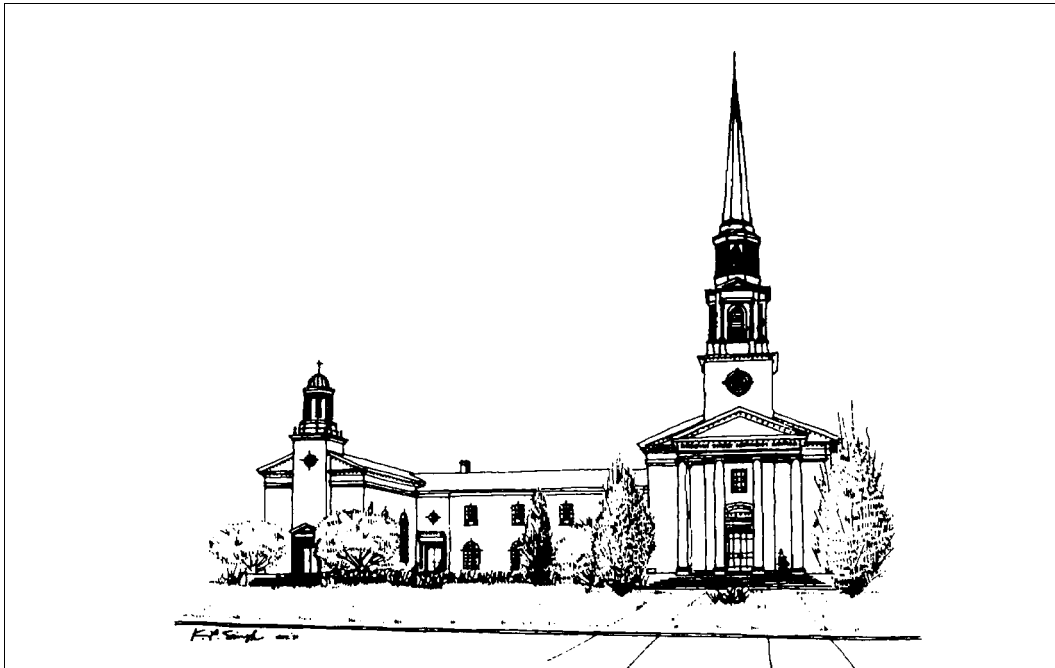


**YOUR WEDDING
AT
MERIDIAN STREET UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**



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The marriage ritual of the United Methodist Church begins with these words:

*Dearly beloved, we are gathered together 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...*

These opening words affirm the nature and character of the wedding and the marriage relationship as the Christian tradition has understood them. We look upon your choice of our church as the setting for your wedding as your personal affirmation that you share the interpretation of marriage the church has taught and upheld. We hope the dignity and beauty of the sanctuary and chapel will enhance the dignity and beauty of the ceremony. The members of the church staff who will be participating or assisting in the ceremony welcome the privilege of sharing an event of such significance in your lives.

FROM THE PASTORS:

It is important for us to identify the assumptions which the church brings to the occasion of Christian marriage. Since a Christian ceremony of marriage is a covenant undertaken in the sight of God with the intent of establishing a relationship responsive to God, church membership is one indication of that intent. The language of the ceremony expresses such a covenant. The Christian celebration of marriage is quite different from a civil ceremony. We believe that officiating at your wedding presupposes a pastoral relationship that does not begin, nor end, with the actual ceremony. For that reason, we encourage your participation in the life of our church.

Because we take seriously the responsibility we have in conducting your ceremony and in doing everything we can to guarantee a successful marriage, **we strongly encourage that all couples married at Meridian Street United Methodist Church participate in one of our pre-marital seminars or complete this experience elsewhere.** This is one of the most significant tools available to you as you prepare for your life together.

I. SCHEDULING

NON-MEMBERS: Our policy is to conduct weddings for members as well as non-members. During the initial contact with the wedding coordinator, you will be told of the wedding fees that will be incurred. If those fees are acceptable, then the availability of the date (for the church itself), as well as for the officiating pastor, need to be determined. Once availability for both is determined, you will be promptly informed and moved from a tentative to a fixed date and time. Once a pastor is assigned (an attempt will be made to honor a request for a particular pastor), it is your responsibility to contact that pastor to discuss the liturgical aspects of the ceremony and the

various special things you might wish to include in it. It is the expectation of the pastors that such a contact be made at least three months prior to the wedding date.

Wedding dates should not be set, or invitations printed, prior to confirmed arrangements with both the church wedding coordinator and the officiating pastor.

Weddings are not scheduled later than 6:30 p.m. on Saturday evenings. Weddings will not be scheduled on the following days or times: Holy Week, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving weekend, December 24 - January 1, Sundays, or any other day that the church is scheduled to be closed. Weddings may only be scheduled on other holiday weekends based on the discretion and availability of an officiating pastor

Each wedding party will have a maximum of three and one-half hours use of the church, two hours before and one and one-half hours after the start time of the wedding. For an additional fee, extra time may be arranged after the wedding ceremony. If additional time is desired, that request should be made to the wedding coordinator at the time that the wedding is scheduled. The time allowed in the church includes dressing, photographs, florists, etc. If pictures are taken in the parlor and furniture is moved, that furniture must be returned to its original position. Please also note that food and/or drinks are not allowed in the parlor, but may be consumed in the parlor kitchen.

We reserve the right to schedule additional weddings within the timeframe of three hours between the beginning of each ceremony. Exceptions to this policy are made when ceremonies are held in different locations, such as the Sanctuary and the Chapel. All attempts will be made to honor reasonable requests of the wedding parties involved when more than one ceremony is scheduled. The cooperation of all parties is appreciated!

The rooms that are available for use by the wedding party are the library (bride and bridesmaids) conference room (groom and groomsmen), restrooms, parlor, parlor kitchen, sanctuary or chapel.

II. PERSONNEL

It is expected that one of the pastors on the staff of Meridian Street United Methodist Church will officiate at the wedding services in the church. Assignments of pastors are made on the basis of their availability on a particular weekend. If you have any objection to a female pastor officiating, we advise you to schedule your wedding elsewhere. A co-officiating pastor of a non-United Methodist denomination can be accommodated under special circumstances. Any arrangements for a minister not on the staff to co-officiate must first be cleared with the pastor assigned to your wedding. The performance of a wedding ceremony by a non-United Methodist minister is not permitted.

The wedding coordinator is helpful in arrangements concerning the processional, recessional, reception and in many other aspects of the advance preparations. The coordinator will be on duty for all wedding rehearsals, weddings and receptions which are held on church premises.

The use of a bridal consultant, coordinator or other person used by the bride (couple) in the formulation of wedding plans can be helpful to the Meridian Street Church wedding coordinator.

The bride is requested to notify the MSUMC coordinator in the event a wedding planner is hired. It should be understood, though, that the MSUMC coordinator is in charge of all non-liturgical aspects of the rehearsal and ceremony itself. Many opportunities exist for the couple to express their expectations and to work with the coordinator to fulfill those expectations to insure a smooth and perfect ceremony.

The organist of the MSUMC will play at all weddings and is willing to do so in conjunction with other soloists and ensembles. (See VI-Music for your Ceremony.)

III. DECORATIONS

The liturgical decorations used by the church during Advent, Lent or other special Christian seasons may not be removed for weddings. This should be taken into consideration in planning additional decorations. No existing sanctuary or chapel furniture is to be moved or removed for weddings.

The florist is asked not to tape decorations to the pews and is also asked to remove or arrange to have removed, immediately following the ceremony, all decorations, so that the sanctuary or chapel may be prepared for a wedding to follow or for preparation for Sunday morning services.

If an aisle runner is used, the florist must furnish it. The length of the sanctuary aisle is 125 feet. The chapel aisle is 65 feet. The church provides a kneeling bench.

The church has candelabras (candle trees) you may use if you wish. The candles are furnished by us at our cost. There are 33 candles on each tree. Total cost is \$70. If your florist provides candelabra, he/she must place drip cloths under them and they must be removed by the florist the day of the wedding, as we do not have space to store them for future pick-up. Candles with hurricane globes may be used in the windows and are provided by the church for a fee of \$25.

Twelve hurricane pew candleholders are also available for rent. Holders, placed on the inside of every fourth pew allows for six hurricane candleholders to be placed on each side of the aisles. With the recent refurbishing of the church pews, (2/02/02), we will no longer permit florists to provide and set up candles for use along the aisle. If you desire to use the hurricane pew candleholders, they can be rented from the church for \$100 including our set-up. Please advise the wedding coordinator if you would like to use them.

Whether the hurricane pew candle holders are used or not, the attachment of bows, greenery and any other floral pieces shall be attached through the holder that is placed on the inside of the pew where the candle pedestals would normally be placed. Decorations may be attached when the candle pedestals are used in a fashion that does not mar the holder or the pew itself. All decorations to be used on the pew candleholders, not belonging to the church must have approval from the church wedding coordinator.

No large bouquets of flowers will be placed on or in front of the altar. The cross and candlesticks on the altar will remain in place. Unity candles may be used. They must be furnished by the wedding party and may be decorated with simply-stated/low key flowers. The

wedding coordinator will gladly assist in your planning of decorations or answer any questions you may have pertaining to decorations.

Our church Sanctuary seats up to 500 + persons. The Chapel seats 120 comfortably.

IV. FEES

Pre-Marital Workshop	<u>\$165</u>
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Church Fees:

Use of Sanctuary or Chapel	\$600
Pastor	\$200
Organist	\$145
Coordinator	\$225
Custodian	\$100

Totals:	<u>\$1270</u>
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Optional Decoration Fees:

Candelabra (candle trees)	\$ 70
Hurricane Globes (used on windows)	\$ 25
Hurricane candle holders for aisle	<u>\$100</u>
Subtotal	<u>\$195</u>

Totals:	<u>\$1465</u>
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All fees, other than the deposit, are due and payable two weeks prior to the wedding, as outlined in the wedding fee statement. Separate checks should be made payable to the officiating pastor, organist, wedding coordinator and custodian, and should be given to the wedding coordinator for distribution. An additional check for use of the candle trees or any additional rental items should be made payable to Meridian Street United Methodist Church and given to the wedding coordinator with all other checks for wedding fees. Your wedding coordinator will help you determine who you will make your checks payable to as well as the final payment date for your wedding fees.

At some time during the last two weeks to one week prior to the rehearsal, all fees, legal wedding license (see included information), pink sheet with all information given as requested (this information is used by the secretary to type the wedding license and must be accurate) and the white wedding worksheet should be handed to the wedding coordinator. The optimal time to do this is at a "final" meeting with the couple. This meeting should be scheduled with the couple and the coordinator. The purpose of the meeting is to finalize details of the seating of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and mothers and by whom; how the processional is to be, positions of bridesmaids and groomsmen at the chancel rail, etc. Essentially, this meeting helps determine that those involved are "on the same page."

Custodial services required for weddings are above and beyond regular staff duties. These extra duties may include opening and closing, cleaning, assisting the florist and/or photographers, and managing lighting/heating/air conditioning settings. All custodial set-up requests must be made through the wedding coordinator. Any time deemed excessive (beyond 3 ½ hours) in restoring the areas used by the wedding party for church use will be charged an additional fee of \$20.

For private weddings without rehearsals, fixed decorations or music, the fee is \$100 for the use of the sanctuary or chapel and \$100 for the pastor.

V. PHOTOGRAPHS

PLEASE BE SURE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER READS THIS SECTION:

The purpose of the rules that govern the taking of photographs is to preserve the character of the wedding ceremony as a worship service. Photographs may be taken of the processional from a position no further forward than the sixth to eighth pew from the rear of the sanctuary, or the second pew from the rear of the chapel. The same rule applies for the recessional. Members of the wedding party are not to be stopped in the aisle for photographs. **NO PHOTOGRAPHY IS PERMITTED FROM POSITIONS IN THE CHANCEL OR FROM WHERE THE PHOTOGRAPHER IS BLATANTLY NOTICED BY THE GUESTS.**

Video taping may be done only from the balcony or an unmanned camera behind the pulpit, available light only. NO videography is to be done from the side aisles or the choir loft. Taping may be done from the center aisle and rear (behind the pews) and no closer than seven pews from the rear. This is to help insure the sanctity of the ceremony and avoid the appearance of a media circus. We thank you for your understanding of our request on this matter. **All equipment must be in place, focused and ready to operate before guests arrive. This means at least 30 minutes before the scheduled time of the wedding.** Videographers should be informed to contact the wedding coordinator if there is any question as to what is or is not permitted.

No flash photographs are to be taken during the ceremony. The sound of a camera shutter clicking during the service is intrusive and inappropriate; cameras must be behind the doors leading into the sanctuary or chapel. Ushers are requested to inform guests with a camera that the rules of the church forbid taking photographs during the ceremony.

We will be glad to cooperate in any way we can in arranging for photographs to be posed either before or following the ceremony.

VI. MUSIC FOR YOUR CEREMONY

The services of the regular organist shall be utilized at all weddings. The Christian wedding service is a religious service. Within the ceremony, reverence and discretion are the principal guides. The church wedding is conducted in the presence of God in God's house and with prayer for God's blessings. **The selection of music must be appropriate to a service of worship in the tradition of this church. This means that secular or "popular" music will not be used within the wedding itself. We strongly request that music of a "pop" nature**

that has meaning for the couple but is not appropriate for the wedding ceremony be a part of the music of the reception

The organist will be happy to confer with you in choosing music. Music for the wedding ceremony must be approved by the wedding coordinator in consultation with the organist. The couple is responsible for setting a consultation time with the organist. No musical plans (soloists, additional instruments, etc.) should be confirmed until after such consultation.

Instrumental music (i.e. string ensemble, harp, flute and trumpet) may be used in conjunction with that of the organ or playing separately for prelude music and post recessional music. Processional and recessional music will be played by the organist. Vocal music should be limited to trained voices. (Many say they can “sing” but are not really solo quality). The organist will accompany soloists with the organ and should not be expected to “train” the soloist on site. Soloists should arrange a rehearsal time with the organist prior to the actual rehearsal or plan to rehearse ½ hour prior to the start of the rehearsal. Do not plan on a soloist rehearsing after the actual rehearsal as pastors and others involved often have plans for the evening and another rehearsal might follow.

All solo music should be approved by the wedding coordinator for appropriateness, duration and placement in the ceremony. Singing to the accompaniment of tapes or CD’s at any time is strongly discouraged and is really not acceptable.

VIII. SMOKING AND ALCOHOLIC PRODUCTS

The use of any tobacco product, alcoholic beverage or chemical substance is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** in the church building and all premises. Upon detection of the presence and use of alcoholic products by members, relatives and friends of the wedding, the officiating pastor and/or wedding coordinator is authorized to insist on compliance of church policy, and if finding continued use of such products after a warning, will **not** conduct the ceremony and all fees paid will not be refunded.

IX. CHANGING ACCOMODATIONS

Members of the wedding party who wish to dress at the church are welcome to do so. The wedding coordinator will show you the rooms to be used for dressing on the evening of the rehearsal. No additional rooms are to be used by the wedding parties except at the discretion of the wedding coordinator. Groomsmen usually arrive at the church in wedding attire, otherwise changing is done in the conference room at the rear of the building. Fifteen minutes prior to the start of the ceremony, the groom and groomsmen, at the summons of the officiating pastor, will gather in the choir Robing Room adjacent to the Sanctuary and accessible through a passage that runs behind the chancel. The wedding coordinator will point this out on the night of the rehearsal.

All personal belongings **MUST** be removed from the dressing rooms prior to the wedding. It is easiest to do when all involved have made their changes and all unneeded property can be placed in the trunks of your vehicles prior to the taking of pictures. The removal of other items should be assigned to a person who is not in the wedding party. Meridian Street United Methodist

Church cannot be held responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items. ALL ITEMS should be stowed in the trunk of the cars and should be out of sight. This doesn't happen too often but it has happened and so you are "foretold and forewarned"!

X. OTHER RULES AND SUGGESTIONS

PLEASE BE ON TIME FOR YOUR REHEARSAL!

You may bring with you any items that you might otherwise bring on the day of the wedding i.e. programs, decorations, unity candles, etc. It is encouraged that only members of the wedding party and other participants be present at the rehearsal. While we recognize that it is a joyful and reunion time for all concerned, the rehearsal is expedited by having only the aforementioned present. Rehearsals are normally scheduled for 5:30, (earlier if possible) and if a second wedding is scheduled, that rehearsal is set for 6:45. Those involved from MSUMC often have their own plans for the evening and so it is desirable to proceed as quickly and efficiently as possible and to be sure all participants are comfortable with the rehearsal of the ceremony the next day. It has been our experience that extraneous people deter the progress of the rehearsal. We hope you understand and, when possible, cooperate with us on this matter.

It is understood that the officiating pastor is in charge of all aspects of the ceremony itself. The church wedding coordinator is in charge of all other aspects of the wedding.

If live flower petals are to be tossed by flower girls, a runner must be used. Silk flowers are otherwise permitted. The throwing of rice, confetti, and birdseed on the outside is not permitted. Balloons and bubbles are acceptable. Limited showering of flower petals on the bride and groom is permitted.

Room(s) for childcare may be provided, but must be scheduled through the wedding coordinator prior to the day of the wedding. The wedding party is responsible for making all childcare arrangements. The church assumes no responsibility or liability for childcare provided by the wedding party/family.

XI. "IN CASE YOU ARE NOT TOLD":

There are 24 pews on each side of the center aisle. For decoration of the ends of the pews with bows or other decorations, the holder that is in place for the aisle candles should be used to secure the decoration. For the best visual effect, six "decorations" are recommended for each side of the aisle.

The bridal party, all grandparents and all parents should remain in the library or be gathered in the Fellowship Hall below the Sanctuary until the wedding coordinator escorts them to the Narthex of the Sanctuary for seating and/or the start of the processional. Elderly and those finding it difficult to walk or climb stairs may be seated in the rear of the Sanctuary until it is time for them to be "specially" seated.

Arrangements should be made for the removal of floral pieces and decorative items that are to be saved or used elsewhere. This includes the Unity candle and those representing the respective families. Anything left behind that is deemed to have no value or further use will be discarded.

If an aisle runner is used, the custodian and/or the wedding coordinator will see that it is installed properly. Please inform your florist of this matter.

Hurricane globes for use in the Sanctuary or Chapel windows are available from the church for a rental fee of \$25.00. These are particularly used for evening weddings when, at twilight, they have their particular affect. Taper candles (10") are just as effective as pillar candles, but must be supplied by the florist or bride.

XII. CANCELLATION POLICY:

It is never anticipated that there would be a cancellation of a wedding, however, it is understood that there are times when a cancellation is unavoidable. In the event that the wedding has to be cancelled a cancellation fee will apply. **A cancellation 3 months or less, prior to the date of the wedding, will result in a \$300 cancellation fee for non-members.** A refund of all monies/deposits paid up to the date of the cancellation, less the cancellation fee, will be returned to the parties involved as directed. **There will no refund of fees for the premarital workshop.**

Revised 04/20/06