

Wedding Policies and Procedures

It is with joy that Stoverdale United Methodist Church shares its ministries with you through your Christian marriage. We believe that "marriage is instituted of God, blessed by Jesus Christ, and to be held in honor among all. It is not to be entered into lightly but advisedly." You will be entering into a covenant agreement with God and asking Him to unite you in marriage. It will be your responsibility to carry out this covenant, and in coming to this church you are indicating a willingness to do so.

We hope that this will assist you in preparation for this special day that initiates that covenant. These policies and procedures are sanctioned by Stoverdale United Methodist Church and are a binding agreement.

Scheduling of Weddings

When planning the time and date of your wedding, it is important to check the availability of the church and the pastor. This will confirm whether the date you are planning is available. It is suggested that you contact the church at least 6 months in advance. This will allow for the reservation of the church and also the setting of premarital counseling sessions.

Weddings or rehearsals, whether for members or non-members, may not be scheduled to take place on the following days: Sundays, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday), Independence Day, Thanksgiving holidays, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

The Pastor

Stoverdales' pastor will officiate at all weddings. Exceptions to this policy will be made only at the discretion of the pastor. It is the policy of the pastor to hold pre-marital counseling sessions with the couple in advance of the wedding to help them prepare for a Christian marriage. The times and dates will be determined at the initial meeting.

The pastor reserves the right not to perform the wedding if he/she does not believe God is calling the couple to marry or to postpone the wedding if he/she feels the couple is called but is not yet prepared for marriage. It is imperative that the couple participates wholeheartedly in the process as the wedding is important, but the marriage is more important and last much longer.

Details of the wedding service will be discussed during the counseling sessions. Please do not hesitate to bring questions concerning the service.

Music

It is important for you to keep in mind the music that will be used and that it is suitable for a church wedding. Stoverdale has both an organ, piano as well as a sound system if you choose to use prerecorded music. We will assist you in arranging for an organist; however this is ultimately the responsibility of the couple. The pastor reserves the right to refuse any music that may be unsuitable.

Rehearsals

The wedding party will be involved in the rehearsal the night before the wedding. The wedding rehearsal is an integral part of the preparation of a wedding and should proceed reverently. The purpose of the rehearsal is to familiarize the wedding party with the procedure for the wedding, to enable them to be as comfortable as possible with the arrangements, and to enhance the beauty of the ceremony.

Decorations

Decorations used for the wedding should enhance the chancel, not obscure it. Decorations may not displace the Christian symbols on the altar or hide from clear view the worship symbols within the chancel, such as the altar table, the pulpit, and the cross. Stoverdale is a historic building, so that furnishings will not be damaged, decorations must not be attached to the pews, carpeting, or other furniture by pinning, gluing, nailing, tacking, or taping.

The use of confetti or rice is not allowed, other options include the use of birdseed or bubbles. If there is a question please ask.

Any special items to be used in the ceremony if not available through the church will need to be cared for by the wedding party. It is the responsibility of the bride and grooms to see that the items arrive on time and are returned after the service. Stoverdale is not responsible for any items rented for the wedding ceremony. The church is also not responsible for any items left behind.

Photographs and Video

Your photographer has the freedom to roam the church and take pictures before and after the service. During the ceremony the photographer is not to be behind the kneeling rail. Videotaping is allowed as long as it is on a stationary tripod.

So that the taking of pictures will not distract from the wedding service, no flash photography or videotape lighting equipment may be used while the ceremony is in progress. Any pictures of the actual ceremony can be recreated afterward.

Miscellaneous

Alcoholic beverages or drugs of any kind are forbidden anywhere on the premises. Immediately prior to the rehearsal and prior to the wedding the wedding party is to refrain from using alcoholic beverages.

No smoking is permitted in the church building.

The Sanctuary seats approximately 125

Weddings are a ministry of Stoverdale United Methodist Church. Fees charged for a wedding cover the church's basic expenses and available at request. Cost will not preclude an active church family from being married at Stoverdale.

Member status: Any person (bride, groom or immediate family member) who has been an active member of Stoverdale UMC for six (6) months or more at the time of scheduling their wedding.

All fees are to be paid in full ninety (90) days before the wedding date.

Responsibility of Safekeeping of Personal Items

Every possible effort will be made to protect personal items such as wedding dresses, purses, silver to be used for receptions, etc. However, the church cannot be responsible for such items if lost, stolen, or damaged. It is imperative that money, jewelry, and other valuables not be left unattended, but entrusted to a reliable person of the family's choice, or preferably, not be brought into the church at all.