

Wedding Policy
First Presbyterian Church



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Dear Friends,

Welcome, congratulations, and best wishes on your engagement and upcoming marriage! It is our pleasure to extend the facilities of First Presbyterian Church (FPC) to those who are planning to marry, members and non-members alike. We are proud of the facility that the members of this congregation have been able to create, and we know that those who marry here will benefit from their stewardship and dedication.

As a community of faith, we strive to ensure that everything we do, first and foremost, gives glory to God. Our congregation is a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which outlines a particular understanding of marriage. As such, it is important that all weddings held in our worship space reflect the beliefs of our denomination in regards to weddings and marriage.

We hope that you will take the time to read these pages, which outline our beliefs and policies regarding marriage ceremonies at First Presbyterian Church. If you decide to move forward, please follow the process as outlined on p. 5.

May God bless you in this season of engagement, planning and preparation!

Grace and peace,

Rev. Christine Coy Fohr

Pastor, First Presbyterian Church

Contact Sheet

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Foundations for Weddings at First Presbyterian Church

Weddings and Marriage: What We Believe

The constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) defines marriage as:

A gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people...to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community.

Further, it stipulates that:

A couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the [minister], who may agree to the couple's request only if, in the judgment of the [minister], the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values. In making this decision, the [minister] may seek the counsel of the session, which has authority to permit or deny the use of church property for a marriage service. (Book of Order W-4.9000)

At First Presbyterian Church, we uphold the belief that the couple called to marriage are called as equal partners, where no individual is viewed as having rank or primacy over the other. Language concerning submission in marriage is not acceptable as part of a wedding ceremony at First Presbyterian Church.

The Wedding Ceremony: What to Expect

Weddings at First Presbyterian Church follow an order for a Christian worship service and ceremony in keeping with church tradition. While the service can be shaped to reflect the wishes of the marrying couple, the ceremony must remain acceptable to the governance of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the church's governing council (the Session), and the minister.

Weddings conducted at First Presbyterian Church must be conducted by the minister of the church. No weddings will be approved if the minister is unable to officiate. Requests for the participation of ministers in addition to our own will be considered requires compliance with our beliefs on marriage, as outlined in the above statements.

Our minister will work with couples to plan their ceremony, including choosing such elements as scripture passages, vows and special rituals or symbols of their marriage.

Weddings at First Presbyterian Church: Members and Non-Members

Both members and non-members must comply with the wedding policies of First Presbyterian Church. For non-members, fees are required to provide fair stewardship for use of our space and the time of participants. For members, there are no fees associated with the use of the building. (For a full list of fees, see page 9.) Members are defined as at least one person in the wedding couple, or their parents, who have been active, participating members at First Presbyterian Church for at least the previous 12 months.

Planning for your Wedding and Marriage

Pre-marital counseling sessions are required of the couple. It is the responsibility of the couple to make these arrangements with the minister at least three months prior to the ceremony. Typically, three one-hour sessions are required, with the final session dedicated to planning the order of worship for the wedding.

Planning Your Event: Our Process

Initial Arrangements:

Conversation about wedding arrangements must be initiated through our church office manager. We suggest you call as early as possible to ensure that your intended wedding date is available. Applicants will need to complete the necessary forms on pages 11-14 of this document and return them to the church office in order to be considered for approval.

Once your documents have been submitted, the church's governing council must approve the event. Please note that it may take up to 30 days to obtain approval from the Session, as they meet monthly. Upon approval, you will be notified and arrangements will be made for you to meet further with our pastor and church wedding coordinator.

Restricted Dates:

We cannot schedule weddings or rehearsals during Holy Week, Easter weekend, the week before or after Christmas, or on Christmas Eve. We will make every effort to accommodate your choice of dates otherwise. Dates will be given on a first-come-first-served basis. There will be no more than one wedding at FPC in any one weekend.

Spaces Available for Use:

Wedding ceremonies are typically held in the church sanctuary, which has an organ, piano, sound system and which holds up to 300 people. Other available spaces include our chapel, which can hold 75, and our prayer garden, which can seat 50. Chairs must be rented from an outside vendor for use in the prayer garden. Space is also available for use prior to the ceremony on the wedding day. Our church wedding coordinator can provide information on those spaces for you.

Reception/Rehearsal Dinner:

The fellowship hall is available for on-site receptions and rehearsal dinners. Your caterer will be responsible for the reception or dinner and surrounding details. The caterer is to provide for all services, including serving, washing dishes, and handling food. Use of the church tables and chairs is included in the fee for the space. All linens, dishes and silverware must be supplied by the wedding party.

Rehearsal:

Unless otherwise scheduled through the minister and the wedding coordinator, all rehearsals will begin promptly at 6:00 p.m. the evening before the wedding ceremony. Up to one hour will be reserved for rehearsal. The FPC minister and the wedding coordinator will conduct the rehearsal.

Policies for Weddings at First Presbyterian Church

Required Participants:

The minister of the church will participate in all wedding ceremonies at First Presbyterian Church. No weddings will be approved for FPC if the minister is unable to officiate due to a scheduling conflict.

The minister and Church Wedding Coordinator will oversee the logistics of the ceremony at the church. Any additional wedding or event planners hired by the couple are welcome to attend and observe the rehearsal and furnish assistance to the family on the day of the wedding.

The Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church will provide guidance and approval for all music conducted during the ceremony. Our church organist and pianist will be given priority in providing music for the ceremony. Outside musicians may be included.

The Sound Technician of the church will provide proper amplification of sound for all participants, including the minister and the musicians.

The Custodian of the church will ensure that the space is properly cared for both prior to and following the wedding ceremony. Should cleaning be needed to remove stains or repair furniture, etc., additional fees may be assessed on an as-needed basis.

In the event that any of the above persons are unable to participate on the day of your wedding, the minister or the Session of the church will approve an appropriate replacement.

Security and Damage Deposit:

A security deposit is required by non-members in order to secure the wedding date/time, following approval by the Session. In addition, both members and non-members are required to provide a damage deposit following the approval of session. Both deposits will be refunded when the church passes post-wedding inspection. If, upon inspection, damage is found, payment for those repairs will be assumed by the couple.

Fees:

As an acknowledgment of the time given toward your wedding ceremony, it is expected that all participants receive proper compensation. A full list of fees for members and non-members can be found on page 9. All payment may be given at the wedding rehearsal to the Church Wedding Coordinator, who will distribute them to the appropriate individuals.

Decorations

Decorations for the ceremony are permitted but must respect the space as a regular place of worship. The baptismal font at the center of the nave can be moved only by church staff; the Lord's Supper table may not be moved. During special seasons of the year such as Christmas and Easter, any decorations that the church may be using may not be removed from any area to make room for wedding decorations. This includes the curtain hanging behind the cross, pulpit paraments, banners, Christmas or Easter decorations, or communion ware.

All equipment for decorations must be provided by the wedding party. Flower arrangements may neither be placed on nor obstruct view of the Lord's Supper table. For reasons of fire safety, aisle runners are prohibited. Because of fire code regulations, exits must be left free of decorations. Decorations may be placed on windowsills.

Please refrain from using pins, staples, or cellophane tape anywhere on the pews, windowsills or walls. Masking or painters tape is preferred.

Candles are allowed, so long as they are dripless. Clear plastic mats or cloths must be placed beneath all candelabra.

Photographs and Videotaping:

Photography and videography are to be done in a manner that respects the sanctity of the occasion. Unless otherwise discussed with the minister, photographers and/or videographers must remain stationary throughout the service.

Food and Beverage

Food and beverages are allowed in certain areas of the church building, including the Gardenside Parlor, the Conference Room, the Fellowship Hall (upon approval) and the hallway kitchenette. All spaces must be left as they were found, with any waste being placed in proper receptacles.

Alcohol and Smoking:

Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed anywhere on the premises, including the parking lot. If any member of the wedding party fails to abide by this provision, or comes on the premises in an intoxicated condition, he or she will be asked to leave the church premises, and the security deposit will be forfeited.

Smoking is allowed in the parking area only with disposal of cigarette butts in the proper receptacle. Please: no littering of cigarette butts on the parking lot or on the grass.

Outside Contractors (Florist, Photographer, Videographer, etc)

Attached to this document are written instructions and information for your florist, photographer, and videographer. The couple should distribute these sheets to those involved in the wedding for their information and/or files and keep an extra copy for their own records.

Fees

As with every aspect of the wedding, it is important that couples properly acknowledge the time and energy put into preparing for and overseeing the wedding ceremony. Below are fees required when holding your service at First Presbyterian Church.

	Member	Non-Member
Wedding in Sanctuary	---	\$650
Wedding in Chapel	---	\$300
Wedding in Prayer Garden	---	\$200
Minister (participates in all weddings)	*	\$300
Pastoral Counseling	*	\$200
Wedding Coordinator	\$200	\$300
Sound Engineer	\$100	\$100
Director of Music	\$100	\$100
Organist/Pianist	\$150	\$150
Custodian	\$100	\$100
Fellowship Hall use	---	\$150
Security Deposit	---	\$100
Damage Deposit	\$100	\$100

*Because weddings officiated for church members constitute part of the minister's work, no fees are assessed for conducting the wedding. However, because of the time, energy and expertise required for the pastoral counseling prior to the wedding, you may wish to gift the minister with an honorarium. A \$200 honorarium is customary.

Fees for use of the building, including security and damage deposits, are made payable to First Presbyterian Church. All other checks must be made payable directly to the Minister, Wedding Coordinator, Sound Engineer, Director of Music, Organist/Pianist and Custodian. The Church Wedding Coordinator can supply you with a list of all of the names. Checks for wedding participants must be given to the Church Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal.

WEDDING APPLICATION

Requested Wedding date: _____ Requested Wedding Time: _____

Requested Rehearsal date: _____

Rehearsal time: 6:00 pm (arrive at 5:30pm)

of expected guests: _____

The Wedding Couple

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Church Affiliation: _____

Cell phone: _____ Home phone: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Their address: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Church Affiliation: _____

Cell phone: _____ Home phone: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Their address: _____

Future address of the couple:

INITIAL SHEET

To be submitted with the wedding application.

I have read and understand First Presbyterian Church's beliefs regarding marriage.

Party One

Party Two

I understand that our church pastor is required to lead the wedding ceremony at First Presbyterian Church. If additional ministers are requested to assist, I understand that they must comply with FPC's beliefs regarding marriage and must indicate as such below.

Party One

Party Two

Additional Minister

I understand that the church requires the participation of the church's pastor, wedding coordinator, director of music, church musician, sound technician and custodian, all of whom must be appropriately compensated as outlined on page 9.

Party One

Party Two

I understand the church's rules regarding decorations of church space.

Party One

Party Two

I understand the church's rules regarding photography and videography before, during and after the ceremony.

Party One

Party Two

I will distribute the vendor information sheets to the florist, photographer and videographer prior to the rehearsal.

Party One

Party Two

I understand the church's policies regarding food and beverage, and its restrictions around alcohol and tobacco use on church premises.

Party One

Party Two

I understand that I must submit a security deposit upon approval of this application by the Session.

Party One

Party Two

I understand that I will be responsible for any damages to church property which exceed the security deposit. Should there be no damages, I understand that the security deposit will be reimbursed to me, by mail, following the ceremony.

Party One

Party Two

I understand that my use of the building for my wedding is confined to the spaces agreed upon for the ceremony, the Gardenside Parlor, the conference room, the hall kitchenette and the church restrooms. Any additional space usage must be discussed with the Church Wedding Coordinator.

Party One

Party Two

Appendix A

Information Sheet

FLORIST OR PERSON IN CHARGE OF DECORATIONS

Basic Instructions and Guidelines for Weddings at First Presbyterian Church:

1. Communion table: Silver service remains in place. Flower arrangements may never be placed on the communion table, nor anywhere in the chancel area (unless permitted by the minister or wedding coordinator) but are permitted on ground level.
2. Pins, staples, tacks, or cellophane tape may not be used to secure decorations to woodwork or walls. Masking tape or painter's tape may be used.
3. Clear plastic mats or cloths must be placed beneath all candelabra. Dripless candles only may be used.
4. Birdseed and rice are prohibited anywhere in the vicinity of the church.
5. Exits must be left free of decorations because of fire regulations.
6. Aisle runners are not allowed for safety reasons.
7. Decorations that the church may be using for worship will not be moved to make room for wedding decorations.
8. Furniture and fixtures may not be rearranged nor moved from any area of the church. The baptismal font at the center front of the nave may be moved only by church staff.
9. Decorations may be placed on windowsills in front of the windows. No open-flame candles may be used on windowsills. Hurricane or reflector types are acceptable.
10. Decorations, including flower petals strewn down the aisle, shall be picked up within one hour following conclusion of the ceremony.
11. Payment for damages to objects of art, furniture, or fixtures in any room that is in excess of the security deposit will be assumed by the couple.
12. The church reserves the right to restrict florists who violate these regulations.

Appendix B

Information Sheet **PHOTOGRAPHER AND/OR VIDEOGRAPHER**

At First Presbyterian Church, we understand that photographs are an important memento of any wedding. We hope that photographers will respect the wedding ceremony as a service of worship.

Before the ceremony:

1. Pictures may be taken in the sanctuary, the parlor, and outside the church.
2. Pictures in the sanctuary and outside should be finished one hour prior to the service.
3. Pictures with members of the wedding party may be taken up to 30 minutes prior to the service.

During the ceremony:

1. No flash pictures may be taken after the wedding begins.
2. The FPC wedding coordinator will assist the photographer and videographer in finding the best location to take pictures.
3. Time exposures are permitted from stationary positions during the ceremony.
4. As much as possible, we ask that the photographer and videographer remain stationary for the duration of the service. For this reason, additional photographers and videographers may be necessary in various places throughout the sanctuary in order to accommodate this policy and the artistic nature of your work.

After the ceremony:

Pictures will be allowed for up to 45 minutes following the wedding service.