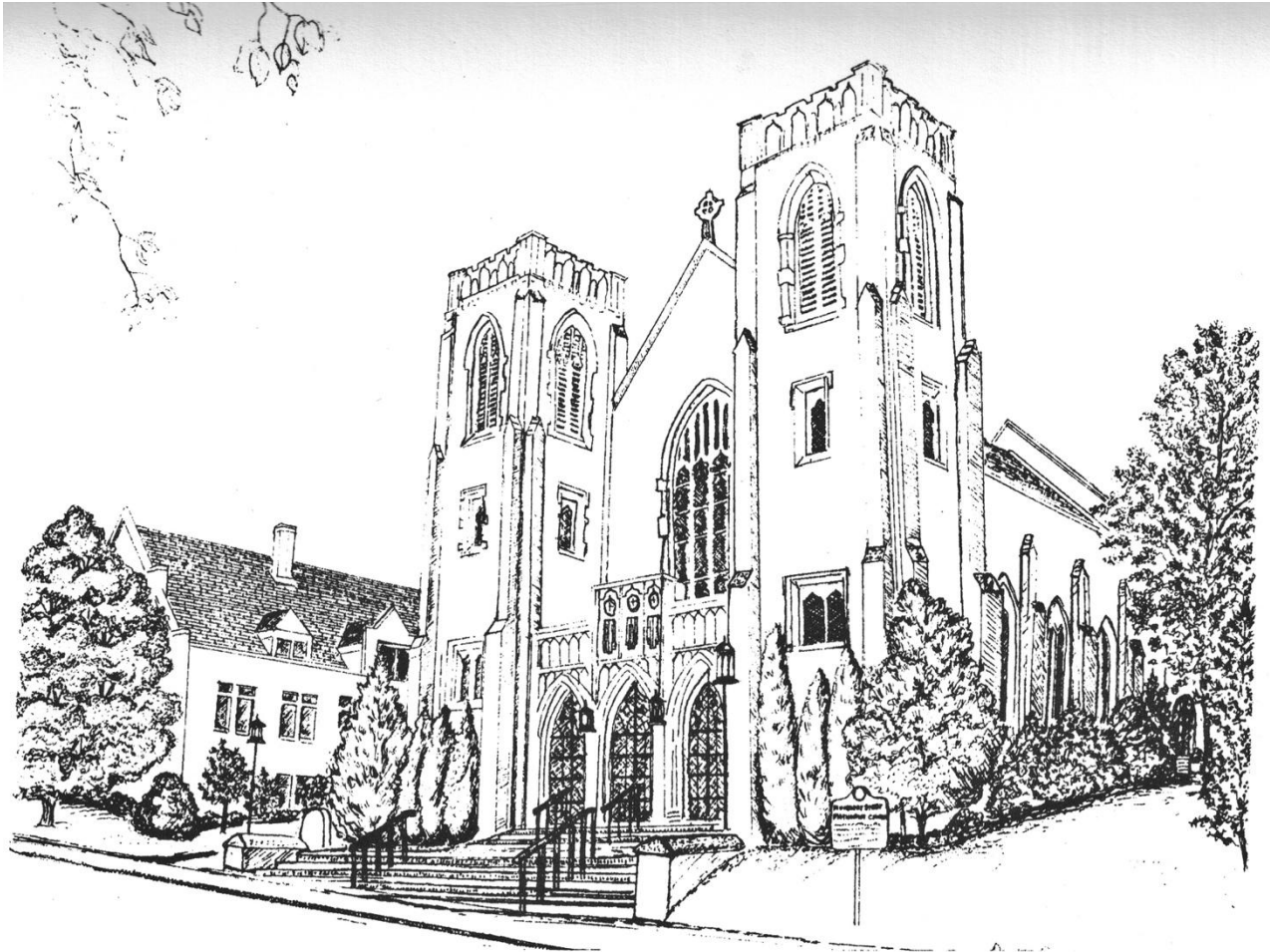


# GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS

*(Revised 4.8.26)*



## **Mulberry Street United Methodist Church**

719 Mulberry Street

P.O. Box 149

Macon, Georgia 31202

(478) 745-8601

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

*"Sharing the heart of God from the heart of downtown Macon"*

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### The Mulberry Wedding Director

Welcome to Mulberry Street United Methodist Church (MSUMC) where our mission is to share the heart of God from the heart of downtown Macon. We are pleased that you are considering our church as a venue for your wedding!

The Christian marriage is a sacred worship service, and we welcome the opportunity to join with you in making this service special. This document details our wedding guidelines and hopefully addresses many questions you may have.

The Mulberry Wedding Director is:

**Mrs. Beth Smith      (478) 719-9041 (cell)      Bethns7972@gmail.com**

Mrs. Smith can address any questions you may have regarding your wedding plans. She will discuss wedding policies to give you early access to guidelines for florists, photographers, videographers, and other contracted personnel.

As the Mulberry Wedding Director, Mrs. Smith will direct both the rehearsal and the wedding. This includes seating of family members and guests, processional, recessional, and placement of the wedding party in the chancel area. If the bride has a wedding planner, the planner should contact Mrs. Smith to review wedding details.

In the event Mrs. Smith is unavailable the day or time of your wedding, she will assist in securing another director who is familiar with the church's facilities and process.

### Rooms Available for Weddings at MSUMC

**Sanctuary** – a beautiful Gothic Revival Style sanctuary with seating for up to 550. The room has inspiring stained-glass windows, stone floors with a beautiful carpet runner down the center aisle, a narthex entry area at the back of the sanctuary, a large chancel/altar area, two pulpits, a sound system, a grand piano, and a large pipe organ.

**Chapel** – a beautiful space with a seating capacity of 70. An upright piano and electronic organ are available for use. Though the Chapel does not have a microphone system, the space is small enough such that it is not necessary. The entrance to the Chapel is located on the First Street side of the building.

**Fellowship Hall** – a large space with a seating capacity of approximately 180 people. The hall has a microphone system, screen, and projector that are available for use.

**Parlor** – an elegant, recently renovated space that includes two sofas, multiple club chairs, a large dining table, and several console tables. Light refreshments may be served in the Parlor.

**Bride's Dressing Room** – Many brides choose to use the Parlor as the bride's dressing area. However, the bride may choose to utilize a Sunday School classroom on the second floor.

**Groom's Dressing Room** – Many grooms choose to use the Fellowship Hall as the groom's dressing area. However, the groom may choose to utilize a Sunday School classroom on the second floor.

### Wedding Fees

<b>Sanctuary</b>	\$1,500 ( <i>non-member</i> )	\$0 ( <i>active member</i> )
<b>Chapel</b> (if used instead of sanctuary)	\$500 ( <i>non-member</i> )	\$0 ( <i>active member</i> )
<b>Minister</b>	<i>(determined by minister)</i>	
<b>Wedding Director</b>	\$400	
<b>Organist</b>	\$350	
<b>Audio Technician</b>	\$250	
<b>Custodian</b>	\$250	

Checks to cover the use of the sanctuary (or chapel) should be made payable to "MSUMC".

All other fees must be paid in separate checks and should be made payable directly to the staff member providing the services. Please ask the Mulberry Wedding Director for payee names. All checks must be submitted to the Mulberry Wedding Director no later than the evening of the wedding rehearsal.

### Wedding Dates and Times

Weddings are primarily held on Saturdays. Without express permission of the Senior Pastor, no weddings may be scheduled on New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Holy Week, Easter, July 4th weekend, Thanksgiving weekend, weekend of All Saints' Sunday, Christmas Eve, or Christmas Day. Most weekends in December are already reserved for church services/activities.

Weddings are held at various times. The wedding may be scheduled as late as 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. To allow for ample clean-up time for Sunday services, weddings with receptions at the church must be scheduled no later than 5:00 p.m. (Onsite receptions are allowed for church members only.)

### Reserving Your Wedding Date

To schedule a wedding date, please contact the Mulberry Wedding Director (see contact information on page 3).

Following your conversation with Mrs. Smith, please complete the Wedding Application Form, which is available online and in the church office. The application may be emailed or mailed to the church office:

MSUMC  
c/o Beth Smith & Hospitality Director  
PO Box 149  
Macon GA 31202

**Bethns7972@gmail.com**

If you prefer to deliver the completed application in person, you may bring it to the church office. The main entrance to the church office is found at the rear of the building.

The church staff will review the application, and if approved, the date will be reserved on the official church calendar. The Mulberry Wedding Director will notify the couple of the confirmed date.

Wedding dates are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. While a reservation may be made up to a year in advance, official confirmation is contingent upon receipt of the completed Wedding Application Form followed by staff approval. No formal announcement of the wedding venue should be made prior to this confirmation.

### Officiating Minister

The selection of an officiating minister is important. We encourage you to consider a MSUMC minister or a minister from another United Methodist Church. The use of an officiating minister outside of the United Methodist Church must be approved by the MSUMC Senior Pastor.

In the event you choose a non-United Methodist minister to officiate, the MSUMC Senior Pastor may request an advance copy (at least 1 month prior to the wedding) of the full order of worship, remarks, sermons, etc. In some cases, the MSUMC Senior Pastor may require that a MSUMC minister be asked to assist in the wedding ceremony to ensure it is conducted as a service of worship with due reverence.

### Marriage License and Premarital Counseling

It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain a marriage license prior to the wedding since no wedding can be performed without this legal document. The marriage license should be given to the officiating minister at the wedding rehearsal. All couples who choose to be married at MSUMC are encouraged to receive premarital counseling either by the officiating minister or a qualified counselor. If a MSUMC minister is officiating, the bride and groom should contact the MSUMC minister to discuss premarital counseling.

### The Wedding Rehearsal

Rehearsals are usually held the day prior to the wedding. The suggested rehearsal time is 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. MSUMC allows one hour for a rehearsal. We strongly recommend that members of the wedding party arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Your rehearsal will begin promptly at the time indicated on the Wedding Application.

### Wedding Music

Couples should contact the MSUMC Organist (Mr. Daniel McIntosh) as soon as they receive confirmation of their wedding date on the church calendar to discuss music and/or musician(s). Mr. McIntosh will assist couples in selecting appropriate music for the occasion and will also serve as the organist as his availability permits.

If the bride and groom wish to have a guest organist/pianist play for the wedding, the guest organist/pianist must contact Mr. McIntosh to set a time to review the use of the instrument(s).

Because a wedding is a service of worship, all music must be sacred in nature. Secular texts and taped accompaniments are not permitted in the service without the express permission of the Senior Pastor.

Musicians will be allowed a 30-minute rehearsal with the Church Organist and must provide their own music score(s) in the proper key. Copies of any accompaniment scores must be provided to the Church Organist *well in advance of the wedding*.

### Flowers, Candles, and Altar Spaces

Mulberry's sanctuary and chapel are beautiful worship spaces where few decorations are needed. As such, we recommend simplicity.

Dripless candles are required. Altar candles may not be swapped with other candles. No nails, tacks, or gummed tape are allowed on church furnishings and walls.

The Church will be unlocked three (3) hours before the ceremony for wedding preparations. All decorations must be removed by the florist within an hour of the conclusion of the wedding. Any exceptions to these allotted times should be discussed with the Mulberry Wedding Director prior to the weekend of the wedding.

White paraments are used at weddings on the altar and pulpits. A wedding kneeling bench with a beautiful needle-point wedding cushion is available upon request. Church seasons dictate certain

adornments that cannot be removed or changed, e.g., the Advent wreath, Chrismon tree, the altar cross draping, etc. The Mulberry Wedding Director can provide information regarding adornments related to the church calendar.

### Photography and Videography

We ask that the photographer/videographer confer with the Mulberry Wedding Director to prevent or minimize distractions during the wedding ceremony. Photographs may be taken in the sanctuary both before and after the ceremony and must be completed 30 minutes before the ceremony begins. Videographers may film the wedding ceremony from a fixed position in the balcony. Additionally, a small (unattended) video camera is allowed at the front of the sanctuary.

We recommend including the following statement in the printed wedding program: *"As a sacred service of worship, personal photography during the ceremony is discouraged."*

### Receptions

Only church members may hold a reception at the Church. Arrangements for an onsite reception should be discussed with the Mulberry Wedding Director. The couple is responsible for contracting their own caterer, musicians, florists, etc. All reception food must be pre-prepared off-site and brought to the church ready to serve. Dishes, plates, glasses, utensils, trash bags, etc., must be supplied by the caterer.

Caterers are responsible for set-up, serving, and clean-up. All areas used by the caterer must be returned to their original condition immediately following the end of the reception. Floors should be swept, and all trash should be bagged and taken to the dumpster.

### Stipulations Regarding Damage/Loss/Hold Harmless

By submitting a Wedding Application Form, the applicant consents to the following stipulations related to the use of church facilities/property:

- A. The applicant agrees to keep the church facilities/property free of hazards.
- B. The applicant agrees to pay for any damage or loss to church facilities/property caused by attendees or activities of the wedding and/or rehearsal.
- C. The applicant agrees to reimburse the church for any expenses arising from loss of use of church facilities/property caused by attendees or activities of the wedding and/or rehearsal.
- D. The applicant agrees to sign and submit the church's Hold Harmless Agreement to accompany the Wedding Application Form.

### Miscellaneous Stipulations

1. **Young Children in the Ceremony** – Experience has shown that a child younger than 6 years old is not mature enough to remain standing in place during the entire ceremony. As such, flower girls and ring bearers under this age should be seated with a family member immediately following the processional.
2. **Reverence** – The attire and behavior of the wedding party, guests, and contracted professionals should reflect reverence. Once the prelude music has begun, we request that members of the wedding party refrain from loud conversation in the Narthex.
3. **Communion** – Communion may be served at the wedding if it will be served to the entire congregation (regardless of church affiliation) and will be conducted by an ordained minister.
4. **No Childcare** – No nursery is available during weddings. Under no circumstances may any room within the church be allowed for impromptu babysitting purposes, as this is in direct

violation of the Safe Sanctuary policy of the United Methodist Church. The bride and groom are responsible for communicating this policy to family and guests.

5. **Alcohol and Smoking** – No alcohol is allowed on church property. Smoking is only allowed outside the building in areas where other guests will not be disturbed.
6. **Security** – Since the church building is unlocked during a wedding, handbags and other valuables should not be left unattended at any time. Though every effort is made to maintain security, MSUMC cannot be held responsible for personal property.
7. **Use of Birdseed/Rice/Confetti** – Birdseed is allowed for use outdoors. No rice or confetti may be used on church premises.
8. **Liability for Damage/Loss** – As detailed in the Hold Harmless Agreement, the user assumes all liability for any and all injuries, damage, and loss to persons attending the event, including the wedding party, guests, and all contracted professionals hired and/or utilized by the wedding party. The Church does not accept responsibility for items lost or damaged during the use of the facilities/property.
9. **Furniture/Equipment** – Church furniture or equipment cannot be moved, except under the supervision of the Wedding Director of church personnel.
10. **Cleaning of Space** – All spaces should be left clean, and all items (including trash) associated with the rehearsal and wedding should be removed.
11. **Food** – Food/drink is allowed in the Fellowship Hall and Parlor. Other than Communion, no food or drink is allowed in the sanctuary or chapel.

## **Contact Information**

### Mulberry Wedding Director

Mrs. Beth Smith  
Bethns7972@gmail.com  
478.719.9041 (cell)

### Pastoral Staff

Rev. Jack Varnell, Senior Pastor  
jvarnell@mulberrymethodist.org  
478.745.8601 (office)

Rev. Payton Stone, Associate Pastor  
pstone@mulberrymethodist.org  
478.745.8601 (office)

### Organist

Mr. Daniel McIntosh  
dmcintosh@mulberrymethodist.org  
478.745.8601 (office)

### Hospitality Director

Mrs. Charlotte Kennington  
ckennington@mulberrymethodist.org  
478.745.8601 (office)

### Audio Technician

Mrs. Millie Thompson  
mthompson@mulberrymethodist.org  
478.745.8601 (office)

### Church Administrator

Mr. Hunter Godsey  
hgodsey@mulberrymethodist.org  
478.745.8601 (office)