

A&M
United Methodist Church
Wedding Policy



A&M United Methodist Church

From Our Pastor

We are delighted that you have chosen A&M United Methodist Church for your wedding. Our staff is anxious to assist you in every way possible to make your wedding a memorable experience.

It is important that you do some serious planning about the meaning of a Christian marriage. Both of you, together with this church, want your marriage and the wedding service itself to be a meaningful Christian event. Therefore, I urge you to read this booklet so that you understand the significance of and the procedures for weddings in our church.

The staff and I look forward to helping you get off to a great start in the exciting adventure of Christian marriage.

God bless you!
Rev. Dr. Jim Reiter
Associate Pastor

The Wedding Policy of A&M United Methodist Church

The marriage ceremony is a worship service. It is one of the most sacred rites which the pastors perform under the authority of the church. In order that you may have a sacred and dignified wedding ceremony, the pastors and staff of A&M United Methodist Church ask that you read this policy which has been approved by the Board of Trustees and is designed to help you plan for this memorable Christian experience.

Scheduling the Wedding

So that you have adequate time to plan, schedule your wedding **at least six months in advance, but not more than eleven months in advance**. A reservation for a wedding date may be made in the church office and the necessary paper work will be given to you. A \$250 deposit is required when the wedding date is put on the calendar. In the event that both bride and groom live out of town, parents of the couple may arrange the reservations.

Because of numerous church activities, weddings may not be scheduled on Sundays, during Holy Week, New Year's Eve or Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Christmas period from December 23 through December 27.

When reserving the church, designate the date and hour of the wedding. To allow adequate time between weddings scheduled for the same day, we ask that weddings be scheduled for 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. The church prefers rehearsals to begin at 5:30 the day prior to the wedding.

The Church Administrative Assistant, as the official representative of the church, is ready to help you plan and organize your wedding. She will handle payment of fees, room reservations, and other details related to the wedding. You may call her prior to the wedding about questions relating to the church.

Premarital counseling is required before the wedding can take place. We recommend the Marriage 101 online course that qualifies you for a substantial savings on your marriage license as well. The course fee is \$50 and you may sign up for that

when you schedule your wedding. When you finish the course, you will be required to meet with the pastor.

An A&M United Methodist Church Hostess, as assigned by the Administrative Assistant and Pastor, will be present at the rehearsal and the wedding to help with logistics, scheduling, and to answer questions. Our wedding hostess will have authority over a private wedding consultant in regards to the rehearsal and wedding ceremony.

To reduce the possibility of misunderstanding or error, please direct a wedding invitation to both the Pastor and the Administrative Assistant.

Non-member Weddings

Unless either the bride or groom, a parent or a guardian are members of A&M United Methodist Church at the time the wedding is scheduled, the wedding is regarded as one of **non-members**. We assume that non-members desire to have their wedding at A&M United Methodist because of their **interest in the faith and worship life of this congregation**. Because of the need to understand United Methodist worship, arrange for one or both of the wedding partners to attend worship here for at least **four Sundays prior to reserving your wedding date. Please bring the Administrative Assistant the bulletins from those services when you are ready to schedule your wedding.**

Guest Ministers

In keeping with our religious traditions, the United Methodist service will be used at the wedding, and **one of the ministers of A&M United Methodist Church will be in charge of the rehearsal and the wedding**. A minister from another denomination or United Methodist Church **may assist** in the wedding ceremony when approved in advance by one of our pastors. Please give the Administrative Assistant the name and address of an assisting pastor. *The visiting pastor is responsible for calling our pastor to coordinate the ceremony.* Any honorarium to guest ministers is the responsibility of the wedding party.

Member Weddings

You may qualify for the member price if you or a parent or guardian has been an active member of A&M United Methodist Church for six months or longer. "Active" is defined as actively supporting the church with your gifts and your presence.

The Marriage License

The marriage license must be presented to the Pastor or the Church Hostess at the rehearsal. Marriage licenses may be procured no sooner than thirty days before the wedding and no later than 72 hours prior to the wedding. Apply for your license through the County Clerk's Office in any county courthouse in Texas. To obtain a license, both bride and groom need a certified copy of their birth certificate or (if you are over 18 years of age) a valid Texas driver's license. You will also need your social security number. Blood tests are no longer required in Texas.

The Rehearsal

Because several rehearsals may be scheduled for the same day, the bride and groom should urge all members of the wedding party to be ready to begin promptly at the time scheduled. **No rehearsal or wedding ceremony will be conducted when the Pastor or the Church Hostess perceives that any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.**

Keep in mind the following as you prepare for the rehearsal:

1. The rehearsal should last approximately an hour.
2. Invite parents, ushers, groomsmen, bridesmaids, and any other participants to be at the rehearsal.
3. Ask participants to arrive at the church at least 15 minutes before the rehearsal.

Music

The Assistant Director of Music of this church will be the organist for all weddings unless approved through the music department. The church wedding fee includes one music consultation appointment with the Assistant Director of Music as well as the rehearsal and wedding service. In the event of a schedule conflict, the Assistant Director of Music will arrange for a qualified substitute.

The wedding couple should make an appointment with the Assistant Director of Music to discuss the choice of music at least six weeks prior to the wedding. Additional appointments and responsibilities may be arranged with the Assistant Director of Music for a negotiated fee.

The wedding couple may choose instruments other than the organ for wedding music. Our Assistant Director of Music also plays the piano and would be glad to play for soloists or play piano selections at your wedding. If you wish for instruments other than the organ or piano, please select those that are appropriate to this occasion and in keeping with the dignity of the United Methodist service. Our musician will also be present to assist guest musicians in the timing and coordination required in a large wedding.

For an additional fee, the Assistant Director of Music will secure a qualified soloist if desired. A guest soloist is welcome, but is required to know the music in advance of the rehearsal. Our accompanist must be given the music prior to the rehearsal.

Music selected for the wedding should be appropriate for a religious ceremony. Popular secular music, including the Aggie War Hymn, may not be played in the Sanctuary. Please confer with the church organist for approval of music selections and instruments at least six weeks prior to the wedding date. Pre-recorded music is not allowed at weddings.

Bride's and Groom's Rooms

For Sanctuary weddings, we have provided a dressing area in Room 113 for the bride and her party. The groom and groomsmen may assemble in Room 129. Because these areas receive extensive use on Sunday mornings, it is the responsibility of the couple to have someone **remove all garment bags, hangers, trash, and other items from these areas immediately following the wedding service. Tell the Church Hostess the name of the person responsible for removal of items from the rooms.**

Military Dress and Ritual

Military dress uniforms, including that of the Corps of Cadets, may be worn in the Sanctuary. Sabers and other weaponry may not be present in the Sanctuary, even for decorative purposes. The ceremonial saber arch may be provided on departure from the ceremony outside the main door of the building in the Memorial Courtyard.

Personal Valuables

Every reasonable effort will be made to assist the wedding party in protecting property. However, the church shall not be liable for items that are lost, stolen or damaged. It is suggested that friends or family members be assigned the responsibilities for valuables such as dresses, purses, silver, glassware and gifts during the wedding and/or reception.

If dresses are to be delivered to the church, arrange the details with the Administrative Assistant.

Instructions for Florist, Photographer and Caterer

The wedding couple will be furnished instructions for the photographer/videographer, florist and caterer at the time the wedding date is confirmed. The couple should provide a copy of the instructions and review them with the photographer/videographer, florist and caterer in making plans for the wedding and reception so that there will be no misunderstanding about the established policies.

Should the wedding couple desire their flowers to be used in the Sunday morning worship service, arrangements can be made with the church office 2-3 weeks in advance. The Sunday morning worship guide would inform the congregation that the flowers were from the couple's wedding.

If the couple desires to keep the flowers, arrangements should be made to have the flowers picked up immediately following the service. The church shall not be responsible for flowers after the service.

For Your Information

Keep in mind that smoking is prohibited in church buildings, and alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church property. Birdseed may be thrown only outside the building. Rice or confetti may not be used.

Facilities and Fees

The A&M United Methodist Church wedding fee includes services for the Pastor, the Church Hostess, the organist, the custodial staff, use of the Sanctuary, the bridal parlor and the groom's area. The fee is to be paid in full to the Administrative Assistant at least sixty days prior to the wedding. **This fee is in addition to the reservation deposit.**

Additional charges for extra services such as soloists, baby sitting, extra hours of building use, etc. can be arranged with the Administrative Assistant.

The reservation deposit of \$250 will be fully refunded within ten days after the service with the following exceptions:

1. In the event of a cancellation, there is no refund.
2. The Pastor or Church Hostess deem that unusual custodial services are required for clean up or that facilities have been damaged.
3. The Pastor or Wedding Hostess observe gross violation of the standards and policies of this congregation.

Fee Schedule

Member Wedding	\$1,000.00
Non-Member Wedding	\$1,400.00
Deposit	\$ 250.00
Marriage 101 Course	\$ 50.00

(**Note:** In the event of a cancellation, the wedding fee will be refunded in full. The deposit will not be refunded if the cancellation is within 90 days of the wedding date. The deposit will be refunded in full within 10 days following the wedding if there are no issues pertaining to abuse of rules or damage to facilities.)

The Reception

The Great Hall or the Fellowship Hall may be reserved for your reception if you so desire. The fee for the Great Hall without the kitchen is \$500 for up to 200 people, \$550 up to 300, and \$600 for over 300. A deposit of \$175 is required to book the hall. The CLC kitchen is \$100 with an additional \$100 deposit. The Fellowship Hall is \$200 without the kitchen, \$300 with the use of the kitchen and requires a \$50 deposit without the kitchen and \$150 deposit with kitchen. All prices cover the first four hours. Additional hours will be charged an hourly rate of \$175 for the Great Hall and \$50 for the Fellowship Hall.

For your convenience we also have the following available for rent:

White Table Cloths	\$12.00 each
Cloth Napkins	.50 each
*Place Settings	\$ 4.00 each

*(Includes dinner plate, salad plate, dessert plate, and glass and silverware)

Informal Weddings

Small, informal weddings performed in the Pastor's office, the Chapel, or in the Sanctuary are limited to immediate families and may be deemed exceptions to the above fees at the Pastor's discretion.

Additional Guidelines and General Information

1. Smoking is prohibited in the church buildings at all times.
2. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church property.
3. No rehearsal or wedding will be conducted when the Pastor in charge or the

- Church Hostess suspects any member or the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
4. Food and drinks are not permitted in the Sanctuary.
 5. **Birdseed**, in lieu of rice, may be thrown as the bridal couple leaves the church. **No rice, flower or paper petals, or confetti** are to be used inside or outside the church buildings.
 6. Plan for at least one usher for every forty persons expected at the service. Groomsmen may serve as ushers.
 7. Ushers are asked to inform those persons with cameras that pictures may not be taken in the Sanctuary at any time during the wedding using a flash.
 8. Because the altar area is very limited, **the number of attendants standing with the bride and groom is limited to seven each, including junior attendants and children.**
 9. To preserve the sacred dignity of the wedding ceremony, children eight years old or older may stand with the wedding party. Younger children may walk down the aisle during the processional and be seated with adults in the front pews as the ceremony begins. Exceptions to this guideline will be made for very small weddings, and those involving children of the bride or groom.
 10. A signed wedding agreement outlining church policy, fees, etc. will be obtained at the confirmation of the wedding reservation on the church calendar.
 11. Variances of the prescribed procedures and other exceptions may be made at the discretion of the attending pastor of A&M United Methodist Church.

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