



**FIRST  
METHODIST**  
ARDMORE

WEDDING POLICIES HANDBOOK

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH  
501 W. Main Street, Ardmore, OK 73401  
580-223-5390 | [www.ardmorefirst.org](http://www.ardmorefirst.org)



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# Wedding Policy Information

## A Church Wedding is a Sacred Event

Your wedding is a great time in the life of your families and we, at First Methodist Church Ardmore, are most honored to have a part in it. A church wedding is one of the most sacred rites of this church. Therefore, it will always be a religious experience. If it is your desire to recognize your coming together as a providential act of God, and you wish to acknowledge this with praise and thanksgiving to God, we at Ardmore First will do everything in our power to help you express your faith throughout a worshipful wedding.

## Responsibilities of First Methodist Ardmore Wedding Staff

Our mission at Ardmore First is to create a celebration of your lives. In doing so, we have a dedicated Wedding Coordinator to guide you through the process. It is the responsibility of our Wedding Coordinator to schedule the wedding date, the rehearsal, and the on-site reception (if necessary). The Wedding Coordinator fills out the appropriate paperwork and obtains your signature, collects the initial deposit, and the balance due (due 30 days prior to the wedding). The Wedding Coordinator is responsible for informing the engaged couple of the church's policies and enforcing these policies, while providing them with a copy of this handbook. The Senior Pastor is responsible for the completion of the marriage certificate after the ceremony. If a First Methodist Ardmore pastor is not officiating the ceremony, then the Senior Pastor requests the officiating party's credentials and will meet with the minister to approve the officiating responsibility. All final decisions and approval of other matters are reserved for the Senior Pastor.

The Wedding Coordinator and Senior Pastor (if officiating) will lead the wedding rehearsal where the bride, groom, and all members of the wedding party come together to do a practice run of the entire wedding ceremony. The coordinator provides the guidance throughout the event.

The main job of our Wedding Coordinator is to direct the wedding itself. Our coordinator is on-site during the rehearsal and wedding, to ensure timeliness, respond to changes, and monitor adherence to the church policies. If the reception is held at Ardmore First, the coordinator will be on-site to ensure that the event runs timely, and clean-up is completed by the vendor in charge.

The First Methodist Ardmore Wedding Coordinator is not the Wedding Consultant for the overall event. Our wedding coordinator only directs activities within the Church and its properties. The coordinator does not secure vendors for the wedding, manage the wedding budget, oversee the seating chart, complete gift registration/guest list, make floral arrangements, or schedule the photographer.

# Reserving Your Date

## Member Weddings

The Bride/Groom must be an *active* member of the church or have parent(s) or grandparent(s) that are members (participating in the life of the church by your prayers, attendance, gifts, services, and witness), for at least twelve (12) months *prior to requesting* the ceremony date on our church's calendar. In such case, there is a discounted usage fee, but a minimal charge is required for church staff providing services for your ceremony.

1. The wedding shall be conducted in accordance with Biblical Principles.
2. Ministers outside the church are welcome to officiate, but must be approved by our Senior Pastor.
3. Pre-marital counseling will be required.

## Non-Member Weddings

The non-member Bride/Groom may reserve the ceremony date, not more than 6 months prior to the ceremony date.

1. The wedding shall be conducted in accordance with Biblical Principles.
2. Ministers outside the church are welcome to officiate, but must be approved by our Senior Pastor.

## Dates

Due to seasonal activities of the church, we do not schedule weddings on Sundays or any of the following days:

First weekend in January\*  
Easter Weekend  
Memorial Day Weekend

Labor Day Weekend  
Thanksgiving Weekend  
Any Weekend in December  
except for the first two weekends of Dec.

*\*If New Year's Eve falls on a weekend, this may also include the second weekend of January.*

We reserve the right for members and non-members for the McClure Chapel the whole month of December.

We do schedule weddings on Fridays.

# **Scheduling Policy and General Information**

## **Location of Ceremony**

Weddings may be held in the Sanctuary or the McClure Chapel. The Sanctuary seats a total of 596 guests. *The upstairs balcony may not be used to seat wedding guests, unless the total number of guests exceeds 200.* The McClure Chapel seats approximately 100 people.

## **Time of Ceremony**

Weddings are scheduled to begin no earlier than 2:00pm and/or no later than 6:00pm on Saturdays. ***All weddings must use Traditional Set-up with no exceptions.*** Our Sanctuary must be *easily* ready for our Traditional Worship Service on Sunday mornings. Arrival of the bridal party and vendors can begin five (5) hours prior to the ceremony; for instance, 2:00pm weddings' earliest arrival time is 9:00am. If you are having a reception at Ardmore First, the wedding ceremony may not be scheduled for any later than 4:00pm.

## **Wedding Coordinator**

Your wedding coordinator will handle your scheduling and help you in any way with the wedding arrangements. She will also be able to answer your questions, up to the ceremony.

## **Bridal Consultation**

Shortly after your wedding is scheduled, the First Methodist Ardmore Wedding Coordinator, bride, groom, and other family members who would like to attend, will schedule a Bridal Consultation to discuss details of the wedding. This is to be scheduled at a mutual-approved time for all parties involved and will take place in the Welcome Center of the church.

## **Wedding Assistant Coordinator**

The Wedding Coordinator will be available to you throughout the planning process, as well as being present during the rehearsal and on your wedding day. If your wedding consists of a large Bridal Party (more than 10 members, including the bride and groom) and/or over 200 guests, then a Wedding Second-Assistant Coordinator is mandatory. The coordinator and wedding assistants work in close communication to ensure every detail of your wedding is just how you want it.

## **Officiating Minister**

A First Methodist Church Ardmore minister would be glad to officiate your wedding in accordance with Biblical principles and the Global Methodist book of doctrines and disciplines. Please, first discuss with the coordinator who you would like to officiate your ceremony. The coordinator will contact your first and second choices of an Ardmore First minister for you, and then notify you of your minister.

We also welcome guest ministers to officiate your wedding ceremony. In this case, the Wedding Coordinator will arrange for the Ardmore First Minister and guest minister to meet (in person or via telephone) prior to the ceremony, to discuss the details and answer any questions.

*Each Ardmore First couple must meet with the officiating minister for at least four (4) sessions of pre-marital counseling, prior to the ceremony date. If pre-marital counseling has not been completed prior to the wedding date, then the ceremony may not be approved.*

### **Fees**

Fees for use of Ardmore First facilities and staff are payable directly to First Methodist Church Ardmore and are due no later than 30 days prior to the wedding. All other fees (Organist/Pianist/Soloist) are paid directly to the individual before the wedding. The minister's honorarium is due the night of the rehearsal and is paid directly to the minister.

# Music

## Music Consultation

After the initial Bridal Consultation, the bride and/or groom are then responsible to contact, Ardmore First's Adult Music Director, to discuss music selection. This consultation may be scheduled after the Bridal Consultation. A final consultation will occur with the bride, groom, Wedding Coordinator, Officiating Minister, and Adult Music Director (or AVL Technician), prior to or within 15 days prior to the rehearsal date.

Should any type of music be desired (digitally played, organ, piano, other instrumental, or vocal), a conference with the Adult Music Director must be arranged, as soon as possible, following the reservation of the date and time of the wedding. The purpose of this conference will be to honestly and openly discuss the place of music in a wedding worship service, to select music and musicians for the wedding, and discuss appropriate fees.

## Ceremony Music

The wedding is a service of worship, during which a man and a woman unite their lives in the presence of God and loved ones. The music should reflect an atmosphere of reverence and joy, should glorify God, and honor the sanctity of Holy Matrimony. A beautiful and reverent wedding service can be held with no music at all, though, if so desired.

The Adult Music Director can assist you in finding music which reflects personal considerations yet upholds the appropriateness and integrity of the worship service. All musical selections will be discussed with and approved by the Adult Music Director. Any other considerations regarding the organ or other instruments considered for use in the wedding ceremony are at the discretion and approval of the Adult Music Director. Movement of the piano and other stage items/instruments is strictly prohibited without the approval and under the supervision of the Adult Music Director. *Any concerns may be addressed with the Senior Pastor, who reserves the right for all final decisions and approval of all wedding matters.*

Music may be live or recorded. Suggestions for soloists/instrumentalists are to be discussed and approved by the Adult Music Director. If a relative or friend is being considered to sing or play an instrument for your ceremony, the choice of music must be approved by the Adult Music Director.

Use of audio equipment in any church building requires a church trained AVL technician.

All music must be delivered to the Adult Music Director, **via CD or USB Flash Drive**, within 30 days prior to the wedding date. Music delivered in any other manner, will not be accepted. This is to ensure adequate time for changes, in the case music is not approved, and to ensure ability of the music being played. **No music will be played at the wedding ceremony or reception, if it has not been previously approved by the Adult Music Director.**



# Booking Your Vendors

**It is always a good idea to take this guideline book with you when you are meeting with your vendors. You will often need this information.**

## Flowers and Decorations

- We ask that no rice, birdseed, confetti, glitter, sparklers or unsupervised candles be used, however, real flower petals may be tossed, bubbles blown, or doves, butterflies, or balloons released outside the church.
- Florists are encouraged to arrive two and half (2 1/2) hours before the wedding. Boutonnieres, bouquets, and corsages are to be left at the Welcome Center Desk. (Plumose, glitter, or maiden hair [shedding greenery] may not be used anywhere inside the church.)
- No Sparklers or other flammable items may be used inside or outside.
- Petals may be tossed by the flower girl(s) during the processional. No fresh flower petals may be strewn inside or outside, without the use of a proper aisle cloth. Silk petals or cut ribbon are beautiful substitutes.
- We suggest you designate someone in your party to set up your floral decorations and décor and remove them immediately after any post-ceremony photographs.
- Shields of paper or plastic must be used under ALL candles and candelabra.
- We can remove the preaching pulpit and the baptistery, however, the piano and everything behind the modesty panels will remain in place (includes the choir risers, chairs, handbell tables, and drum set). We can cover the drums in black.
- We recommend either a loose-leaf Guest book or two separate guest books, so guests can sign at two different oak stands, to ensure traffic flow.
- Decorations may not be fastened to furniture by nails, staples, screws, unpadded wires, or uncovered clamps. You may use command grips on the pews and doors, but please take care to remove them carefully so not to damage paint.
- Decorations may not be placed in the aisles. No real flowers or candles may be used in the aisles or on pew ends.
- All decorations and flowers must be removed within one hour after the completion of the wedding ceremony.
- You may have access to the wedding venue two (2) hours prior to the Friday evening rehearsal, for any decorating.
- All items being brought onto church property from outside sources, such as arbors/arches/etc., must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator. Placement of such items must be supervised by church maintenance staff and the Wedding Coordinator. No items with metal edges/bottoms will be allowed or any other material that will scratch the hardwood flooring. All protective measures must be followed to ensure no damage to the flooring.

## Videography/Video Playing

The Ardmore First Media Department services include sound and lighting. A CD or DVD is not provided. If you would like a video of your wedding, we suggest that you book a videographer. **No furnishings or decorations are to be moved by any videographers.** Video recording may be made from the balcony or from a stationary camera located in the choir loft.

Video Playing is not available before, during, or after the ceremony in the Sanctuary or McClure Chapel. Videos may be played, however, during a reception in the Colvert Ministry Center

## Photography

We want to assist you in capturing this special day in a memorable, reverent, and safe manner, therefore, we kindly ask that you follow our wedding photography guidelines.

- The Bridal Party and vendors may arrive to the church three (3) hours prior to the ceremony. For example, if the wedding is at 6:00pm, then the Bridal Party and vendors may begin arriving at 3:00pm.
- In pre-ceremony and post-ceremony photos, family/friends should provide courtesy to let the professional photographer shoot first.
- Please ask family and friends to **not** use flash cameras **at all** during the wedding ceremony. This interrupts the professional photographer.
- We **do** allow *flash* photography by the *Professional Photographer for the processional and recessional*. Photography with no flash or sound is allowed throughout the ceremony, however, once the minister has begun speaking (at the beginning of the actual ceremony), we ask for **no more flash photography until** the kiss between the Bride and Groom, in which flash photography is allowed and can resume.
- Photographers are free to use the balcony area during any part of the ceremony. If you are not familiar with this part of the sanctuary, ask the wedding assistant to show you how to get there.
- We ask that photographers not take any photos any closer than the last row of seats or down the side aisles during the ceremony.
- Photographs are not to be taken in the chancel area during the ceremony, but may be taken from the back, far sides of the room, or the balcony. Photographers are not to stand in the chancel area, in any part of the processional, ceremony, or recessional. Also, they may not lie on the aisle floor during any part of the entire ceremony. Photographers may not stand on chairs/pews during any photography, throughout the day. However, if there are planned shots you need to capture at a higher level, other than the balcony, *at your own risk*, provide your own step-ladder and bring an assistant with you to insure your safety.
- **No furnishings or decorations are to be moved by any photographers.**

- Please discuss with the photographer, in advance, the specific photos you want, and be sure those in the wedding party are informed where and when to be present for photographs.
- When planning pre-ceremony photographs with the wedding party, photos should be finished by **45 minutes before** the start time of the ceremony. This ensures enough time to prevent the bride being seen before the ceremony, the guests to be seated, and the wedding assistant to light any candles. (Seating of guests begins 45 minutes prior to the ceremony.) For example, if the wedding is at 6:00pm, all photos should conclude at 5:15pm. This is also a great time to shoot mock “getting ready” photos in the Bride’s Room.
- After the ceremony, any photos taken with the minister should be taken first. Please, however, keep in mind that often the church may have another sanctuary event scheduled after the wedding and/or the Bridal Party may need to leave to attend the reception, so the photographer should plan their shots with efficiency. **All photography must be completed within one (1) hour after the completion of the wedding ceremony.**
- If you need additional information, please feel free to contact the Wedding Coordinator, who will be happy to assist you.

# Rehearsals

The rehearsal is very important. If a beautiful and graceful ceremony is desired, everyone in the wedding party must be present. Families of both the bride and groom should attend. It is important that the rehearsal begins and ends on time. Impress upon the wedding party that attendance and punctuality are vital.

Rehearsals are on the Friday evening, directly before the wedding date, at 6:00 pm. In cases of emergency constraints of arrival times of pertinent members of the Bridal Party, the Wedding Coordinator may be contacted for a slightly later meeting time. *Please arrive a few minutes early!* All rehearsals will be completed within one (1) hour.

The officiating minister will be at the rehearsal, along with the Wedding Coordinator, AVL Technician and the Adult Music Director. The Minister will conduct the rehearsal, along with the wedding staff. Please follow procedures on page 5-6 regarding a guest minister officiating the ceremony. Please ***bring your marriage license to the rehearsal*** and give it to the Wedding Coordinator.

Our AVL Technician will attend the rehearsal when music is to be played at any time of the ceremony. Soloists or instrumentalists rehearsals will be held one hour and 15 minutes prior to the wedding ceremony. For instance, if the wedding is at 6:00 pm, they may rehearse at 4:45 pm.

**First Methodist Church Ardmore has a *no alcohol policy*. No alcoholic beverages are permitted within the church buildings or on any premises, including church parking lots, at any time. Alcohol, including wine, is not allowed as part of the wedding ceremony. This includes a “blending of the wines” ceremony. Please dispose of any alcoholic beverages prior to arrival at the church. Do not bring open drink containers into the church. If any alcohol is seen or suspected, it will be confiscated and not returned, without any reimbursement. Please make sure your bridal party is aware of our no alcohol policy.**

**First Methodist Church Ardmore has a *no tobacco policy*, which includes smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapor cigarettes, etc. Smoking or tobacco use of any kind is not permitted within the church buildings. If smoking of any kind is noticed, the item will be confiscated and not returned, without any reimbursement. Please make sure your bridal party is ware of our no smoking policy.**

# Your Big Day

- What to Bring:
  - Dress, veil, tux, and shoes
  - Rings
  - Make-up and hair products
  - Unity candle (3”x6” white candle)
  - Guest book(s) and pens
  - Programs
  - Card box (enclosed box to gather gift cards)
  - Map to reception
- Guests will be arriving through the large, wooden doors of the Sanctuary or McClure Chapel, which face Main Street.
- Only certified service animals (with official documentation) are allowed inside First Methodist Ardmore buildings at any time.
- The men will dress in the Youth Room, located on the third floor. The women will dress in the Choir Room, located on the second floor.
- Childcare is not available or provided during wedding rehearsals or ceremonies. This includes use of the Children’s/Nursery’s facilities and rooms.
- Snacks and food are allowed in the Bride’s Room and Groom’s Room (except any red, purple, or blue dyed drinks). Bottled water is best, as it will not stain attire or carpet. Throw away all trash before leaving the dressing rooms (including water bottles).
- Please plan to have your belongings gathered in the Bride’s Room prior to the beginning of your ceremony. This will help to “grab and go” with your things after the ceremony, so as not to leave anything behind. **Once the bride leaves for the ceremony, the doors to the Bride’s Room will be locked.**
- Please make sure to secure all your belongings. If you leave the Bride’s or Groom’s room, please lock and shut the doors behind you. The wedding assistant will be available to let you back into the rooms. **First Methodist Church Ardmore is not responsible for lost or stolen items.** It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to arrange for the care of the property of the wedding party before, during, and after the wedding, and for the removal of ALL belongings immediately following the service.

# The Wedding Party

No alcohol, tobacco, or e-cigarettes are allowed inside any First Methodist Ardmore buildings or on church property. It is expected that members of the wedding party will recognize the fact that the Church is a house of God and will conduct themselves at all times in a manner acceptable to a place of worship. Food and non-alcoholic beverages are welcomed in the dressing areas. Large trash receptacles will be provided. Absolutely no alcohol or tobacco of any kind is to be had anywhere inside the church or on church grounds. The church cannot be responsible for any lost or stolen articles. We urge you to place valuables in secured and locked areas. **It is the bride and groom's obligation to make certain that these policies are made known to the members of the wedding party and followed by all.**

## Reception Venues

- **All receptions held at First Methodist Church Ardmore must be for afternoon (not after 4:00pm) weddings only. Due to time constraints, we do not host evening receptions. Guests must leave buildings by 7:00pm, so staff can begin cleanup.**
- **You may have access to the reception area beginning at 8:30am Friday morning for any decorating, unless a funeral or other rented event is being held.**
- **We do not allow alcohol of any kind in the buildings or on the premises.**
- **We do not allow the use of tobacco and/or smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapor cigarettes, etc. of any kind in the buildings at any time.**
- **An AVL Technician can be available for receptions, starting at \$100 for the first hour. If you need additional hours, please contact the Wedding Coordinator for media fees.**
- **Wall hangings/pictures, and permanent fixtures of rooms, such as a stage, cannot be moved for wedding receptions.**

**Colvert Ministry Center** – Only round tables may be used for seating. DJs with reasonable volume level, use of digital music, or a music CD is allowed (additional media fees must be paid to use church owned devices, or you may bring your own devices). Any music played must be in good taste and should reflect an atmosphere of reverent celebration. We reserve the right to stop the music while playing, if deemed inappropriate. Use of the attached kitchen is included in pricing, but use of utensils and other commodities will be an additional fee. The Colvert Ministry Center can hold approximately 240 people with round tables (a maximum of 30 tables with 8 chairs per table) or 400 people without the use of any tables.

## Fees

A detailed fee schedule (Event Planning Page & Agreement) will be explained and must be signed. This agreement is maintained by the Wedding Coordinator and a copy will be given to you. A security deposit of \$200.00 is required to confirm your requested wedding date. If your deposit has not been paid and another wedding party requests the same date, the Wedding Coordinator will contact you regarding the payment. If your deposit is not received promptly, the date will be reserved to whomever pays the deposit first. This deposit is refundable and **must** be paid in addition to the cost of the wedding. The total cost of the wedding must be paid **30 days prior** to the date of the wedding. This may be given directly to the wedding coordinator, mailed to the church office, or delivered to the church Business Administrator. If the total cost and deposit is not paid by the 30 days prior to your wedding date, all wedding planning will cease until the cost is paid in full. If the full amount is not paid within 15 days prior to the wedding date, then the wedding will be removed from the church calendar and the deposit is forfeited.

We offer these guidelines in the hope they will be helpful to you in planning your important day and to provide a successful planning process. Please feel free to call us with any questions. May God bless you as you plan this most joyous event!

**Thank you for considering First Methodist Church  
Ardmore as the site for your wedding.**

# Notes