On the Cover: this stained glass window, one of many to grace our sanctuary, depicts the Wedding at Cana, where Jesus performed his first miracle: changing water into wine. This window was created in 1903 by Mayer & Sons of Munich, Germany, and is dedicated to George Winship.
POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS

A wedding is one of the most joyous celebrations in life. Your wedding, if properly executed, can be a genuine worship experience, inspiring both to the participants and to the gathered congregation. Such a wedding will always have happy memories and be a good beginning in establishing a deep spiritual family relationship.

The following policies are in place for each wedding that we conduct in our facility at Atlanta First United Methodist Church. We want your wedding to be just perfect for your occasion. These policies are not designed to restrict you, but to enhance this time of celebration in your lives.

Furthermore, the staff and volunteers assisting you did not set these guidelines; however, they must enforce them. The guidelines will not be waived at the rehearsal or on the wedding day.

Please read all of these guidelines carefully. If you have any questions, call the church at 404-524-6614 to be put in touch with the Wedding Coordinator.
GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Arrangements

Contact should be made with the Atlanta First church office at 404-524-6614. well in advance of a wedding to confirm a date for the facility, the availability of one of our ministers, wedding directors, musicians and staff.

All weddings will be held in our historic sanctuary, built in 1903, which has a seating capacity of 500. The sanctuary has a large platform that can accommodate small to very large wedding parties.

B. Dates

Weddings are not generally scheduled on Sundays, Palm Sunday weekend, during Holy Week, Easter weekend, during Advent, or on New Year’s Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.

C. Officiating Minister

Under normal circumstances, our Senior Pastor officiates at all weddings. Upon approval, a guest minister of your choice may be used to officiate your wedding. The guest minister will need to be approved by our Senior Pastor. Our Wedding Coordinator will gather details and arrange a meeting either by phone or in person with our Senior Pastor.

The wedding is a sacred service at Atlanta First. At least one pre-marital conference must be scheduled with our Senior Pastor, in person, before permission will be granted to hold your wedding at Atlanta First. The ceremony will be discussed at that time. Our Wedding Coordinator will schedule this time for you to meet with our Senior Pastor.

D. Music

The wedding is a sacred service of worship and as such, you are asked to select music which will enhance the worshipful joy of this holy event. The music selections for your wedding may be made from sacred classical literature, hymns, as well as Christian contemporary songs. No movie themes or Broadway hits are permitted unless religious in nature. Our director of music/organist and worship has the right to reject inappropriate music. A meeting between the bride, groom and our director of music/organist must be held far in advance of the wedding.

Organist

Atlanta First has a large and complex pipe organ. Ariel Merivil is our Director of Music and Worship/Organist. Our organist must play for all weddings at Atlanta First. Should he not be available, he will secure another organist to play your wedding.

Soloist

Atlanta First is blessed with access to many great soloists. It is strongly suggested that you utilize one of our soloists for your wedding, but this is not mandatory. If you do not
have a soloist in mind to sing at your special occasion, our director of music, Ariel Merivil, will be happy to line up a soloist for your needs.

**Instrumentalists**

If you are looking for something special in your wedding ceremony, Atlanta First is blessed with access to many guest instrumentalists who play harps, trumpets, piano, violins, etc. Please contact Ariel Merivil for suggestions.

**E. Sound System**

Atlanta First has a built in sound system in the sanctuary that can be used during the wedding. A sound technician is required for all weddings. If a videographer is employed by the wedding party, the sound technician can provide an audio feed from the mixer for their recording purposes.

**F. Wedding Coordinator/Director**

A Wedding Coordinator and members from our Wedding Guild will work closely together to make your special day come together the way you want it to be. If a bridal consultant is used, the consultant will be in charge of dressing the bride. The Wedding Coordinator will handle all other details, arrangements and procedures, coordinating with the bridal consultant.

**G. Parking**

Parking lots for your guests are located on Porter Place, to the left of the Church off of Peachtree Street, and in the rear of the Church building. There is a handicap ramp on the Porter Place side of the Church. No parking is allowed on Porter Place. There is security provided.

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**The Rehearsal**

The date and hour of the rehearsal will be scheduled along with the wedding. The rehearsal is an integral part of the wedding and should proceed in a manner respectful of the bride, groom, and the place of worship. The rehearsal should begin promptly at the appointed time. The rehearsal should last no longer than one hour. The bride is encouraged to participate fully in the rehearsal.

Please turn off all electronic devices upon entering the sanctuary.
**Schedule of Wedding Fees**

**Mandated Fees:**

The total cost for a non-member wedding at Atlanta First United Methodist Church is $2,300 and the total cost for a member wedding is $1,800. The services that are included in the cost of your wedding at Atlanta First United Methodist Church for both members and non-members are the use of the Sanctuary for both the rehearsal and the wedding, the custodian, a security guard for the parking lot, the organist, a sound system technician, a wedding coordinator/director and the minister. These services included in the mandated fees may not be deleted. The bride, groom or one of their parents must be an **active** member of Atlanta First United Methodist Church at the time the wedding is booked in order to be considered for the member pricing.

**Optional Fees:**

Optional fees for your wedding include the use of the gymnasium or fellowship hall for a reception, a soloist and/or an instrumentalist. The fee for the use of the gymnasium or fellowship hall is $150 for members and $500 for non-members. The fee for a soloist and/or instrumentalist varies according to the individual providing the service. This fee should be negotiated between the bride and the soloist and/or instrumentalist.

**Deposit:**

A deposit of $500 for Non-Members or $100 for Members, confirms your reservation. Three months prior to the wedding ceremony fifty percent (50%) of the total amount is due. An e-mail with an invoice attached will be sent to you by the Wedding Coordinator. Two months prior to the wedding ceremony the Wedding Coordinator will send you an e-mail with an invoice attached for the remaining fifty percent (50%) of the fee. One month prior to the wedding, all fees must be paid. If there are any security and cleaning overages, these fees will be taken out of the deposit and the amount left over will be sent to you by check. Please make all checks payable to Atlanta First United Methodist Church, write “Wedding Ceremony” and the bride’s and groom’s names on the memo line and mail them to 360 Peachtree Street, NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30308, Attention: Madelyn Mitcham.

**Late Fees:**

If the wedding begins more than 30 minutes late an additional fee of $500 will be charged.
A. Decoration Guidelines

1. “Chase” candles must be used in our facility for your wedding. We require clear plastic with self adhesive be placed on the floor under all candelabras.

2. Pew markings must be attached with twist ties, ribbons, or plastic snap-ons. Do not use tape, nails, tacks, staples or adhesives that can damage the wood.

3. No rice or bird seed may be thrown inside or outside the Church.

4. Seasonal liturgical symbols placed in the sanctuary by the Altar Guild may not be removed.

5. No flower petals may be dropped along the aisles.

6. Under normal circumstances, all decorations must be in place two (2) hours prior to the ceremony and removed immediately following completion of all pictures.

7. Candles are not permitted on the pews, standing at the end of the pews or in the sill of the windows.

B. Pulpit Furniture and Chancel Area

The pulpit furniture is historic and will be moved from the Sanctuary by our church custodial staff only. It is permitted to have all the pulpit furniture (chairs, tables, choir chairs, flags) removed for your wedding ceremony. Our custodial staff will also replace the furniture following the ceremony. Please advise the Wedding Coordinator exactly which pieces of furniture you would like to have removed for your ceremony.

C. Photographer and Videographer

You may select a photographer and/or videographer of your choice or our Wedding Coordinator can recommend some to you. The Professional Photographers of American has prepared a “professional code of ethics for church weddings” which recognizes that a wedding is a service of worship and should not be interrupted by picture-taking. Photographs using flash may NOT be taken in the Sanctuary while the wedding party is standing at the altar. Time exposures may be made from the balcony. Please be sure to advise your guests of this regulation. Experience has proven that it is difficult to maintain a worshipful attitude amidst flashes and the sounds of individual camcorders.

The camera for video recordings is best located in the back balcony. Our sound technician may also assist the videographer with suggestions for alternate placement of the camera.

Photographs may be made preceding the service and the wedding party may return to the Chancel area after the service. The photographer must not move anything to accomplish the staging of his photographs.

In consideration of the friends who attend the reception, avoid long, time-consuming sessions of posed picture taking which delay the beginning of the reception. Remember that these are your invited guests.
D. Dressing Rooms

Rooms are available for the convenience of all members of the wedding party. The Wedding Coordinator designates these. Both the bride’s room and the groom’s rooms will be locked during the service.

E. Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages are NOT allowed on the church property, including the parking lots. This is strictly enforced.

IMPORTANT RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Eating and drinking beverages of all types are prohibited in the Sanctuary.

2. For your safety and for the safety of our members and your guests, we do not allow throwing of bird seed, rice or confetti at any time, inside or outside of the Church or on the Church grounds.

3. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the church facility or on the sidewalk areas around the Church. Smoking is permitted in the Church parking lots across the street or behind the building.

4. The Marriage License is due at the Church and in the Senior Pastor’s hand no later than two weeks before the wedding ceremony is to take place.

5. The Wedding Coordinator will be responsible for cleaning, adjusting utilities, unlocking and locking the building and related duties. He/she is not responsible for helping the catering service.

6. Prior to the final scheduling of the wedding date, the bride and groom and the Wedding Coordinator will agree on the total fee. A refundable deposit of $500 will be due immediately to confirm the date for the facility with the Church.

7. Please indicate in your program that all electronic devices should be turned off upon entering the Sanctuary.

8. Following the service the bridal party should remain in the north corner of the Narthex and return to the Chancel for pictures down the side aisles. A receiving line is best formed at the reception site and NOT at the Church.

9. Make sure all members of the wedding party attend the rehearsal, know the location of the Church and arrive at the specified time. Please allow plenty of time for Friday afternoon downtown traffic. Directions to the Church may be obtained from our web page. The URL is: www.AtlantaFirstUMC.org.

LIABILITY FOR DAMAGE:

The bride and groom assume full responsibility for any damage, destruction or loss of Church property that occurs through the actions of any member of the wedding party.

Reminder:

Again, it is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make sure the florist, videographer, photographer and members of the wedding party are made aware of, and that they follow, these guidelines.
Suggested Outline For Your Wedding Program

Below is the outline of the traditional Service of Holy Matrimony as used in the United Methodist Church. Items in [brackets] are optional.

The Prelude  
*List the organ or other instrumental prelude music here.*

The Seating of the Mothers

The Bridal Procession

The Words of Grace and Greeting

The Declaration of Intention

The Presentation of the Bride

[Solo or Instrumental Interlude]

The Scripture Lesson(s)

The Pastoral Meditation

The Exchange of Vows

The Blessing and Exchange of Rings

The Declaration of Marriage

[Solo or Instrumental Interlude]  
*If the unity candle is used, the lighting should take place here.  
A vocal or instrumental solo may accompany the lighting.*

The Blessing of the Marriage

The Lord’s Prayer  
*The prayer may be spoken, sung as a solo or sung by the congregation.*

The Dismissal With Blessing

The Introduction of the Bride and Groom

The Recession

The Postlude
Suggested Scripture Lessons

Old Testament Lessons

Genesis 1:26-28, 31
Song of Solomon 2:10-14, 16a, 8:6-7
Isaiah 43:1-7
Isaiah 55:10-13
Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Isaiah 63:7-9

The creation of man and woman.
Love is as strong as death.
You are precious in God’s sight.
You shall go out in joy.
Rejoice in the Lord.
The steadfast love of the Lord.

New Testament Epistle Lessons

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18
I Corinthians 13
II Corinthians 5:14-17
Ephesians 2:4-10
Ephesians 4:1-6
Ephesians 4:25-5:2
Philippians 2:1-2
Philippians 4:4-9
Colossians 3:12-17
I John 3:18-24
I John 4:7-16
Revelation 19:1,5-9a

The life of a Christian.
The greatest of these is love.
In Christ we are a new creation.
God’s love for us.
Called to the one hope.
Rules for the new life.
The Christlike spirit.
Rejoice in the Lord.
Live in love and thanksgiving.
Love one another.
God is love.
The wedding feast of the Lamb.

Gospel Lessons

Matthew 5:1-10
Matthew 7:21, 24-27
Matthew 22:35-40
Mark 2:18-22
Mark 10:42-45
John 2:1-11
John 15:9-17

The Beatitudes.
A house built upon a rock.
Love, the greatest commandment.
Joy in Christ as at a wedding.
True greatness.
The marriage feast of Cana.
Remain in Christ’s love.
SUGGESTED HYMNS

From The United Methodist Hymnal (1989)

61  Come, Thou Almighty King
66  Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
89  Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
90  Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones
93  Let All the World in Every Corner Sing
96  Praise the Lord Who Reigns Above
111 How Can We Name a Love
117 O God, Our Help in Ages Past
126 Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above
138 The King of Love My Shepherd Is
139 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
158 Come, Christians, Join to Sing
164 Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life
166 All Praise to Thee, for Thou, O King Divine
408 The Gift of Love
451 Be Thou My Vision
475 Come Down, O Love Divine
549 Where Charity and Love Prevail
559 Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation
642 As Man and Woman We Were Made
643 When Love Is Found
644 Jesus, Joy of Our Desiring
645 O Perfect Love
647 Your Love, O God, Has Called Us Here
695 O Lord, May Church and Home Combine
732 Come, We That Love the Lord
The Prelude

The Lighting of the Altar Candles [and Memory Candle]
[The Lighting of the Family Candles on the Unity Candle]
The Seating of the Families

The Pealing Of The Chimes

The Entrance of the Presiding Minister, Groom and Best Man, either in procession or from the north side of the chancel.

The Bridal Procession

The Entrance of the Bridal party in procession. The Entrance of the Bride and her Father or presenter in procession.

The Greeting

The Presiding Minister says words of greeting to the congregation:

_Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is an honorable estate, instituted of God, and signifying unto us the mystical union that exists between Christ and his Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence in Cana of Galilee. It is therefore not to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons come now to be joined._

The Declaration Of Intention

The Presiding Minister gives the following charge to the persons who are to marry:

_I require and charge you both, as you stand in the presence of God, before whom the secrets of all hearts are disclosed, that, having duly considered the holy covenant you are about to make, you do now declare before this company your pledge of faith, each to the other. Be well assured that if these solemn vows are kept inviolate, as God’s Word demands, and if steadfastly you endeavor to do the will of your heavenly Father, God will bless your marriage, will grant you fulfillment in it, and will establish your home in peace._

The Presiding Minister to the Groom:

_Name, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all other keep thee only unto her so long as ye both shall live?_
Groom:  
*I will.*

The Presiding Minister to the Bride:  

_Name, will thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all other keep thee only unto him so long as ye both shall live._

Bride:  
*I will.*

**The Presentation Of The Bride**

If the woman is presented in marriage, the Presiding Minister asks the presenter(s):  

_Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?_

Presenter:  

_Her mother and I do._ or _[I do.]_ or _[I do, on behalf of our mother.]_

The Bride hands her bouquet to her Maid of Honor. If the bride has a veil over her face, the presenter should lift it at this time and may also kiss the bride on her cheek.  
The presenter offers the Bride's hand to the Presiding Minister.  
The presenter then moves back, careful not to step on the train of the gown, and sits beside the bride's mother unless it is more appropriate to sit elsewhere.  
The Presiding Minister joins the Bride’s hand to the Groom’s hand and invites them up on the platform. [A vocal or instrumental solo may be offered.]

**The Scripture Lesson(s)**

The lesson from the Old Testament, New Testament Epistle and Gospel are appropriate.

*Old Testament:*

*Epistle:*

*Gospel:*

**The Pastoral Meditation**

**The Exchange Of Vows**

The man and woman face each other, joining hands. The Presiding Minister may prompt them line by line. The man and woman should look at each other during the vows, not at the Presiding Minister.
The Groom to the Bride:

_I, Name, take thee, Name, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith._

The Bride to the Groom:

_I, Name, take thee, Name, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge thee my faith._

[Here personal words may be shared between the Bride and Groom.]

The Blessing Of Rings

The Presiding Minister may interpret the symbolism of the wedding ring. The Presiding Minister, taking the rings, says:

_The wedding ring is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, signifying to all the uniting of the man and woman in holy matrimony, through the Church of Jesus Christ our Lord._

The Presiding Minister may bless the giving of rings:

_Bless, O Lord, the giving of these rings, that they who wear them may abide in thy peace, and continue in thy favor, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen._

The Exchange Of Rings

The Groom and Bride exchange rings with these words:

_In token and pledge of our constant faith and abiding love, with this ring I thee wed, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen._

The Declaration Of Marriage

The husband and wife join hands. The Presiding Minister to the people:

_Forasmuch as Name and Name have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have pledged their faith each to the other, and have declared the same by joining hands and by giving and receiving rings; I pronounce that they are husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God hath joined together, let no one put asunder. Amen._

[The Lighting Of The Unity Candle]

The couple stands or kneels for prayer. A vocal or instrumental solo may be offered as the couple stands or kneels.
The Blessing Of The Marriage

As the husband and wife stand or kneel, the Presiding Minister prays with his stole wrapped around their joined hands:

O eternal God, creator and preserver of humankind, giver of all spiritual grace, the author of everlasting life: Send thy blessing upon Name and Name, whom we bless in thy name; that they may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant between them made, and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together and live according to thy laws. Look graciously upon them, that they may love, honor, and cherish each other, and so live together in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and a place of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

The husband and wife continue to stand or kneel, as all pray (or sing) the Lord’s Prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

The Organist may play a brief, prayerful interlude as the couple rises from prayer and prepares for the Presentation.

The bride receives her bouquet from her Maid of Honor.

The couple faces the congregation.

The Dismissal With Blessing

Presiding Minister to the people (from Numbers 6:24-26):

And now... May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; may the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace, perfect peace. In the Name of the Father, and of the son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Introduction Of The Bride And Groom

The bride and groom face the congregation. The Presiding Minister says:

It now gives me a great deal of joy to present to you Mr. and Mrs. Names. You may kiss the bride!

The Retiring Procession

The Postlude
Atlanta First UMC