

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, BENTON ARKANSAS

FACILITY USE POLICY

1. Introduction

First United Methodist Church, Benton Arkansas (FUMC) seeks to be faithful and responsible stewards of the gifts that God has given us. We believe our facilities should be used for the glory of God in community outreach and for programs and activities consistent with Christian teaching and the United Methodist Book of Discipline (the Discipline).

FUMC does not discriminate in the use of our facilities on the basis of race, color, sex, ethnicity or national origin. However, groups whose purposes or beliefs are not consistent with the core beliefs of FUMC will not be permitted to use the facilities. The church, through its Senior Pastor and Board of Trustees, reserves the right to make final determinations as to whether a group may use church facilities.

2. Authority for Establishment of Policy

Subject to the direction of the charge conference, the Board of Trustees shall have the supervision, oversight, and care of all real property owned by the local church and of all property and equipment acquired directly by the local church or by any society, board, class, commission or similar organization connected therewith.

[The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church](#), paragraph 2533.3

Additionally, the Discipline instructs trustees to ensure that the church, its properties, and its personnel are properly protected against risk (2549.7). Therefore, the Board of Trustees will establish liability insurance requirements.

This policy is approved by the Board of Trustees and shall be interpreted by the Senior Pastor. Any exceptions (except as noted in this document) shall be approved by the Board of Trustees. Exceptions made in these instances will not constitute a permanent change in policy, unless documented and dated as such by the Board of Trustees.

Facility use requirements as related to weddings can be found in the FUMC's [Wedding Policy](#).

FUMC reserves the right to have a church representative at any meeting or event held on church property. There may be a fee for the church representative that must be paid in addition to other fees as defined in FUMC Fee Schedule

3. Priority of Activities

Activities and events of FUMC will be given the highest scheduling priority as Category 1 activities, followed in order by the types of activities and events in the remaining categories.

A. Category 1: FUMC Programs and Functions. The programs of the church are given the highest priority in use of the facilities. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Worship services
- Sunday School Classes
- Adult, Youth, Children's Ministry Activities
- Music Ministry Activities
- Church Committee, Staff Meetings, and Bible Studies
- FUMC Mission Activities
- Funerals

B. **Category 2:** Other United Methodist programs or Functions outside of FUMC's immediate congregation, if availability permits. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- United Methodist Conference events
- United Methodist District events

C. **Category 3:** Church Member events. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Sunday School class socials
- Bridal or baby showers (church member sponsored)

D. **Category 4:** Individual, community and outside organization uses. This includes social, civic, service, educational and charitable groups. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Birthday parties
- Bridal or baby showers
- Class reunions
- Sports practice or games
- Cheer practice or competition
- DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution)
- Rotary, Kiwanis, or Lions Club events
- Quiz Bowl practice or competition
- Other Non-profit organizations

E. **Category 5: "For Profit" and political events.** Except for activities/ events that are for the benefit of the Church, FUMC does not normally allow use of its facilities for "for profit" or for political activities and events. Trustee approval would be required in such instances. Examples of activities and events that will be allowed only with trustee approval include, but are not limited:

- Political debates
- Sales activities
- Award ceremonies
- Movies or videos

All overnight events in category 3 -5 will require Church trustee approval.

4. Scheduling of Recurring Events

As noted previously, FUMC encourages the use of its facilities for activities and events that support its missions. For those that are scheduled on a recurring basis, a group may be asked to modify their schedule on a temporary or a permanent basis if needed to satisfy other scheduling needs. All recurring events will be placed on the church calendar for a duration agreed upon by the group contact and the facilities manager.

For groups with events that reoccur weekly or monthly for a duration beyond a year, the event will be reevaluated annually by the facilities manager and group contact.

5. Prohibited Activities

- A. Any illegal activity.
- B. Any purpose in conflict with church mission and activities.
- C. Any activity which may result in damage to church facilities.
- D. Any other activity which the Senior Pastor or majority of trustees deem inappropriate.

6. Use of Animals in the Church

With the exception of official service dogs, the use of animals for events/activities inside the church requires advance approval by the Board of Trustees, the Senior Pastor, or the Facility Manager. An emotional support service dog is not considered an official service dog by FUMC, and would therefore require prior approval and proper identification. Dogs are not permitted in the kitchens or in food service lines.

7. General Policies and Provisions

- E. A facility use form must be submitted to FUMC's facility manager
- F. Each request must include the name of the adult who will be responsible for the activity, the Onsite Person in Charge. The group/organization's Onsite Person in Charge listed on the Application for Use must be with the group at all times when the facility is in use. At a group event where there is no Church Member Sponsor available for the event, at FUMC's discretion, FUMC personnel may be assigned that duty. Refer to FUMC Fee Schedule
- G. All groups using church facilities are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with FUMC's mission.
- H. Vulgar or profane language and inappropriate behavior or dress is not acceptable.
- I. Groups must stay in the area where assigned.
- J. Children must not be left unattended. Childcare can be provided by appropriate FUMC personnel. Refer to FUMC Fee Schedule
- K. No child shall be left alone with a youth or adult in a closed door setting unless explicitly allowed to do so by a parent or guardian.
- L. No youth or vulnerable adult shall be left alone with an adult in a closed door setting unless explicitly allowed to do so by a parent or guardian.
- M. Events for youth and children must be supervised by adults at all times.
- N. Any game, raffle or activity involving monetary gain or loss that is not supported by FUMC is unacceptable.
- O. Tobacco, vaping, alcoholic beverages, and illegal drugs are prohibited in all areas of the church.
- P. Propping exit doors open is prohibited.
- Q. No signs, notices, artwork or photographs will be posted on church walls, doors, ceilings, woodwork or windows without approval of the facility manager or Senior Pastor as to content and method of posting.
- R. Unless authorized by the Facility Manager, decorating the church facilities using nails, glue or screws is prohibited. The use of staples, cellophane adhesives, and other temporary adhesives should be used with discretion, where appropriate, to minimize damage to walls and paint.
- S. At no time may any exits or exit signs be covered or obstructed.

- T. All non-church groups (categories 4 and 5) must provide their own consumables, including paper and beverage products.
- U. All facilities should be left in the same condition as prior to the event. Tables, chairs, and other equipment should be returned to original locations. Windows should remain closed and locked, and opened only in an emergency. All trash should be placed in receptacles. Personal items should be removed. All lights should be turned off, thermostats reset to original settings and, where applicable, doors locked when the event is concluded. Noncompliance will be subject to retention of Custodial deposit and/or revocation of future privileges. Refer to **FUMC Fee Schedule**.
- V. Evening events must conclude by 10:00 PM. Saturday night events in the Christian Life Center must conclude by 7:00 PM. Exceptions must be approved by the Senior Minister or the Board of Trustees.
- W. Users will pay any costs of special set-ups, take-downs, or clean-ups that are not included in other fees collected.
- X. FUMC facilities are currently exempt from property taxes. Any use that jeopardizes the property tax exempt status of FUMC is prohibited.
- Y. The Board of Trustees, by majority vote, or the Senior Pastor may prohibit or terminate any activity or use that, in its discretion, it determines to be harmful, dangerous or detrimental to the interests of the church.

8. Facility Specific Policies

- A. Sanctuary
 - 1) Use of Sanctuary must be approved by the Senior Pastor.
 - 2) Food and beverages are prohibited in the sanctuary.
 - 3) No stages or platforms may be placed in the sanctuary without the permission of the Senior Pastor.
 - 4) Furniture, fixtures or equipment may not be moved or removed without the approval of the Senior Pastor or the Board of Trustees.
 - 5) Guest organists for the pipe organ must be approved by the Senior Pastor or Director of Music.
 - 6) Any use of audio/visual/technical equipment requires setup, supervision, and operation by appropriate FUMC personnel. Refer to **FUMC Fee Schedule**.
- B. Chapel
 - 1) Use of the Chapel must be approved by the Senior Pastor or the Board of Trustees.
 - 2) Food and beverages are prohibited in the chapel.
 - 3) No stages or platforms may be placed in the chapel without the permission of the Senior Pastor.
 - 4) Furniture, fixtures or equipment may not be moved or removed without the approval of the Senior Pastor.
- C. Parlor
 - 1) Use of the parlor is limited to small meetings and formal or semi-formal occasions.
- D. Christian Life Center (CLC) and Walking Track
 - 1) No bicycles, skates or skateboards are allowed in the CLC.
 - 2) To protect light fixtures and equipment, games or play involving kicking of any type of ball are not allowed.
 - 3) All church-owned equipment, such as basketballs, goals, volleyballs and nets will remain in the CLC and returned to the proper storage area after use.

- 4) If the event requires the use of the stage, it must be approved in advance. All equipment and fixtures will be returned to their original location immediately following the event. Only FUMC personnel are authorized to move and/or replace stage items. Any tables and chairs that are moved or removed, will be returned to their original location immediately following the event. Refer to **FUMC Fee Schedule**.
- 5) Food and beverages are allowed in the CLC.
- 6) Supervision of children
 - a) Any events involving youth or children must be properly chaperoned
 - b) Two adults must supervise children in the outdoor play area at all times. At least one adult must have their phone available.
- 7) Any use of audio/visual/technical equipment requires setup, supervision, and operation by appropriate FUMC personnel. Refer to **FUMC Fee Schedule**.
- E. Fellowship Hall
 - 1) Any tables and chairs that are moved or removed will be returned to their original location immediately following the event.
 - 2) Food and beverages are allowed in the Fellowship Hall.
 - 3) Any events involving youth or children must be properly chaperoned.
- F. Classrooms
 - 1) Any tables or chairs that are moved or removed will be returned to their original location immediately following the event.
 - 2) Food and beverages are allowed in the classrooms.
- G. Child Development Center (CDC)
 - 1) Use of CDC facilities is not permitted during regular CDC operating hours and must be approved in advance by the CDC Director and Facility Manager.
 - 2) Groups must remain in approved areas and may not use or move CDC supplies, equipment, or children's belongings without permission.
 - 3) All rooms must be left clean, and furniture and equipment must be returned to their original locations.
- H. Kitchen
 - 1) Usage of the kitchen will require instruction and agreement to follow all operating procedures for kitchen equipment.
 - 2) All applicable state, county, and local code requirements must be followed.
 - 3) All equipment and utensils must be cleaned and properly stored after use.
 - 4) Boxes must not be stored on the floor of the pantry, but only on shelves.
 - 5) All items in the refrigerator or freezer must be stored on shelves (not floor) and covered, dated, and include a contact name or group.
 - 6) All food will be removed from the kitchen within 24 hours of the event, unless arrangements are made with a contact for a following event.
 - 7) Personal dishes, pans, utensils, etc. not removed within one week of the event will be disposed of.
- I. Hospitality items

Items such as silver, dishes, and linens may only be used with the permission of FUMC's United Women of Faith, and may only be used within the church facility. Exceptions must be approved by the FUMC's United Women of Faith.

J. Painting of Rooms

Youth rooms and Adult Sunday school classrooms may be painted by the room's primary occupants, under adult supervision and with coordination of the Facility Manager. Common rooms, children's classrooms, hallways, stairwells and offices shall only be painted with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

9. Assignments

Permission to use the facilities, if granted to a group or individual, is only granted to that group or individual, and may not be assigned to any other group or individual.

10. Fees and Cancellation Policy

FUMC does not charge fees for the use of the church facility. However, fees are charged for services provided by FUMC personnel. A fee schedule for the services of FUMC personnel can be found in the FUMC Fee Schedule. It should be noted a separate policy governs weddings and the associated fees. See the [Church Wedding Policy](#).

While not required, monetary donations for usage of the facilities to help offset additional utility costs incurred are appreciated.

Cancellation / Refund Policy: • 100% of fees (deposit/rental) will be refunded if cancelled 14 days or more before the event date. • 50% of rental fees and 50% of deposit will be refunded if cancelled 1-13 days before the event date. With the exception of the custodial fee, no refund of fees will be returned if cancelled the day of the event.

Childcare, CLC stage set up, and Audio Visual (AV) use require FUMC personnel only, while event groups are expected to provide their own custodial labor after events. Specifically:

- A. Childcare: FUMC childcare staff can be hired for events. Childcare is available for children from birth through 11 years of age. A minimum fee based on 2 childcare staff members for 2 hours will be assessed. If more than 10 children are expected, one additional staff member will be required (for up to 15 children). It should be noted in the event no children show up for care, the minimum fee will still be assessed. Please note, FUMC implements the Safe Gatherings policy.
- B. CLC stage: The CLC stage and area below the stage can be cleared and set back up for events by FUMC personnel. For events requiring the use of the stage that involve moving and/or removal of the normal worship service items (e.g. instruments and sound equipment, kneeling rails, screens, podiums), a minimum fee based on 2 FUMC personnel will be assessed.
- C. AV Equipment Use: AV Equipment are available for groups to use in both the CLC and the Sanctuary. a minimum fee based on 2 FUMC personnel will be assessed.
- D. Custodial: A deposit will be required for events that have the potential to require additional custodial labor following the event. The following items are the responsibility of the event group and should be addressed immediately following the event
 - 1) Moving tables, chairs, and other furnishings to agreed upon locations
 - 2) Washing and drying of kitchen utensils. Utensils should be returned to their previous locations
 - 3) Cleaning, vacuuming, sweeping and mopping floors
 - 4) Removing trash. Full trash bags and food waste must be placed in the outside dumpster

- 5) Checking lights and thermostat settings. Lights should be turned off and thermostats placed at appropriate settings.

In the event the above activities are not performed, the deposit fee will be retained.

Fees received for childcare, stage set up, and audio visual use will be paid directly to FUMC personnel performing the services. Retained custodial deposits will be deposited in the general budget account as "Other Income."

11. Financial Responsibility for Facility or Equipment Damage

FUMC is pleased to make its facilities available to members and others under the limits described in this policy. However, it is understood that from time to time, damage to the facility or contents can occur. For events covered by Categories 2-4 listed above, the repair of damage or the replacement of damaged items will be the financial responsibility of the person or persons or entity who reserves the facility. The amount of repair and replacement costs will be estimated, or otherwise determined, by the Board of Trustees or their designee. Costs for such repair and replacement are payable upon demand.

12. Insurance

Groups and organizations will agree to hold harmless, indemnify and defend FUMC (including FUMC's agents, employees and representatives) from any and all liability for injury or damage, including, but not limited to, bodily injury, personal injury, emotional injury or property damage which may result from any person using the above-described premises, its entrances and exits, and surrounding areas, for a group's or organization's purpose, regardless of whether such injury or damage results from the negligence of FUMC (its agents, employees and representatives) or otherwise.

At FUMC's discretion, groups and organizations will provide a certificate of insurance to FUMC at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date upon which the Organization begins to use the premises. The certificate of insurance will indicate that groups or organizations have made FUMC an "additional insured" on the group's or organization's policy with respect to the use by a group or organization of the premises, and the group or organization promises and warrants that it carries liability insurance with a minimum liability occurrence limit of \$1,000,000.

13. Approval of Policy Exceptions

All exceptions to this policy except as noted in the document must be approved by either

- A. A vote of the FUMC's Board of Trustees or
- B. The approval of the FUMC Benton Senior Minister, the Facilities Manager and the Board of Trustees Chairman.