

SHARON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
POPLAR BRANCH, NORTH CAROLINA
WEDDING POLICY

The church family of Sharon United Methodist Church is happy that you desire to have your wedding in the church. The altar is a place where great decisions are made in the presence of God. It is a holy place and is appropriately used for the uniting of persons in matrimony. We wish you happiness as you plan and live in a Christian marriage. It should be remembered that a church wedding is a service of worship. Therefore, the decorations, the music, and the attitudes and decorum of all participants should be in keeping with the worship experience. In that spirit, the following policy is offered to guide the planning and conduct of the wedding service at Sharon United Methodist Church, Poplar Branch, NC.

THE PASTOR:

The United Methodist Church instructs its pastors to perform the wedding ceremony only after “due counsel with the parties involved,” and states that, “The decision to perform the ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the Pastor.” Therefore, the first step toward planning a wedding is to make an appointment with the Pastor. No wedding date can be finalized before this consultation. The Pastor will go over with you and answer any questions regarding these policies for use of the Sharon United Methodist Church facilities, share with you the requirements set by the State of North Carolina for license and set up dates for pre-marriage counseling, a requirement of The United Methodist Church of each bridal couple. After receipt of the Wedding Information Sheet, the pastor will put the date on the church calendar. An approved copy of the Wedding Information Sheet will be sent to you, along with a schedule of when deposits are due to the church.

It is the policy of this church that its Pastor is in charge of all weddings in this church. However, another Pastor may assist or perform the ceremony, provided the Pastor of this church is first consulted and agrees to issue an invitation to the guest Pastor.

CAN WE WRITE OUR OWN VOWS?

Traditionally, The United Methodist wedding liturgy will be used for the wedding service. However, the pastor is open to working with you if you so wish to write your own vows.

YOUR WEDDING SCHEDULE:

You will need someone assigned to serve as the wedding director to assist in the planning and the directing of the wedding service and/or reception if held at Sharon United Methodist Church. The coordinator will work with the bride to begin preparation for the wedding. This person will be crucial at the rehearsal in making certain wedding participants are dispatched at the appropriate times in the service and will serve as your “go to” for any needs during the ceremony. The coordinator will meet with the pastor two weeks before the wedding to go over the service and coordinate details for the rehearsal.

The bride must have decisions for wedding protocol decided with the director before the rehearsal. It makes for a smooth, flawless rehearsal when the order of the bridesmaids or place of a solo has already been decided by the bride, rather than the assembled gathering at the rehearsal.

SPECIFIC POLICIES:

An ordained pastor of The United Methodist Church will officiate all weddings at Sharon United Methodist Church. However, a non-UMC guest minister may co-officiate, if approved and invited by the Sharon UMC pastor.

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

Wedding party members will refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages both before the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony. No alcoholic beverages may be served on the church premises at any time and any person appearing to be under the influence will be asked to leave.

All materials used in the Sanctuary must be moved within an hour following the wedding's completion so that custodial staff may come in and clean the building.

It is the obligation of the bride and groom to make certain these guidelines are made known to the members of the wedding party and their guests.

PIANIST/MUSIC POLICIES

Music for the wedding ceremony at Sharon United Methodist Church is an important component to the service. A wedding service is a worship service. The music chosen for the wedding ceremony should reflect what would be appropriate for a Sunday morning service of worship at Sharon UMC.

Soon after the wedding has been approved and placed on the church calendar, the applicant should contact the Pianist/Music Director to discuss their role in the wedding. Just as with the Pastor, another pianist, organist, guitarist or other musical ensembles may be used. However, this must come with the Pianist/Music Director's approval of the replacement.

We understand that our traditions may be different from other churches; the Pianist/Music Director will guide you in selection appropriate music from classic to contemporary genre for the service.

Weddings are not understood to be part of the Music Director's normal duties. Therefore, there is a fee listed under Financial Arrangement for these professional services.

DECORATIONS:

Our sanctuary is a beautiful and dignified worship space. Therefore, only a minimum of decorations are needed.

- Natural or silk flowers or greenery may be used. Two arrangements may be used on either side of the altar.
- No tape or tacks are to be affixed to church furniture, walls or woodwork.
- Seasonal decorations in the sanctuary (i.e., Christmas tree and greenery for Advent season) may not be removed or changed.
- The church DOES NOT provide candelabras or kneeling benches. This can be secured from florist.
- The church DOES NOT provide a Unity Candle, but allows its use in the service. This can be secured from florist.
- The church provides white paraments and altar candles.
- Only candelabras with non-drip candles may be used behind the altar.
- Flame-less white candles may be used in the windows.
- All furniture, musical instruments and choir chairs must stay in place and not be moved from the chancel area.
- Only artificial/silk flower petals may be "dropped" by the flower girl or otherwise used to decorate the aisle walkway.
- Birdseed or bubbles, rather than rice, may be used for the traditional post marriage ceremony. Birdseed or bubbles can be used outside of the building only.
- No aisle runners shall be used.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT

Members: There is no charge for church members for the use of the church building for weddings, receptions and rehearsal dinners. Members, however, are required to pay custodial, pianist, director and sound operator fees (if needed).

Non-Members: Non-members are required to pay custodial, pianist, director and sound operator fees (if needed), in addition to a nominal fee to offset expenses of the church.

Fees: All fees are to be paid directly to these individuals or church (for operating expenses) prior to the rehearsal.

Pastor's Honorarium Members \$ _____ Non-Members \$ _____

Pianist Members \$ _____ Non-Members \$ _____

If the pianist is to accompany a soloist and/or instrumentalist, rehearsal time is necessary, and an addition fee per soloist or instrumentalist will be charged.

Wedding Director Members \$ _____ Non-Members \$ _____

Sound System Operator Members \$ _____ Non-Members \$ _____

Includes rehearsal and wedding.

Custodial Fees

Wedding Only Members \$ _____ Non-Members \$ _____

Includes cleaning sanctuary, front entry, outside areas, restrooms, halls and dressing areas.

Wedding and Reception Members \$ _____ Non-Members \$ _____

In addition to the above, includes set up of tables & chairs, cleaning floors, disposing of trash and cleaning the kitchen.

Wedding, Reception & Rehearsal Dinner Members \$ _____ Non-Members \$ _____

I have read the Wedding Policy of Sharon United Methodist Church, including the Financial Agreement and agree to follow all the rules and provide payment for use of the facilities prior to the event.

Bride _____ Groom _____

Date _____