

Hilliard United Methodist Church

Wedding Policies and Planning Booklet

2024



God Loves You  No Matter What

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Dear Future Married Couple to Be,

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! We are grateful that you have decided to share your wedding day with our family at Hilliard United Methodist Church.

Before getting to this point, you should have already read the general information on our website and submitted a Wedding Request Form (available online).

This booklet aims to provide you with all the essential information and details so you clearly understand what to expect when having your wedding with us.

Please read through all of this information carefully. Once you clearly understand our policies, you are required to sign our Wedding Policy Agreement, located on the last page.

We are excited to watch you flourish in this holy season of preparation for your marriage. You are loved!

Sincerely,

Your HUMC Staff & Community

A Statement about Weddings at HUMC

The Christian wedding ceremony at Hilliard United Methodist Church is rooted in the belief that marriage is a gift from God for all people. As the church, we strive to equip couples to have lifelong, loving, covenantal, and flourishing marriages. To this end, our pastors take a great deal of care in preparing each couple who is to be married at Hilliard UMC. This includes the requirement for all couples who are to be married to attend four pre-marital counseling sessions with a pastor.

We believe that interfaith and LGBTQIA+ weddings are consistent with the United Methodist understanding of marriage.

Getting Started

Who Can Have a Wedding at Hilliard UMC?

Members of Hilliard United Methodist Church and some Non-Members are welcomed to utilize the facilities of Hilliard UMC for their special day.

- Member is defined as:
 - One who has attended the required membership classes (Discover & Explore), has taken their membership vows, and is on our most recent membership roster and/or someone directly involved with the ministries of the church, such as regularly attending worship or small groups.
- Non-members who can host weddings here include:
 - One who occasionally worships or attends small groups but has not yet completed Discover & Explore or taken formal vows of membership.
 - The parent of the bride and groom is an official member of Hilliard

Choosing Your Wedding Date

Your first step is to visit our website to complete the Wedding Request Form (available online).

Ensure you make plans far enough in advance for your preferred date — **at least 12 months before.**

Please be aware that weddings cannot be held between Palm Sunday and Easter, Thanksgiving weekend, or the week before Christmas.

We may be able to accommodate New Year's Eve or New Year's Day weddings, but this is dependent upon pastor availability and other church activities.

Once your contribution for the Sanctuary use has been paid, and it is at least 12 months away from your wedding date, our Community Connections and Office Manager will confirm your reservation.

Remember to book any additional rooms or times you need, (i.e. rehearsal time, dressing rooms, or reception rooms), as soon as possible.

Understanding the Role of Your Pastor and Their Leadership

We understand the importance of planning your wedding service and creating a genuine atmosphere of worship. Therefore, the officiating pastor will work with you in designing your wedding service and will be in charge of and direct all rehearsals and your wedding.

If you have questions about the content of your service, feel free to reach out to the officiating pastor.

Please note — **our clergy reserve the right to cancel or postpone any wedding if premarital counseling is not completed or if any other issue arises where the pastor, in their good conscience, feels that they cannot perform the wedding.**

In this case, all fees collected will be refunded within 30 days.

Obtaining Approval for Non-HUMC Clergy to Officiate Your Wedding Ceremony

If you wish to have a non-Hilliard UMC pastor officiate your wedding, they must be credentialed, licensed to solemnize marriages in Ohio, and pre-approved by the HUMC Lead Pastor.

The premarital counseling requirements must then be discussed between the HUMC Lead Pastor and the officiating clergy to make sure all necessary steps are taken

HUMC Rules & Restrictions

Out of respect for the church building and its grounds, please note that the following activities are not permitted:

- **No alcoholic beverages** are allowed - period.
- Hilliard UMC is a **smoke-free** and **gun-free** facility.
- If any member of your bridal party appears to be inebriated or not behaving appropriately for a worship setting, the officiating clergy person reserves the right to cancel the wedding.
- Confetti, rice, birdseed, or other material may not be thrown in the church or on its grounds - this is for both safety and ecological reasons (if you wish to practice this custom at your reception elsewhere, that is fine).

Legal Requirements

To be married at Hilliard United Methodist Church, there are legal requirements you must meet:

- In the State of Ohio, you must get a marriage license from the Probate Court of the county where either applicant resides. The license is valid anywhere in the State of Ohio.
- Out-of-state residents getting married in Ohio must obtain a license in the county where the ceremony will take place.
- You must bring your marriage license to your wedding rehearsal and give the license to the officiating pastor. The pastor will not be able to perform your wedding ceremony unless he/she has a valid Ohio marriage license in his or her possession.
- Contact your County Probate Court for further instructions on identification necessary for the purchase of the license, as well as the fees associated with the license.

Preparing for Your Wedding

Your HUMC Wedding Coordinator

All couples who have chosen HUMC for their wedding ceremony will be assigned a Wedding Coordinator from the church. This is required even if the couple already has a private wedding coordinator.

This Coordinator will be essential in handling all the logistics related to the church, including the rehearsal and wedding service, so that your special day runs as smoothly as possible.

Couples will need to schedule a meeting with the HUMC Wedding Coordinator at least one month before the ceremony to talk through details.

Fees and Payment Schedule

To secure the booking for your special day, a **\$100 non-refundable deposit** for pastoral expenses must be paid when you schedule your wedding with the Community Connections and Office Manager.

Fees vary depending on whether you are a member or non-member.

MEMBER FEES

NON-MEMBER FEES

All remaining balances must be **paid in full 30 days before** your wedding.

Please make all payments out to Hilliard United Methodist Church. You may pay by check or through our website at www.HilliardUMC.org. Be sure and include your wedding name and date in the memo line.

Should payment not be made on time, Hilliard UMC reserves the right to postpone or cancel your wedding booking.

If the wedding is canceled for any reason, you will be given a full refund within 30 days.

Premarital Counseling

We expect all couples being married by an HUMC pastor to attend premarital counseling.

While planning a wedding is exciting, our primary hope is that we also help prepare you for a lifetime of marriage.

Premarital counseling is an excellent opportunity for you as a couple to have honest

conversations about some of the most important aspects of married life. In addition, it offers a chance to learn even more about one another and the life you want to build together.

The Prepare/Enrich Premarital Counseling Curriculum

Our pastors use a curriculum and online assessment tool called *Prepare/Enrich*, which helps to invite conversation around areas of agreement and difference.

The cost for the assessment is \$35 and is to be paid by the couple online.

Your officiating pastor will provide you with a link after your first meeting. Once you have completed the assessment, your officiating pastor will receive your results and share these with you over 3-4 sessions.

In addition, your officiating pastor may invite you to explore other tools such as the Enneagram, podcasts, articles, etc.

Here's a basic overview of what you can expect during these sessions:

INTRO SESSION - approx. 75 minutes

- Get to Know You
- Hopes for the Wedding
- Financial & Logistical Agreements
- Overall Timeline for Future Sessions

SESSION 1 - COMMUNICATION - 90 minutes

- Strength & Growth Areas
- Assertiveness & Active Listening Exercises
- Overview of the Enneagram

SESSION 2 - CONFLICT RESOLUTION - 90 minutes

- Stress & Conflict
- Enneagram Work - Stress & Security

SESSION 3 / 4 - AREA(s) OF GROWTH - 90 minutes

Couples Choice: (ex: Finances, Family of Origin, Spirituality, etc.)

FINAL SESSION - approx. 60 minutes

- Planning the Ceremony

All couples must attend at least four sessions with the officiating pastor. In addition, premarital

counseling must be completed at least **one month before** the wedding.

After you complete the premarital counseling sessions, one additional session will be scheduled with the officiating pastor to plan the actual ceremony.

If you live out of state and cannot attend premarital counseling with one of our pastors, other arrangements will need to be made with the officiating pastor before your wedding date.

Usually, the officiating pastor will help you find another *Prepare/Enrich* facilitator near you.

If a non-HUMC pastor is officiating the ceremony, the premarital counseling requirements will be discussed between the HUMC Lead Pastor and the officiating clergy to ensure the premarital counseling requirements have been met.

The Wedding Rehearsal

When you schedule your wedding date, you'll also schedule your rehearsal time.

It's important that all of your bridal party and wedding participants arrive promptly for the rehearsal, so allow yourself some extra time for traffic or other surprises when scheduling.

A good rule of thumb is to **set the arrival time 15 before the scheduled rehearsal.**

Your Wedding Ceremony

Ceremony Facilities

Sanctuary

When deciding on your wedding guest list, please note that **our Sanctuary has a seating capacity of 250.**

HUMC cannot produce worship bulletins for your wedding.

Bridal Party Room

We have rooms available for the Bridal Party to use for dressing rooms on your special day. If you'd like to reserve one or more of these dressing rooms, please inform the Wedding Coordinator when scheduling your wedding.

Decorations

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you plan the church decorations for your wedding:

- HUMC will provide white paraments (decorated coverings) for the communion table, pulpit, and lectern, along with two altar candles.
- You may not cover or obscure the pulpit, lectern, or communion table with other decorations.
- No tacks, tape, or nails may be fastened to any part of the Sanctuary furnishings, including the pews and floors.
- You may use appropriate floral arrangements on the communion table. If you decide to leave flowers for use during the following Sunday worship services, please notify the Wedding Coordinator.
- If you desire an aisle runner, you should make arrangements through your florist. The florist will be responsible for the placement of the runner. Plan for the runner to be at least **100 feet** in length.
- It is not necessary to provide boutonnieres for HUMC personnel assisting in the wedding, including the pastor.

- Please inform your florist of the appropriate time to decorate the church. You may confirm this time with the Wedding Coordinator.

Photography

A wedding held in a church is a sacred occasion of worship, so we require that flash photography not be used during the service and that guests not take photos at all.

We kindly request that professional photographers adhere to the following guidelines:

- Pre-ceremony pictures may be taken 45 minutes before the ceremony.
- Post-ceremony pictures may be taken for up to 45 minutes following the ceremony.
- If pictures during the ceremony are desired, natural light photography may be used from the rear of the Sanctuary.
- The photographer should also consult with the officiating pastor before the beginning of the service.
- The attire of the photographer and assistants should be appropriate for the wedding.

It is important that family, friends, and especially photographers are made aware of these policy guidelines. A simple line in the worship bulletin requesting guests to refrain from taking photos is recommended.

Videography

We kindly request that any videotaping be conducted respectfully, professionally, and in a manner that does not interfere with the atmosphere of worship.

If your videographer needs to connect to our sound system, this will need to be arranged one month prior with our media technician.

The same policies apply to videographers as it does to photographers.

Wedding Music

Here at Hilliard United Methodist Church, our pastors and music professionals strive to create an atmosphere of worship for each marriage ceremony.

With this in mind, we have put together the following wedding music policy:

- Music is an essential component of worship, so it should always direct people toward praising God. We ask that all musical selections are suitable for a church service.

- Our pianist/organist will assist you in the planning of the musical part of your wedding ceremony.
- If the pianist/organist is not available to play for a wedding service or rehearsal, they will arrange for someone else to play.
- You may hire an outside pianist/organist. Your pianist/organist needs to contact ours before the wedding to discuss the usage of the piano and organ.
- All musical selections for your ceremony are to be finalized at least six weeks before your wedding day.
- Soloists should contact the church pianist/organist at least two weeks before the ceremony to schedule a time to rehearse (usually 45 minutes prior to the service, although this can sometimes be done at the wedding rehearsal or another convenient time). These rehearsals are for the coordination of solos and accompaniment. Soloists should seek outside coaching if they are still getting familiar with the music selected.
- If any musical selections are made that are not in the church's ownership, you are responsible for providing sufficient copies of the music to the organist and any vocal or instrumental soloists. To avoid any copyright infringements, please do not use illegal photocopies.

Media Usage

If you wish to include media in your ceremony, such as video or PowerPoint, please ensure that a HUMC Media Technician is scheduled.

To find the associated fee for a Media Technician, please refer to the fee worksheets.

Media Technicians will need to be scheduled with the Wedding Coordinator as you finalize your agreement. Additionally, it is your responsibility to provide the media technicians all necessary files in advance.

Lastly, we provide livestream capabilities here if desired. Again, please coordinate this with the Media Technician ahead of time.

Music Suggestions

Here are a few suggestions that may be helpful as you select the music for your wedding.

Prelude

The prelude is intended to set the mood of the service. It generally consists of music for 20-30 minutes, played while your guests are being seated. It is appropriate to include 1-2 vocal or instrumental pieces during the prelude.

Seating of Family

The seating of parents and/or special family members may take place during a specifically chosen piece of music at the end of the prelude.

Processional

The processional is part of the ceremony during which the wedding party and bride enter the sanctuary. One or two selections should be chosen for the processional, depending on whether a separate piece of music is used for the bride's entrance.

Service Music

We encourage the active participation of the congregation during the wedding service, in the singing of hymns, and in the recitation of prayers and responses. It is also appropriate to include 1-2 vocal or instrumental solos during the service itself. These generally occur after the scripture readings and/or the lighting of the Unity Candle. Selections during the service should be no longer than 2-3 minutes each.

Solos

Vocal or instrumental soloists are optional. One or two solos before the wedding (during the prelude or seating of family), and during the service are the most desirable. If too many pieces are chosen, the concert-like atmosphere tends to detract from the focus of the service. If you have no particular preference as to solos, appropriate selections can be left up to the organist and soloist.

Recessional

The recessional marks the end of the ceremony and is the point during which the bride and groom and the attendants exit. The music should be bright and upbeat, and its length should reflect the number of individuals in the wedding party.

One selection is usually adequate to allow the wedding party to leave the sanctuary. The postlude is intended to be a time for the congregation to exit. The music can be an extension of the recessional if the selection is long enough, or it can be a separate piece of music. The recessional and postlude combined should not exceed ten minutes in length. If music is required beyond this time, appropriate recorded music is to be provided to the Wedding Coordinator.

Receptions at HUMC

If you're hosting your reception at HUMC, there is an **additional fee** for using the **Social Hall** for up to 5 hours, as well as a fee for a **Reception Attendant** and **Custodian**.

Our kitchen is available if you'd like to use it during the reception.

For smooth operations and convenience, please be sure to coordinate communication between your catering company (if using) and the Wedding Coordinator.

Hilliard United Methodist Church Wedding Policy Agreement

Please print, sign, and return the Wedding Policy Agreement to the church when you are reserving your wedding date.

We, the couple, have read and understand the items contained in the Hilliard United Methodist Church Wedding Policy and agree to follow the described regulations and responsibilities.

Signatures of the Couple: _____

Couple's Printed Names: _____

Date of Wedding: _____

Today's Date: _____

Please return a signed copy of this document to the church at:

**Hilliard United Methodist Church
Attn: Community Connections & Office Manager
P.O. Box 158
Hilliard, OH 43026**

Office Use Only:

Date Received: _____

Community Connections & Office
Manager's Signature:

