

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to be a part of the very special days you have ahead of you. AHUMC staff and wedding guild volunteers hope to make your wedding a positive experience for everyone involved: friends, family and guests. Throughout this process, it is our calling to encourage you to seek the elements that compose a strong and enduring marriage relationship.

Our church is your home and we want you to feel welcome as we make facility arrangements, plan the music and worship service, and invite you into the process of premarital counseling.

We look forward to these important and sacred days with you. Thank you for allowing us to be your church community.

The Pastoral Staff

David McAtty Donna Stieb
Susan Kelly Michael Baker
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Introduction

Weddings are one of the many ministries that AHUMC offers to our community. We are happy that you are considering sharing in this ministry with us. Congratulations on your upcoming marriage and we wish you much joy and happiness.

A marriage ceremony is a worship service. It is a sacred ritual of the church that needs thoughtful preparation. Be assured that careful study and concern have gone into the preparation of these wedding policies. Please read the policies carefully and cooperate with AHUMC in upholding our standards.

Consultation and Scheduling a Wedding

Your first contact should be with our wedding coordinator. She will give you a copy of the Alamo Heights Wedding Policies Handbook, explain our guidelines and procedures, and help you determine a date and time for your ceremony. No weddings are scheduled on the following holiday weekends: Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. No weddings are performed during the month of December or on Sundays.

After reading the material in this handbook, if you desire to proceed, you may register your wedding with the Wedding coordinator, pay the non-refundable \$100 deposit, and schedule an appointment with one of our ministers. The consultation with the minister will be a time to become better acquainted, discuss the concept of a Christian marriage and the significance of various parts of the wedding service, including the meaning of the vows.

Member and Non-Member Weddings

A wedding is considered to be a “member wedding” if the bride or groom or one of their parents or grandparents has been a member of AHUMC for at least 6 months. All other applicants are considered non-members.

Guest Ministers

Upon approval by one of our ministers, Christian pastors from other churches and denominations are welcome to conduct wedding services in our church. If you want to have an outside minister perform your ceremony, please tell the wedding coordinator and the minister at your consultations. We will need the guest minister's name and address in order to extend an invitation to perform your service in our church.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are scheduled for 5-6 p.m. or from 6-7 p.m. on the night before the wedding. They are conducted by the Wedding coordinator and organist. AHUMC ministers do not attend the rehearsals. If a visiting minister would like to participate, they are welcome. Everyone who is going to attend the rehearsal should be present 15 minutes early so that the rehearsal can begin promptly.

Premarital Counseling

We know that preparing for your wedding is very special and a tremendous commitment of your time and finances. Your wedding day is the beginning of a lifetime together. AHUMC ministers have developed a program to help prepare you for this. We require that couples participate in premarital counseling led by a professional marriage counselor and participate in pastoral counseling with the minister.

Through our pre-marriage preparation, you will be given the opportunity to increase your awareness and understanding of key marital issues and to develop interpersonal skills essential to strengthen your relationship. Couples in this process identify strength and growth areas. They learn communication and conflict resolution skills. Each couple has the opportunity to focus on families of origin, intimacy, sexuality and/or financial issues.

The Wedding coordinator will assist you in scheduling the counseling and give you full details.

Facilities and Costs

Two areas in the church are available for weddings, subject to prior scheduling and limitations.

Sanctuary Seating Capacity 1200
Chapel Seating Capacity 120

| Cost | Member | Non-member |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Sanctuary | \$1200 | \$1900 |
| Chapel | 900 | 1200 |
| Security | 152 | 152 |
| Candelabra (optional) | 40 | 40 |
| Ministers | | |

The above fees include the services of the wedding coordinator, organist, sound technician, custodians and two security officers. Full payment to the church is expected and appreciated one month prior to your wedding date.

Although security officers will be on the grounds for your wedding, we remind you that no valuables should be left visible in cars.

Child-care

Child-care for weddings is available through the wedding coordinator. The minimum charge will be the current rate that the church pays for two hours for two care-givers.

Building Use

The Sanctuary or Chapel is reserved for your wedding for approximately four hours. Two to three hours are reserved before the wedding for preparations and photography. The bride and her attendants will get ready in the brides room. The groom and his attendants come to the church dressed for the wedding. If you need additional time, please discuss it with the wedding coordinator. Photographs may be taken anywhere on the church grounds. Photography in the Sanctuary or Chapel prior to the ceremony must be completed at least 30 minutes before the service. Please limit the

time allowed for photography after the service to 45 minutes.

Aisle cloths are not permitted. The flower girl may drop petals in the aisle.

Ring Bearer and Flower Girl

Children participating in your service as ring bearer and flower girl must be at least three years of age. Often, the flower girls and ring bearers process directly to a parent or grand parent. At the end of the service they recess behind the bride and groom. If they process to the front of the church with the other attendants, they will be seated when the father gives the bride away. Be sure there is a responsible party for the children to sit with. There also needs to be a responsible party to care for the ring bearer or flower girl prior to the service.

Flower girls may drop petals in the aisle. The ring bearer may carry a pillow with ceremonial rings attached, but not with the actual wedding rings.

Smoking and Alcohol.

AHUMC is a smoke-free and alcohol-free environment. Prior to the rehearsal and during the wedding, it is expected that the wedding party refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages. Smoking is not permitted in any part of the church building. We ask the bride and groom to be responsible for sharing these policies with all members of the wedding party.

Communion

In the United Methodist Church, if you wish to serve communion, it must be offered to the entire congregation.

Marriage Licence

The couple should provide the marriage licence to the wedding coordinator two weeks prior to the wedding.

Music

Music is a very important part of the wedding service. Your wedding is a service of worship and the music you choose should be appropriate for the service. You complete a music information form at the time you confirm your wedding date. Upon receipt of the form, a representative of our Music Department will contact you and assign your organist or pianist. The organist or pianist will help you determine which music is appropriate for your wedding service. Our Music Department will also be happy to assist you in choosing a soloist or an instrumentalist. Be certain that all arrangements with the organist and the Music Department are completed at least one month prior to your wedding.

Photography and Videography

Since the wedding ceremony is a religious service, all photographers (amateur and professional) are asked to revere the ceremony and the place.

The photographer may take pictures before the ceremony in any part of the building. He/she is freely permitted to take pictures from the narthex of the Sanctuary or Chapel, however, no flash may be used after the bride starts down the aisle. No pictures shall be made during the ceremony, except from the balcony or narthex, and again, no flash equipment may be used. The photographer is cautioned to make sure that no noise is involved in making photographs, changing film, etc., during the ceremony.

1. Photography of the recessional is permitted from the narthex only. The bridal party may reassemble in the Sanctuary or Chapel after the ceremony for more pictures.
2. The photographer is cautioned against marring the furniture by standing on the pews, or by placing camera equipment on the pews or furniture of the church. The photographer will be held responsible for any damage caused.
3. No video equipment may be seen or heard during the ceremony.

Video cameras may be placed in the balcony or hidden behind the pulpit. No exceptions will be allowed.

4. All photographers must read and agree to abide by the church policies prior to being selected by the bridal couple. The sanctity of the Christian ceremony must be respected.

Flowers

AHUMC encourages floral arrangements that complement the beauty of our Sanctuary or Chapel. In keeping with this, we have developed some guidelines for the family and florist to follow when preparing flowers for the wedding.

1. No furnishings may be moved.
2. No aisle cloth may be used.
3. No candles or other decorations, other than pew ribbons with small greenery and/or flower attachments shall be used outside the chancel rail.
4. No tacks, pins, nails, or glue may be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture or building.
5. Only wrapped wire or ribbon that will not mar the pew ends may be used to fasten bows.
6. Only dripless-type candles should be provided by the florist and he/she is required to use wax savers to prevent candles from dripping onto the floor or furniture. There must be ample polyethylene or similar plastic material under the candelabra to protect the carpet.
7. Decorations must be completed at the designated time so as not to interfere with the photography. After the florist is finished decorating, he/she should contact the wedding coordinator.
8. After the wedding and photographs are completed, the florist must remove all decorations and equipment promptly, unless prior

arrangements have been made.

9. The church properties must be left in the condition in which they are found.

Printed Programs

Many weddings use printed programs. The design and printing of the programs is the bride's responsibility. Please consult with your wedding coordinator and submit a draft of your program to her at least one month prior to your wedding.

Listed below is the Order of Worship for the wedding

Prelude

Seating of Families

Solo (optional)

Procession of the Wedding Party

Procession of the Bride (or Bride's Processional)

Call to Worship

Declaration of Intent

Giving of the Bride

Response of the Families and Congregation

Scripture Reading

Message

Exchange of the Wedding Vows

Blessing and Giving of the Rings

Declaration of Marriage

Blessing of the Marriage

Prayer (solo or spoken)

Benediction

Presentation of the Bride and Groom

Recessional

Notes

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