

A&M United Methodist Church Wedding Policy



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Congratulations on Your Engagement!

We are delighted that you have chosen A&M United Methodist Church for your wedding. Our staff is here to assist you to make sure your wedding is a memorable experience. We want this experience, your marriage, and the wedding service itself to be a meaningful Christian event.

The marriage ceremony is a worship service. It is one of the most sacred rites, which the pastors perform under the authority of the church. In order that you may have a sacred and dignified wedding ceremony, the pastors and staff of A&M United Methodist Church ask that you read this policy, which has been approved by the Board of Trustees and is designed to help you plan for this memorable Christian experience. We look forward to helping you get off to a great start in the exciting adventure of Christian marriage.

Congratulations!
The A&M United Methodist Staff

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SCHEDULING THE WEDDING

Wedding Dates & Time

Weddings can be scheduled **at least three months in advance, but not more than eleven months in advance** of the wedding date.

Because of numerous church activities, weddings may not be scheduled on: Sundays, Holy Week, New Year's Eve or Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, home Aggie Football games, Thanksgiving Day and the Christmas period from December 23 through December 27.

To allow adequate time between weddings scheduled for the same day, we ask that weddings be scheduled for 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. Rehearsals are scheduled at 5:30pm the day prior to the wedding, unless there are multiple weddings scheduled. You may request an alternate wedding time when you submit the wedding contract.

Facilities

Our sanctuary can seat approximately 650 guests (comfortably seats 400 in lower level).

All wedding reservations give you access to our facilities & sanctuary for a total of 4 hours. Typically, doors open 2.5 hours before the ceremony for your use. If you would like to reserve the facilities for more than 4 hours, you may request to rent more time at an hourly rate and dependent on availability.

Calendar Check

We recommend you check the online church calendar to see what church-wide events are scheduled on your preferred date. You may also contact the Church Office with any questions about the reservation process or questions about dates.

Non-Member Weddings

Unless either the bride or groom, a parent or a guardian are members of A&M United Methodist Church at the time the wedding is scheduled, the wedding is regarded as one of *non-members*. We assume that non-members desire to have their wedding at A&M United Methodist Church because of their interest in the faith and worship life of this congregation. Because of the need to understand United Methodist worship, arrange for one or both of the wedding partners to attend worship here for at least four Sundays *prior to reserving your wedding date*.

Non-members are required to submit four worship bulletins (different days) to show your attendance at those worship services when you submit your contract.

Member Weddings

You may qualify for the member price if you or a parent or guardian has been an active member of A&M United Methodist Church for six months or longer. "Active" is defined as actively supporting the church with your gifts and your presence.

Informal Weddings

Small, informal weddings performed in the Pastor's office, the Chapel, or in the Sanctuary are limited to immediate families and may be deemed exceptions to the standard fees at the Pastor's discretion.

Deposit & Wedding Contract

To officially reserve the church for your wedding, you must submit a completed A&M UMC Wedding Contract and a \$250 deposit payment to the Church Office. If applicable, you must also submit the additional deposit to hold the reception at the church, and if you are a non-member, the required four worship bulletins. In the event that both bride and groom live out of town, parents of the couple may arrange the reservations.

After receiving the required paperwork and deposit, the Director of Church Life will confirm with the Church Staff for the availability of the date and follow up with a confirmation email to the couple. This process may take up to 1-2 weeks, but we will try and confirm with the couple as soon as possible.

Steps To Schedule the Wedding:

1. Read the A&M UMC Wedding Policy, including the photographer and florist agreements.
2. If a non-member, you must attend at least 4 weeks of worship services and collect bulletins to submit with the Wedding Contract.
3. Check the online church calendar to see if your desired date for the ceremony has openings. *(This is not a guarantee of availability.)*
4. Complete the A&M UMC Wedding Contract and submit the \$250 deposit to the Church Office.
 - a. Checks can be made to “A&M United Methodist Church”
 - i. Be sure to put bride/groom names in Memo Line.
 - b. You may pay by credit card online at www.am-umc.org, but you must pay an additional 5% to cover credit card fees at time of payment.
 - i. Ex: \$250 + \$12.50 (5%) = \$262.50 credit card payment
 - c. If a non-member, you must submit the 4 worship bulletins with the wedding contract as well.
 - d. Wedding Contracts & Deposits can be made as early as 11 months before your desired wedding date or as late as 3 months prior to the desired date.
5. If you plan to host your reception at the church, you must submit an additional deposit to reserve the reception room when you submit the Wedding Contract. See facility costs for more information.
6. After the Wedding Contract & deposit is submitted, you will receive a confirmation email and additional documents from the Director of Church Life. Please allow 2 weeks to receive confirmation before contacting the Church Office.
7. Final wedding and reception fees are due in full at least *60 days* prior to the wedding date.

AFTER YOU SCHEDULE YOUR WEDDING

Church Staff Help

The Director of Church Life

The Director of Church Life will be your main contact for submitting paperwork, payments, room reservations, coordinating deadlines and help answer questions you might have about the overall process. However, anyone in the Church Office should be able to assist you as well.

Church Wedding Hostess

An A&M United Methodist Church Hostess, as assigned by the Church Office, will be present at the rehearsal and the day of the wedding. Her role is to help with wedding day logistics, scheduling, and to answer questions. Our Wedding Hostess will have authority over a private wedding consultant in regards to the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. The couple is not required to meet with the Church Wedding Hostess in advance, but both parties will be given each other's contact information in case of emergencies.

If you plan to hire a professional Wedding Coordinator, we recommend they contact your assigned Church Hostess in advance with any questions and that you send their contact information to the Director of Church Life.

Meeting With The Pastor

The couple is required to meet with their assigned pastor no later than one month prior to the wedding date. At this about 2-hour long meeting, they will discuss the wedding ceremony and premarital counseling. It will be the couple's responsibility to schedule this meeting with the pastor in advance.

To reduce the possibility of misunderstanding or error, please direct a wedding invitation to both the Pastor and the Director of Church Life.

Recommended Premarital Counseling

We recommend the Marriage 101 online course that qualifies you for a substantial savings on your marriage license as well. The course fee is \$50 and you may sign up for that when you schedule your wedding. This is not a requirement to host your wedding at A&M UMC.

Guest Ministers

In keeping with our religious traditions, the United Methodist wedding service will be used at the wedding, and **one of the ministers of A&M United Methodist Church will be in charge of the rehearsal and the wedding.** A United Methodist Minister from another church *may assist* in the wedding ceremony when approved *in advance* by one of our pastors. If you'd like another pastor to assist, please give our pastor or the Director of Church Life the guest pastor's name, current church, phone number, email address and mailing address at least 6 weeks prior to the wedding. Our Pastor will contact the guest pastor to discuss their role in the ceremony. Any honorarium to guest pastors is the responsibility of the wedding party.

The Marriage License

The marriage license must be presented to the Pastor or the Church Wedding Hostess at the rehearsal. Marriage licenses may be procured no sooner than thirty days before the wedding and no later than 72 hours prior to the wedding. Apply for your license through the County Clerk's Office in any county courthouse in Texas. To obtain a license, both bride and groom need a certified copy of their birth certificate or a valid Texas driver's license AND their social security number. Blood tests are no longer required in Texas.

After the ceremony, the Church Office will send the signed marriage license to the courthouse.

Music

A&M UMC will assign our Organist/Pianist for all weddings unless the Church Office approves other arrangements. The church wedding fee includes one music consultation appointment with the Organist/Pianist, their presence at the rehearsal and their performing during the wedding service. In the event of a schedule conflict, the A&M UMC Organist/Pianist will arrange for a qualified substitute.

The wedding couple should make an appointment with the Organist/Pianist to discuss the choice of music no later than 6 weeks prior to the wedding. Additional appointments and responsibilities may be arranged with the organist for a negotiated fee.

Soloists/Singers

Our Organist/Pianist is happy to accompany soloists/singers as well. For an additional fee, the organist will secure a qualified soloist if desired. A guest soloist is required to know the music in advance of the rehearsal. Our accompanist must be given the music and meet with the soloist prior to the rehearsal. It will be the responsibility of the couple to discuss these options/plans with the Church Organist/Pianist and singers in advance and pay for the soloist/singers services.

Other Music

If you wish for instruments other than the piano or organ, please select those that are appropriate to this occasion and in keeping with the dignity of the United Methodist service. Typically, we see guitar accompanists, string quartets, etc. Our Organist/Pianist will be present to assist guest musicians in the timing and coordination required in a large wedding. It is the responsibility of the couple to discuss additional musicians with the church Organist/Pianist in advance and cover fees for the additional musicians.

Music selected for the wedding should be appropriate for a religious ceremony. Popular secular music, including the Aggie War Hymn, may not be played in the Sanctuary. Please confer with the Church Organist/Pianist for approval of music selections and instruments no later than 6 weeks prior to the wedding date. Pre-recorded music is not allowed at weddings.

CEREMONY NOTES

Instructions for Florist, Photographer and Caterer

Church Policy Forms

We require all couples and their photographer, videographer, florist and caterer to review our church policies and sign an agreement to follow those policies. These policies and agreement form will be given to the couple at the time the wedding date is confirmed. It will be the couple's responsibility to get those forms signed by the photographer, florist, etc. and returned to the Director of Church Life at least one month prior to the wedding date.

We want there to be no misunderstanding about our established policies so we recommend you go over these with each entity. If you have questions about the policies, you are welcome to contact the Director of Church Life.

Donating Flowers

Should the wedding couple desire their flowers to be used in the Sunday morning worship service, arrangements can be made with the church office 2-3 weeks in advance. The Sunday morning worship guide would inform the congregation that the flowers were from the couple's wedding.

If the couple desires to keep the flowers, please have the flowers picked up immediately following the service. The church shall not be responsible for flowers after the service.

Photography & Cell Phone Use

Flash photography and cell phone use is *prohibited* during the wedding ceremony. This policy applies to not only the photographer, but the wedding guests as well. Further clarification for the photographer and videographer is found in the Photography Policy Form.

Candles

Unity Candle

If requested, the church can provide a Unity Candle Stand and lighter for the ceremony. The couple is responsible for providing the candles used and should bring those to the rehearsal the night before.

Military Dress and Ritual

Military dress uniforms, including that of the Corps of Cadets, may be worn in the Sanctuary. Sabers and other weaponry may *not* be present in the Sanctuary, even for decorative purposes. The ceremonial saber arch may be provided on departure from the ceremony outside the main door of the building in the Memorial Courtyard.

After Ceremony

No rice, flower or paper petals, or confetti are to be used inside or outside the church buildings. Birdseed, in lieu of rice, may be thrown outside of the church building as the bridal couple leaves the church.

Bridal Party Notes

Ushers

If you have ushers, we recommend planning for at least one usher for every forty persons expected at the service. Groomsmen may also serve as ushers. Ushers are asked to inform those persons with cameras that pictures may not be taken in the Sanctuary at any time during the wedding using a flash.

Attendants

Because the altar area is very limited, we recommend the number of attendants standing with the bride and groom is limited to seven each, including junior attendants and children.

To preserve the sacred dignity of the wedding ceremony, only children eight years old or older may stand with the wedding party during the service. Younger children may walk down the aisle during the processional and be seated with adults in the front pews as the ceremony begins. Exceptions to this guideline will be made for very small weddings and those involving children of the bride or groom.

WEDDING WEEKEND

Parking

Parking is available for your rehearsal and wedding ceremony guests in our four parking lots, located off Church Street and Tauber Street.

No overnight parking is allowed and we begin towing the parking lots at 10:00pm.

It is the responsibility of the couple to inform their wedding party/guests of this policy. If your wedding and reception is scheduled in the evening and may run until 10:00pm, contact the Director of Church Life in advance to discuss alternate solutions.

There is additional parking in the Northgate Parking Garage or metered parking on the street for a fee (check with the City of College Station for rates).

The Rehearsal

Because several rehearsals may be scheduled for the same day, the bride and groom should urge all members of the wedding party to be ready to begin promptly at the time scheduled (typically 5:30pm). We recommend the participants arrive at least 15-30 minutes early to allow for traffic, parking and locating the sanctuary.

The rehearsal should last approximately 1 hour. Typically, the bride & groom invite the parents, grandparents, groomsmen, bridesmaids, ushers, flower girls, ring bearers, scripture readers and any other ceremony participants to attend.

The Pastor, assisted by the assigned Church Wedding Hostess, will conduct the rehearsal. No rehearsal or wedding ceremony will be conducted if the Pastor or the Church Wedding Hostess perceives that any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

Bride's and Groom's Rooms

On the day of the wedding, the Bridal Party is assigned two rooms in the Sanctuary Building for their use.

1. Bride's Room – Room S-113
2. Groom's Room – Room S-129

Booking of a wedding gives you access to the sanctuary and Bride & Groom Rooms about 2.5 hours prior to the wedding ceremony start time.

Because these areas receive extensive use on Sunday mornings, we ask that the rooms are emptied and cleaned after the wedding ceremony. It is the responsibility of the couple to have someone remove all garment bags, hangers, trash, and other items from these areas immediately following the wedding service. Please tell the Church Hostess the name of the person responsible for removal of items from the rooms.

Every reasonable effort will be made to assist the wedding party in protecting property. However, the church shall not be liable for items that are lost, stolen or damaged. It is suggested that friends or family members be assigned the responsibilities for valuables such as dresses, purses, silver, glassware and gifts during the wedding and/or reception.

If any items are found left in the Bride Room, Groom Room, or Sanctuary, they will be placed in the Lost & Found located in the main Church Office.

OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Smoking is prohibited in church buildings at all times (this includes vaping)
2. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church property.
3. Food and Drinks are not allowed in the sanctuary.
4. All wedding events start ON TIME. Please encourage all participants and guests to arrive early and allow for traffic.
5. Variances of the prescribed procedures and other exceptions may be made at the discretion of the attending pastor of A&M United Methodist Church.

RECEPTION OR REHEARSAL DINNER

In addition to your wedding ceremony, you have the option to host your reception or rehearsal dinner at A&M United Methodist Church. We offer two spaces to accommodate your needs. If you would like to schedule an appointment to view the spaces in person, please contact the Director of Church Life.

Great Hall

This space is located in our Christian Life Center. The Great Hall (GH) is the size of a large gym with wood floors and comes with the optional use of a stage, full kitchen, sound system, screens and projectors. It is ideal for larger events and can hold up to 500 people or around 250 comfortably with dance floor space.

Fellowship Hall

This space is located in the main Sanctuary Building. The Fellowship Hall (FH) is a large room with carpeted floors and comes with the optional use of a full kitchen, sound system, screen and projector. It is ideal for smaller receptions or rehearsal dinners and can hold up to 150 people.

Kitchens

Kitchens are available for you or your caterer's use for additional fees to the room reservation fees. Both are full kitchens. We do ask that all caterers set up a meeting with our Facilities Director at least one month prior to the wedding to review the space and discuss additional policies of A&M UMC. If you are not hiring a professional caterer, but have a friend/family member assist with food & drink, they will still need to meet with our Facilities Director at least one month prior to the wedding.

Tables & Chairs

Round or rectangle tables and chairs are included in your rental fee for the Great Hall or Fellowship Hall. The round tables are 5 feet in diameter and seat 8 chairs. The rectangle tables are 6 feet long and seat 6-8 chairs around them. The couple will need to meet with the Facilities Director at least one month in advance of the wedding to discuss room layout.

Place Settings & Linens Rentals

We also offer the option to rent table linens and place settings from A&M UMC. Those prices are listed below. You are allowed to rent linens, table settings, additional tables or chairs from an outside vendor but will need to let the Director of Church Life know in advance of your plans. When renting from outside vendors, be sure to specify which hall/building to deliver the rentals.

- White Table Cloths - \$12 each
- White Cloth Napkins - \$0.50 each
- Place Settings - \$4 each
 - Include dinner plate, salad plate, dessert plate, glass and silverware

FACILITIES & FEES

The A&M United Methodist Church wedding fee includes:

- Pastoral Services
 - Pre-marital counseling session
 - Rehearsal
 - Wedding ceremony
- The Church Hostess at rehearsal & wedding ceremony
- The organist/Pianist at rehearsal & wedding ceremony, one consultation
- The custodial staff
- Use of the Sanctuary, the bridal parlor and the groom's area.

Additional charges for soloists, extra hours of facility use, reservations for additional rooms, etc. will impact your final amount due.

Fee Notes

- The Reservation Deposit of \$250 will be refunded within ten days after the ceremony if:
 - No unusual custodial services required for clean up
 - No facilities or property has been damaged
 - The Church Staff does not observe gross violation of the standards and policies of A&M UMC and/or this wedding policy.
- Final balance of the wedding fee and reception fee is due at least *60 days prior to the wedding.*

Cancellation Policy

- In the event of a cancellation, there is no refund of the Reservation Deposits (\$250 for wedding deposit and/or reception deposit).

FEES & PAYMENT SCHEDULE

WEDDING COSTS	Amount Due	Notes/Due Date
Member Wedding		
Deposit	\$250	At time of reservation
Member Wedding Fee	\$1,000	60 days prior to wedding
Total Due	\$1,250.00	
Non-Member Wedding		
Deposit	\$250	At time of reservation
Member Wedding Fee	\$1,400	60 days prior to wedding
Total Due	\$1,650.00	

RECEPTION COSTS	Amount Due	Notes/Due Date
Great Hall Rental (GH)		
GH Deposit	\$175	At time of reservation
<i>plus</i>		
GH, less 200 guests	\$500	60 days prior to wedding
GH, up to 300 guests	\$550	
GH, over 300 guests	\$600	
GH Subtotal	\$675-\$775	<i>Dependent on number of guests</i>
GH Kitchen		
GH Kitchen Deposit	\$100	At time of reservation
GH Kitchen Use	\$250	60 days prior to wedding
GH Kitchen Subtotal	\$200	
GH Hourly Rates		
GH Hourly Rate (past 4 hr res)	\$175	Past 4 hour rental
GH Kitchen Hourly Rate	TBD	Past 4 hour rental
Fellowship Hall Rental (FH)		
FH Deposit	\$50	At time of reservation
FH Room Reservation	\$200	60 days prior to wedding
FH Subtotal	\$250	
FH Kitchen		
FH Kitchen Deposit	\$100	At time of reservation
FH Kitchen Use	\$100	60 days prior to wedding
FH Kitchen Subtotal	\$200	
FH Hourly Rates		
FH Hourly Rate	TBD	Past 4 hour rental
FH Kitchen Hourly Rate	TBD	Past 4 hour rental

<i>Optional Additional Fees</i>	<i>Amount Due</i>	<i>Notes/Due Date</i>
Marriage 101 Course	\$50.00	<i>At time of purchase</i>
Additional Hourly Rental of Sanctuary or Bride/Groom Rooms on Wedding Day	\$100/hour	<i>This is in addition to the 4 hour reservation and will be granted based on availability</i>
Reception Rentals		
White Table Clothes	\$12 each	
Cloth Napkins	\$0.50 each	
Place Settings	\$4 each	<i>One set includes dinner plate, salad plate, dessert plate, glass and silverware</i>