



## Wedding Policy & Procedures



### Bluffton United Methodist Church

101 Calhoun Street  
Bluffton, SC 29910  
(843) 757-3351

Email:

[blufftonumc@gmail.com](mailto:blufftonumc@gmail.com)

Website:

[www.blufftonumc.org](http://www.blufftonumc.org)



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## **WELCOME**

Getting married is one of the most important decisions you will make in your life. You have come to our church for this important and meaningful event. To that end, we join with you in making the occasion one of happiness and joy, as well as an experience of Christian worship. This is a sacred ceremony, instituted of God, regulated by His holy commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be held in honor among all people.

Remember, the setting of your wedding is an atmosphere of Christianity. Your home, if founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ, will be stronger and more meaningful. The church stands ready to help you establish your home in love and peace.

You have chosen Bluffton United Methodist Church (BUMC) for your religious ceremony. Bluffton United Methodist Church has beautiful worship spaces in a unique and lovely coastal setting. We respectfully request that you plan your wedding around and in keeping with the decor, architecture and design of your worship setting. We are eager to work with you on your wedding plans and to support you in your marriage experience.

Guidelines for weddings have been set in keeping with the tradition, theology, and doctrine of the United Methodist Church. We trust that the following guidelines will prove helpful in planning your service. This policy simplifies your plans and procedures, protects Bluffton United Methodist, and demonstrates the church's encompassing care for its families.

**The guidelines and regulations in this policy must be observed. Please do not ask for exceptions. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the cancellation of your wedding service and forfeiture of all fees.**

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***The information and guidelines in this booklet represent the traditions outlined by the United Methodist Church doctrine and have been reviewed and approved by the Bluffton United Methodist Church pastors, wedding coordinators, and Trustees.***

## WEDDING GUIDELINES

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Services include consultation, counseling session, rehearsal, and wedding service.
2. Weddings are not scheduled on dates that conflict with large festivals in Bluffton or any date that conflicts with a scheduled church activity. Additionally, weddings cannot be scheduled on weekends that include but are not limited to Easter, Christmas, New Year's and Holy Week.
3. There is no fee for the use of a worship space when the bride, groom, and/or parents are active members. **Active members** are defined as follows:
  - A member of the church for a minimum of 12 months
  - Attends worship on average - 2 times per month
  - Regularly contributes to the financial support of the church
  - Active participation in other church activities

**For non-members, please refer to the Fee Schedule. In all cases, eligibility is subject to the approval of the Wedding Coordinator and the Pastor.**

4. The Wedding Coordinator schedules the dates/times for rehearsals and weddings as well as handles all fees and payments. Additionally, the Wedding Coordinator provides information concerning Bluffton United Methodist Church's (BUMC) available services and facilities.
5. A Wedding Coordinator is required for all weddings and assists the pastor in conducting the rehearsal and the wedding service. The Wedding Coordinator has authority over all activities on church property. **Outside event/wedding planners must defer to the Wedding Coordinator.**
6. The sanctuary organist/pianist fee is established for the normal ranges of services provided. Use of guest vocalists and instrumentalists (once approved) requires an additional fee.
7. The Wedding Coordinator opens and closes the facilities for all events, controls the HVAC system, and is responsible for arranging and cleaning the facilities and grounds before and after the service.
8. BUMC technical support is required for all weddings, and it is necessary to ensure that sound, lights, etc. are set up properly.
9. "In keeping with the Church's historic stand on total abstinence" (the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, pg. 124), there will be NO alcoholic beverages on church property. Additionally, BUMC is a tobacco-free campus. Chewing gum is prohibited for wedding parties.

10. Safety precautions prohibit the use of bubbles, bird seed, rice, sand and sparklers. Flower petals may be dropped outside. With the exception of service animals, no live animals or insects are permitted on church property. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to ensure that the church property is respected, maintained and not defiled.

11. All floral arrangements and décor must be removed immediately following the service unless prior arrangements are made with the Wedding Coordinator for flowers to remain for use in other church services.

12. The bride and groom are responsible for informing photographers, videographers, guests and the wedding party of all policies and guidelines.

13. On the day of the wedding, the church is available for a total of three (3) hours if the reception is not on church property. This includes getting dressed, pictures and videography. If the reception is held in the fellowship hall, the reception must end no later than 6 pm, as the church will be locked by 6 pm.

14. Weddings at BUMC will be between a man and a woman.

### ***CIVIL PREPARATIONS***

A marriage license may be obtained from any county within SC from the Probate Court prior to the wedding. Applications are now available online at <https://ez-filing.net/sc-applications/>, and provides a much more convenient way to apply for your marriage license.

A 24-hour waiting period is required before you can secure a license. A wedding service cannot be conducted without a valid license.

The wedding does not need to be held in the same county in which the license is obtained, but it must be obtained in South Carolina.

**The license must be hand-delivered to the Wedding Coordinator (Bluffton United Methodist Church, 101 Calhoun St, Bluffton, SC 29910) NO LATER THAN one week before the rehearsal date. The rehearsal and wedding will not proceed without the license.**

### ***SCHEDULING THE WEDDING SERVICE***

As soon as you have selected a date for your wedding, please call the BUMC Wedding Coordinator (843-757-3351) to ensure the date is available. At that time, fees and costs can be discussed. Please inform us if you are a BUMC member.

No public announcement of the wedding date should be made before the reservation fee has been received and that specific date is confirmed with the officiating pastor.

**A non-refundable reservation fee secures your rehearsal and wedding dates on the church calendar.**

### ***WEDDING COORDINATOR***

The Board of Trustees of Bluffton United Methodist Church requires a BUMC Wedding Coordinator to oversee both the wedding rehearsal and the wedding service. The coordinator will instruct the participants concerning their responsibilities, so they are comfortable and prepared for the wedding service. Once the rehearsal and wedding dates are confirmed, it is the couple's responsibility to contact the assigned coordinator to review plans, clarify policies, and discuss options.

### ***CLERGY***

The clergy of Bluffton United Methodist Church consider it a privilege to officiate at weddings. The pastor is responsible for interpreting the policies of the church, conducting the rehearsal, and officiating at the wedding service. The BUMC pastor has the final word on all aspects of the service. The pastor of BUMC is required to be present unless otherwise approved. All outside clergy must be approved by the BUMC pastor.

### ***PREMARITAL COUNSELING***

Premarital counseling is required of all couples married at BUMC and is to be performed by the pastor officiating the wedding. An appointment should be made with the pastor for counseling and preparation for the wedding service and marriage. Dates and times are best arranged directly with the pastor and may be conducted electronically to accommodate schedules. The number and length of the counseling session/s will be determined by the pastor with the first appointment at least six weeks prior to the wedding date.

**For couples who are not local, premarital counseling may be conducted with their home pastor or counselor, but this exception must be arranged with the BUMC pastor prior to the first session.**

### ***DECORATING***

In the worship setting, there exists a dignity and beauty that speaks of the presence of God. Elaborate decorations are not necessary and are, in fact, discouraged. No decorations should prevent free movement of the pastor and/or members of the wedding party.

The cross is the focal point, and decorations must not obscure or detract from it. Arrangements may not be taller than the altar cross. Altar candles will be lit for the ceremony.

If you desire a Unity Candle (two tapers and one pillar candle) to be incorporated into the wedding ceremony, they must be provided by the bride and groom.

The use of arches and other similar equipment is not permitted inside worship spaces. Additionally, aisle runners are not to be used inside (for insurance purposes). Real flower petals may only be dropped outside on church property.

**Rice, bird seed, grass seed, artificial petals, sparklers, bubbles, glitter, sand and/or confetti are not to be used on church property.**

### ***CHURCH FURNISHINGS***

Sanctuary furniture, including but not limited to the organ, piano, chairs, benches, hymnals, Bibles and music stands must remain in their appropriate places. Flower stands may only be moved by designated staff.

Decorations may not be hung or suspended from fixtures or furnishings. Ribbon or simple arrangements of flowers may mark reserved pews. No nails, tacks, wires, pins, or tape of any kind may be used on/in the walls, woodwork, pews, railings, furnishings or any part of the building. Construction of unique or artificial settings is not permissible.

### ***FLOWERS***

Only flowers appropriate for worship services, specifically fresh cut flowers, live foliage and live plants, are permitted in stationary arrangements. Only appropriate potted plants or palms may

be used for decorating and must be placed in waterproof containers. Please contact the Wedding Coordinator to discuss prior to the service.

It is the responsibility of the florist/decorator to request access to the worship space by contacting the Wedding Coordinator.

Floral arrangements may be used at Sunday worship with a note in the worship bulletin that the flowers are in honor of the marriage. Contact the Church Office (843.757.3351) to see if the date is available for that Sunday's worship services.

**The bride and groom are responsible for giving the florist a copy of this policy statement at least three months before the service and the florist may contact the Wedding Coordinator BEFORE the day of the wedding to clear up any questions.**

### **Bride and Groom acknowledgement of Florists Policy**

**Location of Wedding Ceremony:**

**Bluffton United Methodist Church**

**101 Calhoun Street**

**Bluffton, SC 29910**

**Date/Time of Wedding:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Wedding Coordinator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bride's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## ***MUSIC***

All wedding service music must be sacred in tone, classical in style and all lyrics must be scripturally based.

The music desired for the wedding service must be discussed with Music staff, arranged through the assigned BUMC Wedding Coordinator. **It is the bride's and groom's responsibility to contact the appropriate staff as soon as possible to discuss your musical needs.**

If there is a vocalist/s, it is the bride's and groom's responsibility to see that the vocalist/s contact the staff musician assigned to the service to arrange a rehearsal. Our Director of Music may recommend local vocalists, who set their own fees. Solos are acceptable at appropriate places within the framework of the service.

**Recorded music is NOT permitted during the service.**

## ***AUDIO/VIDEO TECHNICIAN***

For AV services, a staff audio/video technician is required. A video recording will be made for our archives, and you may request a copy.

## ***PHOTOGRAPHY***

**NOTE: The wedding begins with the seating of the immediate family (grandparents and/or parents) and ends with the recessional of the immediate family.**

Photographers must not interfere with the worship experience of the wedding party and the congregation. There will be **NO flash photography** during the service and photographers must remain at the back of the worship space. Any movement or noise that distracts from the worship service is not permitted. **This MUST be communicated to the photographer prior to the day of the wedding. Photographers must wear proper worship service attire.**

Photographs may be taken following the service. Any pictures that include the clergy should be taken first. No one is allowed to stand on any pew or chair.

Photographers are required to follow the timeline set by the BUMC Wedding Coordinator. Pre-service photos must be completed at least one hour prior to the service.

**VIDEOGRAPHY**

Video recording may be done during the service using available lighting and from a position that does not interfere with the wedding. The camera must be on a tripod at the back of the worship space and must not impede the wedding party's entrance or exit.

The **videographer must be in place 30 minutes prior to the service** and must not attract attention. Any questions or concerns may be discussed with the A/V technician and/or BUMC Wedding Coordinator before the service. Also, the **videographers must wear proper worship service attire.**

**The bride and groom are responsible for giving the photographer/videographer a copy of this policy statement at least THREE MONTHS before the service and the photographer/videographer may contact the Wedding Coordinator BEFORE the day of the wedding to clear up any questions.**

**Bride and Groom acknowledgement of Photography and Videography Policy**

**Location of Wedding Ceremony:**

**Bluffton United Methodist Church**

**101 Calhoun Street**

**Bluffton, SC 29910**

**Date/Time of Wedding:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Wedding Coordinator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bride's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## ***REHEARSAL***

Typically, the wedding rehearsal is scheduled for the day prior to the wedding service. Because of the commitments of both staff and facilities, it is important that the rehearsal date and time, once set, not be changed.

Please ask all members of the wedding party to be on time for the rehearsal. Please remind them that the rehearsal is a time of careful planning for the worship service.

The BUMC pastor does **not allow** the use of stand-in brides or grooms. The pastor finds it helpful to have the couple take part in their own rehearsal.

## ***WEDDING SERVICE***

The wedding is a service of worship in which we celebrate God's gift of human love and affirm the covenant between a man and a woman in holy matrimony. Changes or additions to the service must be made in consultation with the clergy and must be consistent with the theology and tradition of the church. Decisions that should be considered regarding the service include:

- Use of Special Scripture Verses
- Solos and/or Special Music
- Unity Candle/Hand Fasting/Tying the Knot

The Sacrament of Communion is an act of corporate worship. If the sacrament is desired at the wedding, everyone present should be given the opportunity to partake. NO private communion will be served to the couple during the service.

The printing of programs is the responsibility of the wedding couple. **Please provide a proof copy of your program to the BUMC Wedding Director prior to printing.**

## ***MISCELLANEOUS CONCERNS***

**Absolutely NO alcoholic beverages may be served or consumed on church property.** Should the bride or groom appear to be under the influence of any substance, the pastor reserves the right to stop the rehearsal or postpone the wedding service. Should a member of the wedding party appear to be under the influence of any substance, the Wedding Coordinator reserves the right to remove them from the rehearsal/service.

The church is not responsible for any personal property during or after the service. It is recommended that the bride and groom assign someone to check all rooms after the wedding for items that may have been left.

Bluffton United Methodist Church is a tobacco-free campus. Smoking/chewing and vaping are prohibited on church property.

Irreverent or obscene language will not be tolerated.

Clergy and/or the Wedding Coordinator may prohibit an attendant or guest from entering the worship space if it appears they will not be respectful of the service.

### **CHECKLIST FOR THE BRIDAL COUPLE**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Reserve the rehearsal/wedding dates with the Wedding Coordinator via deposit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Carefully read the policy and ask any questions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact the clergy to schedule counseling session.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact the Director of Music and/or staff to discuss music selections and musicians.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact assigned Wedding Coordinator to ensure all plans are within the church guidelines.

#### **Three months prior to wedding:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Give florist the guidelines for decorating.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give photographer/videographer the guidelines for service policies.

#### **One month prior to wedding:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact the Wedding Coordinator to review fees and procedures.

#### **Two weeks prior to the wedding:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit the completed wedding service form, found on the next two pages, for Wedding Coordinator's use.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact the Wedding Coordinator for names and fees of those assigned to your rehearsal and wedding service, for your final payments. Checks must be made out separately to the assigned staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm that florist, photographer, and videographer have received a copy of service guidelines.

#### **One week prior to the wedding:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit a South Carolina marriage license to the Wedding Coordinator.

### **WEDDING COORDINATOR**

**101 Calhoun Street  
Bluffton, SC 29910  
843.757.3351**

**Bluffton United Methodist Church**

**Wedding Service Form**

***Bride and Groom***

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Seating of Grandparents**

Music: \_\_\_\_\_

***Groom's Grandparents***

**Paternal Grandmother:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Paternal Grandfather:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Maternal Grandmother:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Maternal Grandfather:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

***Bride's Grandparents***

**Paternal Grandmother:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Paternal Grandfather:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Maternal Grandmother:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Maternal Grandfather:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Seating of Mothers / Fathers**

Music: \_\_\_\_\_

***Groom's Parents***

**Stepmother:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Father/Stepfather:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mother:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Father/Stepfather:** \_\_\_\_\_

***Bride's Parents***

**Stepmother:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Father/Stepfather:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mother:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ushered by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Father/Stepfather:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Wedding Party Processional

Music: \_\_\_\_\_

Minister: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Man: \_\_\_\_\_

Maid/Matron of Honor:

\_\_\_\_\_

Ring Bearer:

\_\_\_\_\_

Flower Girl:

\_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: PAIR any attendants/ushers who are married or who should be paired together.  
(Print "goes by" name)**

Bridesmaids: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Groomsmen: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Honorary Bridesmaids: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ushers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Bridal Processional**

Music:

\_\_\_\_\_

Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ Escort: \_\_\_\_\_

**Wedding Party Recessional**

Music:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Ceremony Details**

No. of Guests: \_\_\_\_\_

Unity Candle: Yes No (Please note that candles are not provided)

Who will be lighting the tapers? (i.e. acolytes, ushers, parents, mothers) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Will anyone other than the pastors be doing a reading: (i.e. scriptures, poem) Yes No

**Musicians(s)/Vocalists(s)**

Name(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Florist**

Name & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Photographer**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Videographer**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Wedding Party**

**Arrival Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Please complete the Wedding Service Form and return it to address below, no later than two (2) weeks before the wedding date.**

**Bluffton United Methodist Church**

**ATTN: Wedding Coordinator**

**PO Box 368**

**Bluffton, SC 29910**

## FEE SCHEDULE FOR WEDDINGS

<u>Sanctuary</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>	<u>Date Paid</u>
Reservation Fee Applied to Custodial Fee (non-refundable)	\$50	\$600	
Service Facility Fee	\$0	\$7,500	
Fellowship Hall	\$500	\$500	
Minister	\$600	\$800	
Wedding Coordinator	\$500	\$500	
Organist	\$500	\$500	
AV Technician (Audio only)	\$150	\$150	
Custodian	\$250	\$250	