

First Presbyterian Church

Policy on the Rite of Christian Marriage

Statement of Purpose

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 man and a woman. For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a woman and a man 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 man and a woman to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

I. Reservations and Fees

Permission to use the church facilities is granted by the Session. Requests to be married in First Presbyterian need to come before the Session at least six weeks prior to the event. The date and time also need to be cleared through the church office.

There is no cost to church members for use of the facilities. There will be a \$250 deposit collected from non-members for use of the church. \$100 will go toward utilities and building use. \$150 will be refunded after the wedding party has cleaned up and restored the church facilities to the way they found it. There is no pastoral fee for conducting weddings. Any gratuity given to the pastor is solely the discretion of the families.

II. Premarital Counseling

The bride and groom are required to meet at least twice with the pastor for sessions on the nature of marriage. The pastor reserves the right to schedule other sessions as deemed necessary. The pastor reserves the right to refuse to perform ceremonies based on his/her judgment after meeting with the couple.

III. Music

The pastor must approve all music selections. The musician(s) are required to contact the pastor at least one week before the wedding to discuss the plans, and are required to attend the rehearsal.

Organist - Church organist will be the primary organist available for weddings. The wedding party will be responsible for paying the organist. Payment will be made to the church office on the Tuesday prior to the wedding

Compensation will be \$100 when the organist plays alone. Compensation to the organist will be raised to \$150 if a vocalist or other musician is required. The fees will cover three meetings with the organist:

- (a) initial meeting to discuss wedding plans and select music
- (b) rehearsal - the evening before the wedding
- (c) Wedding ceremony
- (d) 4th meeting with a vocalist or other musician to practice if the other option is chosen

IV. Flowers and Decorations

Flowers and decorations should be appropriate to the place of worship and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life. The families are responsible for set-up and clean up of all the facilities uses. Questions about decorations should be presented to the pastor. No decorations that cause structural damage are permitted.

V. Photographs and Videos

Flash photography is not permitted during the ceremony. Formal pictures may be taken before or after the ceremony. Video cameras are permitted upon approval by the pastor. Photographers will need to meet with the pastor to discuss the arrangements.

VI. Use of the Fellowship Hall

The fellowship hall may be reserved for rehearsal dinners and receptions upon approval by the Session. Set-up and clean-up are the responsibility of the families. The families are expected to pay for any damages that may happen. Caterers are required to discuss plans and arrangements with the pastor. Alcohol and tobacco products are not allowed in the church facilities.

Rice is not permitted, but birdseed is acceptable outside the building. Other items to be used must be approved by the pastor. The families are responsible for cleaning the walkways of such items as well as the church grounds, if necessary.

VII. Rehearsal

Wedding rehearsals are generally held the evening before the ceremony. Only immediate family and members of the wedding party are allowed to attend the rehearsal.

VIII. Miscellaneous

The pastor needs to be consulted on any requests for the service. Cultural and family traditions may be incorporated into the service if they do not detract from the meaning of Christian marriage. All such plans must be approved by the pastor.

The families are responsible for providing nursery attendants, if childcare is needed. The church's nursery is available for such use. The families are responsible for making sure all the facilities used are put back in proper order before the next Sunday's service.

The pastor and Session of First Presbyterian Church reserve the right to refuse such service when it does not conform to the meaning of Christian marriage.