

Chaires United Methodist Church Wedding Policy

We are delighted that you are considering Chaires United Methodist Church (Chaires UMC) for your wedding. We believe that your marriage is a sacred undertaking, a happy social occasion, and one of the most important ministries of the Church. The uniting of a man and a woman under the blessing of the Almighty God is a service of Divine Worship. We look forward to working with you to make your wedding a memorable day and to help you prepare for a healthy, growing marriage.

And, as important as the wedding service is, what matters most of all is your marriage. In his first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul wrote:

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 RSV)

The purpose of this booklet is to inform you of certain procedures that have been approved by the Trustees of Chaires United Methodist Church as a helpful guide for your wedding.

Setting the Date

Weddings require careful planning and the more time you allow the better. Before you can schedule your wedding date at Chaires United Methodist Church, you must check with the church secretary or the Pastor for availability. Our Church office phone number is (850) 219-9361. Weddings are not scheduled on Sundays, Holy Week, or the weekend before Easter.

Weddings should be scheduled six months in advance, provided the pastor has approved it and the applicable deposits have been paid. The Sanctuary seats approximately 150-175 and the Historical Church Sanctuary seats approximately 100. The wedding and reception has to conclude by 8:00pm if there are church activities the following day.

The Role of the Pastor

The Pastor of Chaires United Methodist Church looks forward to working with you to help make your wedding a success. It is assumed that our Pastor will have the privilege of officiating the wedding. The Pastor will direct everything that happens at the church. If a professional wedding consultant is hired, he or she will work under the direction of the Pastor. In cases where the wedding party desires another minister, our Pastor will invite the visiting minister to officiate the marriage ceremony.

Chaires United Methodist Church requires pre-marital counseling for all couples, which consists of at least four sessions designed for couples that are making the commitment to marriage. If another Pastor is used for the pre-marital counseling, then it is the responsibility of the couple to provide the Chaires UMC Pastor with a copy of the Certificate of Completion of Premarital Preparation Course as defined in the Florida Statue Chapter 741.0305 no later than one week before the wedding.

The wedding is a service of worship in which we celebrate God's gift of human love and affirm the covenant between a man and a woman in holy matrimony. The Pastor will meet with you to determine the format of the service which may include:

Selection of congregational hymns, if desired
Selection of appropriate scripture
Selection of solos or special music, use of the unity candle (candles are not provided by the church)

Marriage is an adult decision. Children are welcome to be in the wedding party, but we strongly encourage them to be at least 5 years old. Experience has shown that children must be mature to participate in the service. The couple's marriage license must be brought to the Chaires UMC Pastor at the wedding rehearsal.

Rules for Decorating

We believe that both our current sanctuary and the Historical Church sanctuary are already furnished as a place of dignity and beauty. In both places, we ask that extreme care be taken in placing flowers, palms, and other decorations so that the floors, carpets, walls and furnishings are not damaged. Decorations must NOT be hung or suspended from the fixtures or furnishings. It is imperative that no tacks, nails, pins, screws or scotch tape be used in decorating. Ribbon or simple arrangements of flowers may mark reserved pews.

The florist or family decorator must remove all decorations immediately following the wedding, any damage done to the furniture or furnishing shall be repaired to the satisfaction of the church by the family responsible, in addition to the removal of all candle dripping and wax from the carpet and furnishings.

The altar table must be central to the service and nothing may be used to block the visibility of the altar table. One floral or Unity candle arrangement may be placed on the table in the current or historical sanctuary.

Wedding Music

Music plays a vital part in all the worship services at Chaires United Methodist Church. The purpose of music is to create a spirit of Christian worship and to glorify God's holy name. Since the wedding is an act of worship and praise to God, care should be taken in choosing music that is appropriate for the ceremony. It is the bride and groom's responsibility to schedule a time to meet with our music director to select the music for the wedding or to introduce the wedding party's music coordinator to our Pastor and or music director to help coordinate the selected music.

In addition to the processional and recessional music, the following are also appropriate places during the ceremony where music could enhance the service:

- During and after the seating of the mothers.
- Hymn may be sung by all in attendance prior to the processional
- During the lighting of the unity candles
- While the couple is kneeling during the prayer

If you desire to use the church pianist for your wedding, it is your responsibility to contact the pianist, however, guest pianist are welcomed.

The Wedding Party

It is expected that members of the wedding party will recognize the fact that this is a church and will conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting the atmosphere of a place of worship.

It is expected that all members of the wedding party will refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages. No rehearsal or wedding will be performed if any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol. No alcoholic beverages may be served on the church premises at any time.

Smoking is NOT permitted anywhere in the buildings at any time. Confetti or rice may NOT be thrown in the buildings or on the grounds. Birdseed may be thrown in the parking lot only away from the sidewalks. It is the obligation of the bride and groom to make certain that these policies are made known to and followed by all members of the wedding party.

Dressing Rooms

There are small classrooms that are available for the bride and her attendants to dress at the church. The groom and his attendants should dress before arrival. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom or those whom they designate to arrange for the care of the property of the wedding party before, during and after the wedding and for the transportations of such items. Since the church cannot be responsible for personal belongings, we request that you remove everything from these rooms immediately following the wedding.

The Reception

Our current sanctuary may be converted into a fellowship / reception hall for serving refreshments. For the use of the kitchen facilities, the church secretary or Pastor must be consulted in advance. Church personnel will set up the tables and chairs, which will seat approximately 100 people.

Financial Costs of Your Wedding

You will have discovered that a large formal church wedding and reception are quite expensive, especially to the family of the bride. Among these are certain charges the church must make simply to meet our costs of building maintenance, utilities and custodial care. Our Board of Trustees has approved two schedules of charges for the church use, one for church member families and one for non-members families. Our own custodian must be employed to see that all rooms are clean and in proper order.

All fees, with the exception of the Pastor's honorarium, must be received two weeks prior to the wedding rehearsal with the exceptions of extra custodial fees incurred by using more than the time allotted and paid for. A contract, representing the terms and conditions as prescribe above will be signed by the Chair's UMC Pastor and the bride or groom and will be initiated at least two weeks prior to the wedding event. See attached blank contract form. Please make out one check payable to Chair's United Methodist Church.

Church Member Weddings

For Chaires United Methodist Church member families, there will be no charge for the use of the Sanctuary or the Historical Church. There will be nominal fees for the following services:

- Security Deposit - \$200.00 (refundable)
- Music Director - \$100.00 (if used)
- Pastor Honorarium - Optional
- Custodial Fees - \$125.00 (minimum 25.00/hr for 5 hours)
- Sound Technician - \$50.00 (minimum if one is needed)

Non-Member Weddings

A non-refundable deposit of \$100.00 is due before a wedding will be placed on the church calendar. This amount will be credited towards your total bill.

- Security Deposit - \$200.00
- Historical Church - \$250.00
- Sanctuary / Fellowship Hall - \$300.00
- Sanctuary/Fellowship Hall with Kitchen - \$350.00
- Pastor Honorarium - \$150.00
- Custodial Fees - \$125.00
- Sound Technician - \$50.00 (minimum if one is needed)

Suggested guidelines for Photographer and / or Videographer

We ask that professional photographers, family members or others take no photographs during the ceremony. It is suggested that as many pictures as possible be taken before the service and the wedding party may return for further pictures immediately after the ceremony. The processional and recessional may be photographed from the aisle providing the photographer remains behind the last seated guest. Videotaping during the service is acceptable providing the camera/video equipment is stationary. No flash photography during the ceremony.

Wedding Approval and Scheduling Process

The Chaires United Methodist Church initial wedding process includes:

Submittal of a signed request form to the church indicating both bride and groom have read, understood and agreed (agreement form) to follow the church's Wedding Guidelines and Conditions. Notification (by a representative of the church) regarding availability. This will happen within 10 days of the receipt of this signed request form

Wedding reservations are then held for 30 days and become official when the signed wedding contract and the required deposit are returned to the church office. At this time the full wedding packet can be picked up in the church office.

Suggested Outline for the Marriage Ceremony

(Note: This is a service of Christian Marriage from the 1964 Book of Worship)

Wedding Cost Worksheet