

*Planning a
Christian Wedding*



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Planning a Christian Wedding Service at First Presbyterian Church

First Presbyterian Church is pleased that you wish to celebrate your wedding with a Christian service of worship. We are eager to help in your understanding of marriage and the commitments you are about to make. This packet of information reflects the current policies of First Presbyterian Church and is intended for couples to read together and discuss.

Contained in this packet is information concerning:

- Who may be married at First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton
- Dates and times
- The role of the pastor
- Our policy on marriage preparation and counseling
- Wedding Coordinators
- The Marriage License
- Music
- Further guidelines for Planning your Wedding and Reception
- Fee Schedule
- Other Items

One further word: At First Presbyterian Church we believe it is important to place this material in the proper context. As the words of the wedding ceremony describe it, we believe that “marriage is given by God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and sustained by the Holy Spirit.” We believe that a Christian wedding ceremony should always enhance our affirmation of the reality of God, and the following guidelines are offered with that in mind.

Who may be married at First Presbyterian Church

The policy of the church, established by Session (the governing board of the church), is to marry only those who are members of the church. This means that either the bride or the groom should be a member of the church or in the process of becoming a member. We also marry children and grandchildren of members. Couples who are not members of the church., may be married at First Presbyterian, however, there must first be contact with one of our pastors to discuss your needs.

Dates and times

Before the date for a wedding can be placed on the church's calendar, an appointment must be made with one of the pastors. Getting acquainted and reviewing mutual expectations will be two important goals at the first meeting between the pastor, bride and groom. Please call the church office (668-5147) to set up a time to meet with one of the pastors.

There are a few limitations on dates and times for weddings held at First Presbyterian Church. Weddings are not held during Holy Week, or on major holiday weekends. Therefore, there will be no weddings on New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day weekend, Fourth of July weekend, Labor Day weekend, Thanksgiving Day weekend, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

It is difficult for the church to accommodate more than one wedding in a day, but it can be done. Our policy is that at least four hours be scheduled between the end of one wedding and the beginning of another. Weddings must be scheduled to begin no later than 6:00 p.m.

The church will not schedule weddings for non-members more than a year in advance of the wedding date.

The Role of the Pastor

The pastors at First Presbyterian Church are eager to assist you with your wedding plans and to make the day a memorable one in your life. Brides and grooms may suggest that a friend or family member who is a pastor assist in the wedding ceremony. One of our pastors will be happy to extend the invitation to that person to participate. The pastor from First Presbyterian Church will be the officiating pastor.

Weddings at First Presbyterian Church are Presbyterian services, and though care will be taken to honor and include other traditions we ask the bride and groom to plan to stay within the tradition represented by this church.

Our policy on Marriage Preparation and Counseling

We encourage all couples to prepare as thoroughly as they can for their life together. Couples who are married at First Presbyterian Church will commit to a two-step preparation process:

First, all couples will meet 2 – 3 times with the First Presbyterian Church pastor who has agreed to officiate at their wedding ceremony. The purpose of these meetings includes getting to know the couple, planning the ceremony itself, and using assessment or planning tools that the pastors have found useful in their work.

Second, all couples will be invited to attend a couples communication seminar, which will be offered by the church at various times throughout the year. The seminar requires a commitment of six weeks, with one 2-hour session per week. Couples will complete a personality assessment test as part of the seminar and learn how personality factors affect the way they see themselves and their partners. Couples will also learn how to communicate using the “awareness wheel” model, how to resolve conflict constructively, and how to take steps that will lead to a lasting marriage. Marriage and Family Therapist *Henrieta Ribeiro*, M. A. will lead the seminar. Sign ups should be made through the church office.

Wedding Coordinator

When your wedding is accepted, a wedding coordinator from the church will be assigned to work with you. She will offer valuable assistance with the planning of your day. Your wedding coordinator will attend your rehearsal and will be available on your wedding day from well before the ceremony until the last guest departs. Please direct most of your questions, except those about the ceremony itself, to the wedding coordinator.

Your Marriage License

Illinois law requires that couples obtain a marriage license. Your license must be issued in DuPage County for a ceremony at First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton. ***Securing the license will be your responsibility and must be dropped off or sent to the church two weeks prior to the wedding rehearsal.*** The pastor and the wedding coordinator will complete the license and the church secretary will take care of mailing it to the county clerk's office.

Music

Initiating contact with the Music Director, David Lincoln, is the responsibility of the bride and groom. Please call the church office to make an appointment at least one month prior to the ceremony. Usually only one brief meeting is required to plan the music for a wedding.

The marriage rite is a service of worship, and therefore the music that is selected should embody the same high standards as the music chosen for worship generally. Wedding music should have as its focus the worship of God, and it should emphasize the faith of the Christian community. Romantic or sentimental music is often more appropriate for the reception than for the worship of God. The Music Director will be very helpful in selecting music that will make the service memorable. Here are three questions to ask to determine whether or not a particular piece of music is appropriate for worship:

- Does this music/text reflect praise and/or thanksgiving to God?
- Is it based on, or does it reflect, a biblical theme or text?
- Is this song in the form of a prayer?

Musical accompaniment need not be limited to the organ. The church also has a piano and a harpsichord. If you have other instruments in mind or would like the services of a vocalist, flutist and/or trumpeter, please discuss this with the Music Director. The director knows many musicians and soloists in the area and will be happy to suggest their names to you.

Please note: The final decision regarding musical selections will be the responsibility of the Music Director.

Further guidelines for Planning your Wedding and Reception

Rehearsal -- Ordinarily the rehearsal takes no more than an hour. Musicians and vocalists ordinarily do not attend. All members of the wedding party are asked to be ready to rehearse by 6:00 p.m. the night before the wedding. As a courtesy to church employees and their families, all rehearsals will be held the night before the wedding, and they will begin no later than 6:00 p.m. Brides and grooms will ask members of their wedding party to honor this starting time.

Decorations -- Both the sanctuary and McCormick Chapel are lovely settings for your wedding without additional decorations. If you desire flowers or candles, please consult with your Wedding Coordinator about their appropriate placement. The church has some brass candelabras for your use; others can be rented from area florists. When a wedding takes place during a special season of the church, you should expect to work with the furnishings or decorations already in place. There will be poinsettias in the sanctuary in the days leading up to Christmas, for example, and Easter lilies in the days following Easter. As a general rule the church asks that decorations be modest and not ostentatious.

Ushers -- The ushers should plan to attend the rehearsal, and the wedding coordinator will explain their role to them.

Wedding Programs -- It is helpful, but not necessary, for you to provide your guests with a wedding program. Please discuss this with your wedding coordinator. Your wedding coordinator can provide you with samples when you meet. If you choose to provide a program the wedding coordinator needs to review it before it is printed.

Smoking -- The entire facility and grounds have been designated a smoke-free environment by the Session, the governing board of our church. We ask that you, your wedding party, and your guests honor this policy.

Drugs and alcohol -- Similarly, the use of drugs and alcohol is prohibited on church property. Any violation of this policy will result in immediate action to remove the offending party and substance.

Photography -- The church understands that most couples would like to have a photographic record of their weddings. A wedding, however, is a service of worship, and our focus is on the presence and reality of God. Therefore, our policy is that only the designated photographer and videographer be allowed to film during the ceremony. Please communicate this policy to your guests, and please include this information in your wedding program. Videotaping may be done most effectively from the balcony of the church.

Rice, confetti, bird seed, balloons, bubbles, etc. -- Please **do not** provide your guests with rice, confetti, bird seed, flower petals, balloons, monarch butterflies, etc. for throwing or releasing either inside or outside the church. Besides being bad for the environment, most of these items are extremely difficult to clean up and usually result in additional clean-up time for our custodian. If something needs to be thrown or released at the end of the service, perhaps bubbles make as much sense as anything, provided they are released outdoors. Please check with the wedding coordinator to avoid a misunderstanding of this policy.

From the Directory for Worship

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 woman and a man. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

- A. In preparation for the marriage service, the minister shall provide for a discussion with the man and the woman concerning
1. The nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
 2. The legal requirements of the state,
 3. The privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
 4. The nature and form of the marriage service,
 5. The vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
 6. The relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
 7. The resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.

This discussion is equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse, and a marriage following divorce.

- B. If the minister is convinced after discussion with the couple that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the minister shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision the minister may seek the counsel of the Session.

Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the Session. (W-1.4004-.4006) The marriage ordinarily takes place in a special service, which focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the pastor. Celebration of the Lord's Supper at the marriage service requires the approval of the Session, and care shall be taken that the invitation to the Table is extended to all baptized present. The marriage service may take place during the Service for the Lord's Day upon authorization by the Session. It should be placed in the order as a response to the proclamation of the Word. It may then be followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. (W-2.4010; W-3.3503)

The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The man and the woman shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the woman and the man are now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.

Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. (W-2.1004) The congregation may join in hymns and other musical forms of praise and prayer. Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshippers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life. (W-1.3034; W-1.4004-.4005; W-5.5006)

A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, and the declaration of intention, the exchange of the vows by the husband and wife, and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the woman and man are already married to one another according to the laws of the state.

Appropriate Scripture Selections from the Book of Common Worship

You may select from among the following Scripture Readings for your ceremony:

Genesis 2:18-24	Psalms 145
Song of Solomon 8:6-7	Romans 12:1-2, 9-18
Proverbs 3:3-6	1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Isaiah 54:5-8	Matthew 5:1-10
Psalms 67	Matthew 5:13-16
Psalms 95:1-7	Matthew 22:35-40
Psalms 100	Mark 10:6-9
Psalms 103:15-18	John 15:1-17
Psalms 136:1-9,26	

OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE: RITE I

A Service for General Use

Entrance

Sentences of Scripture

Statement on the Gift of Marriage

Prayer

Declarations of Intent

Affirmations of the Families

Affirmation of the Congregation
(Psalm, Hymn, or Spiritual)

Scripture and Sermon
(Psalm, Hymn, or Spiritual)

Vows

Exchange of Rings (or Other Symbols)

Prayer (and Lord's Prayer)

Announcement of Marriage

Charge to the Couple

Benediction
(Psalm, Hymn, Spiritual, or Anthem)

NOTE: The text for components of this service and suggested options are given on pages 12-22 of Christian Marriage, Supplemental Liturgical Resources 3 of the Presbyterian Church (USA). This resource is available to you in the church library or from one of the pastors.

OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE: RITE II

A Service Based Upon the Service for the Lord's Day

Assemble in God's Name

Gathering of the People

Call to Worship

Psalm, Hymn of Praise, or Spiritual

Confession and Pardon

Act of Praise

Proclaim God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

Lessons from Scripture

Sermon

Creed

Psalm, Hymn, or Spiritual

Christian Marriage

Statement on the Gift of Marriage

Prayer

Declaration of Intent

Affirmations of the Families

Affirmation of the Congregation
(Psalm, Hymn, or Spiritual)

Vows

Exchange of Rings (or Other Symbols)

Prayer (and Lord's Prayer)

Announcement of Marriage

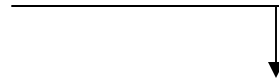
Charge to the Couple

Blessing of the Couple
(Psalm, Hymn, Spiritual, or Anthem)

Prayers of Intercession

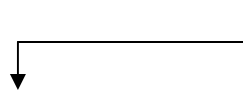
_____ or

Give Thanks to God



Preparation of the Table
Great Prayer of Thanksgiving,
followed by the Lord's Prayer
Breaking of the Bread
Communion of the People

Prayer of Thanksgiving
followed by the Lord's Prayer)



Go in God's Name

Prayer
Psalm, Hymn of Praise, or Spiritual
Charge
Benediction

NOTE: The text for components of this service and suggested options are given on pages 25-50 of Christian Marriage, Supplemental Liturgical Resources 3 of the Presbyterian Church (USA). This resource is available to you in the church library or from one of the pastors.

**First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton
Wedding Fee Schedule**

	Members	Non-Members
Deposits:		
To Hold the date <i>(non-refundable)</i>	\$100	\$100
Security Deposit <i>(must be paid upon acceptance of your date)</i>	N/A	\$500
Use of the Sanctuary for the ceremony	N/A	\$500
Use of the Ministry Center for the ceremony	N/A	\$400
Use of McCormick Chapel for the ceremony	N/A	\$200
Use of Memorial Garden for the ceremony	N/A	\$150
Use of Parish House or Stewart Hall for Reception	\$300	\$500
Use of Rotunda <i>(For smaller receptions)</i>	\$100	\$150
Use of the kitchen for Reception <i>(Please check with the wedding coordinator regarding caterers and church equipment)</i>	\$100	\$100
Pastoral services	\$300	\$300
Organist <i>(Fees dependent on number of rehearsals with other musicians and time spent)</i>	\$200-\$300	\$200-\$300
Wedding Coordinator <i>(If the wedding includes a reception at the church, the fee for the Wedding Coordinator will be \$500.)</i>	\$300	\$300
Sound Technician <i>(This is required for all weddings, additional fees may apply)</i>	\$100	\$100
Custodial Services <i>(If the wedding includes a reception at the church, the fee for custodial services will be \$225.)</i>	\$125	\$125
Couples Communication Seminar (Optional) <i>(This fee is for the marriage and family counselor who leads the couples communication seminar; unlike the other fees on this list, this fee is payable to the counselor at their first meeting.)</i>	\$250	\$250

Updated 12/9/10

Approved by Session 09/25/07