny access–present or future–to florists who violate these policies.

Miscellaneous

Smoking, alcohol, and illegal substances are not permitted in the church building or anywhere on church property. The pastor will refuse to perform the wedding ceremony for anyone considered to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs at the time of the wedding rehearsal or ceremony.

The church is not responsible for personal belongings brought to the church. Please remove these immediately after the ceremony.

Food and drink are not permitted in the sanctuary or chapel at any time.

First United Methodist Church is ADA Accessible. Please provide the Parking and Accessibility Map on page seven to any guests who would benefit. Parking is available on T.J. Jemison Blvd., America Street, and underneath I-110.

Animals are not allowed in any capacity unless they are certified service animals.

Double check with the Convention and Visitors' Bureau (225-383-1825 or www.visitbatonrouge.com/events) for parades, festivals, or other downtown events that might interfere with the wedding, parking, or access to the church.

Checklist:

- Contact Donna Robin, *Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor*, to obtain the Wedding Contract and request available dates on the church calendar.
- Read First United Methodist Church's Wedding Guidelines in full.
- Return the Wedding Contract and a $200 deposit to secure date.
- Contact Holden Miller, *Associate Director of Music and Organist,* no later than three months in advance to select music and musicians. You may reach out as soon as your date is booked.
- Give Photographer and Florist their copy of First United Methodist Church's guidelines.
- Schedule pre-marital counseling. This should occur eight weeks prior to the wedding date at the latest.
- Contact Donna Robin to schedule a conference with your minister after counseling is secured, three months in advance of the wedding.
- Confirm whether your flowers are going to be left for Sunday Services and/or the Flower Ministry, or removed immediately following the ceremony.
- Submit final payment at least three weeks in advance of the wedding.
- Obtain Marriage License.
- Send the Order of Service to Donna Robin for final approval before printing. Holden Miller is also happy to proofread after approval and before printing.
- Bring Marriage License to the wedding rehearsal.
- Bring checks made payable to any additional musicians who have been hired.

Contact Information

Donna Robin, *Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor*
Email: drobin@firstmethodist.org
Phone: 225-383-4777, ext. 210

Holden Miller, *Associate Director of Music and Organist*
Email: hmiller@firstmethodist.org
Phone: 225-383-4777, ext. 222

Parking and Accessibility Map

Parking is available on T.J. Jemison Boulevard, the America Street lot, and underneath I-110. ADA Compliant entrances are marked on the map below. Parking in the T.J. Jemison lot is recommended for those with accessibility needs. Accessible entrances for both the Aldrich Chapel and Sanctuary are located directly across the street from this lot. There is a vehicle drop off area with direct access to both entrances that is marked with a sidewalk sign.

