

**milfordhills**

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# **The Covenant of Marriage**

Policies, Guidelines, Liturgy and Theology


**Milford Hills United Methodist Church**

1630 Statesville Boulevard

Salisbury, North Carolina 28144

704-636-0471

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

<b>Milford Hills United Methodist Church</b>	<b>Wedding Policy</b>
As approved by the Board of Trustees	01/18/2017
 Grayson Gusa, Chair	

**Choosing Milford Hills United Methodist Church**

Milford Hills United Methodist Church is pleased to be the site for your wedding. We want to help in every way to make your wedding a significant and joyous event. This book of church policy will help answer questions that you may have and it will inform you of specific policies and procedures for weddings in our facility.

The church is happy to offer its facilities to members, and others, who want to have a sacred ceremony. We hope you will have beautiful and meaningful memories of your ceremony in our church.

**What We Believe**

“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 blessing resus upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.”  
*(¶ 161.C – The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline)*

Anyone wishing to be married at Milford Hills United Methodist Church must first consult with the Administrative Assistant several months before the ceremony. The Minister is the person who will give permission for the church to be used for your ceremony.

We support the Biblical Foundation for Marriage: marriage is a Holy Covenant (Malachi 2:14-15), marriage is the covenant of a man and a woman uniting together as a husband and wife (Genesis 1:27, 2:22-25), which pictures the oneness of Christ with His church (Ephesians 5:31-32), and marriage is for life (Matthew 19:6).

**Church Calendar**


Reservations for church facilities for rehearsal, ceremony and/or reception must be made through the Church Office. (704-636-0471)

There will be limited availability for the sanctuary during the time of Advent due to the many seasonal church Christmas programs. In addition, weddings will not be scheduled for any of the following holidays: Holy Week, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Thanksgiving weekend, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Years Eve and New Years Day.

The Church Sanctuary may be reserved up to one year in advance of the wedding date. No wedding or rehearsal will be scheduled for any time later than 8:00pm.

**Arrangements for the Wedding**

If you wish to have your wedding at Milford Hills United Methodist Church, call the Church Office to request that the church grant permission for the wedding to occur and to determine the availability of the church. When making the reservation for your wedding, you should also

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make reservations for your rehearsal and use of the Fellowship Hall for reception, if necessary, at the same time.

No announcement of wedding dates to the public should be made before the church is officially reserved and you have been contacted by church staff to confirm all dates.

### **The Minister**

The United Methodist Church requires that the Minister of Milford Hills United Methodist Church provide oversight for all weddings. The Minister typically will officiate at weddings in our Sanctuary, however, if the bride or groom desire to have a visiting Minister officiate or assist in the service, then permission and an invitation must be extended by the Minister of Milford Hills United Methodist Church.

The Church Administrative Assistant will reserve the Sanctuary for your wedding after the Minister has first determined that their calendar is clear on the given date.

### **Preliminary Arrangements**

The United Methodist Church requires that its Ministers have “due counsel” with the couple being married. The Minister will want to have a minimum of three (3) counseling and consultation sessions with the couple during the months before the wedding. These meetings should be scheduled at the time other arrangements are being made.

### **Membership**

Church membership is a sacred covenant involving certain privileges and responsibilities. Building use and cleaning fees are required for non-members to assist in offsetting the facilities costs related to your wedding. We welcome any inquires concerning membership and participation at Milford Hills United Methodist Church. Church membership must be established at least six (6) months prior to the date of your wedding unless otherwise determined by the Minister and/or Board of Trustees.

### **Wedding License**


A marriage license must be obtained through the office of the Rowan County Register of Deeds before the wedding. The license must be presented to the Minister on or before the date of the wedding rehearsal. (Rowan County Register of Deeds – 704-216-8626)

### **Rehearsal**

Generally, the wedding rehearsal is held the evening before the wedding. It typically lasts one (1) hour and the time should be coordinated with the Church Office when making your reservation. The rehearsal will begin with the arrival of the bride and groom who must be present for the entire rehearsal. It is the responsibility of the bride, groom or wedding director to inform members of the wedding party who are late or absent of all procedures.

### **Music for Your Wedding**

Music for your wedding will be arranged through consultation with the Church Director of Music/Organist. The Minister will check with the Organist for availability when the wedding is

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placed on the calendar. The Organist will help you plan appropriate sacred music for the service and can also assist you with soloists or instrumentalists if you want to include others in your service. The Organist will play for both the rehearsal and the ceremony as they are familiar with the organ and the order of service.

Consultation with the Organist should be done no later than two (2) months prior to your wedding.

If for any reason the Church Organist cannot participate in your wedding, other recommendations for an Organist will be suggested. Should another Organist be desired, the approval of the Church Organist is required.

All music shall be of a sacred nature and must be approved by the Church Organist. All music shall reflect that a wedding is a worship service of the covenant and commitment between a man, a woman, and God. Therefore, all music must reflect the worship, honor and praise of God, not just the love of a man and woman. Secular music (rock and roll, rap, easy listening, country, etc.) will not be permitted.

Prerecorded music can be used in the Sanctuary with approval, however should the couple desire a different musical atmosphere for their wedding the use of the piano and/or guest instrumentalists is permissible. At times, weddings may use a harpist or a string quartet in place of the organ or the piano, or all may be used together. Musicians should wear choir vestments or other appropriate garments and should use a music folder to hold their music.

If special music that is not available in the United Methodist Hymnal, it will be the responsibility of the bride, groom or wedding director to provide sheet music to the Church Organist at least two (2) months prior to the wedding.


**Use of Sound System in the Sanctuary**

The sound system of the Sanctuary is available and recommended for all weddings, especially those with soloists. The acoustics of our Sanctuary require the use of a sound system so both the soloists and the Minister can be heard. Under no circumstances will wedding parties be permitted to setup their own sound mixers, speakers, microphones or other sound equipment.

Only our trained technicians are allowed to operate our system, and the Administrative Assistant will arrange for a technician to be available for both the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony. This technician is to be paid by the wedding party.

**Decorating the Sanctuary for a Wedding**

The Sanctuary is first and foremost a place of worship – it is the house of God. It is a place of beauty and elaborate decorations are not necessary. The Cross is the focal point of the sanctuary and must not be obscured. Since flowers symbolize the Christian belief in the resurrection, all flowers or plants should be appropriate to the environment of worship and no artificial flowers or plants may be used in the Sanctuary. If flowers are placed on the altar

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table, the arrangement must not obscure the Cross. Flowers used for a Saturday wedding may be left at the discretion of the bride for the Sunday morning worship service. The bride should notify the Church Administrative Assistant at least one (1) week before the ceremony so a note can be included in the Sunday bulletin that the flowers are in honor of the marriage of the couple.

The Altar and other furniture in the chancel may not be moved. None of the articles on the Altar, Lectern or Pulpit may be moved. The Baptismal Font may be shifted slightly if necessary, but may not be removed from the chancel or obscured by decorations.

**No** decorations should create any fire hazards and must be in compliance with the local and state fire codes. All candles must be in approved holders or candelabras. Only dripless candles in candelabras are permitted, with the exception of the Unity Candle. Flowers must not be placed where they block the limited view of the Organist.

No nails, tacks, wire or tape may be used in the walls, woodwork, pews, furnishings, or other parts of the building. If church property is damaged the deposit may be withheld and the bridal party will be responsible for any damages.


The color of the church season or white pulpit paraments may be used.

Decorations should be removed promptly after the ceremony, especially if the wedding is on a Saturday, so the Sanctuary can be cleaned and prepared for the Sunday worship services. The church staff and leadership is not responsible for moving or removing decorations from the Sanctuary, and the church can take no responsibility for decorations or equipment left in the church after the wedding.

### **Pictures of the Wedding**

Pictures are treasured possessions and the Minister will gladly cooperate so that beautiful pictures may be taken, but photographers must not interfere with the worship experience of the congregation during the ceremony. Individuals in the audience may not take pictures during the ceremony. Pictures and/or videos should be discussed with the Minister before the wedding, under the following guidelines:

- Pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary prior to the actual ceremony or after. The ceremony begins after the mother of the bride has been seated. The ceremony ends with all members of the wedding party have completed the recessional and the congregation is dismissed.
- Photographers are not to stand in the pews or on any furnishings in the Sanctuary.
- Flash photography may not be taken during the ceremony either by a photographer or by guests. Organize your wedding in a timely manner so that pictures will either be taken before the guests arrive or just following the wedding ceremony. If the bride desires to have the Minister in any pictures, please make those pictures the first ones taken after the service so the Minister may be free for other responsibilities.

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- Videos from the Choir Loft may be made during the ceremony if no additional light is required and if equipment is quiet and will not interfere with the ceremony. To limit interference with existing equipment, no wireless controlled devices or microphones will be permitted during the ceremony. Our Sound Technicians will assist with any of our church equipment that may be required for the ceremony.
- The photographer may take flash pictures of the bride and her escort as they enter and as they leave the Sanctuary.

### **The Reception at the Church**

The Fellowship Hall is available and may be used for wedding receptions. Reservations should be made at the time the wedding is scheduled if any other spaces will be utilized. Receptions outside on the church campus are prohibited.

No nails, tacks, or tape should be used on walls, tables or furnishings in the Fellowship Hall. The wedding party is responsible for securing caters and the caterer must supply their own linens, serving trays, etc.

If Milford Hills United Methodist Church kitchen equipment is used, it must be washed, dried and returned to its proper place. All counters, floors, skins, etc. are to be left clean. Trash and garbage should be removed and placed in the dumpster.

Church paper products and supplies are stored in the kitchen and are not to be used by either the caterers or the wedding party.

For additional information refer to the **Use of Church Facilities Policy**.

### **Wedding Service Bulletins**

All printed programs, bulletins, orders of service, etc. must be approved at least two (2) weeks in advance of the wedding by the Minister. The Administrative Assistant and Church Office will be available to assist in publishing and copying Worship Bulletins at an appropriate fee of no less than \$45.


### **Safe Sanctuary Policy**

Milford Hills United Methodist Church is committed to creating a safe environment for all members and guests, the **Safe Sanctuary Policy** shall be followed at all times during the wedding rehearsal, wedding ceremony and reception.

### **Miscellaneous**

The throwing of rice, confetti or bird seed on the church campus or inside church buildings is strictly prohibited.

Smoking is not permitted in any building on the church campus. The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is strictly prohibited on the church campus.

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Members of the wedding party may use our classrooms for dressing. Please notify the Minister how many rooms will be needed. Do not leave your personal items or clothing in the classrooms after you dress there. Store your personal items in the trunk of your vehicle, or another secure place, during the ceremony. Milford Hills United Methodist Church cannot be responsible for any stolen or lost items.

### **Fees and Financial Arrangements**

Milford Hills United Methodist Church makes no charge to its members for the use of its buildings. However, a schedule of fees has been established to compensate staff for extra duties involved in your wedding. Non-members who may wish to use our facilities are asked to pay a usage fee in addition to the service fees. Non-members are defined as couples with no member of the immediate family being a current member in good standing of Milford Hills United Methodist Church. Honorariums for the Minister, Organist and Sound Technicians are requested in addition to facility fees.

	<b>Members</b>	<b>Non-Members</b>
<b>Use of Sanctuary</b>	No Charge	\$350
<b>Use of Fellowship Hall</b>	No Charge	\$250*
<b>Use of Fellowship Hall Kitchen</b>	No Charge	\$150
<b>Sanctuary Cleaning</b>	No Charge	\$50
<b>Publication and Printing of Wedding Bulletin</b>	\$45 (minimum)	\$45 (minimum)
<b>Minister Honorarium</b>	\$200 (minimum)	\$300 (minimum)
<b>Organist Honorarium</b>	\$150 (minimum)	\$250 (minimum)
<b>Sound Technician Honorarium</b>	\$100 (minimum)	\$150 (minimum)
<b>Soloist</b>	Discretion of Hired Individual	Discretion of Hired Individual
<b>Instrumentalist</b>	Discretion of Hired Individual	Discretion of Hired Individual
<b>Key Deposit</b>	\$20**	\$20**

\* \$50 will be refunded if the Fellowship Hall and Kitchen are left clean

\*\* Will be refunded if returned to the Church Office on the next business day

All fees will be paid in advance of the wedding by checks written to the individuals who assisted with the service. The Minister will supply the names and fees of these individuals and collect fees and disperse them on the night of the rehearsal. If the wedding is cancelled after consultation with individuals assisting in planning the service, the fees will be determined by the Minister.

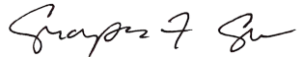
### **The Wedding Ceremony: Ritual and Service**

#### ENTRANCE

Gathering (The congregation gathers for the Service and honored guests and family are seated)

Procession of the Wedding Party

Procession of the Bride



Grayson Gusa, Chair

Greeting

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

Declaration by the Man and Woman  
Response of the Families and People (Optional)  
Prayer

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Scripture  
Homily  
Intercessory Prayer


THE MARRIAGE

Exchange of Vows  
Blessing and Exchange of Rings  
Lighting of Unity Candle (Optional)  
Declaration of Marriage  
Blessing of the Marriage  
Prayer of Thanksgiving  
The Lord's Prayer

SENDING FORTH

Dismissal with Blessing  
The Peace  
Recessional



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### Wedding Reservation Form

Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Reservation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Groom: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_


Address after wedding \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

**Damage Clause:** The bride and groom will be liable for any damage to buildings and/or furnishings of Milford Hills United Methodist Church that may occur during the time the wedding party and all associated with the ceremony occupy the facility.

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**Liability Release of Milford Hills United Methodist Church:** I/we agree to hold Milford Hills United Methodist Church; its ministers, leaders, staff and members harmless in the event of any injury to any minister, member of the wedding party or guest. I/we take full responsibility if any injury occurs to cover all associated medical costs, and liability of the claim. I/we also release and agree to hold harmless Milford Hills United Methodist Church; its ministers, leaders, staff and members in the event damage is done to the wedding decorations or any unexpected event happens which disrupts the wedding.

Please sign this policy agreement as a trust of your responsibility to abide by the Wedding Policy of Milford Hills United Methodist Church and the Liability Release of Milford Hills United Methodist Church. Your signatures indicate that you agree to be completely responsible for the use of the buildings and grounds and all those that use the buildings and grounds for your wedding.

Groom's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Office Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(Required for Non-Members)**

Board of Trustee Chair/Designee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_