

SHARON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
POPLAR BRANCH, NORTH CAROLINA  
FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT USE POLICY

**FACILITIES USE INFORMATION:**

The buildings of the Sharon United Methodist Church exist for the glory of God and to facilitate Christian Ministry. These facilities and equipment are to be used primarily for local church ministries. However, we recognize that our ministries to members and to the community are enhanced through a broad use of our facilities. Therefore, it is our intent to make these properties and facilities available to other groups, including religious, charitable, cultural, community service, fellowship, and educational groups, as well as by individuals that fall within these guidelines set by the Board of Trustees. Our Church buildings are a resource and a gift that can be used to truly make a difference. Groups or individuals may use the facilities with approval if they meet the following criteria:

1. The activity does not adversely affect ongoing Church programs.
2. The activity will not damage Church property or endanger people.
3. The activity does not violate non-profit regulations.
4. The individual or group follows the guidelines for scheduling and using the facilities.
5. Animals are prohibited inside the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall except for specifically trained animals meeting the definition of a Service Animal under ADA Requirements. All animals are prohibited in the Kitchen.

All who use these facilities to this end are welcome.

The following policies are to ensure that adequate care is given to protect the congregation, guests, and facilities so that all may be able to enjoy their benefits.

**PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES:** The Church may not be used for any of the following:

1. Partisan political groups
2. For-Profit activities
3. Any purpose which is not consistent with the goals and purposes of Sharon United Methodist Church.
4. Illegal activities and the use of alcohol or tobacco type products in the buildings.
5. Printed materials that violate provisions of the United Methodist Discipline regarding inappropriate sexually explicit materials are prohibited.

**FACILITY USE POLICY:** Individuals and groups (members and non-members) approved to use the Church buildings and grounds must comply with the following guidelines:

1. Coordinate with Pastor/Trustees to open and close the building(s).
2. Coordinate with Pastor/Trustees for use and setup of special equipment such as audio/video equipment, kitchen appliances, etc.
3. Coordinate with Pastor/Trustees for the use and setup of tables, chairs, and other furniture.
4. Coordinate with Pastor/Trustees for special events and services including use of clergy or musicians.
5. The participation of children or youth in Church facilities will be governed by provisions of Sharon's Safe Sanctuaries Policy.
6. Publicity material and public service announcements in which Sharon United Methodist Church's name is used must have prior approval of the Pastor/Trustees.
7. Take responsibility to avoid damage to buildings, furnishings, grounds, or equipment. Safety hazards or damage must be reported at once to the Pastor/Trustees. The Church is not responsible for any damage to property of others caused by parties using these facilities or visiting the Church.
8. Use of church facilities shall conform to all County, fire, and safety ordinances.
9. Perform a general cleaning of the area used, placing all cups, cans, paper, and trash in appropriate receptacles at the end of the function. All trash must be removed from Church facilities and disposed of properly.
10. Return all tables, chairs, and equipment to their original location and configuration.
11. Ensure all kitchen surfaces, appliances, and utensils are cleaned and stored properly.
12. All small appliances must be turned off and unplugged before leaving the premises.
13. Ensure that all audio/visual or other equipment is turned off and stored correctly before leaving the premises.
14. Ensure all lights are turned off before leaving.
15. Ensure all doors and windows are locked/latched while leaving the premises.
16. Animals may be allowed in the Learning Center with the permission of the Pastor/Trustees when the animals are a part of the learning/worship program.

**SCHEDULING:** All scheduling shall be through the Pastor/Trustees. To use Church facilities, each applicant must fill out an application and submit it to [sumctrustee01@gmail.com](mailto:sumctrustee01@gmail.com) or directly to the Pastor. Completion of the form is unnecessary for groups that are part of the Sharon United Methodist Church, however scheduling with the pastor is essential. Priority of usage shall be given to groups in this order:

1. Church activities
2. Funerals
3. Church Family Weddings
4. Church sponsored groups (unless booked prior to a wedding)
5. Church members' personal use
6. Non-member weddings/Community use

The above priority ranking does not assume that an appropriate scheduled event cannot be moved to a higher-ranking event. Exceptions will be made when practical in the case of funerals, but prior standing events take precedent.

The lead-time to request use of the buildings or grounds is a minimum of four weeks (eight weeks for weddings). Arrangements made without the appropriate lead-time are at the discretion of the Pastor. Requests will be evaluated and approved/disapproved within seven business days of submission in writing.

**CHILDCARE:** Nursery facilities are available, but nursery workers are not included. Non-church related activities must hire and pay workers separately.

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH ON PREMISES:** All youth activities shall be adequately supervised by adults at all times.

**LIABILITY INSURANCE:** Outside groups not sponsored by the Church must provide proof of liability insurance. This does not apply to individuals, church members, weddings, or funerals unless required by the Board of Trustees, or their designate, for a specific event. All user groups are responsible for conducting their activities in a safe manner. Any and all damages to Church facility and equipment shall be paid for and is the sole responsibility of the user.

**TABLES, CHAIRS, AND EQUIPMENT:** Tables, chairs, and equipment are not to be removed from any room or building unless with permission of the Pastor/Trustees. All tables, chairs, and equipment must be returned to its original place and in its original condition.

**HANGING OF SIGNS, DECORATING, AND EQUIPMENT PLACEMENT:** No nails, tacks, push pins, masking tape, duct tape or adhesive tape of any kind may be used on any wall or door (inside or outside). In short no type of adhesive, nail, pin, tack, or other device which may leave a permanent mark on any wall, door, fixture, or surface may be used. Removable tape, wrapped floral wire, or other non-marring devices are acceptable. Wire attached to appropriate picture molding or other mounting device already affixed to the wall, is acceptable for hanging light-weight banners, pictures, or signs.

***Emergency exits and/or signage, safety/emergency fixtures or equipment, or safety/emergency devices or sensors may not be blocked, obscured, or disabled in any way whether by decorations, equipment, or other furnishings.***

Equipment, furnishings, decorations, food/beverage containers, cutting devices, pens, markers, or paints, may not be used in any way that would cause any surface, fixture or furnishing to be marred or damaged.

**AUDIO/VISUAL POLICIES:** Music played at any event must be appropriate for the setting. Any record, tape, CD, DVD, video, or other sound/projection device played or viewed may not be one displaying the Parent Advisory Warning Label. They must be covered by our CCLI and

CVLI License and must be approved by the Pastor/Trustees. All movies other than “G” rated movies will require approval on a case-by-case basis.

Use of sound, or lighting equipment is only by specific authorization and by persons trained in the operation of the equipment. Reservation of an area such as the Sanctuary or Learning Center does not construe permission to use sound, lighting, or recreational equipment.

**KITCHEN AND PRODUCT USAGE:** Use of the kitchen facility is only by specific authorization. Reservation of an area such as the Fellowship Hall or the Learning Center does not construe permission to use the kitchen or its equipment or supplies.

Church disposable products (paper goods, food, etc.) may not be used by non-church groups without expressed permission.

**USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS:** Use of the Church organ or pianos or any other instrument requires permission from the Pastor/Trustees. In no case shall either of the pianos be moved or relocated even a few inches.

**APPLICATION AND FEES:** All non-members must submit a \$50 utility fee plus a \$50 deposit with the *SUMC Application For Use of Church Facility and Equipment*. The \$50 deposit will be returned following an inspection by the Trustees after the event has concluded when the facility has been returned to its original configuration and cleaning has been completed. There is no fee for use by a member of Sharon United Methodist Church; however, donations toward building use expenses are accepted and appreciated. For members, an inspection by the Trustees after the event has concluded will be conducted to insure the facility has been returned to its original configuration and cleaning has been completed. *SUMC Application For Use of Church Facility and Equipment* must be completed for use of all equipment and church facility.

**LIMITED ACCESS:** Areas not specifically needed for a scheduled event are off-limits to all persons in attendance. **The responsible party for the group using the Church facilities is liable for all violations of this or any policy, including damages resulting from failure to comply with these policies.**

**FINAL AUTHORITY:** The Pastor and Trustees Chairperson of Sharon United Methodist Church have final authority for policy and procedure and any exception to these or other established policies, within the limits of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. The Pastor/Trustees Chairperson may determine which groups/individuals meet the criteria for facilities usage and may interpret these policies in daily usage. The Pastor/Trustees Chairperson, or designee, together may make exceptions when deemed appropriate, or may refuse use of facilities by anyone when it is in the Church’s best interest.