

The First Presbyterian Church

Wedding Booklet

I. The Church and Your Wedding

The Church is interested in your wedding because in Christ's name we are interested in you. The wedding ceremony is a service of worship reflecting the faith and teaching of the church as well as expressing the love of the bride and groom for each other and God. Thus, the approach made to the wedding ceremony indicates our understanding of Christian marriage.

Every culture, and almost every religion, has marriage rites surrounded by a host of social traditions. Essentially, the Christian wedding is a covenant-making ceremony in which the bride and groom not only declare their love, but confess their faith in Jesus Christ and pray for God's blessing on their new relationship as husband and wife. They say to each other, to the company gathered and to the world at large, "We now enter into the marriage covenant declaring that our house and our children's home will be faithful to God." The idea of covenant is truly Biblical in its meaning. In civil terms marriage is a "contract" made between a man and woman and entails certain legal rights and obligations protecting both parties. A covenant in the church, on the other hand, is a contract with much deeper perspective: God the Father has on his own initiative in Christ entered into this "new estate" and will strengthen and bless the human promises we make to each other.

Recognizing, as you plan your ceremony that you are asking God to bless your marriage covenant will give you a clearer vision of what a wedding service should be. This booklet outlines the procedure to follow in arranging weddings at The First Presbyterian Church. Suggestions are included to help you in completing your plans.

XI. Photographing Your Wedding

It is important that you discuss your plans for pictures with the pastor. **NO** flash photographs are allowed during the actual ceremony which, in the Presbyterian Church, is a worship service. However, flash photographs can be taken before and after the ceremony. Non-flash photography is permitted behind the last pew on the main level.

Video taping your service is acceptable provided that no auxiliary lights are required. Video cameras and tripods will be permitted in the choir loft (unattended) and the balcony (attended). This will allow the families and friends of the couple to enjoy the ceremony without distraction.

- D. No sanctuary furniture can be moved.
- E. Aisle runners are acceptable and may be pinned or taped in place. Your florist will carry this item.
- F. Church supplies the candles at a cost of \$6.00 to the family.
- G. The church has a set fee for the custodian to clean up after the wedding. Your cooperation in keeping our church beautiful would be appreciated.
- H. The church secretary will type the wedding bulletin for non-members for a fee. The church has bulletin covers available.
- I. The church and its employees are not responsible for purses, clothing or any other articles left in the rooms before, during or after the wedding.
- J. Bird seed only may be thrown outside after the service. Please do not use rice or confetti. The release of balloons is acceptable if the balloons are biodegradable.
- K. The use of the nursery is discouraged. But if needed, we require that there be adult supervision.
- L. Seating Capacity: Sanctuary 300
Length of processional aisle – 55 feet
Number of pews - 13 in center

X. Receiving Line

When deciding whether to have the receiving line at the church or at the reception location, consider whether you are having pictures taken after the ceremony in the sanctuary in a re-enactment. You might prefer the receiving line at the reception. Also, decide which members of the bridal party, if any, you wish to stand in the receiving line with you and your parents.

II. Guidelines For Planning Your Wedding

The use of The First Presbyterian Church for weddings is governed by the Session, which has drawn up the following rules:

1. Weddings may be conducted in the sanctuary, the Perry Addition, in the homes of members, or in any place where the arrangements may conform to such practices as are in accord with Christian custom.
2. It is expected that a minister of the church will officiate at all weddings. If a family desires to ask another clergy person to participate in the service, such a desire will be made known to the minister and he may extend the invitation to such other clergy person.
3. The wedding and rehearsal will be conducted in the Christian spirit. Immediately prior to both the wedding and rehearsal, it is expected that members of the wedding party will refrain from alcoholic beverages. The bride and groom shall be obligated to make this rule known to all other members of the party. There will be no serving of alcohol or smoking at any time in the church or on the church grounds.
4. Please protect your home during the wedding and reception by having a friend house sit for you.

III. Steps to Complete

1. Contact the pastor to clear the day and time of your wedding and rehearsal on the church calendar and the pastor's calendar. The church will officially be reserved with approval by Session.
2. As early as possible thereafter make an appointment with the officiating pastor to begin the planning process under his direction.
3. In this early planning step, a decision should be made regarding music so that the church organist may be scheduled. The couple shall then be responsible to arrange for a consultation on music with the church organist.

Wedding Fees

Wedding fees should be paid to the recipients at the time of the rehearsal.

A couple qualifies for member fees if their parents or one or both of them are currently members of The First Presbyterian Church, Irwin.

	Members	Non-Members
<i>Sanctuary</i>	-0-	\$250.
<i>Social Rooms</i>	\$50.	75.
<i>Kitchen</i>	-0-	25.
<i>Candelabras</i>	-0-	25.
<i>Pew Candelabras</i>	-0-	60.
<i>Candles-Candelabras</i>	10.	10.
<i>Candles-Pew Candelabras</i>	40.	40.
<i>Organist</i>	100.	100.
<i>(when a soloist is used)</i>	120.	120.
<i>Soloist</i>	50.(1-2 selections)	50.
	75.(3 or more)	75.
<i>Secretary</i>	-0-	25.
<i>Sexton</i>	50.	50.
<i>Wedding Coordinator</i>	100.	125.
<i>Pastor</i>	* <i>honorarium</i>	\$200.

Honorarium: *As an honorarium is considered, one should keep in mind the hours of extra work necessary to assist in conducting such a Service. There are many hours given in planning and preparing in addition to the time required for the Service itself. Suggested honorarium: Pastor - \$150*

Love One Another As I Have Loved You

A wedding is a worship of the God who calls a man and a woman together in marriage.

The ***First Presbyterian Church*** is governed by the discipline of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Of the solemnization of marriage, the Directory of Worship properly states at the outset:

“Marriage is an institution ordained of God for the honor and happiness of mankind, in which one man and one woman enter into a bodily and spiritual union, pledging each to the other mutual love, honor, fidelity, forbearance, and comradeship, such as should assure an unbroken continuance of their wedlock so long as both shall live.”

“Marriage is not a sacrament, nor peculiar to the Church of Christ. It is proper that every commonwealth, for the good of society, make laws to regulate marriage, which all good citizens are bound to obey. But since the Scriptures declare that Christians ought to marry in the Lord, and since Christians contracting marriage pledge their vows to God, it is therefore proper that their marriage be solemnized by a lawful minister, and that special instruction be given to them, and suitable prayer offered, when they enter into the relation.”

The Wedding Service states that holy marriage “is instituted by God, regulated by His commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be held in honor among all men”.

Recognizing, as you plan your ceremony, that God ordains marriage will give you a clearer vision of what a wedding service should be.

IV. Premarital Counseling Service

The pastor requires premarital counseling conferences with the prospective bride and groom in order to prepare them for life together in the marital relationship and to assist them in planning their wedding. The wedding information sheet must be completed and returned to the pastor prior to the first conference. Couples are responsible for scheduling these conferences with the pastor.

V. Music for Your Wedding Service

The church organist will serve as organist at all weddings unless an alternate has been approved by the session.

The texts of all songs sung and music played should contribute to the worship atmosphere of the service, and also correspond to the themes inherent in a Christian marriage service.

Instrumental music can be very appropriate. Violin, trumpet or flute can combine beautifully with the organ. First Presbyterian Church has a Schantz Pipe organ. The piano can also be a most effective solo or accompanying instrument. Taped music during the service is not recommended.

If a vocalist or instrumentalist is to be used in connection with the wedding service, arrangements must be made directly between organist and the musician. The church organist will be happy to consult with you in planning your wedding music.

Music can greatly enhance your wedding service, and it will, if it sings the praises of God.

VI. The License

Both parties must go to the Westmoreland County Register of Wills office which is on the third floor of the Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg.

Each party should take driver's license or other photo identification to the courthouse. A fee of \$45.00 (**Cash**) is required. A license to marry becomes effective in the county where it was issued 3 days after the date of issuance

and expires 60 days after it becomes effective. The license must be in the church office no later than Friday noon for weekend weddings and the day before weekday weddings.

VII. Wedding Rehearsal

For the rehearsal, the bride and groom will set the time for rehearsal in consultation with the pastor. It is important that the wedding party be on time as late-comers only lengthen the time set aside for rehearsal. To relieve the strain on the bridal party, it is suggested that small children, not participating in the ceremony, not be invited to the rehearsal.

VIII. Decorating

Wedding flowers in the sanctuary are provided by the family. Wedding flowers and decorations may be placed in the sanctuary the day before, if the church schedule allows, or the morning of the ceremony. Pew bows and bouquets may be placed on the pews along the aisles. Only masking tape or ribbon loop may be used to attach them. Do not use scotch tape, nails screws or wire in decorations. No decorations of any kind are to be placed on the walls, pulpit, pillars, lectern, organ, piano or cross. The church owns candelabras, pew candleholders and unity candleholders.

IX. The Church Building

A. No weddings or receptions may be held in the church on Christmas eve or Christmas day. Generally, in the Easter Season it is difficult to have weddings during Holy Week, therefore, a wedding at that time will have to be treated as a special case and permission secured through the Session.

On New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving no wedding may be held without special arrangements.

B. No alcoholic beverage will be permitted in any part of the church building or on church grounds. The use of any alcoholic beverage in the church is forbidden.

C. Any reception entertainment held on church property, needs to be approved by the Session.



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