



A Guide To Planning Your Wedding

First Presbyterian Church
Manasquan, NJ

PLANNING YOUR CHRISTIAN WEDDING

We are delighted that you are exploring a Christian wedding at First Presbyterian Church. We are committed to assisting in the preparation for your special day. We also want to help you become established in a fabulous Christian marriage for the rest of your life. This booklet is designed to help.

In this booklet, we talk about 1) the meaning of Christian marriage, 2) plans for your marriage, 3) making wedding arrangements, 4) the details of the wedding ceremony, 5) people who will help with your wedding plans and 6) the expenses for a wedding in the church. We also provide you 7) a checklist assisting with your plans.

1. THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

The church teaches that marriage is much more than a human institution. The Bible tells us that God established, instituted, and ordained marriage at the beginning of human history (Gen. 2,3). God created the relationship between a man and a woman as foundational for all society. Before the institutions of a church, a school, a business or a government, merged in culture; God instituted marriage, declaring, ***"A man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."***

We believe that God has not left us in the dark about married life. God has revealed his will about marriage in the Bible and has given principles in the pages of Scriptures which will insure a happy, healthy, and holy relationship. With this in mind, it is our goal to help you understand the Bible's teachings on marriage and to call upon God's blessings and guidance for your life together. We also want to help you understand the important role of the church in your new married life.

2. PLANNING YOUR MARRIAGE

As you prepare for your wedding day we also want to help you prepare to live out your marriage vows. Your vows will bind you together “as long as you both shall live.”

We have developed several resources to help you find God’s happiness and blessings in marriage. Here’s what couples at Manasquan First Presbyterian Church do to prepare for Christian marriage:

1. Meet with the pastor
2. Complete a marriage study guide separately and discuss it together.
3. Discuss the marriage guide with a mentor couple four (4) times.
4. Attend worship and explore the role of the church in your married life together.

It is our prayer that sharing in these activities will help prepare you for living the marriage vows you make on your wedding day.

3. MAKING WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

We want your wedding day to be very special, a day you will remember always. Within the bounds of good taste and the church’s understanding of a Christian marriage, we will work with you to make your wedding as individualized or as traditional as you wish.

It’s your wedding. Family members or friends will be eager to share their own ideas about what is necessary or proper, but you and your fiancé are the ones who must decide. Our goal is to work with you so you may understand the full range of choices available. What follows are some of the details you’ll need to tend to as you plan your wedding day.

Scheduling Your Wedding

Please call the church office (732-223-4627) to tentatively reserve the sanctuary for the date and time of your ceremony. A Scheduling Fee shall be paid within two weeks to secure your wedding date. Schedule your first meeting with a pastor. The church should be notified of your desired wedding date **at least two months** in advance of the ceremony. **(Please note: Arrangements for weddings will be made only with the bride and groom, not with parents or any other third party.)**

Our **pastoral staff** have their own standards for marriage preparation. Please discuss with the Pastor a schedule of meetings.

We have a **mentor couple** program at Manasquan. We encourage all couples getting married in the church to meet a minimum of 4 times with a mentor couple to discuss issues related to Christian marriage. The pastor will work with you to assign a couple when you meet.

The following days are usually **NOT** available for weddings:

- New Year's Eve or Day
- Palm Sunday
- Good Friday
- Saturday before Easter
- Easter Sunday
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Our Church Wedding Coordinator

We have a wedding coordinator who will assist with your wedding details. Please arrange by calling Barbara Marino at (732-714-1942)

The coordinator will meet with the Bride and Groom to go over all of the plans of the wedding and to coordinate with you the details of the day. She will go over changes and any questions that you have. She will also coordinate janitor/sexton needs pertaining to the Rehearsal and Wedding Day.

The coordinator will attend your rehearsal and go over details with the Ushers, Bridal Party, Bride and Groom, Parents and/or other participants of the wedding.

The Church Building

Fridays and Saturdays are usually good for weddings. Sundays are generally not available for weddings, although exceptions may occasionally be made for church members, as church programming permits.

The date and time for the rehearsal and wedding should also be arranged as far in advance as possible. The rehearsal is ordinarily scheduled in the late afternoon or early evening of the day preceding the ceremony (4 or 5 p.m. is best), and ordinarily lasts approximately one hour.

When the sanctuary is reserved for a wedding, the overflow room (room adjacent to the church sanctuary) is also reserved as a waiting area for the bridal party prior to the ceremony.

Other church facilities, including the Fellowship Hall and kitchen in the Christian Education building (located next to the Church) may be reserved for receptions. Please consult the wedding coordinator for more information about reservations and fees for these facilities.

Church policy does not allow the serving of alcoholic beverages in any of the Church buildings or grounds.

Alternative Locations for the Wedding

The ministers are open to discussing alternative locations for your wedding, such as a home, a public park or other places. The responsibility for making arrangements for alternative locations rests solely with the couple. In the case of outdoor weddings, the couple should incorporate in their wedding plans for an **indoor facility** as a backup plan in case of inclement weather. This information should be communicated to all guests when invitations to the wedding are prepared.

4. WEDDING DETAILS

It is church policy that a pastor from Presbyterian Church will preside at all weddings held in the church.

If you wish to have a guest minister preside or assist at the ceremony, please consult the pastor; any invitation to a guest minister must be extended by the pastor.

Although the minister has a standard service that is used in most cases, you are more than welcome to make special requests to be incorporated into this service that will help to make your wedding more unique.

The wedding ceremony ordinarily lasts about 40 minutes excluding the organ pre-service and post-service music. One or more readings from the Bible are included.

You will **not** be expected to memorize your wedding vow, or any other part of the service; all words spoken by you are repeated after the minister, however, if you wish, you may write your wedding vows or select one from a format the minister will provide. We encourage you to select one or two readings from the Bible; again, the minister will provide a list of suggestions.

Wedding Bulletin

Some couples arrange for a wedding bulletin—a printed order of the service, including personal greetings, announcements and the names of the wedding party. The minister will gladly consult with you about bulletin design, but it is your responsibility to arrange for typing and photocopying. Christian bookstores are a good source for wedding bulletin covers; should you desire, the church office can supply you with a cover that has a picture of the First Presbyterian Church on it. (Contact the office for this cover at least two weeks in advance of your wedding.)

The basic order of worship for the wedding service, which may be reproduced in the bulletin, is as follows:

- Pre-service Music
- Processional
- Call to Worship
- Statement on the Gift of Marriage
- Prayer
- Declarations of Intent
- Scripture Reading
- Exchange of Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Unity Candle
- Prayer
- Charge to the Couple
- Proclamation of Marriage
- Introduction of Couple
- Benediction
- Recessional
- Postlude

A final version of the bulletin must be shown to the minister for final approve at least one week before the wedding.

Flowers and Decorations For the Sanctuary

Arrangements for flowers and other decorations for the sanctuary may be made with the florist of your choice. Flowers and other special decorations are not necessary for a wedding, but many couples find they add to the celebration atmosphere. We encourage couples to keep their floral arrangements modest and dignified.

Floral arrangements are usually delivered to the sanctuary on the same day as the wedding. Please notify the church office as to what time the florist will make the delivery, so the sexton (church custodian) may be present to unlock the door.

Many couples donate at least one of their flower arrangements to the church for use in Sunday morning worship. Afterwards, these arrangements are donated to shut-ins. If you would like to do this, please notify the church office at least a week in advance, so mention of your donation may be made in the Sunday bulletin.

The Communion table in the sanctuary has two candlesticks on it. If you wish to have additional candelabras at your wedding, this may be arranged through the Wedding Coordinator.

Some couples follow the tradition of lighting a marriage or "Unity" candle during the ceremony. This involves a special three-candle holder that rests on the Communion table. If you would like to do this, please discuss your wishes with the minister, and then consult your florist about obtaining the necessary candleholder, candles and tapers.

Some couples purchase a white "runner" for the church aisle, to be unrolled just before the processional. This, too, can be obtained from the florist, and delivered with the flowers. The church aisle is 35 feet long.

Photography

Most couples wish to commemorate their special day with photographs. We are happy to accommodate photography in the church sanctuary, **but only at appropriate times**, so as not to disrupt the worshipful nature of the occasion. It is your responsibility to notify the photographer of these requirements.

The photographer is permitted to take pictures at the entrances of the church or at the head of the aisle during the processional, and at the church door during the recessional. **Please Note: No flash photography will be permitted during the time frame after the Processional and before the Recessional. We request that the professional photographer consult with the minister one half hour before the ceremony starts. Also, the photographer and videographer are not permitted to move around the sanctuary during the ceremony.**

Following the ceremony, you and the wedding party may re-enter the sanctuary so that scenes of the service may be re-enacted and group photographs taken.

Video cameras, on fixed tripods or at stationary locations, without artificial lighting, may be used unobtrusively. The minister will indicate the most appropriate position for the video camera.

Photographers should be dressed appropriately for a service of worship.

Worshippers are welcome to take pictures during the **Processional and Recessional only and, at the discretion of the official photographer, during the photographic re-enactment** following the ceremony.

Ushers/Groomsmen will be asked to remind worshipers, at time of seating, of these restrictions, particularly the prohibition against flash photography.

Music

Our Director of Music plays for all weddings. If he is not available, he will suggest a substitute. If the couple requests another musician, the couple must make a request directly to the Director of Music, who will verify that a guest organist is qualified to play the church organ. Opportunity for guest organist to practice will be provided. It is the couple's responsibility to contact the Music Director as early as possible.

You may make arrangements or ask the Music Director to help you if you would like other instruments (harp, trumpet, etc.) or vocal soloist at your wedding. Soloists must make arrangements with the Music Director for rehearsal time. The Music Director can also recommend suitable soloists; however, it is the couple's responsibility to engage the services of the soloist/instrumentalist and to pay that person his or her customary fee. All musical selections must be appropriate for a service of worship. The Music Director has a wide repertoire of appropriate musical pieces, and will be happy to select the pieces for your wedding. Please make an appointment with the Music Director to discuss the musical selections for your wedding either by phone or e-mail listed below.

Music Director: Marcello Velame

- Office Phone: 732-223-4627
- Home Phone: 732-223-8770
- E-mail: cellov@aol.com

The Music Director may or may not be at your wedding rehearsal according to his schedule. All fees regarding music must be paid in advance.

The Marriage License

A wedding is both a religious and a civil ceremony. In conducting the ceremony, the minister acts on behalf of the State as well as the church. Because of the civil nature of the proceedings, couples must obtain a Marriage License ahead of time--usually from the clerk of the municipality in which the bride is a legal resident.

A marriage license in the State of New Jersey is good for **thirty days**; therefore, do not obtain your license more than thirty days in advance of your wedding day (or it will have expired by the time that day arrives). Please note also that there is a mandatory **72-hour waiting period** (or longer, if a weekend or holiday is involved), before you can obtain your license. **Do not wait until the last minute. Without a valid license, the wedding cannot take place.** The license must be brought to the rehearsal and will be kept by the minister between the rehearsal and the wedding. The license will be signed immediately following the wedding service and the minister will file it with the appropriate municipal authorities following the wedding.

The Wedding Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal, ordinarily held the late afternoon or early evening before the wedding, is an opportunity for members of the wedding party to practice their roles in the ceremony. It is important that proper dress and behavior be observed so that rehearsals can proceed in an orderly and expedient fashion. At the rehearsal, the focus is on the movement and physical placement of participants.

The following people should be present at the rehearsal:

- Bride
- Groom
- Best Man
- Maid or Matron of Honor
- Bridesmaids
- Ushers
- Parents of Bride
- Parents of Groom
- Grandparents (If special escorting will take place)
- Others Accompanying Bride down the aisle
- Readers
- Other members of wedding party (flower Girl, ring-bearer, etc.)

Please remember to bring the marriage license to the rehearsal.

The Wedding Day

- Since the wedding is a service of worship, we expect that appropriate clothing will be worn at the ceremony.
- Ushers should arrive at the sanctuary at least 40 minutes before the ceremony, so they may welcome and seat early arrivals.
- The Groom and Best Man should arrive at least 30 minutes before the ceremony.
- The Bridal Party, Parents and Grandparents (Optional) should arrive at least 15 minutes before the ceremony.

- We welcome children to be included in the ceremony as ring-bearers or flower girls. Please consider, however, that most children under the age of five do not have the maturity to fill this role, therefore, we ask that an adult be designated to oversee the children.
- With pictures and greeting following the wedding, please plan at least one hour following the conclusion of the ceremony.
- If invited, the minister will make every effort to attend the reception, but this is not always possible, given the demands of parish ministry.
- As the wedding party departs from the church, it is permissible for guests to throw bird seed. ***PLEASE NOTE: ALL PHOTOGRAPHY MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE THROWING OF THE BIRD SEED,** due to the fact that excessive amounts of seed can end up inside the church. Also, seed in hair could show up in the photographs.

Other Important Matters

Due to the danger of fire hazard, lighted candles are not allowed in aisles, windows, or adjacent to any area through which the public passed. Lighted candles may not be carried.

- Spotlights may not be used in the sanctuary.
- The Communion Table may not be moved from its central place in the chancel.
- Bows or flowers for family pews may be used; however, these must be attached in such a way that there will be no scratching, marring or other damage to the pews. **ABSOLUTELY NO TACKS, STAPLES, OR NAILS** may be used to secure Decorations in the

- No alcoholic beverages shall be permitted in the Sanctuary or anywhere on the church property.
- No smoking is allowed in any of the church buildings.
- The Bride is responsible for removal of all items left in the Church, dressing room, or overflow room. The Church assumes NO liability for items left. Someone should be allocated to assume this responsibility.
- If a Church reception is planned, arrangements shall be made with the Church secretary to use any Church equipment or personnel.
- The caterer shall bear any expense incurred through the use of church equipment or personnel. If services of the church custodian are expected, these arrangements must be made separately through the church office, in advance, as a separate service from those duties pertaining to the rehearsal and the wedding in the Sanctuary.
- Any damage done to the furnishings or the building by persons or business connected with your wedding shall be repaired by that individual or business to the church's satisfaction. Also, the Church assumes no responsibility for any personal properties or professional equipment or any other items left on the Church premises at any time.

5. PEOPLE WHO WILL HELP AT THE CHURCH

Following are a list of people to help with your wedding and the contact numbers:

First Presbyterian Church

16 Virginia Avenue, Manasquan, New Jersey 08736
Telephone: 732-223-4627 Fax: 732-223-1607

Rev. Dr. Steve J. Davis, Pastor
732-223-4627

Rev. Gayle B. Donnelly, Parish Associate
732-2323-4627

Rev. David Cotton, Parish Associate
732-776-4991

Marcello Velame, Organist
732-223-8770

Barbara Marino, Wedding Coordinator
732-714-1942

Todd Vreeland, Sexton
732-223-4627 (Church Office)

6. EXPENSES FOR A WEDDING

Scheduling Deposit (refundable if Wedding takes place on scheduled date)	\$250.00
Sanctuary Use Fee – Non Member	\$300.00
– Member	\$- 0
Organist	\$200.00
Sexton	\$125.00
Wedding Coordinator	\$ 50.00
Candelabra and candles (optional)	\$ 25.00
Fellowship Hall (optional)	\$200.00

Members Discount - When the bride and/or groom, or at least one of their parents, is an active church member the Sanctuary Use Fee and Fellowship Hall Use Fee are waived. The Scheduling Deposit Fee will be refunded upon completion of the wedding on the scheduled date.

It is customary for couples to present an **honorarium** for the minister a week before the wedding. It is suggested that the honorarium be at least **\$300.00**.

Payment of Fees

All fees except the scheduling deposit, are to be given to the secretary at the Church Office no later than two weeks prior to the wedding. Checks for the church building should be made out to "First Presbyterian Church." Individual checks should be issued for the organist, sexton, coordinator and should be brought to the Church Office no later than two weeks before the wedding.

7. CHECKLIST FOR WEDDING PLANNING

As early as possible

_____ Call the Church Office to tentatively reserve the Sanctuary and to schedule a meeting with the Minister.

_____ After your first session with the Minister and your date has been confirmed, call the Wedding Coordinator to announce the date and time of your rehearsal and wedding.

_____ Call the church organist to schedule your wedding and rehearsal plans.

_____ Book Fellowship Hall if desired or another reception location.

_____ Determine who your ushers/attendants will be and invite them to participate.

One Month Before the Wedding

_____ Marriage License: Apply for your license keeping in mind that there is a 72 hour mandatory wait, therefore do not wait until the last minute.

_____ Contact the organist to discuss any special musical requests and to finalize the general music used for processional and recessional.

_____ Purchase wedding bulletin covers, should you desire.

_____ Make final arrangements for wedding flower arrangements and/or church decorations.

_____ Bring appropriate checks to the Church office and give them to the Church Secretary. (Sexton, Organist, Minister, Church Sanctuary)

One Week Before the Wedding

_____ Remind wedding party, parents and other participants in the wedding service about the time of the rehearsal. Please be aware of traveling time for each person and schedule a realistic starting time for the rehearsal.

_____ Call the Wedding Coordinator should you have any changes or special arrangements pertaining to your rehearsal or wedding day.

The Wedding Rehearsal

- _____ Marriage license must be brought to the Church.
- _____ The wedding party, parents, soloists (if needed), speakers pertaining to the wedding service and any other key people with regard to the wedding itself must be invited to the rehearsal.
- _____ Arrival times for the wedding will be discussed per the meeting with the wedding coordinator.
- _____ Provide honorarium for Pastor if not previously provided.

Wedding Day

- _____ Back-up plan for the marriage license: If the license has not been brought to the rehearsal, then it **MUST** be brought to the wedding and given to the Minister.
- _____ Rings must be brought to the Church.

**First Presbyterian Church / www.manasquanfirstpres.com
16 Virginia Avenue/Manasquan, NJ 08736 / 732-223-4627**