

Wedding Guidelines
Travelers Rest United Methodist Church
Travelers Rest, SC

You have chosen to be married in a religious ceremony by Christian clergy. You join thousands of other couples who have stood in the church to receive the blessings of God upon their union. We do affirm the statements of the United Methodist Church which read: "We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman. We believe that God's blessings rest upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject the social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage. We support civil laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman."

To help you plan your wedding so that it will be a truly beautiful and worshipful experience, the Worship Committee of Travelers Rest United Methodist Church has established these guidelines with hope that many of your questions concerning the details surrounding your wedding will be answered.

The important thing to remember is that a service of Christian Marriage is essentially a worship experience in which sacred vows are taken. It is both a joyous and serious occasion, with social and civil implications. But a wedding in the church is basically a worship experience, and rules governing the conduct of worship shall always take precedence over social protocol.

1. Who can be married at Travelers Rest UMC?

- A. Members, children of members
- B. Non-members who have obtained permission from the Board of Trustees, and with whom the minister in charge has agreed to marry.

2. **Arrangements:** As soon as you have selected the date of your wedding, call the church office to reserve the date. The date should be reserved well in advance (at least 6 months in advance of the wedding), and no public announcement of the date made before plans involving the church are made. The church office will check with the pastor to be sure that the pastor's schedule is clear for the date you have selected. If you plan to have your reception at the church, please request that the other desired facilities be reserved, also. The pastor has the discretion to address special circumstances for relatives of church members.

Selection of your wedding date should be considered in relation to the Christian year. Unless otherwise approved by the Pastor or Board of Trustees the following day should be avoided: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday. No non-member weddings will be scheduled in December. Only one wedding will be scheduled on any given day.

3. **Pastor:** In accord with the policy of the United Methodist Church, the pastor of the church where the service is held shall officiate, be present at, or have a church representative present at all rehearsals and wedding ceremonies. Any leadership roles taken by other clergy should be at the invitation of the pastor. No church representatives are required during the reception.

The decision to perform the ceremony is the right and responsibility of the pastor, in accordance with the laws of the state and The United Methodist Church. All plans should be approved by the pastor.

To assist you in preparing for marriage, Travelers Rest UMC requires a certain level of premarital counseling. During this counseling time the pastor of Travelers Rest UMC reserves the right to refuse to

perform any wedding. The timing and number of sessions will be made at the mutual agreement of the pastor and the future couple. For those who are using clergy from another church or congregation, pre-marriage counseling will be performed by the clergyperson who will conduct the wedding. A written statement must be received two weeks prior to the marriage from the visiting clergyperson and the future couple stating that such counseling has taken place.

The pastor makes no specific charge. Their compensation should be given with consideration to the time involved in consultation, rehearsal, and wedding. While the bride and her family generally assume all other costs of the wedding, it is usually considered the groom's responsibility to provide a suitable honorarium to the pastor.

4. **Facilities:** Facilities of the church are available at no charge to members of Travelers Rest UMC; this includes the bride, groom, or their respective parents or guardians.

For non-members, a non-refundable fee for the specific facilities will be payable at the time of reservation. The fee schedule is shown on the attached table.

5. **Janitorial Services:** The services of the church's sexton will be required for all weddings and receptions in the church facilities. Janitorial or cleaning fees are listed in the attached schedule. The fee for these spaces includes connected areas such as bathrooms, bride's room, and space used by the groomsmen.

Caterers are required to leave the kitchen clean and in good order. It is the responsibility of the one who reserved the Fellowship Hall / Kitchen to be sure that it is left in good order. The church reserves the right to make additional charges if an unusual amount of cleaning is required.

6. **Wedding Coordinator:** All weddings shall be directed by persons who are active members of the congregation and who have been approved by the Worship Committee. These persons have been trained to work with the bride, groom, and wedding party on arrangements, rehearsals, instructions for the wedding party, etc. under the guidance of the pastor. Large weddings may require the service of a director and an assistant. Fees for the director and assistant are shown in the attached schedule. We will provide you with a list of approved wedding coordinators.
7. **The Wedding Ceremony:** The officially approved and authorized rituals of the United Methodist Church shall normally be used at all weddings in the church. The pastor will work with couples who desire to personalize their wedding service, but the integrity of the approved services must not be violated. Couples might consider special scripture, poems, etc. to add a personal touch to the service.

Printed orders of service may be used to guide the congregation's participation in the service. The pastor will assist you in the preparation of the order of service. The cost of printing shall be the responsibility of the bride/groom. The following statement will be included in the program: **Please note that photographs or video recording are not allowed during the ceremony. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers. Thank you for your cooperation.**

8. **Music:** Always keep in mind that a wedding is a service of worship as you consider music selections. It is our policy that all music selected for a wedding shall be suitable for a service of Christian worship. It is mandatory that you seek the aid of the pastor and church musician in making your musical selections.

If you desire soloists or other musicians to perform, it is your responsibility to contact them and make appropriate arrangements, including their fees.

The church organist or pianist have first right of refusal on all weddings and should be contacted as soon as the date for your wedding has been established. The fees for these persons are listed on the attached schedule. If you desire the services of another organist or pianist, that person must be approved by the church musician. We do not control the fee of these other musicians.

A sound technician is required if the sound system is to be used. A list of approved sound technicians is available. The fee for the sound technician is on the attached schedule.

9. **Decorations:** The sanctuary and chapel are places of beauty and lavish decorations are not necessary. Remember that a wedding is a service of worship, and decorations should complement the setting and ceremony rather than detract from it. Flowers, candles and other decorations should not interfere with the appropriate movement of the pastor or any other participant.

The paraments of the season are appropriate for a wedding. However, when requested white paraments may be used.

Floral arrangements and decorations are to be in place in the sanctuary or chapel at least two hours before the appointed time of the wedding. All decorations must be removed from the church immediately following the wedding activities so as not to interfere with other activity of the church. Flowers which are used in the wedding may be left for the Sunday morning worship services. It is the responsibility of the bride to inform the church office about the flowers.

A separate sheet of instructions has been prepared for the florist. It is the bride's responsibility to see that the florist reads and signs this letter. It should be returned to the church office a week before the wedding.

10. **Photographs/video recordings:** Wedding pictures are treasured possessions; however photographers/videographers must not interfere with or intrude upon the worship experience of the congregation. Pictures and video recording of the ceremony may be made from the balcony with noiseless, flash-less cameras during the ceremony. Photographs of the wedding party may be made from the center aisle during the procession and recession under the balcony overhang. No other pictures may be made in the sanctuary during the ceremony.

A separate sheet of instructions has been prepared for the photographer and videographer. It is the bride's responsibility to see that these persons read and sign the letter. The letter should be returned to the church office at least a week before the wedding.

The wedding party should return to the sanctuary promptly after the ceremony for as many pictures as desired. It is the responsibility for the bride/groom to inform the photographer/videographer of these requirements, and the photographer/videographer must agree to abide by these policies.

11. **Payment of Fees:** Building use fees will be paid to the church at the time the facilities are reserved. Other fees will be paid a week prior to the wedding directly to the individual providing the service.