

Myers Memorial United Methodist Church

A Statement of Policy for Weddings & Receptions

I. Why a Church Wedding?

The order for the solemnization of matrimony is a part of the United Methodist Church. The minister instructs the congregation that the gathering is “in the sight of God.” The prime reason for having a church wedding should be to acknowledge the Christian significance of marriage and to worship God. Our church rejoices with you in this holy occasion and is eager to make your wedding memorable and beautiful. Our minister and church staff will assist you in any way possible.

The service of Christian marriage is found in the United Methodist Hymnal on pages 864-869. It 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 the Baptismal Covenant. Everything about the service is designed to witness that this is a Christian marriage.

Both words & actions consistently reflect the belief that husband and wife are equal partners in Christian marriage and that they are entering into the marriage of their own volition.

Those present are understood to be an active congregation rather than simply passive witnesses. They give their blessing to the couple and to the marriage, and they join in prayer and praise. It is highly appropriate that the congregation sing hymns and other acts of worship. See the wedding hymns in UMH 642-47, those listed under Weddings in UMH 953-54, and others listed in the service outline on pages 864-869.

Holy Communion may or may not be celebrated. If it is, it is most important that its significance be made clear. Specifically: (1) The marriage rite is included in a Service of Word and Table. (2) Not only the husband and wife but the whole congregation are to be invited to receive communion. It is our tradition to invite all Christians to the Lord’s table. (3) There should be no pressure that would embarrass those who for whatever reason, do not choose to receive communion.

The decision to perform the ceremony is the right and responsibility of the pastor, in accordance with the laws of the state and The United Methodist Church. All plans should be approved by the pastor. The pastor’s “due counsel with the parties involved” prior to marriage, mandated by The United Methodist Book of Discipline, should include, in addition to premarital counseling, discussing and planning the service with them and informing them of policies or guidelines established by the congregation on such matters as decorations, photography, and audio or video recording. Any leadership roles taken by other clergy should be at the invitation of the pastor of the church where service is held. The Director of Music should be consulted and work with the couple in all decision on music selection.

Ethnic and cultural traditions are encouraged and may be incorporated into the service at the discretion of the pastor.

Any children of the man or the woman, other family, and friends may take a variety of roles in the service, depending on their ages and abilities. They may, for example, be members of the wedding party, participate in the Response of the Families and People, read scripture lessons, sing or play instrumental music, or make a witness in their own words.

II. Arrangements

Weddings will not be placed on the church calendar until the MMUMC minister has approved all wedding arrangements and the information form has been returned. You may contact the minister at 704-864-3222 to schedule this meeting.

Upon approval of the MMUMC minister, all arrangements for weddings and/or receptions should be made through church office. Due to the high demand of our growing congregation, Myers Memorial UMC schedules weddings for ONLY members and their families. "Families" include: children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews of living church members.

At the initial meeting between the prospective bride and groom, the minister will share the wedding policies of the church and will make arrangements for pre-marital counseling sessions. The wedding director will instruct the prospective couple concerning other contacts to be made concerning music, custodial services, and use of the church facilities.

The Myers Memorial wedding director shall assist in planning and directing all rehearsals and weddings held in our church. There will be no outside-the-church directors.

Weddings shall not be scheduled in conflict with regularly scheduled programs of the church. Also, sensitivity must be given to seasons such as Advent and Holy Week when special services fill the church calendar.

III. Minister

Myers Memorial United Methodist Church requires that a clergyperson appointed to the congregation either performs or approves a guest United Methodist for the wedding ceremony. A clergy person from another denomination may be invited to assist with the ceremony at the discretion of the Myers Memorial UMC pastor.

As soon as the wedding arrangements have been cleared with the clergy appointed to Myers Memorial UMC and attached information form returned, the wedding will be scheduled on the church calendar.

All ministers will use the United Methodist Book of Worship for all weddings performed at Myers Memorial UMC.

IV. Music

The Christian wedding is an occasion of corporate worship, and the church considers it sacred religious service. Therefore, it should be one of participation and not mere observation. We encourage the congregation to participate in the service through the singing of hymns.

Music is a traditional and beautiful part of the ceremony, and only music of sacred or classical nature may be used. The couple will review with the Director of Music regarding appropriate music for the ceremony. Audio recordings may not be used during the wedding ceremony. All music, soloists, and instrumentalists must be approved by the Director of Music at least sixty (60) days in advance of the wedding rehearsal.

The church organist will be available to play for your wedding. Normally there is twenty to thirty minutes prelude of organ music before the wedding. It is best to allow the organist to select this music from his/her repertoire.

Upon special request, an organist other than the Myers Memorial UMC organist may be used; however, that person must be approved by the Director of Music.

If a soloist or instrumentalist is used, he/she should consult with the organist to arrange rehearsal time prior to the wedding rehearsal. Additional fees are to be paid to additional musicians.

V. Photography, Videography, Recordings

The wedding ceremony is a worship service; therefore, flash photography is not permitted during the ceremony. All requests for recordings should be cleared with the Wedding Director.

Equipment must not be within view of the congregation. Professional camera and recording equipment is permitted ONLY in the Narthex and/or behind the last pew in the rear of the Sanctuary.

VI. Other

In fairness to the minister and other staff members, the rehearsal should start on time and be concluded within 1-1/2 hours of the scheduled start time.

Alcoholic beverages and smoking are NOT permitted in any part of the church or church property.

No rice may be thrown inside or outside the church. Birdseed may be thrown outside ONLY. Birdseed must be cleaned from the steps and the sidewalks and shall be the responsibility of the wedding party.

No wedding bulletins will be prepared or printed by the church office.

VII. Christian Fellowship Center (CFC) & Kitchen Usage

The couple has the responsibility of choosing the place for the wedding reception and the caterer for the occasion. If available, the Christian Fellowship Center (CFC) may be booked for rehearsal parties, dinners, or for the wedding reception. Our CFC policies and fees apply during these occasions. See the CFC policies and fee schedule.

Our approved kitchen supervisor must be on site for use of the kitchen equipment. Outside caterers may use the kitchen under direction of the kitchen supervisor and complete clean up is required. The couple or their families will be held responsible for any damage. See fee schedule.

VIII. Decorations

The altar, pulpit, and lectern must always be unobstructed and in full view of the congregation. Nothing may be placed on the chancel rail, pulpit, altar, lectern, or organ console.

No nails, screws, thumbtacks, staples, or sticky tape may be used in any part of the church, nor may any carpentry work or other temporary construction be erected.

All candles must be dripless.

Floral arrangements are not permitted on the altar, pulpit or lectern, but on floral stands available in the chancel behind the altar. Protective means should be taken with the use of all plants and floral arrangements. Floral arrangements and candles should be kept simple so as not to detract from the Christian symbols in the sanctuary.

Any seasonal decorations used in the Sanctuary for liturgical seasons must remain in place.

IX. Responsibility

All decorations should be removed from the building immediately after the wedding. Under no circumstances will any of the candelabra or other floral equipment be left over until Sunday. The building must be left in the condition in which it was found. The bride's family shall be responsible for any damages to the building and facilities. Repairs and replacements resulting from damaging and defacing of the church property will be made at the expense of the bride's family.

Failure to abide by these policies may result in extra charges.

X. Finances

All Fees are to be paid no less than two weeks prior to the wedding date.

Minister \$300 minimum

Organist \$200

Wedding Director \$250

Janitorial Services

Ceremony \$125 Sanctuary Building

Rehearsal Dinner and/or Reception

\$125 CFC take down and cleaning

Kitchen Supervisor \$50 for 4 hours (Additional \$12/hour)

Key Deposit \$15 (Refunded when keys are returned)

CFC Rental Fees see Trustees fees sheet.

Following your initial meeting with the MMUMC minister / Wedding Director, please return the last page of this booklet to the church office at:

Myers Memorial United Methodist Church

301 S. New Hope Road

Gastonia, NC 28054

Please retain the remaining policy guidelines for your information.

Thank you.

If you have any questions, please contact the
Church Office at 704-864-3222.

Myers Memorial UMC Clergy

Rev. Sally Queen

pastor@myersmemorialumc.com

Rev. Sarah Watkins Davis

Sdavis2@wnccumc.net

Myers Memorial UMC Wedding Directors

Connie Elzey

704-864-3222

ext. 105

Lousia Suggs

704-824-2015

Cheryl White

734-679-5188

Sarah Davis

704-864-3222

ext. 109

Myers Memorial United Methodist Church Wedding Policy Contract

Wedding Director _____

Organist _____

Florist _____

Caterer _____

Additional contacts regarding arrangements? _____

Will the flowers remain at Myers Memorial UMC for Worship the following Sunday?

Yes No

If yes, please consider how it should be acknowledged in the church bulletin. (Traditional Wording: The Flowers in the Sanctuary are given to the glory of God in honor/memory of...)

The below signed hereby agree to comply with the polices and regulations of Myers Memorial UMC. We understand that failure to abide by these polices or extraordinary requirements made of the church staff may result in additional charges to us or our families.

Bride

Date

Groom

Date

Church Representative

Date

Wedding Contact Information

Myers Memorial United Methodist Church

Please return this form to the church office as soon as possible for the wedding date to be confirmed on the church calendar.

Wedding Details

(Time, Date, Place, Location) _____

Rehearsal Details

(Time, Place, Location) _____

Reception Details

(Time, Place, Location) _____

The Bride

Name _____

Church Affiliation _____

Phone # _____

Email _____

Mailing Address _____

The Groom

Name _____

Church Affiliation _____

Phone # _____

Email _____

Mailing Address _____

The Officiant

Name _____

Church Affiliation _____

Phone # _____

Email _____

Mailing Address _____
