



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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October 2008



*A Guide for
Christian Wedding
Services...*

Fees

First Presbyterian Church assesses a \$550 fee to compensate for wedding coordinator (\$200), organist (\$200), sound system technician (\$75) and cleaning services (\$75). Checks payable to each applicable individual should be remitted with the Wedding Request Form. There is an additional fee for the use of the Fellowship Hall Building for receptions.

There is a \$75 fee for the carillonneur to perform 30-minutes prior to the service hour. All fees for guest musicians (i.e. soloists or instrumentalists) are due one month prior to the wedding date and are payable to the individual contracted for particular services. All such fees will be invoiced at the time of booking.

Weddings are part of the normal responsibility of the minister and no fee is charged to members of First Presbyterian Church for the minister's service. Often, families may wish to offer an appropriate honorarium.

Occasionally, a minister may recommend to Session for approval the use of facilities for the wedding of a non-member. First Presbyterian Church is a worshipping community with many families and members, who understandably expect to have priority in scheduling their wedding services. Non-members will be permitted to reserve the facilities not more than six months in advance of their desired wedding date. A fee of \$1,150 is assessed to compensate the wedding coordinator (\$250), organist (\$250), sound system technician (\$75) cleaning services (\$75) and Sanctuary usage (\$500) will be charged to non-members for a sanctuary wedding. A fee of \$850 is assessed to compensate the wedding director (\$250), organist (\$250), sound system technician (\$75) cleaning services (\$75) and Chapel usage (\$200) will be charged to non-members for a chapel wedding. Checks should be made payable to each applicable individual and First Presbyterian Church and remitted with the Wedding Request Form.

A fee of \$500 will be charged to members for the use of the Fellowship Hall Building and its appointments for informal gatherings and receptions. A fee of \$950 will be charged to non-members for the use of the Fellowship Hall Building and its appointments for informal gatherings and receptions.



Christian Marriage

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a man and a woman. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a woman and a man are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a worship service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a man and a woman to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

– Book of Order (W-4.9000)

A wedding is a joyous and holy occasion as a man and woman unite their lives to form a Christian union. First Presbyterian Church rejoices in this occasion and is eager to make your wedding memorable and beautiful. The beauty of a wedding is not in the externals; rather it is in the sincerity and devotion of those who take part in the Service of Christian Marriage.

These guides, with the direction of the Session, are meant to answer questions about planning a Service of Christian Marriage. In addition, our worship and music ministry and the wedding guild will happily answer your questions.

Facilities

The worship and fellowship facilities of First Presbyterian Church are available upon request to church members and their children. Occasionally, the facilities and staff may be available to serve non-members upon request as approved by Session.

Both the sanctuary and chapel are available for services. The sanctuary and chapel seat 800 and 225 respectively. The Fellowship Hall Building (400 maximum capacity) is available for informal gatherings and receptions. Please note any social gathering must conclude no later than 10:00 P.M.

Scheduling

The scheduling of all weddings at First Presbyterian Church are made through the worship and music ministry. Wedding reservations must first be confirmed with the requested officiating minister and the first premarital counseling session completed. Wedding reservations will be final after the Wedding Request form and fees are received.

No weddings are scheduled on Sundays, Palm Sunday weekend, Easter Sunday weekend, during the Advent Season (four weeks prior to Christmas Day), Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve or New Year's Day.

Please inform the worship and music ministry of any changes in date or time for the rehearsal or service after the letter of confirmation is issued. A change of wedding service date will be subject to availability at time of request.

Ministers

Only an ordained minister of First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia may officiate weddings in our facilities. If you so wish, the officiating minister may extend an invitation to a minister from another church to participate in the wedding service. Participation by an assisting minister will be determined by the minister at First Presbyterian Church officiating the service.

General Guidelines

- Please respect the campus as a smoke-free environment.
- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the campus.
- Food or drink for the wedding party prior to the ceremony is allowed only in the following areas: (1) Session Room , (2) Library, (3) Parlor Kitchenette.
- Please arrange to have at least one usher or attendant to the groom for each 50 guests.
- No material of any kind may be thrown by members of the wedding party or guests, including, but not limited to, birdseed, rice, flower petals, confetti, or soap bubbles.
- A cry room is available for parents to care for their own infant/toddler. Child care facilities are only available through the program nursery coordinator for a nominal fee (\$50).
- A bride's room and library are available for the bride and her attendants to dress. It is recommended that men arrive dressed with any coordinating coat or jacket on a hanger to prevent wrinkles.
- First Presbyterian Church is not responsible for valuables left unattended during or after the service. Please assign a member of the wedding party to gather valuables from the bride's room prior to the ceremony.
- The use of guest books is strongly discouraged to minimize congestion in the narthex and delays in seating.
- The wedding party and guests must vacate the worship facilities within 60 minutes after the conclusion of the ceremony.

Premarital Counseling

All persons married at First Presbyterian Church are required to attend premarital counseling. It is a responsibility of the bride and groom to contact the officiating minister to make arrangements for premarital counseling no less than six months prior to the scheduled wedding date.

Videos

Video cameras may be used discreetly to record the service only if (1) the equipment is stationary and placed in the transept, (2) the equipment does not obstruct the view of the worshipers, and (3) no equipment lighting is required. An out-of-sight, remote-controlled video camera may be placed in the chancel. Manned equipment is permissible in the sanctuary gallery provided such does not hinder the service musician(s). Videographers must wear appropriate dress.

Service Bulletins

First Presbyterian Church strives to demonstrate the best possible visual and graphic aids to worship. The worship and music ministry can provide a service bulletin for a nominal fee (\$25). If the couple elects to provide their own, it must be approved by the worship and music ministry prior to publication.

Rehearsals

The Wedding Guild Coordinator and/or designated minister will meet with the wedding party for rehearsal the day prior to the service. Please plan to arrive promptly at the appointed time. Typically, a rehearsal will not exceed one hour.

Reception

The Fellowship Hall Building and adjoining patio are well appointed for informal gatherings and receptions. When planning, please be aware only licensed food service providers may utilize the commercial kitchen.

Wedding Guild

The Wedding Guild of First Presbyterian Church will be of invaluable service and perform as director for all weddings. Outside wedding consultants shall not serve as the director for the rehearsal, service, or “in house” reception, if applicable.

A member of the Wedding Guild will be assigned as wedding coordinator. The wedding coordinator will review the various policies, assist with wedding plans and coordinate the details of the rehearsal and service.

Order for the Service of Marriage

The wedding ceremony shall be planned with the designated minister under guidelines prescribed by the *Book of Order* (W-4.9000) and the Session. The wedding is a corporate worship service of God. In the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., it indicates what we believe about God and marriage. Since a marriage ceremony is a worship service, the order shall include affirmation of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and an affirmation of commitment by both bride and groom to each other. The ceremony may include affirmation of families, particular vows along with the exchange of rings, prayer and the sealing of the commitment as the minister deems appropriate in planning the service with the couple.

A typical service order may be the following: The entrance of the family, pastor, groom, attendants to the groom, and attendants to the bride into the sanctuary; the processional of the bride; greeting and call to worship by the minister; a hymn; the meaning of Christian marriage; prayer; vows; exchange of rings; dedicatory prayer; declaration of marriage; exchange of a kiss; benediction; recessional. The minister has various resources and advice that will help a couple plan a joyfully unique service for their marriage. All suggestions, changes and instructions in this service must be approved by the officiating minister.

Service Music

It is the policy of the Session of First Presbyterian Church to offer unto God music of the highest quality for all worship services. It is important that the music conform to the Christian ideals of marriage. Secular music, no matter how beautiful or filled with sentiments of love, is not appropriate for a worship service. All music is performed from the sanctuary gallery or chapel chancel. Audio assist is available to the officiating minister(s) only.

The bride and groom must arrange an appointment with the Director of Music/Organist for the purpose of planning music for the wedding service. The Director of Music/Organist plays for all weddings at First Presbyterian Church and will direct all musical elements of the service, including assisting the couple in the selection of the music and directing other instrumentalists and vocalists. Instrumentalists or vocalists who are employed or volunteered, must be approved and contracted by the Director of Music/Organist.

Decorations

First Presbyterian Church is blessed with a beautiful sanctuary and chapel designed by noted liturgical architect Harold Wagoner. Decorations should be restrained and tasteful, respecting the simple contemporary architectural beauty of the spaces. The paraments used for the service are white or the liturgical color of the season. The following guidelines must be followed for decorating:

- It is the responsibility of the florist or wedding party to remove all decorations from the facility immediately following the service.
- Rearranging of furnishings is not permitted.
- A maximum of three brass (chapel) or silver (sanctuary) candelabras with drip-less candles may be used in the chancel for *evening* services .
- If the wedding party includes a flower girl, only artificial flower petals may be dropped down the center aisle as she processes.
- No anchoring or fastening of decorations to the building or furnishings is permitted.
- The building and furnishings must be protected from any stains or drippings sometimes caused by floral arrangements and plants.
- Aisle runners are not permitted.

Sanctuary Flowers

- One arrangement of fresh flowers may be used on the communion table and the narthex table.
- Seasonal plants are provided by the worship and music ministry and placed in large urns on the two credence shelves in the chancel. These plants may be replaced with fresh flowers if so desired.
- Fresh flower or green bouquets proportionate to the space may be attached to center aisle pews with satin ribbon.

Chapel Flowers

- One arrangement of fresh flowers may be used on the communion table and the table in the outside hallway.
- Fresh flower or green bouquets proportionate to the space may be attached to the pews with satin ribbon.

Throughout the liturgical year, the worship and music ministry provides various symbols to aid seasonal worship experiences. Such symbols include column wreaths, draping of the chancel cross, etc. These symbols will not be removed for wedding services scheduled during these special seasons.

Photography

Photographs may be taken up to forty-five minutes before the service hour. At this time, **all** photography must cease until the conclusion of the service. Please share this information with your photographer, family and friends.

The wedding photographer may take pictures, without any noise or flash, from the sanctuary gallery throughout the service, provided their presence does not hinder the service musician(s). The photographer may not enter the sanctuary nave and may only take one picture from the center aisle as the bride processes.

Photographs taken immediately following the service must be completed within 30 minutes of the conclusion of the ceremony.