

St. Luke United Methodist Church



Wedding Planning Guide and Policy January 2020

Table of Contents

Introduction

Table of Contents	
Words of Welcome	3
Purpose of the Policy	3
Church Information.....	4

Weddings at St. Luke

Christian Marriage	5
Procedures for Scheduling Weddings.....	5
Officiating Minister	6
The Wedding Director	6
Fees and Honorariums	7
Use of the Facilities	7
Rehearsal.....	8
Flowers and Decorations.....	8
Music.....	9
Receptions.....	10
Photographs.....	11
Conflicts in Scheduling.....	11
Entrance to the Church.....	12
Miscellaneous	13

Introduction

Words of Welcome

We are delighted that you are giving St. Luke United Methodist Church the opportunity to share in the joy of celebrating your wedding. Our goal is to provide both the personnel and the setting to uphold the sanctity of the ceremony and magnify the joy that characterizes all Christian worship, most especially the service of Christian marriage.

We rejoice with you and give thanks to God that you have decided to establish your marriage relationship in covenant with God. We will be working diligently to enable you to experience your wedding as a true spiritual celebration. We look forward to working with you as we prepare to celebrate your vows in a service of worship. In so doing, we will take seriously your own personalities and experiences, while also maintaining Christian integrity in traditions that have enriched the marriages of countless generations of people who have preceded us.

The opening words of the service of marriage begin “Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God...” We will do our best to enhance the consciousness of God’s presence, both in your minds and in the minds of those who share in the service. The opening statement also contains these words: “to join together this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony.” In Ephesians 5:25-33 we read; “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church; however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” These words remind us that each person is an individual with unique needs and feelings. Through listening with concern and providing careful guidance, we hope the way in which we serve you will clearly demonstrate the warmth and caring of the members of this congregation. 1 8 2 8

We pray that your wedding will be a memorable service that is both beautiful and meaningful. It is to that end that we share with you the following wedding information, procedures and policies of this church.

Purpose of the Policy

Our goal for your wedding day is that it will be as special as possible. In the following pages you will find policies and procedures to ensure that your wedding ceremony accomplishes this goal and maintains our church’s facility for the ongoing life of the congregation and our ministries to the greater community. **Please read these pages carefully and ask any questions you may have before signing and returning to the Event Coordinator.** You should return your signed form along with your reservation form and deposit so we can secure your desired wedding date. **We ask that you be responsible for ensuring that all members of your wedding party understand and know the policies found within this document. You are responsible for communicating clearly the expectations which we, the church, and you have of them for your rehearsal and ceremony. Please read carefully, initial where necessary and sign and return to the Director of Events.**

MINISTER

Rev. Thad Haygood, Senior Minister

ASSISTANT TO THE SENIOR MINISTER

Maggie Roberson

CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINSTRATOR

Kelly Pridgen

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Marc Boensel

WEDDING DIRECTORS

Glenn Albright (when Albright's is the florist)

Lisa Marie Ming

Kym Harden

DIRECTOR OF EVENTS

Lisa Marie Ming

EXECUTIVE CHEF

Kelsey Anderson

CHURCH ADDRESS - Sanctuary and Chapel

1104 Second Avenue

PO Box 867

Columbus, Georgia 31901

(706) 327-4343

MINISTRY CENTER - Large and Small Dining Room

301 11th Street

Columbus Georgia 31901

(706) 256-1017

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

The marriage ceremony is one of the most sacred of all rituals of the church; a worship service. A wedding is a celebration, an outward and visible sign of the Grace that God is asked to give the man and woman who pledge themselves to each other and are united by God in Holy Marriage. As a United Methodist Church we adhere to the United Methodist Book of Discipline, which defines Christian Marriage as follows: (161.B.) Marriage- “We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman. We believe that God’s blessing rests upon such a marriage, whether or not there are children of the union.” (341.6.) “Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.” This would include all of the buildings that are owned by St. Luke United Methodist Church.

Christian marriage is a lifelong covenant of Grace that under girds the state’s civil contract. The church’s care for the institutions and family is a pastoral relationship that is more than counseling to prepare a couple for marriage and rehearsing them for the ceremony. Our commitment is also to offer assistance in reconciling difficulties that may arise as well as to extend God’s grace for divorced and widowed persons who seek remarriage.

To emphasize the Christian view of marriage within the life of the church, “The Marriage Service,” from the United Methodist Church’s BOOK OF WORSHIP or another appropriate service of Christian marriage should be selected in consultation with the officiating minister.

PROCEDURE FOR SCHEDULING WEDDINGS

St. Luke is available to members and their family members for weddings. Church members should contact the St. Luke Director of Events to determine the availability of the church facilities for the date desired. After an available date has been agreed upon, an appointment will be scheduled for completion of the Wedding Application. Applicants will also receive a Wedding Packet consisting of the Wedding Policies and Procedures Booklet, Wedding Fees Schedule and other appropriate information. Completion of the Wedding Application and signature of receipt of the Wedding Policies and Procedures Booklet in addition to the payment of the applicable deposit should be accomplished within 5 days in order to secure your date.

After the selection of a minister and completion/receipt of the required information (as outlined above), weddings and wedding rehearsals are scheduled on the Master Church Activities Calendar by the Director of Events. This is the only way the church facility can be reserved for your wedding. **Public announcement that a wedding will take place at St. Luke United Methodist Church should not be made until this process has been completed and you have received a countersigned application confirming the reservation. _____ Initials**

No weddings or rehearsals may be scheduled on the following days:

1. Holy Week
2. Memorial Day
3. July 4th
4. Labor Day Weekend
5. Thanksgiving Weekend
6. Christmas Eve or Christmas Day
7. New Year’s Eve or New Year’s Day
8. Any Sunday Morning (Sanctuary Weddings only)
9. First Saturday In December

Members and affiliate members of St. Luke United Methodist Church may reserve facilities at any time that the church is available. For purposes of this policy book, “Members” means the bride or groom, parents of the bride or groom, or children of the bride or groom.

After the wedding and rehearsal are scheduled by a member, the couple will be contacted by the officiating minister from St. Luke United Methodist Church to schedule their first counseling appointment if appropriate.

Following confirmation of the wedding arrangement, the couple should contact the assigned Wedding Director who can answer questions and assist in further planning for the wedding. The name and telephone number of the Wedding Director will be provided by the Director of Events as soon as possible thereafter.

“Walk-in” weddings may be performed by the associate ministers of our staff. A “Walk-in” wedding is defined as one in which there is no music, no flowers, no reception, no rehearsal, and where no church staff member is involved, with the exception of the officiating minister.

OFFICIATING MINISTER

Members:

Normally, one of the ministers of St. Luke United Methodist Church will officiate at all wedding ceremonies for members. The couple may ask for the minister of their choice from members of the staff. If they have no preference, a minister will be assigned by the Senior Minister’s office. As soon as possible after the selection of a minister, the minister will meet with the couple to discuss arrangements for the wedding.

Any request for a minister who is not a part of the staff to assist in the ceremony can be made by completing the appropriate section of the Wedding Application. Upon approval by the Senior Minister, an official written invitation from St. Luke United Methodist Church will be extended to the guest minister to officiate.

It is expected that the bride and groom meet with the minister prior to the wedding for discussion and counseling. These sessions are an important aspect of preparation for marriage.

ROLE OF THE WEDDING DIRECTOR

The church uses a Wedding Director to assist the couple with plans for the ceremony, to aid the minister in conducting the rehearsal and to coordinate all activities of the wedding within the Church for rehearsal and the ceremony.

The Wedding Director is qualified to conduct the rehearsal in the event that the minister is unable to attend. The Director is there to help make your wedding as special and unique as possible and to advise the bride and groom in respect to church policy and procedure. He/she is an extension of the Church and is there for directing the rehearsal and the Ceremony. In no way is the director a coordinator or decorator.

PLEASE NOTE: St. Luke’s wedding director will be in charge of the rehearsal and ceremony at all times.

_____ **Initials**

PLEASE TELEPHONE THE WEDDING DIRECTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER YOUR WEDDING HAS BEEN SCHEDULED.

ESTABLISHED FEES

Enclosed with this booklet are sheets listing established fees to cover the use of the facilities, personnel fees and charges for other appropriate services. A non-refundable deposit of \$250.00 is required when the application is submitted. The balance of the fees, except for the minister's honorarium, is due no later than 30 days prior to the ceremony.

To qualify for member fees, an individual must be a member of the church for a period of no less than six months.

_____ **Initials**

HONORARIUM FOR THE MINISTER

It is customary to give an honorarium to the minister or ministers performing the wedding ceremony. When more than one minister is participating in your ceremony, both should receive an honorarium. The honorarium normally should not be less than \$200. You are encouraged to discuss this with the Assistant to the Senior Minister, your Wedding Director or the minister directly.

FACILITIES

The Sanctuary of our church has a seating capacity of 700 with a center aisle and aisles on each side and a beautiful pipe organ. The Sanctuary design makes it suitable for any size wedding.

A wedding in the Sanctuary requires the service of a Sound Engineer.

The Bride's Dressing Room is located on the basement floor of the church parlor area.

PLEASE NOTE: the Brides room is not handicapped accessible.

Turner Chapel is suited for small weddings. It seats a maximum of 100 persons. The chapel has a pipe organ and a center aisle.

The Ministry Center (directly across 3rd Avenue, behind the church) houses both a large and small dining room, suitable for groups of up to 700 people in the large and 50 people in the small. The large dining room is equipped with full AV services for slide shows, power point presentations and basic sound amplification.

USE OF THE FACILITIES

The wedding party has use of the facilities for three and one half hours; two hours before the wedding, thirty minutes for the ceremony, and one hour after the ceremony. **Please make arrangements with your florist to have flowers delivered within the 2 hours before or during rehearsal.** If additional time is needed to open the church earlier for any type of delivery, or wedding party needs to access earlier, additional charges of \$50.00 per hour will apply and must be paid in advance. This does not include the rental of any reception space. _____ **Initials**

REHEARSALS

The rehearsal, especially for larger weddings, is vitally important because it sets the tone for the wedding service itself. The purpose of the rehearsal is to make sure all participants know the meaning of the marriage service, as they become familiar with what they are to do, where they are to be and what may be expected in the wedding service. This is where your wedding director plays a role.

The rehearsal will be scheduled at the time that the wedding is entered on the church calendar.

One hour will be reserved for all wedding rehearsals, regardless of the location on campus. It is important that rehearsals begin promptly at the scheduled time. The bride and groom are responsible for insuring that the rehearsal begins on time. In the event that the rehearsal is delayed, the Wedding Director may opt to commence the rehearsal without the presence of all parties, and additional charges of \$150 per hour may be incurred. _____ **Initials**

The minister and/or Wedding Director will be in charge of the rehearsal.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

The regulations for flowers and decorations are designed to:

1. Prevent damage to the Sanctuary and the Chapel furnishings.
2. Assure all fire codes are followed, and all aisles and walkways are kept free and clear of obstruction.

Decorations may not be attached to the pews, carpeting or other furniture by pinning, gluing, nailing, taping or other tacking.

No decorations will be hung from the walls or pillars.

Pew markers may be tied to the end of pews using ribbons or well covered pipe stems.

Worship furnishings of the Sanctuary and Chapel may only be moved with the permission of the Wedding Director and then only by St. Luke staff. Decorations may not be attached or hung from worship furnishings. This includes the pulpit, communion table and accessories, and the pulpit area pews.

For safety reasons, an aisle cloth or runner may not be used.

In the Sanctuary, the altar candles may be used. Use of additional candles and candelabra furnished by your florist are optional. Use of a Unity Candle is permitted after consultation with the minister and Wedding Director. Unity Candles are not furnished by the church.

All candles must be dripless and must be placed well away from walls, furniture and banners. No candles are allowed in the aisles or walkways.

Polyethylene or similar material must be placed under all candelabra to protect carpeting and furnishings. It must be placed in such a way that it is not visible to the wedding guests (behind the chancel rail, etc.)

In the chapel, the altar candles may be used. Use of a Unity Candle is permitted after consultation with the minister and the Wedding Director. Unity Candles are not furnished by the church. Due to limited space, use of additional candles in the chapel are not permitted.

In the Sanctuary and Chapel, flowers may be placed in arrangements on either side of the altar. A single center arrangement may not be used.

The florist will be held responsible for any damage to carpets or furniture.

You will need to provide the names and contact information of all vendors to your Wedding Director and the Director of Events.

All flowers for the wedding parties and participants should be labeled.

Only the scattering of silk petals or flowers is permitted and only in the aisle.

After the ceremony and pictures of the wedding party have been completed, flowers and equipment must be promptly removed from the Sanctuary or Chapel. This is to allow the custodial staff ample time to make the area ready for the next scheduled service.

Since several services or activities are often scheduled throughout the day and evening, it is the responsibility of your florist to coordinate the delivery and setup time with your Wedding Director.

It is the responsibility of the couple to see that the Florist, DJ, Coordinator and/or all those hired by the Bride and Groom follows all guidelines and regulations in the facility.) _____ **Initials.**

GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING MUSIC

A Wedding Ceremony is a worship service of the Church. As a celebration of the union of the Bride and Groom, and a time for sharing joy with their friends in the presence of God it is sacred in nature. Music should serve to enhance the consciousness of God's presence both in the minds of those who witness and those who participate in the service. The wedding music is defined as any music that occurs before, during or after the ceremony.

The Director of Music has final responsibility for decisions regarding the appropriate choice of instrumental music, vocal music and hymns, in consultation with the clergy. Our desire is that the music chosen for the service be consistent with what is used regularly in worship services. Texts should either be songs in the praise of God, or prayers for God's presence, blessing and guidance in the uniting of the couple and in the founding of a Christian home. Show tunes, popular songs and love songs, while meaningful to the Bride or Groom, are more appropriate for use in the reception following the worship service. _____ **Initials.**

ORGAN MUSIC

The church organist shall ordinarily be the organist for all weddings. They should be consulted as soon as the date is set for the wedding. An outside organist must be approved by the Director of Music, and the invitation extended by him. The organist's fee shall be paid no later than the wedding rehearsal.

If your musical plans for the wedding include organ music only, and your arrangements are not specific, you may prefer to have the organist select all of the wedding music. A conference must be arranged with the Minister of Music. Organ music for the wedding should be considered as follows:

1. Prelude Music – selected from existing repertoire
2. Processional/Recessional Music – may be suggested by the Minister of Music, or chosen in consultation with the Minister of Music
3. Accompaniment of Solos – the Minister of Music’s involvement is for one rehearsal only and is not for the teaching of music.
4. Outside soloists need to schedule rehearsals with the Minister of Music at a time before the wedding rehearsal.

*There is an additional fee for each accompaniment – vocal or instrumental. Please consult the fee sheet that accompanies this booklet.

VOCAL MUSIC

The Music Department is available to advise couples on the choice of vocal music and/or hymns and to supply the names of soloists. Outside soloists, accompanists or other methods of accompaniment not on the organ need to be approved through the Director of Music. If hymns are chosen, they normally should be those in the United Methodist Hymnal.

INSTRUMENTALISTS

In general, if one is interested in using one or more instruments, such as trumpet, oboe, violin, etc., there is an additional fee per musician. The Music Department will assist you in finding these musicians, but their fees are negotiable and are not set by St. Luke United Methodist Church.

Use of the piano in the Sanctuary is optional.

Please Note: ALL music must be approved by St. Luke’s Director of Music. No Exceptions. _____ **Initials.**

RECEPTIONS

A contract must be completed with the Director of Events at the Ministry Center for all receptions and private events.

A \$500.00 deposit will be charged for all reception space and will be due with the Facility Rental Contract. All food and beverage must be provided by the Ministry Center at St. Luke. Under no circumstance will there be outside catering allowed. NO EXCEPTIONS.

All Wedding receptions abide by the same guidelines included in this Wedding Policy, regardless of whether the wedding is performed at St. Luke Church or not. _____ **Initials.**

PHOTOGRAPHS

Noise and lights or flashes distract from the spirit of worship. Guests will not be permitted to take photographs until after the ceremony. The worship service is understood to begin with the music for the prelude.

We want your photographer to be able to make photographs within these guidelines:

- (1) Flash photographs may be taken of the bridal party during the processional from a point under the edge of the balcony as they start down the center aisle.

- (2) After the processional, only photographs without flash may be taken from the center of the balcony upstairs, providing there is NO flash, noise, or any other distraction. Use of auto-winding or motor-driven cameras during the ceremony is prohibited.
- (3) Flash pictures may be made as the recessional is in progress from a point under the edge of the balcony.
- (4) Additional photographs may be taken with flash or other lighting equipment before the prelude begins and again after the ceremony. The Minister will gladly re-stage any portion of the ceremony for photographs afterward.
- (5) Under NO circumstances should the photographer or members of the wedding party or guests stand on the pews, kneeler, or Chancel rail.

A sheet stating these regulations will be provided by the Church. You are asked to give it to your photographer.

_____ **INITIALS.**

VIDEOTAPING

Video taping using an outside photographer is allowed provided the following regulations are followed:

- One camera may be placed in the balcony of the Sanctuary. It must remain stationary.
- One camera may be placed in the left or right corner of the Chancel Choir area. It must remain stationary and be unmanned.
- NO additional lights may be used.
- Aisles and walkways must be unobstructed by cameras, cords or equipment.
- Care must be taken to ensure that there is no noise or other distraction.
- Audio will NOT be supplied from the church's Sanctuary system for recording on a photographer's video tape.
- Videotaping is also available using the Church camera system, for a fee.

A sheet stating these regulations can be obtained from the Church. You are asked to give a copy to any outside video service, should you use one. _____ **Initials.**

CONFLICTS IN SCHEDULING

Should the stage be in the Sanctuary for Church programming, it will be left in place for the wedding. In the event the couple desires its removal, the charge for the service of taking it down and putting it back up again is \$100.00. This can be done only if the schedule of activities for the Sanctuary permits, and if arrangements are made with sufficient advance notice.

Prior rehearsals in the Sanctuary for any programs of the Music Department take precedence over wedding scheduling. Couples will be advised of this scheduling when making contact with the Director of Events. In most cases the Music Department is willing to work out arrangements for the Sanctuary use.

ENTRANCE TO THE CHURCH

SANCTUARY WEDDING: Main entrance doors located at the front door of the Church facing Second Avenue should be the doors used by the guests to enter the Church. All other doors will be locked, with the exception of the handicapped accessible entrance from the Church parking lot between St. Luke and First Baptist.

CHAPEL WEDDING: Entrance doors from the parking lot between St. Luke and First Baptist should be used by guests to enter the Church. These doors are handicapped accessible. All other doors will be locked.

At no time is anyone allowed to prop open any doors to allow others entry. EVERYONE must enter through assigned doors. _____ **Initials.**

MISCELLANEOUS

It is the policy of this Church that under NO circumstances may alcoholic beverages be served or permitted on the premises, this includes the parking lots. No one under the influence of alcohol will be allowed to participate in the rehearsal or wedding. _____ **Initials.**

Smoking on Church property is not permitted.

The Church CANNOT ACCEPT delivery of dresses or tuxedos.

The Church CANNOT BE RESPONSIBLE for personal items such as purses, clothing, jewelry or wedding gifts brought to the church. It is suggested that you appoint someone to be responsible for collecting these items and removing them from the building.

Any items left in the church after the wedding will be accessible during hours WHEN THE BUILDING IS NORMALLY OPEN. This includes passports, visas, etc. so be sure not to leave important items needed for the honeymoon after your wedding.

For safety reasons, the scattering of flower petals or bird seed is not allowed inside the Church building. We prefer that rice, Confetti, glitter or streamers not be used.

The bride and groom should see that all members of the wedding party are informed of these regulations.

_____ **Initials.**

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

As you continue to work on the plans for your wedding and reception, questions may arise for which you need assistance please feel free to contact the Church when any questions or problems arise.

You may reach the staff and business offices of St. Luke United Methodist Church at 706-327-4343, weekdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Names of the appropriate staff persons are listed in the front of this booklet.

WEDDING FEE'S

\$500.00 Deposit to Hold Date

MEMBERS

*Use of Sanctuary or Chapel \$950.00 All Inclusive

Additional hourly charges @ \$50.00 per additional hour may be applied for all use extending beyond the originally contracted times, for both members and non-members. Details are further outlined in your wedding contract.

Client Signature _____ Date _____

St. Luke Representative _____ Date: _____

