

First United Methodist Church Of Belvidere

Wedding Policy

As of July 7, 2015

First United Methodist Church
610 Bonus Ave.
Belvidere, IL. 61008
(815) 544-3479

The Service of Christian Marriage

A Christian wedding is a service of worship, proclaiming Christian marriage as a sacred covenant. The partners give themselves to each other by solemn vows in the presence of God, supported by the presence and prayers of their loved ones. Whether the service is traditional or newly created, it expresses both the seriousness of the couple's commitment and the joy of their love for each other. The church has long believed that the love between marriage partners reflects God's love for humankind and Christ's self-giving love for the Church. God created us with a longing for relationship and blesses our efforts to live in lifelong covenant. In turn, human love can help us receive God's love more deeply.

The First United Methodist Church is happy to be part of your marriage celebration. We also encourage you to participate in our congregation or another church of your choice. A deep and lasting marriage needs prayers not only at the beginning, but also throughout its life. The church can help you grow spiritually as individuals and as a couple, providing a community of friendship, grace, and support. You are welcome here.

The Church and Your Wedding

This information will introduce you to the policies of the First United Methodist Church. *When you submit the Reservation & Wedding Information form, you are agreeing to abide by these policies.* Weddings must be scheduled prior to 90 days before the wedding date. Scheduling priority for wedding ceremonies is given to First United Methodist Church members and present active participants.

Reserving a Wedding Date at the First UMC

1. Read the wedding policy to determine if our facility will meet your needs.
2. Phone the church office at 815-544-3479 to determine if the facility and the pastor are available on the date you are interested in.
3. If your request is approved, complete the Reservation & Wedding Information form and return it to the church office at least 90 days prior to your wedding date. By submitting this form, you agree to follow First United Methodist Church wedding and facility policies.
4. Your wedding date is confirmed upon receipt of the wedding reservation fee listed on the Reservation & Wedding Information form.

Reserving a Wedding Reception at First United Methodist Church

The church may be used for a reception for additional fees. Please let the church know when scheduling your wedding if you are interested in having a reception.

Marriage Encounter

It is the policy of the United Methodist Church that the engaged couple participate together with the pastor who will be performing the ceremony in a 4 to 6 week marriage encounter. This encounter will enable the couple to get to know each other's thoughts and opinions on topics that may have not been discussed prior but which are crucial to the success of any marriage. As soon as possible after securing the wedding date on the church calendar, the encounter sessions should also be scheduled. Currently our church uses the PREPAR/ENRICH program developed by Life Innovations, Inc. This program requires an inventory to assist the pastor for the rest of the counseling session. The cost of this inventory is \$35. The inventory will be further explained during the preliminary discussion. If after the encounter sessions the couple finds it in their best interests to either postpone or call off the wedding any fees paid prior will be fully refunded

minus the Prepare/Enrich inventory fee. The marriage encounter sessions are not optional and facilitate any marriages unless prior counseling has been undergone.

Fee Schedule

See attached schedule sheet

Guest Pastors

From time to time that question is posed as to whether or not people can use our facility for their wedding but use a pastor of their choice to perform the ceremony; such as a friend or relative of the family. In general, the United Methodist Church expects the pastor assigned to a church to perform and oversee all functions and events at the appointed church. The reason behind this is to ensure that all services within the church remain holy and God focused. Guest pastors for weddings are therefore, in general not permitted. It is possible that the service could be co-officiated by our pastor and a guest pastor; meaning that the two would work together and both would be present and take part in officiating the ceremony. However, this must be initiated and coordinated by our staff pastor on a case by case basis. Guest pastors must have proper credentials from an accredited seminary and denomination affiliation.

Wedding Coordinator

The wedding coordinator will assist in all details relating to the use of the building. Additionally she will arrange for sound booth coverage and musicians (if requested). She will contact our church musicians to reserve the date. If they are not available she will notify you and assist in locating someone else if needed. The wedding coordinator or other authorized church representative must be present at the rehearsal and the wedding.

The Wedding Organist and Soloist

The First United Methodist Church does have an on-staff pianist available to play for if you desire. Since the wedding is a service of worship, care needs to be taken in the selection of appropriate music for the service. The pastor must review and approve of all selected pieces. If you wish to use additional musicians or alternative instruments, please discuss this with the pastor. If you have arranged to have a soloist at your wedding it is advisable to have the pianist rehearse with the soloist prior to the service. If our staff pianist is not available for the date of your wedding, a guest pianist can be invited to play. However, any guest pianist must be approved by our staff pianist before approval is given. Use of pre-recorded music is permitted with prior approval of the pastor.

The Rehearsal

A good rehearsal is the key to a well-ordered wedding ceremony. Every member of the wedding party should be present if at all possible. Because other events are scheduled at the church, it is important that the rehearsal begin at the time scheduled. Most wedding rehearsals can be completed within one hour.

Marriage License

Please give your marriage license to the pastor 2 weeks prior to the rehearsal. This must be obtained from the Boone County Clerk. Only a Boone County Marriage License is valid at the First United Methodist Church. To obtain this license, you will need at least one form of identification and \$20.00 in cash. Prices for marriage license subject to changes made by Boone County without prior notice. Office location and other information can be found at <http://www.boonecountyiil.org/content/marriage-licenses> or by calling the Boone County Clerk's office at 815-544-3103.

Smoking, Alcohol, and Drugs

The First United Methodist Church is a smoke and alcohol free building. There is no smoking permitted within the building or anywhere on church property, this includes the church parking lot. Any cigarette butts found on church property will be considered littering and will be cause for an additional janitorial fee. There will be no use of alcohol and/or drugs prior to the service whether at the church or otherwise, this includes the rehearsal. Your wedding is an extremely important event in your life and one blessed by God. If members of the wedding party or guests choose to abuse chemicals prior to participating in the service, it

will be cause for the pastor to exclude those people from taking part in or attending the wedding ceremony. For extreme cases, the pastor reserves the right to cancel the entire service. Should a cancellation occur due to this substance abuse policy, there will be no refund given from any payments already received.

The Sanctuary

The sanctuary seats up to 350 people. Decorating of the sanctuary will be discussed with the wedding coordinator. She will work with you to coordinate the altar colors with your wedding colors. There may be times during the church year that certain colors cannot be changed. If flower petals are to be thrown they need to be silk.

Any use of candles must be approved by the wedding coordinator & placed in appropriate areas (communion table, altar).

Decorations

The church facility can be decorated the day of the wedding. If no other program is to be held in the sanctuary, it may be decorated the day prior if the sanctuary is available. *Please let the office manager know when reserving your wedding if you would like to reserve the space for more than the wedding day.* All decorations, flowers, and equipment must be removed following the ceremony without damaging the facility. Do not use any glitter. Also, please use clips or wrap-around material to attach bows or flowers to pews. Do not use tape.

Rice, Birdseed and Bubbles

Throwing rice or birdseed after the wedding is not permitted. Blowing soap bubbles is permitted, outside the building only. Releasing balloons, butterflies, or birds is also not permitted.

Personal Items

The church is not responsible for wedding gifts or any personal effects or equipment brought to or left in the church building. Wedding parties are responsible for returning to the church and picking up any items they have left. If the owner of the lost belonging lives out-of-town, a local friend or relative can retrieve the item for the owner. The church office will hold valuable items for safekeeping until they are picked up. If the wedding party accidentally takes home items belonging to the church, the wedding party is responsible for returning them to the church in order to have their damage deposit refunded.

Photography

Pictures of the wedding are treasured keepsakes and couples and their families want the pictures to be beautiful. Because the wedding is a service of worship, certain standards should be observed regarding pictures taken at the wedding. Once the bride has come down the aisle and is present at the chancel area, pictures can be taken from the rear of the sanctuary using available light. Flash photographs are not to be taken during the ceremony, nor is the photographer to move down the aisles. We can easily recreate any picture you want following the service. This will ensure an uninterrupted wedding and you will get a better picture. If you plan to videotape your wedding ceremony, the person operating the camera may set it up in the back of the sanctuary or on either side of the chancel area. The video equipment must be set up at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the ceremony. The person videotapping must remain in one position throughout the ceremony. **Please tell your guests not to take flash pictures during the ceremony.** A good rule of thumb is to make mention of the photography policy in your bulletins.

Bulletins

You may purchase printed wedding programs from the church office. Program information must be turned into the church office at least three weeks prior to the ceremony. Program pricing is individualized based on size and materials used.