

**First United Methodist  
Church**

**154 E. Washington Street**

**First United Methodist Church**

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**Wedding Booklet**

***Wedding Message***

***Exchange of Vows***

***Blessing and Exchanging of Rings***

***Lighting of the Unity Candle***

***Declaration and Blessing of Marriage***

***Benediction***

***Recessional***

**The Celebration of the Christian Marriage  
Of**

*(Bride's Name)*

**And**

*(Groom's Name)*

**On (date) At (time)**

**The Ceremony to take place at (location)**

***Prelude***

***Seating of the Mothers***

***Processional***

***Greeting and Prayer***

***Scripture Readings***

Because marriage is a major event in a lifetime, few couples have the experience to attend to the many details involved in preparing a lovely service. This wedding manual is presented to give some guidance for those who desire that their wedding be a meaningful and spiritual experience. We offer the accumulated information and experience which have proven to be a helpful process for persons receiving the blessings of Almighty God through the ministries of First United Methodist Church of East Peoria, Illinois

**Why a Church Wedding?**

Due consideration should be given to the fact of why you are seeking to be married in a church. Something more is sought than a legal ceremony. Society has a stake in every marriage, and consequently social sanction in the form of a wedding license is required to get married.

In undertaking a church wedding, you are asking something more than a mere performance of a legal ceremony. You wish to receive the blessing of God on your union through the church of your choice. The pastor will quite rightfully inquire as to your relationships to the church. In seeking a church wedding you are asking a higher standard. You are endeavoring to lift it out of the realm of a mere contract into the realm of commitment, in which two persons make certain spiritual commitments to God and to each other.

## The Christian Wedding

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As you stand before your friends and family, and publicly declare your love and commitment, God stands ready to bless you, and to give you the strength and insight to live up to your intentions. The vows you take are sacred and enduring-meant to begin a lifelong relationship.

### Think about these important points:

- **First**, in marriage, two people declare their resolve to live in community. Marriage is a relationship - a committed partnership. You will pledge your minds, hearts, bodies, dreams, goals, and resources to each other, so that you may be a mutual benefit to one another. You will leave the ceremony having started a new family, a new home.
- **Second**, marriage is designed to mirror Christ's love for His people. "*Out of reverence for Christ*" husbands and wives are to love each other and respect each other. This means living responsibly in your home and in society. But Christ will be your inspiration. As you welcome Him into your hearts, He will help you live as you should.
- **Third**, in marriage you have the opportunity to experience and express the greatest force in life - true love! This is not simply an emotion. It is a deep grounding in the very best that life can offer. In your marriage, you will have the privilege, and the obligation, to show loving concern and support to someone else-and to receive that same concern and support in return. You will be called to give this concern and support in times of stress, sickness, suffering, grief, loneliness, financial worry, and so forth.
- This, then, is a guidepost for your coming adventure in marriage. May God bless and help you!

## Wedding Service Fees

<u>Item</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>
Sanctuary Use	no charge	\$500*
Chapel Use	no charge	\$200
Wedding Coordinator	\$200*	\$200*
Pastor	Honorarium	\$200*
Incidentals	No charge	\$25*
A-V technician	\$75*	\$75*

\*required for all weddings

"Members" include active members and constituents of the church family, and their children

One hundred dollars (\$100), non-refundable, is due at the time of scheduling. The remainder of the fees should be paid to the church office thirty (30) days prior to the wedding. Please make check payable to "*First United Methodist Church*".

## Do We Need a License?

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Before any wedding can be conducted, a Wedding License must be in hand. This is the specific responsibility of the couple. East Peoria is in Tazewell County, and so the license for weddings in our building must be obtained from the Tazewell County Clerk, at the Courthouse in Pekin. They are open Monday through Friday during business hours only. When a license is issued, it becomes valid the following day, and then is good for sixty (60) days. So, it is advisable to get your license early – and you will have one less thing to worry about. The County sets its own fees, and its own requirements for identification.

You will be given by the County Clerk a packet of materials. The pastor will need the two different wedding license forms, and the envelope addressed to the County Clerk. The other materials are for you to keep and read.

After the wedding service, the pastor will return one copy of the Wedding Certificate to you, for use as you wish. This copy has no legal significance. The other copy will be mailed back to the County Clerk. After a few days, this license will be registered in the County files, and for a small fee you can get a certified copy showing that you are legally married. Most couples find that they need a certified copy to change titles on motor vehicles and real estate, to change beneficiaries on insurance, for tax purposes, etc. So – when you are getting your license, inquire about how to get certified copies.

## Who May Use the Church?

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First United Methodist Church of East Peoria is maintained by its members and friends as a service to our community. Its use is available by permission only to all who will use the facilities reverently and respectfully. Members of the church family (including members and constituents, and their children), have already been supporting the church, so additional fees are charged to other users to help cover the cost of utilities and maintenance.

## How Are Arrangements Made?

All arrangements are to be made with the pastor, who has the final right of approval in all matters related to weddings. Please contact the pastor as soon as possible- and stay in touch throughout the planning process. You may contact the pastor by phone, email, mail, or in person (please see the front of this brochure for contact information). Weddings are not held on the following dates and times:

Saturdays after 6 p.m.

New Year's Eve or Day

Palm Sunday through Easter Day

Fourth of July Weekend

Thanksgiving Day or Weekend

Christmas Eve or Christmas Day

All other dates are available on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

Your date will be reserved only when you have filed with the church office a "Wedding Information Sheet" and a \$100 deposit (check should be made to "First United Methodist Church", with "wedding deposit" written on the Memo line.

Soon after you have reserved your date, you will need to call the pastor to make an appointment for a first meeting, to go over your plans and discuss church policies and procedures, and to talk over any questions you may have. The pastor is available at times of mutual convenience, including evenings and weekends.

## What Rules Are in Effect?

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Wedding activities must be consistent with Christian customs which emphasize the sanctity of Christian marriage. Smoking anywhere in the church building is forbidden. Smoking is also not allowed near any entrance to the building. No alcoholic beverages may be consumed or stored anywhere on the church building or grounds (including the parking lot). Illegal or recreational drugs may not be used on the church building or grounds. The pastor may refuse to perform a wedding when any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or is exhibiting outrageous behavior. No damage to church facilities or equipment will be tolerated. No food or drink is allowed in the Sanctuary area.

No rice, bird seed, confetti, or similar items may be thrown, inside or outside the church. Helium balloons are not permitted in the church.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to see that all members of the wedding party are informed of these rules.

## What About Pictures?

Pictures may be taken prior to or following the ceremony, and during the processional and recessional of the wedding party. No pictures with flash will be permitted during the service. If a videographer will be filming the service, it is highly recommended that he/she be present for the rehearsal.

## What About a Rehearsal?

A rehearsal is highly recommended for all but the very simplest of ceremonies. The rehearsal is usually held the night before the actual ceremony. The rehearsal takes about 45 minutes, including training both for the wedding party and for the ushers. The rehearsal should be scheduled late enough for all participants to get there comfortably after work (it is difficult when most if the party is present, and waiting around for a few who are late)

## What About Decorations?

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The couple is responsible for any decorations that are used in connection with the wedding. The cross and candles on the altar must remain there. Floral arrangements must not cover the cross. Any changes to the normal arrangement of the altar platform must be specifically approved by the pastor. Tape, florist's putty, clips, etc. should not be used to attach decorations to the pews, altar, candelabra, etc. These damage finishes – and usually do not hold well! Loops of ribbon used to firmly tie on decorations work best. The wedding couple is responsible to see that florists and others are aware of these restrictions. There are 18 rows, a total of 36 pews in the Sanctuary. Aisle runners are not allowed. They do not stay flat and they present a hazard for those who process on them.

During the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the church is already highly decorated. The existing decorations cannot be removed. Please discuss any concerns you have with the pastor.

## How Many People Will the Sanctuary or Chapel Seat?

The sanctuary will seat about 300 people; the overflow area can seat an additional 50. The chapel seats 30 persons. You should plan to have one designated usher (some may be members of the wedding party) for each 50 guests you anticipate attending.

## The Church May Need To Adjust Arrangements

Every effort will be made to accommodate your wedding, however, we are a Church and if an emergency arises (such as a funeral), we may need to make some adjustments. In this event, the wedding coordinator and church staff will work with you to try and make the changes as minimal as possible.

**Can We Dress at the Church? 8**

The church has a Bride's Room with high hooks for hanging long dresses, a large mirror, and other amenities. The bridal party is welcome to use this Bride's Room for dressing. The groom's party usually arrives at the church already dressed, but there are rooms available which the groom's party can use for dressing. When either party dresses at the church, it is important to maintain security on purses, wallets, cameras, and other valuables. After the service, someone from the wedding party should be assigned to clean up any used for dressing, and for removing any personal items from the rooms.

**When Can We Get Into the Church?**

The church will be opened for dressing, pictures, etc. **no more than three hours before the ceremony**. An additional charge may be added if extra time in the Church is requested. If special arrangements are needed for florists to deliver flowers, please contact the wedding coordinator. Please do not arrive at the church the day of the wedding any sooner than quite necessary – when people are already dressed and sitting around with nothing to do, accidents happen! – drinks get spilled, hems get stepped on, people get in to things, and tempers often get frayed. As you make arrangements with your photographer, please keep this three-hour time bracket in mind.

The pastor will give you a copy of the Wedding Service of The United Methodist Church, with suggestions for possible additions and variations. This service may be changed and adapted in discussion with the pastor. Additional resources for the service may be found on the internet, in public libraries, in wedding books, etc. Please note that if you desire that the Lord's Supper be celebrated during your ceremony, all guests present must be invited to partake.

**What Does the Church Provide?**

The church provides the sanctuary or chapel, along with heating and cooling as necessary. The church does provide an excellent sound system, with capabilities for playing both CDs and cassettes; and a video projection system. Because of the complexity of this system, only technicians certified by the church are allowed to use our system and there is a mandatory charge for an AV technician for each wedding.

In the foyer, a stand is available on which to place your guest book, and there are tables for gifts, etc. In the sanctuary, there are altar candles; there are also two seven-branch candelabra which may be used for a small fee. The church also provides two brass flower vases, which may be used on the altar, and flower stands.

Many couples choose to use a unity candle, sand ceremony, or other symbolic act during the wedding ceremony. The church can provide a small table for such acts, but all other materials must be provided by the couple.

Music, though not required, is typically used before and after the service, during the processional and recessional, and at various places during the service. Music may be played by an organist or pianist or keyboardist; sung by vocalists; or from CDs or cassettes. Please remember that commercial recordings are often long, and are difficult to shorten.

The church has a competent organist, or you may choose to get your own. Any guest organist will need to be checked out on our pipe organ, which is rather complex. The church does have a high-end keyboard (Clavinova) which may be used. If a vocalist or instrumentalist is to be accompanied by the organist, keyboardist, or pianist, rehearsal times will need to be scheduled. Also, if you want particular pieces of music played, be sure to inform the musicians well in advance so music can be procured. Please remember that it is your responsibility to check with the organist well in advance of the service, so that the organist is prepared to play the music you want played.

Congregational singing (hymns, etc.) may be used – either from the Hymnal or from projected words.

The “Lord’s Prayer” may be spoken or sung during the wedding service, and may be said by the entire congregation.

The pastor has final approval on any music played during the service. All the music used should serve to reflect and intensify the meaning of the service. Some popular music is appropriate, and some is not.

The church provides a Wedding Coordinator to help the pastor and the wedding party before, during, and after the ceremony. The wedding coordinator will open the church, prepare the sanctuary and other areas, be in charge of ushers and of activities up to and including the processional, and clean the church building after the ceremony. A fee is charged for the Wedding Coordinator’s services; if there are exceptional needs for clean-up, additional fees may be charged.

### Where Will We Have Our Reception?

There are many commercial establishments that will host wedding receptions – but they are often booked well in advance. It is usually best to have your reception plans confirmed before you reserve the church.

If you wish to have your wedding reception at the church, the United Methodist Women (UMW) are often willing to host the reception in Ehrett Hall. The pastor will help you contact the UMW. If the UMW is not able to help, you may rent Ehrett Hall and hire a caterer. The UMW is an independent organization within the church, and sets its own fees for receptions.