

# **A Guide for Your Wedding at First Presbyterian Church**

Cape Girardeau, Missouri  
Adopted by the Session, February 8, 1996  
Revised July 2015

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! We are honored that you have chosen First Presbyterian Church as the place to exchange your wedding vows. We want to help you make your ceremony as reverent and as meaningful as possible, as well as set the stage for a long and happy marriage. To this end, we have set forth the following policy.

## **About Our Church**

This beautiful facility sits at the corner of Broadway and Lorimier and has overlooked the “Mighty Mississippi” River since 1854. The church’s sanctuary will seat approximately 265 people. The dining area will seat approximately 150. Both areas are air conditioned and available for use.

The church parking lot is located on the corner of Lorimier and Themis Streets and is available for use. The Wedding Party may use the parking lot by the Activity Building on Broadway, as well.

## **Who May Be Married Here**

Normally, the use of the sanctuary for weddings is reserved for members and associates of First Presbyterian Church. The term “members” includes the immediate family – children and parents of members or those under a member’s legal authority, such as a guardianship or power of attorney. Non-members should seek the counsel of the minister, who shall then make an appropriate recommendation to the Session.

## **Wedding Preparations**

The Governing Board of First Presbyterian Church, called the Session, views the wedding service as an ordinance of the church and an integral part of its ministry. To this end, the following policies have been established so that the honor of our Christian faith might be preserved, and that wedding services might be to the glory of God.

### **I. Request for Reservations**

- A. Reservations for use of the church facilities should be made at the earliest possible date. While the use of the church for weddings is primarily for its members (who have preference over non-members in the event of conflicting dates), the use by

non-members who have established relationships with the church, its minister(s) or any of its members may also be approved by the Session.

- B. The minister should be contacted far enough in advance of the proposed wedding date to allow time for premarital counseling and planning for the wedding service.

## II. Approval

- A. The reservation for use of the sanctuary for a wedding is not finalized until 1) the Wedding Application and deposit has been submitted; 2) the couple has successfully fulfilled the minister's expectations for pre-marital counseling; and 3) the Session has concurred with the minister's recommendation that the marriage be performed.
- B. Upon receiving the minister's recommendation regarding a couple's request to be married at First Presbyterian Church, the Session shall approve (or refuse) each couple's request.
- C. Although the minister and Session share in the responsibility for granting approval, the minister is free to decline to marry any couple about whom he/she has serious reservations. In such a case, the minister shall inform the couple and shall consult with the Session. The Session may, if it wishes, arrange for and allow another minister to perform the wedding service.

## III. Who May Perform the Ceremony

It is the policy of First Presbyterian Church that the minister of the church is to have charge of all weddings in the church. If it is desired, another minister may be invited by the Session to assist in the ceremony, in consultation with the regular minister.

## IV. Wedding Coordinator

- A. The church Session's Worship and Arts Committee has a subcommittee of wedding coordinators, one of whom shall be appointed to serve as your wedding coordinator.
- B. The details for the wedding shall be discussed with the coordinator at least 4 weeks before the rehearsal.
- C. If a couple has a director of its own, he or she will work with the Church's wedding coordinator in regard to preparation of the ceremony, but will be under the authority of the Church's coordinator during the rehearsal and ceremony.
- D. The wedding coordinator is to assist the wedding party both in adhering to the wedding policy and in the mechanics of the wedding ceremony.
- E. The coordinator will attend the rehearsal and the wedding, and may attend any reception held in the church.

F. The coordinator has no responsibilities to the wedding party beyond these.

## **Rehearsal**

- I. The church staff (minister, organist, custodian, and wedding coordinator) shall be consulted prior to setting the date and time of the rehearsal.
- II. Since the staff members have many responsibilities, it is imperative that rehearsals begin promptly at the hour scheduled.
- III. The minister of First Presbyterian Church is in charge of the rehearsal.
- IV. It is suggested that the marriage license be given to the minister during the week of the wedding. The minister will then be able to present the couple with a certificate of marriage on their wedding day.

## **Wedding Details**

- I. The Christian wedding service is an occasion for worship before God and normally is conducted within the house of God. Reverence is expected on the part of all present.
- II. Music – Music in the church is an expression of worship. The church wedding is not an exception and its music, instrumental or vocal, should be consistent with the religious nature of the marriage ceremony.
  - A. Such music as accompanies the ceremony should direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage, and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent.
  - B. The church organist/music director and minister, in conjunction with one another, are responsible for planning appropriate music for the wedding in consultation with the wedding couple.
    1. It is necessary that the wedding couple meet with the organist no later than 4 weeks prior to the service to discuss the music for the service.
    2. The organist will receive requests for appropriate selections and will, to the degree possible, incorporate the requests into the wedding music.
  - C. No organist or other instrumentalist(s) may be invited without the approval of the church organist/music director. If for some reason the regular church organist is unable to meet the date and time of a wedding, he/she will provide a trained substitute.

- D. Vocalists are responsible for providing the organist with music in the correct key and with appropriate accompaniment at least 4 weeks before the wedding. *Note: Copyright laws prohibit the unauthorized reproduction of music.*
  - E. Vocalists may request a rehearsal with the organist for a nominal fee. See *Fees and Honoraria, III, C, 2.*
  - F. While it is permissible to omit organ, piano, or other instrumental music during the marriage service, the use of prerecorded music is not allowed (except in the case of vocal accompaniment).
- III. Decorations – The sanctuary does not require costly or elaborate decorations. Hence the following guidelines should be followed.
- A. Decorations may be put in place during normal church business hours the day before the wedding, during the wedding rehearsal, or just before the wedding ceremony. Set-up outside of normal business hours will be considered part of the wedding party's allotted 6 hours to utilize the church.
  - B. If flowers are used on the Communion table, usually only one arrangement is placed between the Communion table candles. If a couple desires to leave the flowers for use on the following Sunday morning worship service, the church office manager should be contacted prior to the week of the wedding.
  - C. As mentioned above, there are two Communion table candles which are available to be lit for the service. Two candelabra, seven candles each, are also available if desired. The wedding couple must provide their own dripless candles for use in the candelabras.
  - D. No tacks or nails should be used on pews, chancel furnishings, walls, pillars, floors, etc.
  - E. Any decorations that have been placed in the church for special seasons like Christmas or Easter must not be removed.
  - F. As the center aisle is carpeted, the use of an aisle cloth, while not prohibited, is discouraged for safety reasons.
  - G. The use of confetti and real flower petals is prohibited indoors and outdoors.
  - H. Rice and bird seed throwing, while not prohibited, are discouraged due to difficulty of removal and possibility of injury. If used, however, it must be used outside the church building.
  - I. Property belonging to the florist/decorator must be removed from the church after the ceremony and the church left in clean and good order. The ultimate responsibility belongs to the wedding couple.

- IV. Photography – Services of Worship lift up praise to God and inspire the faithful. Weddings are part of a very special worship service, and an atmosphere of reverence should be maintained. This congregation is fully aware, however, that family and friends of the participants often wish to preserve these important moments. Therefore, this church has established the following policy regarding photography in the sanctuary.
- A. Before or after the service, any type of photography may take place in the narthex and any other location within the church, including the sanctuary. This includes both professional photographers and guests wishing to take photos.
  - B. Guests may use silent cameras and video recording devices of any type during the service, providing that they do not produce a flash or require additional lighting of any kind.
    - 1. Guests must remain seated while taking photos or filming.
    - 2. Camera phones are permitted if they do not produce a flash.
  - C. Professional photographs and video may be taken during the wedding ceremony.
    - 1. The photographer and/or videographer may be mobile during the processional and recessional. However the location will be restricted. For details, see the wedding coordinator.
    - 2. During the ceremony (from the moment the Bride reaches the front of the church to the beginning of the recessional), the photographer/videographer must remain seated or standing in one location which would afford a good perspective.
  - D. Professional pictures or filming must take place during the allotted 6 hours the wedding couple has to use the church.
  - E. The church's wedding coordinator shall explain this policy to all who may participate in or attend a wedding ceremony which is to be held in the sanctuary.
  - F. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Session one month prior to the applicable service of worship.
- V. Dressing Rooms
- A. The Bride's and bridal attendants' dressing room is in the Parlor.
  - B. The groom and his attendants may dress in the Library on the second floor of the Education Building.
  - C. The church is not liable for any items left in these rooms during the wedding.
- VI. Nursery – If there is a need to use the church nursery during any part of the wedding, the following rules must be abided by:
- A. A responsible person must be present in the nursery at ALL times.

- B. The wedding couple may supply their own nursery attendant or hire the services of the church nursery attendant.
- C. The ages and number of children who will be in the nursery may be a factor in the number of attendants needed. This should be discussed between the wedding couple and the nursery attendant no later than one week before the wedding.
- D. The condition of the nursery should be returned to its original condition at the close of the event.
- E. The nursery can be available one hour before the scheduled wedding and no more than one hour after its conclusion. If the nursery is also needed during the rehearsal, this should be discussed with the designated attendant, also one week prior to the wedding.
- F. Fees – See “Fees and Honoraria” section.

## VII. Other Ceremony Details

- A. All phones, and anything else that rings, beeps, or buzzes, must be in silent mode during any service of worship.
- B. If requested by the couple, the Session may authorize the celebration of the Lord's Supper at the marriage ceremony. As always, the invitation must be made to all persons present who have been baptized.
- C. The church has a kneeling bench which may be used by the bridal couple if desired.
- D. If the couple would like to include Scripture readings, a Unity Candle, Flowers to Mothers, or other symbolic gestures during the ceremony, it must be discussed with the minister while planning details for the wedding service.

## Receptions

- I. The downstairs dining hall is available for wedding receptions. There is a limited amount of flatware and china/pottery ware available for use. Equipment belonging to First Presbyterian Church is not available to professional and/or commercial caterers.
- II. If a reception is held at the church without a professional caterer, the couple's family is allowed to use equipment, flatware, and china/pottery upon request. The couple's family is responsible for leaving the building and kitchen/dining equipment in good order.

## **Smoking and Alcohol Use**

- I. Smoking is not permitted inside the church buildings.
- II. Alcohol use is prohibited on the church property inside or outdoors. The Minister may refuse to officiate at any wedding ceremony if this prohibition is violated.

## **Fees and Honoraria**

- I. In the case of at least one of the participant's membership in this church or association with the church through prior regular attendance or participation in the life of the church, or one of the participants being a part of the immediate family (parent, child, or legal guardian) of a current member of this church, there are no fees for use of the sanctuary or church dining room.
  - A. There are also no fees charged for or expected for the minister's services, as the Session and minister view these services an integral part of the church's ministry. (Please note that many couples do express their appreciation to the minister for his/her guidance with an honorarium.)
- II. For those couples with no connection with this church, the fees are as follows:
  - A. Church Sanctuary (up to 6 hours, including rehearsal, decorating, pictures, and wedding ceremony) – \$400.00
  - B. Minister – \$200.00
    1. The fee includes all pre-marital counseling, leading the rehearsal, and officiating the wedding.
    2. The minister of First Presbyterian Church will officiate all weddings at the church and will consider requests made by the wedding couple for additional or substitute ministers.
  - C. Dining Area (up to 2 hours in addition to the allotted 6 hours in the Sanctuary) – \$150.00
  - D. In case of a situation not covered by the above guidelines, the Session will exercise authority on whether to make a charge for the use of the church facilities.
- III. In addition, the following fees apply to ALL wedding parties.
  - A. Custodian – \$100.00
    1. The custodian of the church must be employed to put the facilities used in order before and after both the rehearsal and wedding.
    2. For cleaning after a reception and/or for cleaning due to excessive wear and tear caused by the wedding party/guests – \$25.00 per hour.

3. The cleaning deposit will be utilized first if there is excessive wear and tear. If applicable, the remainder will be returned. If additional cleaning goes beyond eight hours, a bill will be sent for the remaining charges.

B. Wedding Coordinator – \$150.00

1. The coordinator must be present for the rehearsal and wedding (up to 6 hours total). The fee also includes planning consultations between the coordinator and wedding couple.
2. Reception (if at church, up to 2 hours) – \$50.00

C. Organist (if requested)

1. Wedding – \$175.00
2. Additional consultations/practices/wedding rehearsal attendance – \$35.00 per hour

D. If additional instrumentalists and soloists are used, the wedding couple must discuss rates with those individuals separately. First Presbyterian Church is not responsible for payment to additional musicians.

E. Nursery Attendant (if requested)

1. Wedding – \$30.00
2. Additional assistant – \$30.00
3. If the nursery is needed for the wedding rehearsal, an additional fee may apply.

IV. Gazebo Wedding

A. Dressing Only – \$175.00, which includes a \$50.00 custodial fee. This payment is due to the church office 2 weeks before the date of the wedding.

B. Couples planning a gazebo wedding should have a “Plan B” in case of bad weather.

1. It is recommended that the wedding couple should first make secondary plans with their own church, or with a church of their own denomination.
2. If a couple wishes to use the First Presbyterian Church sanctuary as their “Plan B”, they must have a conference with the minister well ahead of time - such as at the same time as booking the gazebo - and must receive approval by the Session. This cannot be done at the last minute.
3. Cost to reserve sanctuary as a “Plan B” – \$125.00 (This non-refundable fee is in addition to the “Dressing Only” fee.)
4. The wedding coordinator must be onsite for any wedding in the church. An additional \$100.00 will be charged for the wedding coordinator’s services should the wedding be moved into the First Presbyterian Church Sanctuary.

C. All policies regarding smoking and alcohol use while on church premises will be enforced.

## V. Payment

- A. A \$300.00 deposit (of which \$200.00 is a refundable cleaning deposit) must be submitted with the Wedding Application (regardless of membership status or type of service – gazebo or sanctuary).
1. If the wedding is canceled more than 6 months before the wedding date, \$250.00 of the deposit will be refunded.
  2. If the wedding is canceled less than 6 months before the wedding date, \$200.00 of the deposit will be refunded.
- B. The balance of fees for the use of the church facilities must be paid no later than one month prior to the scheduled wedding date.



This booklet was prepared to assist the wedding couple and their families. We hope you find it helpful. If you have questions or concerns, discuss them immediately with the minister of First Presbyterian Church or call the church office at 573-335-2579.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation in following these guidelines for weddings at First Presbyterian Church. It is our intent to help make your wedding not only beautiful, but also an especially meaningful Christian celebration.

THIS PAGE MUST BE SIGNED AND RETURNED TO THE CHURCH BEFORE A WEDDING DATE CAN BE CONFIRMED.

We have received and read the Wedding Policy of First Presbyterian Church, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and agree to abide by the provisions of this policy.

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Bride's Signature

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Groom's Signature

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Date

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Date

