



**FIRST PALO ALTO**

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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## Wedding Guidelines Rehearsal and Ceremony

Thank you for considering The First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto for your wedding. With its soaring ceiling, dramatic architecture, and the magnificent Merritt Speidel Organ, our Sanctuary offers a most memorable and beautiful location for a Bay Area wedding.

### Marriage Ceremony

At First United Methodist Church Palo Alto (FUMCPA), a wedding ceremony is a service of worship, focusing on the promises you as partners make to each other before God and the guests you have invited to share in your special occasion. FUMCPA is a Reconciling Ministry, welcoming same-sex and gender-nonconforming couples.

Neither you nor your partner is required to be a United Methodist to be married at FUMCPA.

### Wedding Coordinator

Our Wedding Coordinator is your church liaison. The coordinator will help you coordinate your rehearsal and wedding, and will be on site the day of your wedding. You can contact your Wedding Coordinator or Church Office during regular office hours.

The Wedding Coordinator and FUMCPA Clergy have complete authority over all aspects of the wedding within the realm of the Church and Church Facilities. While you are free to employ a personal wedding planner, and others may offer suggestions and requests, they have no jurisdiction within the church and no influence over church wedding policies or practices. For example, we will not remove signs of our support of same-sex and gender-nonconforming couples.

### Officiating Clergy

FUMCPA clergy is available to perform your ceremony. When choosing FUMCPA clergy, pre-marital counseling is required at an additional fee.

You may use an outside officiant of your choosing with approval of FUMCPA clergy.

### The Sanctuary

The sloping side walls of our sanctuary dramatically rise up and meet 73 feet off the ground. 1,500 brilliantly hued, small stained-glass inserts add to the ambiance.

The center aisle is 75 feet long with side aisles to the left and right.

The sanctuary has seating for over 650 guests which includes the main floor and balcony. The chancel is raised off the main floor and 2 choir lofts are located at the rear sides of the chancel area.

Food and beverages are not allowed in the Narthex, Sanctuary or Chapel.

## **Music and Musicians**

The sanctuary features the renowned Merritt Speidel Organ. The instrument is now one of the largest in the San Francisco Bay Area, boasting numerous sets of ethereal soft string stops, and many piquant flute stops.

The acoustics of our sanctuary are superb, and as a result we regularly host concerts featuring orchestras and choirs from around the world.

If you choose to use FUMCPA's organist, it is the responsibility of the couple to schedule consultation and rehearsal with the organist and church office.

Vocal soloists or instrumentalists may also be part of your service, If you would like to have them at your ceremony, you will need to contact them directly.

Outside musicians allowed on approval in consultation with our Wedding Coordinator.

FUMCPA does not allow music that is degrading, misogynistic, or contains racial, ethnic or other epithets or stereo-types.

All requested music is subject to the approval of our music staff and clergy.

## **Audio/Visual/Lighting and Live Streaming**

FUMCPA offers state of the art Audio, Visual, Lighting and Streaming services. All Audio, Visual, Lighting and Streaming services must be operated by FUMCPA technicians. Fees are available on our sample fee schedule. Recordings can be provided at an additional cost.

## **Basic Custodial Services**

FUMCPA requires the use of an FUMCPA custodian at all weddings. Custodial fees are available on our sample fees schedule.

## **Scheduling Weddings and Rehearsals**

Weddings may be scheduled Saturdays between the hours of 9AM – 5PM (and must conclude, including any clean up, no later than 5PM). Weddings are not scheduled for Sunday. A wedding may be scheduled for Friday evening at the discretion of the Wedding Coordinator and Church Office.

5 hours are allowed for each wedding; 4 hours the day of the ceremony to include any and all decorating, including flowers, and 1 hour for a rehearsal at least a day before the wedding or by other arrangement cleared by the Wedding Coordinator and Church Office.

On the day of the wedding the wedding party should arrive *no earlier* than one hour

before the music starts. The wedding party and all guests are expected to leave the church 4 hours after arrival, unless other arrangements have been made with the Wedding Coordinator. Removal of all decorations, flowers and other items must be completed in that time frame.

The date and time for your wedding must be cleared by the Wedding Coordinator in consultation with the Church Office. Wedding rehearsals are usually scheduled around 4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. the afternoon before the day of the wedding. One hour is allowed for rehearsals; they start and end **on time**, regardless of who is present. All members of the wedding party should be in attendance. **NO CHANGES ARE ALLOWED AFTER THE REHEARSAL.**

## **Air Conditioning**

FUMCPA Sanctuary and Chapel are NOT air-conditioned.

## **Marriage License**

Couples must obtain a wedding license in accordance with California State law. Consult your county courthouse for specific information.

You must bring your marriage license to the officiating clergy at the wedding rehearsal.

## **Insurance**

All wedding parties shall submit a “Certificate of Liability Insurance” indicating they have an insurance policy in effect with General Liability limits of at least \$1,000,000.00. First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto must be named specifically in writing on this certificate as an additional insured. It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain this insurance.

## **Photographer and Videographer**

Your photographer and/or videographer should be to the church no more than 60 minutes before the music begins. Photographers and/or videographers are not permitted to move about the Sanctuary during the ceremony. Flash photography is not permitted during the wedding service. Photographers and/or Videographers may NOT stand on the pews or altar or otherwise climb or stand on any fixtures. Failure to comply with these rules will result in the photographer and/or videographer being expelled from the service. It is the responsibility of the couple to communicate this policy to the photographer and/or videographer.

Your ushers should also make your guests aware of this policy.

## **Candles, Flowers and Other Decorations**

FUMCPA does not provide flowers or candles.

Pew bows may be used as long as they tie or slip over the ends of the pews. Pew decorations cannot be stapled, pinned, taped, glued or clamped in any way to the pews. Any adornments beyond those mentioned must be discussed with and approved by the Wedding Coordinator.

Florists may come during the first hour of your scheduled Ceremony time.

Experience in our Sanctuary with its long, carpeted aisle and marble steps have shown that it is unwise to use an aisle runner. Such runners invariably wrinkle and slip, becoming both unattractive and dangerous to persons walking on them. Runners should not be used in our sanctuary.

At various times of the year, (for example Advent, Christmas and Lent) the sanctuary is specially adorned for Sunday morning. Such decorations are not removed for weddings.

## **Use of Rice and Other Materials**

Due to insurance liability and building maintenance issues the use of rice, confetti, flower petals (real or fake), birdseed, birds, balloons, butterflies, lady bugs, soap bubbles, glitter or other similar materials is NOT permitted within or outside the church.

## **Alcohol, Smoking and Masking**

The City of Palo Alto prohibits smoking in downtown areas under Municipal code 9.14. FUMCPA is a smoke-free property.

NO alcoholic beverages are permitted at any time on church property.

Santa Clara County and FUMCPA require masks at all indoor events regardless of vaccine status. Note: This policy may change over time. The Wedding Coordinator will keep you up-to-date on any changes in mask or vaccine policy as the date of your ceremony approaches.

It is the responsibility of the couple to communicate these policies to their wedding party and guests. The Wedding Coordinator reserves the right to exclude from the ceremony any member of the wedding party or guests who fail to observe these policies. FUMCPA reserves the right to impose a financial penalty should the wedding party or guests fail to observe these policies.

## **Parking and Maps**

The church has a small parking lot on Byron Street. There is additional free parking on the street and in the City of Palo Alto parking structure on Webster St. Maps can be found on [maps.google.com](https://maps.google.com).

## **Dressing Rooms**

A Bride's Room and a Groom's Room are included in your rental for the day of your wedding ceremony.

## **Ushers**

At least two ushers are required for every wedding in our Sanctuary. Ushers should familiarize themselves with the guidelines contained herein.

Ushers should be in place and ready to seat guests 30 minutes before the music begins.

## **Children and Pets**

We do not encourage children under the age of 4 to participate in your ceremony. The behavior of young children often distracts from the focus of your ceremony which should

be the bride and groom. If you do have young children in your ceremony, be sure they are assigned an adult to be with them at all times.

Pets are not allowed.

## Fees and Payments

A non-refundable deposit of \$1,000.00 is required to hold your date and must be paid at the time of your first meeting with our Wedding Coordinator. All other fees must be paid in full four weeks before your wedding date. If final payments are not paid by that date, all plans will be canceled and no refunds made. If additional fees are incurred on the day of your ceremony, you will be sent an invoice and given 10 days to remit payment.

Non-refundable amounts may be refundable should the city/county/state/federal government enacts a lawful shelter-in-place order in response to a pandemic or other city/state/national/global catastrophe; or at the discretion of the Board of Trustees. A \$100.00 processing fee will be assessed.

By signing below, we indicate that we have read, understand, and agree to comply with these guidelines. Furthermore, we understand that by signing these guidelines we have NOT entered into a contract with First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto for our wedding at any time or on any date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bride Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Groom Date