

First Methodist Houston Wedding FAQ

Do we have to be members of First Methodist Houston to be married on one of their campuses?

We invite members and non-members alike to be married on either of our two campuses.

All couples married at First Methodist Houston must agree to the guidelines and contractual arrangements as defined in our documentation and discussed with the Wedding Coordinator.

When are weddings held at First Methodist Houston?

Weddings are held on Saturdays at 11 a.m., 3 p.m., or 7 p.m. Weddings will not be scheduled from two weekends before Easter, through Easter, anytime July 4 weekend, or from the weekend before Thanksgiving through Christmas. (Using this Christmas season and 2016 Easter and July as examples, weddings would not have been scheduled for Nov. 20 through Dec. 26, and for next year, March 18 – 27 and July 1 and 2.)

How many people will First Methodist Houston downtown sanctuary seat? The downtown chapel? The Westchase sanctuary? The Westchase chapel?

The downtown sanctuary will seat 1350, the chapel will seat 100, 6th floor, Westchase sanctuary will seat 2400 and the Westchase chapel seats 200.

May we select our own minister to officiate at our wedding?

Yes. The wedding coordinator will ask you to make a first and second choice from our list of male and female clergy on staff at First Methodist Houston. The Wedding Coordinator will need to verify the availability of the requested pastor for your wedding date and get back with you. Once availability is determined a pre-marriage conference with your officiating pastor will need to be made. During the conference, the minister will discuss with you the details of the service and the meaning of marriage in the context of the Christian faith. This conference is in addition to the Premarital Workshop, *Building a Solid Foundation*.

Can a pastor from another Church or other denomination of faith officiate our wedding?

A pastor from another church or church denomination may assist with the ceremony only. Requests for the addition of a guest pastor should be made well in advance of the wedding date to the Wedding Coordinator, who will get approval from the officiating clergy.

Is marriage counseling or a workshop required?

Yes. It is the policy of First Methodist Houston to marry couples who have first been through our premarital workshop: *Building a Solid Foundation*. This 8-hour workshop, held three times a year in January, April & September, goes over many aspects of a healthy foundation for marriage. We use the curriculum "Prepare to Last". For couples getting married at either the Downtown or Westchase Campuses, the cost of the workshop is included in the cost of the wedding.

Other premarital workshops not held at First Methodist Houston may be taken as an alternative, however we will need to approve the workshop in advance and we will require a Certificate of Completion from the entity providing the workshop prior to your wedding date. *First Methodist will not marry a couple who has not completed an approved marital workshop.*

May we select our own music and musicians?

Responsibility for all music at First Methodist Houston is delegated to the Organist.

Downtown Campus: Jay Whatley is our organist and will assist you in planning the music for your wedding. Jay Whatley can be contacted through his email, jwhatley@fmhouston.com or by phone 832.668.1824.

First Methodist Houston does allow outside musicians, soloists and choirs to perform at weddings but all approval and coordination must be through him.

Westchase Campus: Todd King. His cell is 281-705-3960 or Tking@fmhouston.com

How old must one be to participate in a First Methodist wedding?

Children must be at least five years old to participate in a First Methodist Houston wedding. That includes ring bearers and flower girls.

May we write our own service?

Your pastor will follow The Service of Christian Marriage to ensure the service is kept in accordance with the United Methodist Church. However, your officiating pastor will gladly work with you to bring your ideas and personality into the ceremony.

How do we schedule our wedding?

To schedule your wedding, contact the Wedding Coordinator via email: amccarty@fmhouston.com or call 281-924-9085

Weddings will be confirmed by First Methodist Houston upon receipt of the wedding deposit.

*The Building Use Fee includes use of the Bride's Room, the Groom's Area, parking lots, safety staff, a wedding assistant, and related services for two hours before through one-and-one-half hours after the wedding begins.

What is the payment schedule?

Deposit. A \$450 deposit of which \$250 is non-refundable is required to secure the availability of First Methodist Houston for your wedding. This deposit is partial payment of the total fees paid to First Methodist Houston for the wedding.

Second Payment is half of the remaining balance and is due toward the total fees owed to First Methodist Houston at either six months before the wedding date or upon booking the wedding if the wedding date is fewer than six months from the booking date.

Balance. The balance of the fees is due and payable no later than 60 days prior to the wedding date.

Payments for the church facility must be submitted on time per the payment schedule and sent to the following address:

First Methodist Houston
Attn: Susie Horr
1320 Main Street
Houston TX 77002

You may also submit credit card payments online at www.fmhouston.com. Click on the "GIVE" tab on the home page. Fill in the form using the "other" box for the payment. Give a detailed explanation of the payment in the box next to the "other" box (Bride's name, Groom's name, wedding date, and downtown campus). This information in the comment box is imperative in order for the amount to be applied as a payment for the wedding and not a donation.

Honorariums to the pastor need to be paid directly to the pastor and should be taken care of during the premarital meeting with that pastor. You may also mail the honorarium to the church address to the attention of the pastor.

Fees for video services by First Choice Ministries or for video streaming should be sent to the following address:

First Choice Ministries
Attn: Chris Taylor
1320 Main Street
Houston TX 77002

You may also make credit card payments online at www.fmhouston.com following the instructions above, except using the "First Choice" box for your payment and giving the bride and groom's name and wedding date in the description box.

All facility charges, fees, and honorariums must be paid as agreed to avoid the wedding date being dropped from the church calendar. Honorariums to the pastor are paid directly to the pastor, not the church. Please do not include honorariums in your payment to the church.

Weddings will be removed from the calendar if the fees are not received according to the payment schedule.

What if I must cancel?

If you must cancel your wedding for any reason, please notify the Wedding Coordinator as soon as possible so your time can be made available to others. The deposit fee of \$250 is retained by First Methodist Houston and the remaining balance of paid fees will be sent back to the bride in check form.

When may we schedule our rehearsal and who must attend?

The rehearsal time must be set with the Wedding Coordinator when the wedding is scheduled. These are to be at 5, 6, or 7 p.m. on the evening preceding the wedding.

All members of the wedding party, including parents, grandparents, and ushers, should be present at and prompt to the rehearsal. Please stress promptness to them. There may be as many as three rehearsals on the same evening. If members of your party are more than 15 minutes late, your rehearsal may be cancelled.

Other Miscellaneous:

A Wedding Guild member will be available at the rehearsal and wedding to help make the wedding go smoothly.

A Bride's Room is available for the bride and her attendants to use beginning no sooner than two hours before the wedding begins. A Groom's Area is available during this same period.

No rice, bird seed, flower petals (real or artificial), or other materials of this nature may be thrown on the church premises by anyone, including a flower girl.

Absolutely no alcohol is allowed on the church premises at any time before, during, or after the wedding. Smoking is permitted only outside the buildings.

Responsibility

These FAQs are not intended to provide every answer about weddings at First Methodist Houston. For more information, including reservation forms and policies, please contact the Wedding Coordinator, Alexis McCarty. It is the responsibility of the bride and the groom to ensure that any outside vendors to whom these policies apply be provided a copy of the relevant policies and that these policies are followed.