

## *Our Wedding Prayer*

*Precious Lord,  
Please bless us  
on this holy day of new beginnings.*

*Teach us to love each other  
purely and faithfully with a love  
that comes from you alone.*

*With each new day,  
may we draw closer to each other  
as we draw closer to you.*



*With this ring....*

# Christian Marriage

A Guide for Preparing  
for Your Wedding

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## **Weddings Celebrated at the Church**

### **Christian Marriage**

“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 woman and a man. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman 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 woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.” (W-4.9001, Directory for Worship, Presbyterian Church [USA]).

Marriage and family life are held together by the mutual care and loyalty of those involved. God gives life and creates us either male or female. God prepares women and men to live life in marriage covenant. Thus, a Christian service of marriage is a worship service where a bride and groom come together with friends and loved ones to give thanks, to praise God, and to ask God’s blessing upon their life as husband and wife.

### **Initial Arrangements**

When a couple wishes to be married at First Presbyterian Church, or plans to ask the Pastor of First Presbyterian Church to officiate at their wedding at another location, they should contact the church office as early as possible to coordinate their choice of wedding date with the availability of the Pastor, Organist, Wedding Coordinator, and/or building. At that time, the couple should set up an appointment for premarital counseling with the Pastor.

### **Premarital Counseling**

“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:

1. The nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian.
2. The legal requirements of the state.
3. The privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage.
4. The nature and form of the marriage service.
5. The vows and commitments they will be asked to make.
6. The relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship.
7. The resources of the faith and the Christian Community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.

This discussion is equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse, and a marriage following divorce.” (W-4.9002 Directory for Worship, Presbyterian Church [USA]).

Premarital counseling provides an opportunity for the wedding couple to explore and discuss the significance and meaning of their life-long commitment. Areas such as the marriage service, communication and conflict in marriage, as well as financial, budget, medical, and legal matters are addressed. Three one hour sessions are normally scheduled to cover this range of topics, but may be adjusted to suit personal schedules. The Pastor will not perform a marriage service without premarital counseling with the couple.

At the first meeting the couple will receive homework - the Taylor and Johnson Temperament Analysis - which the Pastor will explain and have them return. This helps each person recognize their personal traits, how well they know one another, and communication issues they may have as a couple, and give each a diagram of where improvement would be beneficial.

At the second meeting the Pastor will go over the results of the Taylor and Johnson Temperament Analysis with the couple and answer any questions they may have.

The third meeting is used to finalize the plans for the wedding service including scripture verses and other readings, participants in the wedding party, music, etc.

## **The Wedding Service**

“Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the Session. The marriage takes place in a special service which focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life.” (W.4-9003 Directory for Worship, Presbyterian Church [USA]).

The content, actions, and music of the entire wedding service should be in keeping with the worship of God. During the wedding service a man and a woman pledge their life, love, and faithfulness to one another before God and a gathering of family and friends. Under the guidance and approval of the Pastor, a couple is encouraged to include elements within the service which will make it special to them, and every attempt will be made to accommodate their particular wishes. Any wedding bulletin must be approved by the Pastor.

## **Rehearsal**

A rehearsal will be scheduled usually the evening before the wedding, to help everyone in the wedding party feel comfortable with the church and the wedding service. The couple must bring their marriage license with them to the rehearsal. Wedding fees may also be paid at this time. Depending on the cooperation of the wedding party, a rehearsal will take 45 to 60 minutes. Many details of the actual service and questions will be covered at this time.

## **Photography**

All photography associated with the wedding service, both still and video, should be conducted in a manner appropriate to a worship service. Since this can be a sensitive area, a couple should plan to discuss with the Pastor, in advance, the appropriate time and place for pictures.

## **Photographers' Guidelines for Weddings**

1. The photographer may take flash pictures from any angle during the processional.
2. No flash pictures may be taken at any time during the wedding service.
3. The photographer may take pictures from the rear of the sanctuary during the service and only then with available light and no flash.
4. The photographer may take flash pictures during the recessional.
5. After the wedding service is over and the wedding guests have left, the photographer may repose and take pictures in the sanctuary. Please let the Pastor know if he is needed for any of these photographers. We ask that you take pictures with the Pastor before family or wedding party photographs.
6. No wedding guests may take pictures during the wedding service. They may take pictures during the processional and recessional or during any reposing after the photographer has completed his/her picture-taking.

## **Videotaping**

Videotaping is permitted, however, the Pastor will discuss with the videographer where to set up a tripod and all video must be shot from that spot.

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please consult the Pastor.

## **Music During the Wedding Service**

“Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church.” (W-4.9005 Directory for Worship, Presbyterian Church [USA]). Music is an important part of a marriage service and the Bride and Groom should feel free to discuss their choice of music with the Organist and the Pastor and every effort will be made to accommodate the couple’s selections; however, the final decision regarding the appropriateness of the music and its place within the service will be made by the Pastor, in consultation with the Organist. Normally, the Organist of First Presbyterian Church provides the music for weddings at the church and any other arrangements should be discussed with the Pastor. The Organist will begin playing 15 minutes prior to the service.

Any vocal or instrumental soloists should make advance arrangements with the Organist for practice time, and original copies of any music to be performed by soloists must be provided to the Organist by the wedding couple, and will be returned after the service.

The Organist receives a fee for providing music at a wedding. This fee has been set by the Session and appears on the fee schedule.

The couple may select pieces for the prelude, the seating of the mothers, the processional (of the attendants and of the bride), the lighting of the unity candle (if there is to be one), and the recessional in accordance to the above guidelines. The Organist will help you with these selections if you would like.

## **Flowers**

“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-4.9005 Directory for Worship, Presbyterian Church [USA]). In order to facilitate planning for other worship services to be held in the church, the wedding couple should advise the Wedding Coordinator if they plan to leave any flowers for Sunday worship.

The couple should let the Wedding Coordinator know the name of the florist, so she may make arrangements with the florist for delivery.

## **Use of the Church Buildings**

The wedding party will find the sanctuary cleaned and ready prior to the wedding service.

You may bring pew bows, and/or other decorations to the wedding rehearsal. All such decorations must not mar the surface of the pews to which they are attached.

Seating capacity of the sanctuary is 225.

The Wedding Coordinator will make arrangements for the Custodian to clean the church after the wedding.

### **Guidelines for use of the church buildings include:**

1. No alcoholic beverages may be consumed on church grounds;
2. No smoking within church buildings;
3. No rice, helium balloons, or confetti may be used;
4. Birdseed and bubbles are fine outside.

Any items left from the wedding will be collected by the Wedding Coordinator and locked in her office. They may then be picked up by the Bride, Groom, a friend, or family member during regular church office hours.

## **Bulletin**

The Wedding Coordinator will order and prepare a bulletin of your wedding service if you choose. Please let her know as soon as possible if you would like a bulletin. She will give you brochures of several covers to select from. Please indicate first, second, and third choice and the number wanted. The information of names, etc., needed for the bulletin is due to the Wedding Coordinator a week before the wedding. It is advisable for the Bride or Groom to proof the bulletin for name spellings before they are printed.

## **Candles**

If you are having a candlelight service, candles for the side candle holders and/or the candelabra may be purchased through the church. Please let the Wedding Coordinator know if you plan to do this.

## **Bell Ringer and Acolyte**

You may select special friends or family members to light candles (if not having a candlelight service, there are still two candles to be lit) or to ring the church bell before service. Please let the Wedding Coordinator know their names and have them come to rehearsal.

## **Unity Candle**

Please let the Wedding Coordinator know if you plan to have an unity candle and if you will be needing to use candle holders from the church. Such candles need to be purchased by the couple.

## **Ushers**

Ushers should arrive at the church 45 minutes prior to the time of the wedding to begin seating guests.

## **Groom and Best Man**

The Groom and Best Man should arrive at the church 15 to 30 minutes before the time of the wedding. They are to go to the Pastor's office to wait.

## **Bride and Attendants**

The Bride and Attendants should arrive at the church 15 to 30 minutes before the time of the wedding. They may wait in the Church Lounge. The Wedding Coordinator will watch for the Bride to assure the Groom is in the Pastor's office so that he does not see her, if they wish to follow that custom.

## **Flower Girl and Ring Bearer**

It is advised that Flower Girls and Ring Bearers not be younger than four years old.

## **Scripture Lessons and Other Readings**

You may select one, two, or three readings (at least one from the Bible) for your wedding. You may select family members or friends to read. Samples of scripture verses you may want to consider are:

<b><u>Old Testament Readings</u></b>	<b><u>Psalms</u></b>	<b><u>New Testament Readings</u></b>
Genesis 1:26-31	8	Matthew 5:1-10
Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24	22:25-31	Matthew 5:13-16
Genesis 2:18-24	23	Matthew 7:21, 24-29
Ruth 1:16-17	33	Matthew 19:3-6
Proverbs 3:3-6	34	Matthew 22:35-40
Ecclesiastes 26:1-4	37:3-7	Mark 10:6-9, 13, 16
Song of Solomon 2:10-13	67	Luke 6:36-38
Song of Solomon 8:6-7	95:1-7	John 2:1-11
Isaiah 54:5-8	100	John 15:1-17
Isaiah 63:7-9	103:1-5, 15-18	Romans 8:31-39
Jeremiah 31:31-34	112	Romans 12:1-2, 9-18
Hosea 2:16-23	117	I Corinthians 6:15-20
	121	I Corinthians 12:31-13:13
	127	Ephesians 3:14-21
	128	Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33
	136	Colossians 3:12-17
	136:1-9, 26	I Peter 3:1-9
	145	I John 4:7-16
	148	Revelation 19:1, 5-9
	150	

Please review these and other selections (poetry, etc.) with the Pastor.

## Fees Schedule for Weddings

Modest fees are charged for the use of the building or to recover direct costs for services. Fees may be paid at the time of Rehearsal to each individual person, one total check made out to the church, or by cash, again to each individual person, and given to the Wedding Coordinator, who will distribute the fees for you.

Use of Sanctuary	Members Non Members	No Charge \$200.00
Organist	Members Non Members	\$100.00 \$125.00
Soloist		As per Arrangement
Custodian	-----	\$40.00
Minister	Members Non Members	Discretion of Member Families \$200.00
Wedding Coordinator	Members Non Members	\$100.00 \$125.00
Bulletin	-----	\$17 per 100 (approximately)
Candelabra Candles	-----	\$15.00
Side Wall Candles	-----	\$25.00
Use of the Fellowship Hall for Receptions		*Please refer to Building Use Booklet

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call.