



Topsail Presbyterian Church
16249 US Hwy. 17 N
Hampstead, NC 28443
910-270-2312

Wedding Policy

Introduction:

We are pleased that you have chosen Topsail Presbyterian Church (TPC) as the place for your wedding. All weddings held here will conform to the guidelines listed in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Order*.

Purpose & Function:

Marriage is the public declaration of covenant love between two people. Marriage is to be regarded as a lifetime commitment to be entered into prayerfully and joyfully.

“Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people... to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community.” (W-4.0601)

Eligibility:

For weddings held on-site at TPC, the bride, groom, or the bride’s or groom’s immediate family will ordinarily be members of the church.

NOTE: The Pastor of TPC *may be willing* to officiate at other weddings (held off site). Please contact the minister to discuss this option.

Before announcing a date for your wedding, it is required that you contact the church office to make sure the church and the minister are available on the date you have chosen.

Officiates:

Ordinarily, the installed pastor of TPC will officiate at each wedding. Additional ministers may be invited upon approval by the Session. Weddings will be preceded by appropriate premarital counseling sessions (W-4.0602) by the officiating pastor or by someone recommended by the officiating pastor.

The Session will grant approval for each wedding held at TPC. (W-2.0303)

The pastor will prearrange for the opening and closing of the church with an Elder.

The Service:

The wedding ceremony is a service of worship that has as its central focus the worship of God. The service should be a tasteful affirmation of God. The officiating pastor has the responsibility of maintaining the integrity of worship and reserves the right to determine what is or is not appropriate for the service.

Music - The TPC Director of Music (DOM) or Organist will approve the music for weddings. All guest musicians, including soloists and guest organists, must be approved. The couple should communicate with the DOM or Organist in advance of the wedding.

Wedding Consultant – A wedding consultant is not provided by TPC. If the wedding party chooses to work with a wedding director/consultant, they may assist at the rehearsal. His or her primary responsibility will be to coordinate the ushers, the lighting of candles, and the wedding processional/recessional.

Bulletin (or printed order of worship) – It will be the bride's and groom's responsibility to provide the wedding bulletin/program, or to provide information for this bulletin to the Administrative Assistant two weeks prior to the ceremony.

Photography and Videography - No flash photography is permitted during the service. Placement of video cameras and non-flash photography must be discreet and approved by the minister. Photographers and/or videographers must consult with the officiating minister prior to the service. The location of the video recorder may not be moved.

Decorations -

Flowers – Flowers or other decorations must be appropriate and may not be affixed to any surface (ends of pews, walls, etc.) by any means that result in permanent markings (no staples, no nails, no tape that leaves residue, etc.)

If the wedding occurs on a Saturday, all decorations must be removed in order to be ready for worship on Sunday morning. Flowers may be left at the discretion of the wedding party.

Unity Candles – All candles must be non-drip candles. Candles and candle holders must be provided by the bride and groom.

Military Weddings –

The Session has approved the wearing of swords in the sanctuary. They may not be drawn inside the sanctuary at any time. The presentation of the sword ceremony must be held outside the building.

No birdseed, confetti, rice, etc., is allowed at any time after the ceremony.

The Rehearsal:

The rehearsal will have a set time and date. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to ensure all members of the wedding party are present and punctual.

The following items must be brought to the rehearsal if not already given to the minister:

1. The marriage license (give to the officiating pastor)
2. The unity candle (if one is to be used)
3. The bulletins/programs; TPC will provide bulletins if requested by the bride and groom (please see Bulletin above)

Digital Ministry Committee:

The Digital Ministry Committee of TPC is ordinarily involved with all weddings. The pastor/bride or groom will contact the Digital Ministry Elder at admin@topsailpres.org.

A Committee representative will be responsible for operating church sound and video systems, as required. All videos, photo montages and prerecorded music must be provided to the Digital Ministry representative at least 48 hours prior to the event. Live-streaming services are not offered for weddings.

Other Information:

Dressing – If the wedding party wishes to get dressed at the church, then the available options may be discussed with the minister/designee.

Alcoholic beverages and other controlled substances are not permitted on church property.

Reception/Rehearsal Dinner - If a reception or rehearsal dinner is to be held at the church, the bride and groom are responsible for ensuring that the facilities are left as they are found. Light refreshments can be requested by the Fellowship Committee; additional fees apply. Session approval is required. A Facilities Request Form is required and located on the website. Catering is allowed in Fellowship Hall; arrangements are provided by the bride and groom.

Honoraria:

The Session of Topsail Presbyterian Church recognizes that weddings require a significant amount of time and attention on the part of the pastor(s) involved. It is appropriate to honor the pastor(s) with a financial gift or honorarium.

In the past, families have requested guidance about “an appropriate honorarium” for an officiating pastor. The following information is presented in response to those requests, NOT as an expected fee for service.

Officiating Pastor \$250.

An honorarium/gift should be provided directly to the pastor(s) at the rehearsal.

Fees:

Weddings require special attention on the part of the church. Fees must be paid in full by check (or other means acceptable to TPC) at least two weeks in advance of the wedding (unless previous arrangements have been made). The following fees apply to weddings held at TPC. Please consult directly with the officiating pastor for non-Topsail Presbyterian Church weddings. In certain circumstances, in consultation with the officiating pastor, fees may be waived.

Payable to “Topsail Presbyterian Church”:

	Members	Non-Members
Refundable Deposit	No fee	\$300
Wedding & Rehearsal, NO Reception	No fee	\$300
Wedding, Rehearsal, AND Reception	\$150	\$300

Payable to the Individual:

Officiating Pastor:	\$250
Organist/Accompanist:	\$200 each.
Director of Music:	\$200 if participating in the ceremony

Scheduling a Wedding at Topsail Presbyterian Church:

The bride or groom should:

1. Download the Wedding Policy from TPC website or contact the church office to request a copy. Read the policy in its entirety. Make note of any questions or concerns.
2. Speak with the pastor about your desire to be married at TPC.
3. After speaking with a pastor, download and complete the Facilities Request Form. Submit the form. The requested date(s) will then be submitted for approval by the Session and reserved on the church calendar.
4. Contact the Director of Music/Organist and schedule an initial meeting to discuss wedding music.

Adopted by the Session of Topsail Presbyterian Church on November 17, 2025.