

# *Wedding Guidelines and Policies*



Thomasville First Methodist Church

425 North Broad Street  
Thomasville, Georgia 31792  
[thomasvillefirstmethodist.com](http://thomasvillefirstmethodist.com)

## **WEDDINGS AT THOMASVILLE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH**

The Christian marriage is a sacred worship service in which God blesses the union of man and woman. We are pleased you have chosen Thomasville First Methodist Church for your wedding and look forward to assisting you in this important event in your life.

This booklet is designed to inform you of the wedding guidelines and policies of Thomasville FMC and to answer most of the questions asked by our engaged couples. Please feel free to contact any of TFMC's staff listed in this booklet for assistance.

May God's blessings be upon you both as you plan for your wedding and your new life together.

### **FACILITIES AVAILABLE**

Sanctuary with seating for 500

Chapel with seating for 75

Dressing Room for bride and her attendants

Dressing Room for groom and groomsmen

Fellowship Building - reception venue that accommodates 350 seated, 500 standing

Fellowship Building Kitchen for distribution of food by caterer

### **SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING**

Couples who wish to be married at Thomasville First Methodist Church should first contact the Church Administrator who will assist in setting the date and time. The next step is to complete the Wedding Application which is available both online and in the church office. The completed application should be returned as soon as possible to the Church Administrator.

Church Administrator

Floyd White

(229) 226-0840 or (229) 221-1035

[fwhite@thomasvillefirstmethodist.com](mailto:fwhite@thomasvillefirstmethodist.com)

Once the completed application is returned to the church, the Church Administrator will present the request at the weekly staff meeting. If there is no conflict, the date is tentatively placed on the church calendar. The Wedding Director then notifies the couple that the date and time have been confirmed.

The final step in confirming your wedding on TFMC's calendar is to contact the senior pastor of TFMC. He or She will discuss the officiating clergy for your wedding, pre-marital counseling, and the prescribed Methodist order of worship for the ceremony. Once this has taken place, the wedding will officially be placed on the church calendar.

To summarize, the following steps must be done in order to officially have  
your wedding confirmed on the TFMC calendar:

Contact Church Administrator to set date and time

Complete Wedding Application and return to the church office

Contact Senior Pastor of Thomasville FMC for consultation

## **DATES AND TIMES**

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 followed by staff approval and the prescribed consultation with TFMC's senior minister. No formal announcement of a wedding venue should be made prior to this confirmation.

Weddings are primarily held on Saturdays, with exceptions for holidays and holy days. No weddings may be scheduled on New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Holy Week, Easter, Fourth of July weekend, Thanksgiving weekend, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. In addition, the sanctuary is unavailable on weekends when the choir is presenting special music.

Weddings are held at various times, primarily depending upon the reception venue. If no reception is involved, the wedding may be scheduled as late as 7:00 PM for members and 6:00 PM for non-members. In order to allow ample clean-up time for Sunday worship, weddings with church receptions can be scheduled no later than 5:00 PM.

Non-member weddings (neither the bride, groom, or their parents or grandparents are contributing TFUMC members) may be scheduled as the church calendar permits and with staff approval. Receptions for non-members must be scheduled at a venue other than TFMC.

## **THE CHURCH WEDDING DIRECTOR**

The Church Wedding Director is the staff liaison who will assist you with any questions you might have regarding your wedding plans at TFMC. One of the first things she will do is discuss TFMC's wedding procedures and policies with you so that you have early access to the guidelines that must be shared with your florist, photographer, videographer, and other contracted personnel.

The Wedding Director is responsible for directing both the rehearsal and wedding. This includes seating of guests and families, processional, recessional, and placement of the wedding party in the chancel.

An outside bridal consultant is welcome to assist the bride and her attendants in their dressing room. Once the bridal party leaves the dressing area, TFMC's Wedding Director will coordinate the activities of the wedding party.

If TFMC's Wedding Director is unavailable for your wedding, she will assist you in securing a qualified director who is familiar with TFMC's facility and weddings and approved by the ministerial staff.

Any wedding director or bridal consultant is under the supervision of the Senior Pastor.

## **SELECTION OF OFFICIATING CLERGY**

The choice of the minister who will officiate at your wedding must be done in consultation with TFMC's senior pastor. All clergy participating in wedding ceremonies at TFMC must be approved by the senior pastor.

## **COUNSELING AND MARRIAGE LICENSE**

All couples who choose to be married at TFMC are required to have premarital counseling. Appointments for counseling must be scheduled by the bride and groom well in advance of the wedding with the minister who will be officiating.

As part of the counseling sessions, the minister will discuss with the couple the order of worship to be used in the ceremony. This order is prescribed by the United Methodist Book of Worship: A Service of Christian Marriage. Any changes to the service must be approved by TFMC's senior minister.

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 rehearsal.

## **THE REHEARSAL**

Rehearsals are scheduled the day prior to the wedding. Available rehearsal times are 5:00-6:00 PM, 5:30-6:30 PM, and 6:00-7:00 PM. Staff members present include the wedding director, officiating minister, organist, sound tech, and church custodian.

TFMC allows one hour for a rehearsal. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to encourage members of their wedding party to be on time so that the rehearsal can begin on time with everyone in place. We strongly recommend that members of the wedding party arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Your rehearsal will begin promptly at the time indicated on the Wedding Application.

## **MUSIC AT YOUR WEDDING**

Arrangements for your wedding music should be made with TFMC's Director of Music and Organist. They will assist all couples who are being married at TFMC in selecting appropriate music for the occasion and will also serve as the organist for all weddings as availability permits.

Couples should contact TFMC's Music Director as soon as they receive confirmation of their date on the church calendar. The Music Director will set up a meeting to guide you through the process of choosing your music and securing other professional instrumentalists and vocalists if desired.

Because a wedding is a service of worship, all music will be sacred in nature. Secular texts and "canned" accompaniments are not used. Musicians will be allowed a 30 minute rehearsal with the organist and must provide their own score to the music in the proper key. All music selections must be approved by TFMC's Director of Music.

Any guest organist must meet with, and be approved by TFMC's organist.

## **FLOWERS, CANDLES AND ALTAR SPACES**

TFMC's Sanctuary and Chapel are beautiful worship spaces where few decorations are needed. Simplicity is best.

Flowers used at the church should be contracted through the florist of your choice. Only fresh flowers may be used; artificial flowers and greenery are not allowed. Flower arrangements placed on the altar in should not obscure the cross. Potted plants, if used must have containers under them to protect the carpet. No vines with thorns may be used on the railings of the church.

The church requires the use of drip-less candles. The church's altar candles in both sanctuary and chapel may not be replaced by other types of candles. To protect the carpet from falling wax, a fireproof material must be used under all candelabras, regardless of the type of candle used. The antique candelabras in the transepts may not be used or moved. No candles are furnished by the church except the two on the altar and the candelabras on the wall in the choir loft. These are special candles. In the Chapel, the candles on the altar are furnished by the church.

No nails, tacks, or gummed tape are allowed on church furnishings and walls.

The chancel furnishings (pulpit, altar table, cross, candlesticks, baptismal font, etc.) shall not be removed or hidden from view.

If you prefer that the chairs in the choir loft not show, please notify the Wedding Director so that arrangements can be made for rearrangement.

The church will be unlocked before the ceremony for wedding preparations at a time agreed upon by the bride and Wedding Director.

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 Wedding Director prior to the wedding weekend.

Please indicate on the Wedding Application if it is your intention to leave flower arrangements in the church the Sunday following your wedding. Please know that they will be placed in a visible spot in the church building along with an announcement in the church worship bulletin. If flowers are left at the church, please remember that it is still the responsibility of your florist to move the flowers from the sanctuary to the designated place. Flowers left and used on Sunday may be contributed to the Hospice program for distribution to patients.

Church seasons dictate certain things in TFMC's chancel areas that cannot be removed or changed. The Advent wreath and Chrismon tree are an annual part of TFMC's Advent and Christmas seasons. The wedding director can tell you if your wedding date is in this particular season of the church year.

White paraments are used at weddings.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

A wedding is a service of worship that should reflect an attitude of reverence by all who are in attendance, whether invited guests or contracted professionals. For this reason, TFMC restricts photography during a ceremony. The photographer(s) must be in a stationary position at the back of the sanctuary with no movement during the ceremony. Camera sounds must not be audible and flash photography is strictly prohibited.

This policy is strictly enforced and includes professional photographers, family, friends and guests. Please be sure that they are all informed so that the sacredness and reverence of the ceremony and TFMC's worship space will be honored. To assist you in this, the following statement must be included in the printed program:

**"A wedding ceremony is a service of worship. Because of the sacred nature of the occasion, photography on any professional or personal device is not allowed during the ceremony. Thank you for honoring this request."**

Photographs may be taken in the sanctuary both preceding and following the ceremony. Professional photography must be completed 30 minutes before the ceremony begins.

The hired wedding photographer may capture pictures of the wedding party's entrance from the narthex and of their exit from the doors at the back of the church.

## **VIDEOGRAPHY**

Videographers may film the wedding ceremony from a fixed position in the sanctuary. In addition, a small video camera will be allowed in one designated spot in the chancel area. It is necessary for the videographer to ask the Wedding Director to show him/her this specific chancel location before setting up any equipment. The videographers will be asked to remove any camera equipment that is set up in an unapproved location.

The chancel camera may only operate if unattended during the ceremony. The videographer is not allowed in the chancel area once the prelude music begins (30 minutes prior to the service) and must wait to remove the camera until pictures are completed following the ceremony.

Videos in the chapel should be made as unobtrusively as possible from the back pew. The videographer should discuss the specific camera arrangement with the Wedding Director before setting up any equipment.

## **AN IMPORTANT NOTE FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS, VIDEOGRAPHERS AND THEIR ASSISTANTS**

All hired personnel are expected to wear appropriate attire for the wedding. Photographers, videographers and their assistants are asked to respect the sacredness of the wedding space and ceremony by observing all preceding guidelines. Anyone who violates these church regulations will be asked to leave the ceremony by the wedding director and will not be permitted to take pictures or videos at future weddings at Thomasville First Methodist Church.

A copy of TFMC's photography guidelines is available from the wedding director and must be given by the bride to all contracted photographers and videographers who will be at the wedding.

## **RECEPTIONS AT THE CHURCH**

It is unlikely that a request for a Saturday evening reception at TFMC will be approved.

Only church members or a church member's children or grandchildren may hold receptions at TFMC. Arrangements for church receptions must be discussed with the Church Hostess who will offer detailed information about the facility resources that are available.

The couple is responsible for contracting their own caterer, musicians, florists, etc. for the reception.

If you require the stage to be cleared you will be charged \$250.00.

It is required that TFMC's cook be in the kitchen to assist the caterer in operating the kitchen's equipment.

Caterers may have access to the kitchen by the Fellowship Building for their use. They must furnish all items they use including portable equipment, supplies, food, dishes, crystal, silverware, table cloths, napkins, cutlery, serving pieces, paper goods, foil, plastic wrap, etc.

In addition to serving guests, caterers are also responsible for their own set-up and clean-up. All areas used by the caterer must be returned to their original condition immediately following the end of the reception. Dishes should be washed, floors swept, and all trash bagged and taken to the church dumpster. Questions regarding the reception should be directed to the Church Hostess.

The Fellowship Building will be available for wedding preparations 3 hours prior to the wedding or, with permission, during church office hours. Please call the Church Hostess to schedule preparations that must be done other than the day of the wedding.

## **CHURCH FACILITY POLICIES**

No alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or tobacco are allowed on church property.

Members of the wedding party may not consume any alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs on the church premises.

Smoking is not permitted on the church premises.

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, TFMC cannot be held responsible for personal property left unattended in the church facility.

No rice, birdseed, or confetti may be used on the church premises.

Natural rose petals may only be used inside if there is a runner in the aisle.



The wedding party, guests and all support personnel hired and/or utilized by the wedding party to assist with the service shall indemnify and hold harmless TFMC, its members, trustees, and employees against any and all claims, liabilities, damages, or actions arising from the wedding party's possession/use of the property.

### **ADDITIONAL CHURCH GUIDELINES**

Because a wedding ceremony is a service of worship, the attire and behavior of the wedding party and guests should reflect an attitude of reverence befitting the occasion.

Members of the wedding party should refrain from loud conversation in the narthex so that seated guests are not disturbed.

Every effort is made to have the bride and groom and the sacred vows they are making be the focal point of the ceremony. For this reason, flower girls and ring bearers 5 years of age and under should be seated with a family member in a pew close to the front immediately following the processional. Experience has shown that a child this age is not quite mature enough to remain in place during the entire ceremony.

Communion may be served at a wedding only if served to the entire congregation. (UMH, page 864)

## Wedding Fees

It is required that all facility fees be paid 30 days in advance. The check for non-member facility fees should be made out to Thomasville FMC.

It is required that all payments to people providing services be paid in separate checks and given to the Wedding Director no later than the evening of the rehearsal. All checks should be made out to the individual.

### Facility Fee

FACILITY	CAPACITY	RENTAL FEE (Non-Members)
Chapel	75	\$200.00
Fellowship Building	500	\$750.00
Sanctuary	500	\$750.00

### Staff Services

Refundable Damage Deposit *	\$500.00
Pastoral Services	honorarium
Acolytes	honorarium
Organist/Pianist	\$500.00
Sound System / Sanctuary	\$75.00
Sound System / Fellowship Bldg.	\$75 first hour \$25 each following hour
Wedding Coordinator	\$250
Custodial Services / Wedding	\$120.00
Custodial Services / Reception	\$25/hour

\* Refundable Damage Deposit \$500 due with Wedding Application

### Thomasville FMC Member

To be considered a contributing member of TFMC, a person has committed their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness to the church for one year or more. Non-member fees apply to anyone who is not a contributing member of TFMC, or anyone who is not a child or grandchild of a contributing TFMC member.

## **Wedding Staff**

### **Senior Pastor**

Rev. Scott Stanfill

sstanfill@thomasvillefirstmethodist.com 229.226.0840 ext. 103

### **Church Administrator**

Floyd White

fwhite@thomasvillefirstmethodist.com 229.226.0840 ext. 113

### **Wedding Director**

Sally Sullivan

sallynsullivan@gmail.com 229.226.5485 Cell

### **Music Director**

Tim Peck

tpeck@thomasvillefirstmethodist.com 229.226.0840 ext. 111

### **Organist**

Steven Turner

sturner@thomasvillefirstmethodist.com 229.224.0654

### **Custodial Staff**

Martin Naylor

### **Church Hostess**

Barbara Waits

bwaits@thomasvillefirstmethodist.com 229.226.0840

### **Church Office Hours**

Monday-Thursday 8:30 AM-5 PM, Friday 8:30 AM-2 PM

### **WEDDING APPLICATION**

This form must be returned to the Church Office before your wedding space can be reserved. Do your best to complete as much of it as possible. Please notify the Church Office of any changes that need to be made to this form.

Date & Time of **Wedding**: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Time of **Rehearsal**: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride's Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Location (check one): \_\_\_\_\_ Chapel \_\_\_\_\_ Sanctuary

Will the **RECEPTION** be in our Fellowship Building?: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No (if yes, please complete the next form)

Officiating Minister's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(if other than TFMC Senior Pastor, you must have prior approval)

Florist (name & phone number): \_\_\_\_\_

Photographer (name & phone number): \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to use our organ? YES NO ( If YES, you must contact Steven Turner at [sturner@thomasvillefirstmethodist.com](mailto:sturner@thomasvillefirstmethodist.com) well in advance to help make arrangements)

## FIRST METHODIST CHURCH REHEARSAL DINNER / RECEPTION REQUEST FORM

I have read TFMC's *Guidelines for Use of Church Facilities & Fee Schedule* (available in the Church Office) and agree to the fees and policies regarding use. I accept responsibility for my organization/group.

x \_\_\_\_\_ Signature required w/date

Wedding Party Name: \_\_\_\_\_

TFMC Member?: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person (must be present at event): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of event: \_\_\_\_\_ Event Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Event End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Set-up Start time: \_\_\_\_\_ Breakdown time: \_\_\_\_\_ # of People Expected: \_\_\_\_\_

Caterer Name & Contact Information (*policies regarding catering can be found on page 2*): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Check what you'll need: (*each selection will affect your fees*)

\_\_\_ Fellowship Building \_\_\_ Stage \_\_\_ Kitchen \_\_\_ Tables & Chairs \_\_\_ Audio/Visual

Room Set-up Instructions:

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Describe Audio/Visual needs (*only authorized TFMC Tech Team may set-up/run equipment*) *additional fees may apply*:

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