



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Committee: Worship
Sub-committee: Wedding Guild
Policy Number: WG-PO1
Approved prior to 2018 FPC Policy Management

THE CHRISTIAN SERVICE OF MARRIAGE for FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MEMBERS

We are pleased that you want to be married at First Presbyterian Church. Our minister(s) are very eager to plan with you and work toward this very important day in your life.

This guide to our wedding policies will help you understand what is involved in a wedding at our church. Please read this document carefully, fill out the necessary forms and return them prior to your first premarital counseling session as part of confirming your wedding date on the church calendar.

SERVICE OF WORSHIP

The Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God normally conducted within the sanctuary or chapel of the church. Reverence will be expected on the part of all present, and the service will be under the sole direction of the minister.

Most weddings held at First Presbyterian Church will be officiated by the pastor of the church. In some cases, and in accordance with church policy, ministers of other denominations will be invited to officiate. The invitation must be extended by the pastor on behalf of the session of the church.

Ordinarily, the wedding service will follow the form found in the Book of Common Worship. The order of worship for the wedding will conform to the standards of Reformed Worship as set forth in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The marriage service will begin with a brief statement of Christian marriage. At appropriate times during the ceremony, there will be prayers for the couple. There will be an exchange of vows between the couple and, if so desired, a ring or rings may be given. Scripture appropriate for the occasion will be read and the minister will deliver a charge to the couple laying before them the privileges and obligations which they are about to receive and undertake. Before the conclusion of the service, the minister will declare publicly that these two individuals are now joined in marriage. The service will conclude with a benediction.

PRE-MARITAL CONSULTATION



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The minister performing the wedding will participate with the couple in instruction and discussion of the privileges and obligations they will assume in Christian marriage.

There are usually four pre-marital counseling sessions, one hour each, scheduled at least one week apart. These should be scheduled by the couple well in advance of the wedding. Sometimes, there is difficulty with the logistics of scheduling these required sessions. Any scheduling problems should be discussed with the participating minister.

WEDDING MUSIC

Such music as accompanies the ceremony should direct attention to God who sanctifies marriage and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent. If desired, the congregation may be invited to join in the singing of hymns at the beginning and conclusion of the service.

 (initial) Ordinarily, the organist at First Presbyterian Church will play for the wedding. If this is not possible, an organist already approved by the Session must be secured. Because a wedding is a worship service, all music must be appropriate to Christian worship. Traditional and/or contemporary Christian music is preferable. Wedding music, like all music used in worship, should direct our attention to Almighty God and celebrate God's goodness and love. The Director of Music or the organist can offer suitable and appropriate suggestions for all the wedding music including processional and recessional music and solo selections and musicians.

Final decisions regarding the music for a wedding will remain with the Pastor in consultation with the Director of Music or the organist. Every effort will be made to approve and provide music which pleases the couple, and which is in good taste, as well as conforms to the Presbyterian standards of worship.

It is strongly recommended that the church organist be contacted early in the wedding planning process.

DECORATIONS

Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should not be unduly elaborate. If flowers are to be left for the Sunday worship service, the church office **must be notified** two weeks in advance, especially if the information is to be listed in the church bulletin.

 (initial) The chapel and sanctuary of the church are designed for worship and incorporate symbols of the Christian faith. Some families may wish to add dripless candles, ferns and flowers. If additional decorations are desired, they must not obscure or damage furnishings and symbols in the worship area. Nothing but the unity candle may be placed on the platform. Nothing may be placed in front of the pulpit. The pulpit will not be removed. All ceremonies will be performed in front of the pulpit area.

The following precautions will be observed in the decoration of the church:

- 1) No nails or screws will be driven into walls, floors or furnishings.
- 2) All candles **MUST** be dripless.



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- 3) Protective cloths or plastic must be placed under all plants.
- 4) No candles or plants are to be placed on the organ console, piano, pulpit, or tables.

All wedding decorations in the church must be removed by the wedding party or the florist within one hour following the conclusion of the service.

PHOTOGRAPHS

_____(initial) **No photographs will be permitted during the Christian wedding ceremony inside the sanctuary.** The last picture permitted **before** the wedding can be of the couple standing in the doorway to the sanctuary. The first picture **after** the service may be of the couple leaving the sanctuary. This picture may be made (with flash, if desired) from the vestibule through the double doors, if the photographer does not enter the sanctuary.

If the wedding party desires pictures in the chancel area, these may be staged either prior to or following the service. Nothing in the sanctuary may be moved or removed for pictures taken before or after the service. **Pictures after the wedding are limited to 30 minutes.**

Video tape recorders may be used to record the service if the following guidelines are observed:

- 1) The equipment is placed in the balcony.
- 2) The equipment does not obstruct the view of the worshipers sitting in the balcony.
- 3) **No lights are used.**

Videotaping is the responsibility of the wedding photographer or a person appointed by the wedding couple.

THE REHEARSAL

The pastor will be responsible for directing the wedding rehearsal. The pastor may be assisted by members of the Wedding Guild of First Presbyterian Church (see section on Wedding Guild). Professional wedding consultants will not be allowed to assist with the worship service.

The couple will have filled out a Wedding Information Form (attached) prior to the first pre-marital session with the pastor. This information will be used by the pastor and members of the Wedding Guild in directing an orderly and expedient rehearsal. If all members of the wedding party are punctual, the rehearsal will take no longer than one hour.

_____(initial) Members of the wedding party **are expected** to be present at the time set for the rehearsal. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to inform members of the wedding party of such time. Since the rehearsal cannot proceed without all members of the party, late comers cause the entire party inconvenience and delay other planned events.



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A rehearsal dinner may be held in Fellowship Hall with adequate planning and in consultation with the church office and the Sexton (church custodian). Additional custodial fees will be charged. **The Sexton must be notified at least 30 days prior to the wedding to plan for this option.**

WEDDING GUILD

The Wedding Guild is a volunteer committee of church members who assist the pastor of the church in directing the wedding rehearsal and the wedding of members of the church. At the rehearsal, a Wedding Guild consultant will be present to instruct ushers, place members of the wedding party and assure that they get in and out of the sanctuary at the appropriate time. On the day of the wedding, a Wedding Guild consultant will be present at least one hour prior to the wedding to help the wedding party prepare for the service. The consultant will assist all parties in conducting a timely and appropriate conclusion to the wedding service. The purpose of the Wedding Guild is to assist the pastor and wedding party in helping to make the wedding day as stress free as possible.

Since the Wedding Guild consultants are familiar with all aspects of church policy and procedures, the appointed wedding guild consultant should be made aware if a commercial wedding planner has been engaged by the family to assist with the wedding.

_____ **(initial)** the responsibilities of the Wedding Guild do not include assisting the wedding party in dressing or any of the social activities of the wedding.

WEDDING PARTY

The church parlor and the library shall serve as dressing areas for the wedding party. If the wedding party is unusually large, an alternate dressing location (such as choir room) may be suggested.

Details regarding opening the building for the florist, caterer, the wedding party, etc. should be discussed in detail with the Church Sexton and with the Wedding Guild Consultant.

WEDDING INVITATIONS

When desired, an invitation to the congregation can be included in the church newsletter. Arrangements should be made with the administrative assistant three months before the wedding date.

RECEPTION

The Fellowship Hall is available for receptions following weddings at First Presbyterian Church.



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Arrangements for the reception, if held at the church, are to be made through the church office and in consultation with the Sexton. Additional fees will be charged. **It is your responsibility to contact the Sexton at least 30 days prior to the wedding.**

The Fellowship Hall will accommodate approximately 300 people.

The cost of catering services is negotiated by the parties involved. The caterer is responsible for providing the plates, cups, etc. for the reception. The plates and cups that are in the kitchen are the property of First Presbyterian Church and may not be used. The caterer is also responsible for the clean-up of the kitchen.

Receptions at First Presbyterian “move” more freely if guests go directly into the Fellowship Hall following the service (rather than wait outside while the wedding party has pictures taken). If a receiving line or a wedding book is used, they should be placed so as not to cause a backlog of people waiting to enter.

Champagne and wine are permitted at a reception held in Fellowship Hall. Beer and hard liquor are not permitted.

_____(initial) On the day of the wedding, you may want to have a light snack (cheese and crackers, granola bars, water bottles or sodas). **Avoid sauces, dips, frosting and anything with chocolate!** All food and drinks must stay in the dressing area(s) or fellowship hall and be completely cleaned up 30 minutes prior to the ceremony.

FACILITIES

In order to rule out the possibility of conflict of dates, the sanctuary or chapel may be reserved for particular dates only after staff consultation. A tentative clearance may be given by phone, **but a final reservation can be confirmed only after the couple has met one time with the pastor.**

Reservations for weddings are scheduled on a “first-come, first-serve” basis for members of First Presbyterian Church.

The chapel seats approximately 70 persons; the sanctuary, approximately 500.

No rice, confetti, or birdseed may be thrown by members of the wedding party either in the church buildings or on the church grounds.

COSTS

Costs for the use of services are set forth in a separate schedule which should be signed and returned to the church administrator assistant prior to the first pre-marital session with the pastor.

_____(initial) **Payment of all fees must be received thirty days prior to the wedding date or the church may cancel the use of the church for the wedding.**



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Associated Documents: Schedule of Fees
Wedding Information Sheet

Revision History:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Rev.</u>	<u>Description Revision:</u>
February 2018 03/21		Increase in Organist Fees Policy Release

End of Policy