

First Presbyterian Church
300 W. Wayne Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802
Phone: 260-426-7421 Fax: 260-422-5111

MARRIAGE SERVICE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I. INTRODUCTION

If you are considering having your wedding service at First Presbyterian Church, we want to help make it a meaningful and joyful experience for you, your families, and your guests. Therefore, we request that you read this brochure before you decide to schedule your wedding.

Our policies are intended to assure that weddings at First Presbyterian Church are services of worship, which reflect our concern for the sanctity of marriage. As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) we are legally bound by our denomination guidelines and our church's views of Christian marriage. Throughout this brochure you will find a number of statements that are direct quotations from the *Book of Order*, which is the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Our ministers are bound by their ordination vows to abide by those requirements.

These pages are designed to help answer preliminary questions. Our staff can answer others not addressed here. If, after reading this material and consulting with a minister, you choose to be married at First Presbyterian Church, you will find warm and prayerful support as you prepare for your wedding and subsequent life together.

II. SCHEDULING OF YOUR WEDDING AND THE PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE WITH THE MINISTER

Every couple desiring to be married at First Presbyterian Church must confer with the minister who will conduct the service. First contact the Head Wedding Coordinator, Jo Furr (426-7421 x 27) e-mail jfurr@firstpres-fw.org, who will refer you to the minister officiating at your wedding. Ordinarily, the conference will be scheduled on a weekday between 9:00am and 5:00pm. **Please do not make any definite plans, such as wedding invitations, until after the preliminary conference with the minister. Your wedding will be scheduled on the church calendar when the deposit has been received in the Financial Office.**

The Presbyterian *Book of Order* outlines the minister's responsibility as follows: "In preparation for the marriage service, the minister asked to lead the service shall provide for a discussion with the man and the woman concerning":

- The nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
- The legal requirements of the state,
- The privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
- The nature and form of the marriage service,
- The vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
- The relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
- "The resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments." (W-4. 90021)

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While we believe your conferences with a minister are vital and helpful, they should not substitute for in-depth premarital counseling. We urge every couple to seriously consider such counseling and we will be happy to assist in making the necessary arrangements.

III. THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

According to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Order*: "As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and under the supervision of the Session." II (W-1.4004- 1.4006)

All weddings at First Presbyterian Church are officiated only by one of our ministers.

IV. THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

The State of Indiana requires that any person authorized to officiate a wedding be presented with a valid license before conducting a ceremony. The County Clerk of any Indiana county will issue a license. Call the clerk well in advance of the wedding date to check the hours when a license may be obtained and to learn what documents you will need to present to the clerk in order to obtain a license. If you live out of the State of Indiana, a letter from the officiating minister will be needed to present to the clerk.

You must bring the license to the church no later than the rehearsal. We are required to have a copy of your marriage certificate in our records. We will in turn file the original with the County Clerk.

V. BRIDAL PARTY

The bridal party will not exceed 12 in number, and will consist of the Bride, Groom, Best Man, Maid/Matron of Honor and all additional groomsmen and bridesmaids, ring bearer and flower girl(s). If the party exceeds 12 in number, a second staff wedding coordinator will be required.

VI. THE WEDDING COORDINATOR

As soon as the minister has agreed to conduct your wedding, you should make an appointment with the church's wedding coordinator assigned to your wedding. The wedding coordinator will assist you with all necessary arrangements, including the rehearsal, for the wedding ceremony. **A wedding coordinator, who is a member of the church staff, works with each couple and family. Therefore, non-staff or "professional" coordinators are not permitted.**

VII. THE REHEARSAL

A date and time for your rehearsal (usually on the afternoon or evening preceding the wedding day) must be arranged at the same time that your wedding is scheduled. The purpose of the rehearsal is to acquaint each participant, including parents, with his or her part in the service.

Since there is often more than one rehearsal on the same evening **your entire wedding party must honor your scheduled rehearsal time by being prompt and attentive.** Please ask everyone to park in the lot on the north side of the church and enter the main north door of the church.

VIII. FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Again, the *Book of Order* guidelines attempt to assure that your wedding ceremony will be truly worshipful in nature:

"Flowers, decorations and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshipers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the, integrity and, simplicity of Christian life." (W-1.3034; W-1.4004, 1.4005; W-5.5006).

The couple should select their florist and arrange for the placement of flowers and candles.

No floral arrangements may be placed on or in front of the communion table. This includes any placed around the unity candle.

No decorations may be affixed by nails, staples, screws, tape or clamps. Only those appropriate decorations, which can sit on the floor or be tied with ribbons, are permitted.

Decorations are confined to the Chancel and to the pew doors.

Candles are permitted only in the Chancel **and must include cloths beneath the holders to protect the floor.** The two large candles behind the communion table in the Sanctuary and the two candles on the Chapel communion table are lit before all worship services, including weddings. Arrangements may be made with the wedding coordinator to use the church's two seven-branch candelabra on the communion table in the Sanctuary chancel. There is a charge for the use of these candelabra. Additional standing candelabra may be rented from the chosen florist. If unity candles are desired as part of the service, each couple must provide their own candles and holder.

Aisle runners are not permitted.

Rice, birdseed, flower petals, balloons, confetti, glitter, and live animals are not permitted. Such items are very difficult to clean up before Sunday services, and pose safety problems.

IX. MUSIC

If music is to be employed during your wedding, the following guidelines from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Order* are designed to assure that it is an integral part of the ceremony:

"Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. The congregation may join in hymns and other musical forms of praise and prayer."

(W-4.9005)

The minister of music is responsible for all music to be utilized in worship and is charged by Session to adhere to the guidelines established by the church as noted in the *Book of Order*; therefore, all selections of music must be approved by the minister of music. If the bride and groom would like to make special arrangements and musical selections for their wedding, an appointment should be made with the minister of music. Specific requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. **The music staff must be consulted prior to hiring any soloists or instrumentalists.**

X. PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS

Since the wedding is a service of worship, flash photography is prohibited during the service whether on the part of professional photographers or guests of the bride and groom. The wedding couple is responsible for informing the photographer and guests of this guideline.

The photographer chosen by the bride and groom may take still photos, videotapes or movies from designated positions in the rear balcony and through the glass windows in the Narthex;

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in the Chapel they are permitted through the open door from the Narthex. The wedding coordinator or minister will explain the areas in detail. If you are planning on having your wedding videotaped, call the Administrative Assistant, before you make a commitment with a video company or photographer.

Photographs may be taken before or after the wedding ceremony. If taken beforehand, it is important that they be completed at least 30 minutes before the service since guests begin arriving by that time.

XI. DEPOSITS AND FEES

A deposit of \$50 will be required in order to reserve the date and time of your wedding. You must get this deposit into the financial office within two (2) weeks of scheduling a wedding. The deposit will be refunded fully should you cancel your wedding at least 60 days in advance of your wedding day. The deposit will be forfeited if cancellation occurs fewer than 60 days in advance of the wedding. **The deposit will be subtracted from the final balance due, and you will be billed for any damages, extra cleaning, or extra time for use of the building.**

You will receive a fee schedule and this policy statement from the administrative assistant when you call to schedule your wedding. In the case of nonmembers, the fee will cover all obligations, including custodians, coordinator, organist, and minister, as well as a fee for the use of the church and its facilities. However, when either the bride or groom or someone in their immediate family is a member of First Presbyterian Church, this fee does not include any charges for the use of the building, or the services of the minister. Tokens of appreciation and honoraria are always appropriate as an expression of gratitude to the officiating clergy. Please refer to the schedule of fees for guidelines.

Payment in full must be received by First Presbyterian Church at least two weeks before the wedding date. Please address the envelope to the attention of the Financial Office.

XII. RECEPTIONS

Only members of First Presbyterian Church may arrange for a reception at the church, provided the marriage service is the last one scheduled that day. The reception must be concluded within two hours after the marriage service is completed. After scheduling, arrangements are made through the church's business manager. A church food service staff member is to be on duty. The church does not recommend particular catering services but does require that they be licensed professional businesses. We do not have facilities for dancing. No Alcohol may be served.

XIII. GENERAL INFORMATION

The church will be open two (2) hours before the service for preparations, and when available, one and one-half hours after the service.

The seating capacity of the Sanctuary is 660. McMillen Chapel accommodates 90 persons. One usher is needed for every 50 guests.

Alcoholic beverages of any kind are not permitted on church property; this includes the parking lots. All participants in your wedding should be reminded that they are expected to honor the dignity of your ceremony. Sobriety is essential for participants at both the rehearsal and at the wedding ceremony.

Smoking is not permitted inside the building.

The church will arrange for a security guard to be present during your rehearsal/wedding.

WEDDING POLICIES: VIDEO COMPANIES

At First Presbyterian Church a wedding is a worship ceremony. Therefore, the Pastor performing the ceremony is in charge of the service, the Church's wedding coordinator assists the Pastor in working with the wedding party and arrangements in the Church, and the Church has policies, which all who have any part agree to follow.

VIDEO COMPANIES:

Video Companies who agree in writing to abide by the policies of the Church may tape weddings for the parties who select the company.

We agree to the specific following policies about taping wedding services in First Presbyterian Church of Fort Wayne, and others policies, which the Pastor in Charge or Wedding Coordinator may add for a specific wedding. The Church will inform the wedding participants of the availability of your services and this agreement.

1. We will place cameras **ONLY** at places approved by the Church.
2. We will keep the Church informed of the price being charged for our services in the Church, understanding that all charges are to be paid by the wedding party.
3. We understand that we are **NOT** an exclusive agent for the Church.
4. We will **NOT** require that any other services, such as Video taping a reception, will be necessary of the Wedding party in order for our firm to tape the wedding.
5. We will abide by the time frames set by the Church for a Wedding ceremony.
6. We understand that anyone from the firm who does not follow the policies of the Church can make the firm ineligible to provide services in the Church in the future.

SIGNED: _____ **Date:** _____

FIRM NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER:

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:

First Presbyterian Church
300 West Wayne Street
Fort Wayne, In 46802