

HIGHLAND VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
WEDDING POLICY

15524 Chenal Parkway, Little Rock, Arkansas 72211
501-224-6047 HighlandValley@hvumc.org www.hvumc.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Greeting.....Page 2

The Wedding as WorshipPage 2

Consultation with ClergyPage 2

Guest ClergyPage 2

Scheduling of Rehearsal, Wedding, & ReceptionPage 2

Planning Your WeddingPage 3

 Our Facilities

 Fee Schedule

Decorations, Candles, and FlowersPage 4

MusicPage 4

Sound SystemPage 4

Photography/VideotapingPage 5

CaterersPage 5

Staff PersonnelPage 5

 Wedding Hostess

 Organist

 Sound System Operator

 Custodian

The RehearsalPage 6

The Wedding ServicePage 6

AppendicesPage 6

 Wedding Information FormPage 7

 Wedding Fees List.....Page 8

 Wedding Fees Remittance FormPage 9

 Guest Clergy (Copy for Visiting Minister)Page 10

 Decorations and Flowers (Copy for Florist).....Page 11

 Photography/Videotaping (Copy for Photographer)Page 12

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WEDDING POLICY

Greeting

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding. Our Church is pleased that you are considering the celebration of your wedding and the beginning of your married life together at Highland Valley United Methodist Church. It is our hope that this Wedding Policy will give you the guidelines needed to make your wedding plans and ceremony go as smoothly as possible.

Please read this policy carefully and ask any questions you might have. Our Pastors and Staff have been about the “business of weddings” for many years, and our experiences have taught us well. Our Wedding Hostess will assist you in all pertinent aspects of the wedding. We look forward to working with you and hope that the next months will be filled with much joy and anticipation as you begin to prepare for your life in Christ together.

After reading this policy, the first thing a couple should do upon their decision to marry in our church is to arrange a meeting with the Wedding Hostess and Pastor. The Wedding Hostess will answer questions regarding the wedding policy, discuss plans for the marriage ceremony, and schedule the date of the wedding. The pastor will design the worship service with the couple, and arrange for premarital counseling.

The Wedding as Worship

A wedding ceremony is first and foremost a worship service. There is a copy of a traditional order of service in the back of this policy, but we will work with you if there are some changes you wish to make to this order of worship. However, all elements of the service should have Christian spiritual significance or symbolism that has a basis in Biblical teaching and/or Church tradition. Even though the pastor has the final say as to the order and elements of this service, we endeavor to work with you to make the wedding a meaningful worship service.

Consultation with Clergy

At Highland Valley, we are interested in the kind of marriage you are creating and not just the wedding you will be having. We want to help you have the very best start possible on what we help will be a lifelong relationship as husband and wife.

Involvement in three or more pre-marital counseling sessions with one of the church pastors is expected of all couples. We encourage your openness, your honesty, your questions, and your willingness to grow. We value this opportunity to get to know you better and to assist you in laying a firm foundation for lifelong commitment to each other.

In circumstances where the bride and groom live outside of Arkansas, a different minister in their locale may conduct counseling. It is necessary that the two ministers be in contact with one another.

Guest Clergy

At the discretion and invitation of the pastor(s) of Highland Valley United Methodist Church, guest ministers from another United Methodist Church may officiate or assist in the wedding ceremony. A pastor from another denomination may be invited to assist in the wedding ceremony with the Highland Valley pastor. Protocol calls for a pastor of HVUMC to personally invite the guest minister. Guest ministers must comply with this Wedding Policy, including the spirit of covenant and equality which we deem to be inherent in Christian Marriage. (See Appendix: Guest Clergy.)

By Arkansas state law, guest ministers must be registered with one of Arkansas' county clerks before the wedding in order to sign the marriage license.

Scheduling of Rehearsal, Wedding, & Reception

Member couples (where at least one individual or a parent/guardian is a current member) may schedule a wedding up to one year in advance. Non-member couples may only schedule a wedding up to four months in advance in order that members may have preference in scheduling.

The first step in scheduling is to contact the Church Secretary at 224-6047 to check that the wedding date you have selected is available on the church calendar and that the Pastor is able to perform the ceremony

on that date. If so, you will then be given the contact information for the Wedding Hostess and referred to the church website for a full copy of the Highland Valley UMC Wedding Policy to review (You may request that a copy be mailed if internet access is unavailable).

After reviewing the Wedding Policy, contact the Wedding Hostess to discuss the process that should be followed to confirm the date of your wedding on the church calendar and have any preliminary questions answered. All subsequent arrangements will be made through the Wedding Hostess.

Weddings may be scheduled on any date except: Sundays, New Year's Day, Holy Week, Easter Sunday/Weekend, Memorial Day/Weekend, Independence Day, Labor Day/Weekend or Thanksgiving Day/Weekend. Scheduling of weddings during December must be closely coordinated with other Advent ministry events.

Because of the time needed to set up for and clean up after a wedding, weddings will be scheduled no later than 7:00 pm nor earlier than 10:00 am.

For the sake of coordination and to avoid scheduling conflicts, no date will be placed on the calendar without all of the following:

- (1) Review of the Wedding Policy by the Bride
- (2) The approval of the Wedding Date by the Pastor and Wedding Hostess
- (3) Receipt of the Wedding Information Form (See Appendix: Wedding Information.)
- (4) Receipt of the refundable deposit of \$250, made payable to Highland Valley UMC.

Planning Your Wedding

Our Facilities

- HVUMC has a capacity of 360 persons in the **Sanctuary**.
- An **organ, grand piano** and **sound system** are available.
- The **Chapel** has a maximum capacity of 65 persons. A piano is available.
- The **Parlor** is available for small receptions or may be used as the Bride's Room.
- The **Family Life Center Gym** could be used for a casual reception or rehearsal dinner.
- We do not allow smoking in our church building or the consumption of beer or other alcoholic beverages anywhere on the church campus, including the parking lot.
- The Wedding Party is responsible for any damage to the buildings or furniture. Your \$250 Refundable Deposit will gladly be returned if no damage occurs. If damage occurs, the deposit will be applied towards repair or special cleaning.

Fee Schedule

The schedule of fees is based on the relationship between the church and the individuals getting married. There is one schedule of fees for members and their immediate family, which normally means that bride or groom, their father and/or mother, their legal parent or guardian is a church member. The other schedule of fees is for extended family of members of the church or for non-members. Fees charged for weddings include the services of the officiating pastor, our wedding hostess, organist, custodian, and a facility use fee.

Members: The Facility Fees are waived for active members of Highland Valley UMC in appreciation of their past contributions and support of the church with their Prayers, Presence, Gifts and Service. (This applies to members where at least the bride, groom or a parent of the bride or groom is an active member of Highland Valley.) The fees for the individuals assisting with the wedding are the responsibility of the wedding couple. The wedding party may also assist, if they wish, with the extra cost of operating our buildings for the wedding and rehearsal by making a donation to the church in honor of the newlyweds and/or their marriage.

Non-Member Fees: Fees do not defray the total costs to HVUMC of using the buildings, but help recover some of our expenses. These fees include the use of the worship and/or reception space, use of rooms in facility buildings for Bride's Room, rooms for Groom/Groomsmen, and cost of utilities. Fees do not include the use of kitchen supplies, such as punch bowls, table cloths, dishes, cups, tableware, etc. Special arrangements can be made with the Wedding Hostess for the rental of these items if needed.

All fees, except for non-staff persons (i.e. soloist/instrumentalist), are due to the Church Office no later than four weeks prior to the wedding. Checks should be payable to "Highland Valley United Methodist

Church.” (See Appendix: Wedding Fees.)

Highland Valley staff personnel, including clergy, may waive their personal fees if they wish, but are not allowed to waive the fees of other staff personnel.

Gratuities for Highland Valley staff personnel will not be solicited, but are allowed at the discretion of the members of the wedding party.

In the unlikely event of a cancellation, refund requests will be considered. Any approved refunds will be made on a pro-rata basis depending on the amount of time expended by the various members of the staff.

Decorations, Candles, and Flowers

Our Sanctuary is a beautiful worship space designed to magnify the glory of God. Because of the liturgical integrity of the Sanctuary and Chapel, you should trust in their beauty to enhance your wedding.

- It is the Bride's privilege to select all floral and make all decoration plans for the wedding ceremony. These plans must be discussed with the Wedding Hostess and her approval given for all decorative items used in the Sanctuary or Chapel.
- Since the symbols, furniture, and fixtures in the chancel area of the Sanctuary or Chapel are already in their proper place, they cannot be moved without the prior approval of the pastor or Wedding Hostess.
- Decorations are not to be placed in the Sanctuary or Chapel until a day before the wedding. All decorations should be removed shortly after the wedding (especially in the case of Saturday weddings) unless prior arrangements have been made in advance with the Wedding Hostess.
- In the Sanctuary Chancel area, we have two floral vases that you are welcome to use.
- Bows and/or flowers may be hung on the side of pew, providing the wood finish is not damaged. Otherwise, wiring, taping, gluing, stapling, or tacking of decorations to pews or furnishings is not permitted.
- Only silk flower petals may be scattered for the bride. Real flower petals stain the flooring.
- We encourage you to use liquid wax candles in our sanctuary. If using wax candles, you must use dripless candles and place a protective floor covering beneath all candelabras.
- The Altar Table is reserved for sacred altar ware (like communion ware, crosses, Bibles, etc); no other decorations may be placed there.
- No rice, confetti, or birdseed is allowed.
- For safety, no aisles or pew rows may be blocked by decorations.
- Decorations such as the Chrismon Tree placed in the sanctuary during Advent shall not be moved.

Any items that have been rented by you for your wedding are your responsibility and should be removed from the church buildings within two hours after the wedding ceremony. Any items belonging to members of the wedding party that are lost or misplaced are not the responsibility of the church. Every precaution should be taken by the wedding party to secure all valuables. (See Appendix: Decorations & Flowers.)

Music

The music that is sung or played has great power to give the worship service its character. Therefore, it is concern for the sanctity of the worship service that prompts these musical guidelines. The use of sacred music ensures proclamation of Christian faith and hope. Such texts and music express the joy, praise, and thanksgiving that characterize marriage in a Christian spirit.

Our church organist can make suggestions to help guide you in your musical selections if needed. The organist should be contacted as soon as possible after the initial conference with the pastor to secure her services. At least six weeks prior to the wedding, the choice of music and rehearsal schedules should be set and approved by the HVUMC Organist.

Whenever the HVUMC Organist is not available for the wedding ceremony, she will suggest other organists approved to play. The HVUMC Organist will discuss with you her fees once your musical selections have been made because fees are determined by the type of music and amount of time involved.

Sound System

The sound system in the sanctuary must be operated by trained persons. If the sound system is to be used, arrangements will be made for a trained operator. The fee for the operator is noted in the Fees List.

Photography/Videotaping

We understand the importance that couples place upon the preservation of their wedding day in photographs and will provide opportunities for photographs to be taken before and after the ceremony. All photographs taken inside the Sanctuary or Chapel need to be mindful of the sacred setting. For example, photos of the groom removing the bride's garter should be reserved for some other setting.

The Wedding Hostess needs to know your photographer's schedule so arrangements can be made to open the building and coordinate with our custodial staff. If any photos include the officiating minister, it will be greatly appreciated if this can be among the first photograph(s) after the service.

We suggest taking as many pictures as possible before the wedding. In order to allow your wedding guests time to arrive, all pre-wedding photographs taken inside the Sanctuary should be concluded no less than 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the service. Following the service, a maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for photos. If photos are made after the congregation has departed, we trust you will remember the importance of not keeping guests at the reception waiting.

Videotaping of the service may be done privately, provided the cameras are stationary and do not require the use of distracting lights. Please inform the Wedding Hostess of all videotaping decisions.

Flash photography of any kind is not allowed after the processional begins and before the recessional. The use of flash, artificial lights, and shutter clicking disrupts the sanctity of worship and the flow of the ceremony. Photographs may be taken from the narthex (lobby area) once the ceremony has begun, providing no flash is used and it will not be a distraction. (See Appendix: Photography/Videotaping.)

Please advise your friends and relatives not to take pictures during the ceremony.

Caterers

Please inform the Wedding Hostess of any caterers to be involved in a reception held at the church. The Hostess will advise the caterers of any responsibilities to HVUMC and arrange for them to gain access to the facility.

Staff Personnel

The Wedding Hostess

An HVUMC Wedding Hostess will work with you in planning and conducting the details of your rehearsal, wedding, and reception (if held at Highland Valley UMC). As soon as your wedding is officially scheduled, you need to arrange a meeting with the Hostess to begin your planning. The Wedding Hostess duties include:

1. A meeting to go over this wedding policy and discuss plans.
2. Reviewing the facility and its use.
3. Reviewing and approving decorations.
4. Unlocking and locking the building for rehearsal & wedding.
5. Assisting at rehearsal and wedding.
6. Working with the florist, caterer, and photographer on facility arrangements and policies.
7. Assist any guest clergy and implement this wedding policy.
8. Scheduling our Pastor, Organist, Sound System Operator, and Custodian.

The wedding party is responsible for securing the soloists and any additional instrumentalists and should let the Wedding Hostess know who these persons are as soon as possible.

Organist

Our Church Organist/Music Assistant is approved to use our organ and grand piano. If the Highland Valley Organist is not available, she will provide the couple with names of approved organists to play. The Church Organist will discuss with you your music selections and the fees. As noted in the Fees List, the Organist fee is subject to adjustment based on the amount of time involved.

Sound System Operator

A trained Sound System Operator must be used to operate the sound system in the sanctuary. The church staff will arrange for one of the trained operators to be present at the wedding rehearsal and the wedding ceremony.

Custodian

The Custodian's fee covers the cleaning of all rooms of the church facility used by the wedding party and re-setting the sanctuary and rooms for Sunday church services and classes.

The Rehearsal

The rehearsal is an integral part of the preparation for your wedding and should proceed in an orderly manner. It is usually held the evening before the wedding day. The following will help you prepare for the rehearsal:

- The entire wedding party should attend the rehearsal.
- The rehearsal will begin promptly at the designated time and usually lasts less than an hour.
- The marriage license should be given to the Wedding Hostess or Pastor at this time.

The officiating pastor, with the help of the HVUMC Wedding Hostess, will conduct the rehearsal. A private wedding coordinator or consultant hired by the bride or her family may assist the HVUMC Wedding Hostess and pastor at their discretion.

The Wedding Service

As a worship service, weddings are a time to honor God as we celebrate the beginning of a new family.

Our weddings generally follow the outline below:

The Wedding Ceremony

Gathering
Lighting of Candles
Seating of Honored Guests
Bridesmaid Processional
Bride's Processional
Greeting
Declaration of Intention
Solo
Proclamation and Response
 Scripture
 Homily
 Prayer
The Marriage
 Exchange of Vows
 Blessing and Exchange of Rings
 Declaration of Marriage
 Prayer
Dismissal with Blessing
Recessional

Appendices:

- Wedding Information Form
- Wedding Fees List
- Wedding Fees Remittance Form
- Policy for Guest Clergy (Copy for Visiting Minister)
- Policy for Decorations and Flowers (Copy for Florist)
- Policy for Photography/Videotaping (Copy for Photographer)

HIGHLAND VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
WEDDING INFORMATION FOR THE MINISTER



Wedding Date _____

Time of Ceremony _____ Place _____

Bride's Full Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Religion _____ Occupation _____

Groom's Full Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Religion _____ Occupation _____

How long have Bride & Groom known each other? _____

Previously married? (If yes, which party) _____

Date Licensed Applied (or to be) applied for: _____ What County? _____

Best Man _____ Maid or Matron of Honor _____

Number of Ushers in Wedding Party _____ Please list by name on back of page.

Number of Bridesmaids in Wedding Party _____ Please list by name on back of page.

Candlelighter(s) _____

Other Attendants _____

Who will give Bride away? _____ One or Two Rings? _____

Name of Soloist _____ Name of Photographer(s) _____

Other Participants _____

Rehearsal Date & Time _____

Rehearsal Dinner Date, Time & Place _____

_____ Are Minister and wife to attend Rehearsal Dinner? _____

Place Reception to be held _____

Date to meet with Church Wedding Coordinator _____

Date to meet with Church Organist _____

Dates & Times for 3 Counseling with Minister

(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

*Please list on the back of this sheet any other information you feel the minister needs to know.
All information will be held in the strictest of confidence.*

HIGHLAND VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
WEDDING POLICY APPENDIX

GUEST CLERGY

(Copy for Visiting Clergy)



Guest ministers from another United Methodist Church may officiate or assist in the wedding ceremony. A pastor from another denomination may, may be invited to assist in the wedding ceremony with the Highland Valley pastor. Protocol calls for a pastor of HVUMC to personally invite the guest minister. Guest ministers must comply with this Wedding Policy, including the spirit of covenant and equality which we deem to be inherent in Christian Marriage. By Arkansas state law, guest ministers must be registered with one of Arkansas' county clerks before the wedding in order to sign the marriage license.

The Wedding as Worship

A wedding ceremony is first and foremost a worship service. All elements of the service should have Christian spiritual significance or symbolism that has a basis in Biblical teaching and/or Church tradition.

By choosing to be married inside the church the couple is making a faith statement to all their family and friends which says "We are two Christians who desire to make a marriage covenant before God and in the presence of God's people. In a service of worship we want to stand before God's Table and commit ourselves to each other for the rest of our lives. We intend to live our married life in the community of the faithful. We are inviting God's life and love to be at the center of our marriage. In order to make an appropriate beginning, we have come to this place to ask a minister to bless our commitment in the name of God and to ask the congregation gathered to pray for us."

The institution of marriage is based on the order of creation. "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). Males and females are equally created in the image of God. The equality of male and female is clearly stated in such passages as Paul's declaration: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:27 -28).

Christian marriage is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman who are "subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21). It is more than a contract. Covenant, in contrast to contract, involves giving of self unreservedly in love to the other. The couple fulfills each other, and their love gives birth to new life in each and through each. Christ is the bond of unity when both their lives are centered in Christ. The couple encounters the risen Christ daily in their love for each other. They make a little family within the household of God, a "little church" in the Body of Christ.

As such, it is both a joyful and solemn occasion whereby one declares before God and the company there gathered one's intention to share a whole life with another person and to ask God's blessings upon that union. The promises of marriage cannot be maintained by human love alone, so the vital element of the Christian marriage is the invocation of the blessing of God, whose grace and love alone can sustain a Christian marriage.



Date of Wedding: _____

Name of Bride and Groom: _____

Name of Highland Valley UMC Wedding Hostess: _____

Phone Numbers: _____

E-Mail: _____

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15524 Chenal Parkway, Little Rock, AR 72211

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HIGHLAND VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
WEDDING POLICY APPENDIX

DECORATIONS & FLOWERS

(Copy for Florist)



Our Sanctuary is a beautiful worship space designed to magnify the glory of God. Because of the liturgical integrity of the Sanctuary and Chapel, you should trust in their beauty to enhance your wedding.

- It is the Bride's privilege to select all floral and make all decoration plans for the wedding ceremony. These plans must be discussed with the Wedding Hostess and her approval given for all decorative items used in the Sanctuary or Chapel.
- Since the symbols, furniture, and fixtures in the chancel area of the Sanctuary or Chapel are already in their proper place, they cannot be moved without the prior approval of the pastor or Wedding Hostess.
- Decorations are not to be placed in the Sanctuary or Chapel until a day before the wedding.
- All decorations should be removed shortly after the wedding (especially in the case of Saturday weddings) unless prior arrangements have been made in advance with the Wedding Hostess.
- In the Sanctuary Chancel area, we have two floral vases that you are welcome to use.
- Bows and/or flowers may be hung on the side of pew, providing the wood finish is not damaged. Otherwise, wiring, taping, gluing, stapling, or tacking of decorations to pews or furnishings is not permitted.
- Only silk flower petals may be scattered for the bride. Real flower petals stain the flooring.
- We encourage you to use liquid wax candles in our sanctuary. If using wax candles, you must use dripless candles and place a protective floor covering beneath all candelabras.
- The Altar Table is reserved for sacred altar ware (like communion ware, crosses, Bibles, etc); no other decorations may be placed there.
- No rice, confetti, or birdseed is allowed.
- For safety, no aisles or pew rows may be blocked by decorations.



Date of Wedding: _____

Name of Bride and Groom: _____

Name of Highland Valley UMC Wedding Hostess: _____

Phone Numbers: _____

E-Mail: _____

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HIGHLAND VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
WEDDING POLICY APPENDIX

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOTAPING

(Copy for Photographer)



We understand the importance that couples place upon the preservation of their wedding day in photographs and will provide opportunities for photographs to be taken before and after the ceremony. All photographs taken inside the Sanctuary or Chapel need to be mindful of the sacred setting. For example, photos of the groom removing the bride's garter should be reserved for some other setting.

The Wedding Hostess needs to know your photographer's schedule so arrangements can be made to open the building and coordinate with our custodial staff. If any photos include the officiating minister, it will be greatly appreciated if this can be among the first photograph(s) after the service.

We suggest taking as many pictures as possible before the wedding. In order to allow your wedding guests time to arrive, all pre-wedding photographs taken inside the Sanctuary should be concluded no less than 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the service. Following the service, a maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for photos. If photos are made after the congregation has departed, we trust you will remember the importance of not keeping guests at the reception waiting.

Videotaping of the service may be done privately, provided the cameras are stationary and do not require the use of distracting lights. No additional microphones may be used. Please inform the Wedding Hostess of all videotaping decisions.

Flash photography of any kind is not allowed after the processional begins and before the recessional. The use of flash, artificial lights, and shutter clicking disrupts the sanctity of worship and the flow of the ceremony. Photographs may be taken from the narthex (lobby) once the ceremony has begun, providing no flash is used and it will not be a distraction.



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