

Wedding Policy

**First Presbyterian Church
Morganton, North Carolina**



First Presbyterian Church
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Wedding Policy

A Christian wedding is a service of worship. The bride and/or the groom must profess to be a Christian. The procedures set forth in this policy have been established to assist you with your wedding. The ministers and staff of this church are available to work with you as you plan this important event.

Christian Marriage

The *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (USA) states: “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, traditionally a man and a woman, 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.”

The First Step

The scheduling of your wedding begins by calling the church office to see if there are any church calendar conflicts. Next, this Wedding Policy must be read and signed by both the bride and the groom, and a Wedding Reservation Request must be completed and signed. The church administrator will then begin discussions with the pastors for approval. Dates scheduled by members of the congregation will have priority over dates of non-members. Weddings, rehearsals, and preparations must not present a scheduling conflict with scheduled church activities, especially during the Christmas and Easter seasons.

Meeting with the Minister

By virtue of the office, the minister is in charge of all weddings in the church, unless circumstances arise or alternate arrangements are made, of which the pastors are duly apprized and with which they are in agreement. It is the practice of the church to have one of the ministers on staff preside or co-preside at every wedding. In some cases, a Presbyterian minister familiar with First Presbyterian Church of Morganton will be allowed to preside and be considered the “staff minister.” This is allowed at the discretion of the pastor and with approval of Session. If it is desired to have a guest minister co-preside with the pastor or associate pastor of FPC, this minister is invited by the pastor/associate pastor to do so.

The Presbyterian Church requires its ministers to give special counsel and instruction to the couple four to six months prior to the wedding date. Begin the process by calling the office administrator, who will have a minister get in touch with you.

Setting the Date

The wedding date cannot be finalized until **after** consultation with the minister and **approval** of Session.

Meeting with the Wedding Guild

After you have met with the minister and the Session has approved your wedding, the church administrator will contact the Wedding Guild. Then a member of the Wedding Guild will contact you to schedule a meeting. Two members of the guild ordinarily will serve as wedding directors. They will go over all policies, fees, available facilities, etc., with you. They will also assist with the rehearsal and wedding.

Meeting with the Director of Music

The church director of music will meet each couple and assist in the selection of the music for the wedding service. This is done in conjunction with premarital counseling with the pastor/associate pastor. It is the practice of the church to have the church’s director of music play for all weddings; however, a guest musician may be used if the director of music is unable to play on the desired date. Approval by the director of music is required. Additional musicians, as requested, must be selected or approved in advance by the director of music. In most cases there are fees for additional musicians.

Music Equipment

The keyboard instruments of First Presbyterian Church are intended for use only in the church building. The instruments are too fragile to risk moving them outside the building. However, permission to play the organ, harpsichord, and piano may be granted by the director of music.

Music

Music for the wedding must be in keeping with the spiritual nature of the service. It should be in good taste and in accordance with what is acceptable and appropriate for a Christian worship service. The music staff of the church has available a list of suggested music suitable for processions, recessions, and pre-service music. Vocal presentations are preferred in the pre-nuptial section of the service.

The bride and groom are urged to display a spirit of openness regarding the selection of music for their wedding and to consult with the director of music, who will be glad to advise them. While particular requests will be considered, the standards which apply to the music of all liturgical services will apply to weddings. Music which has a secular association, Broadway tunes, ballads, and use of any recorded music, popular and sentimental favorites may be best used at the reception following the ceremony. They will not be allowed in the church service.

Although sacred music is the main musical expression of the church, contemporary Christian music may be acceptable upon the approval of the director of music. All music must reflect a sound theology and be in accordance with the teachings of the church. Music should be rendered as an offering of praise and not as mere performance.

The director of music has responsibility in maintaining integrity in the music offered in the sanctuary, and, therefore, has the final say on all requests.

Rehearsal

In most cases a rehearsal is beneficial. The rehearsal involve all participants, thus familiarizing them with the positions and movements. All rehearsals will be held on the evening prior to the wedding day at a time agreed upon by the directors and minister. The Wedding Guild and the minister will direct the rehearsal.

Wedding Programs

The church office is not responsible for preparing or printing wedding programs. Any printed material for the wedding must be handled by a commercial printer or some other source.

Guests

If the pastor(s), director of music, soloist(s), Wedding Guild members, etc., are to be invited to your wedding functions, such as the rehearsal dinner, wedding ceremony, or wedding reception, please make a verbal or written invitation.

Pictures

Wedding party pictures may take place 1 1/2 hours prior to the wedding. Clothing changes may begin thirty minutes prior to the pictures. No flash photos may be taken in the sanctuary or chapel during the processional, the ceremony, or the recessional. They may be taken after the wedding, by private arrangement with the photographer. Video tapes may be made only from the balcony or behind the column in the chancel area. It is an accepted practice to take pictures before the ceremony.

Florist

Wedding party flowers (bouquets, boutonnieres, etc.) should be delivered to the church parlor. Only candles that are *dripless* may be used. A decorating time must be scheduled with the church office.

Sanctuary and Chapel

The church is fortunate to have facilities for weddings of any size. There is not only a sanctuary for large weddings but also a chapel where smaller weddings may be held. Both have what are regarded as appropriate and adequate furnishings for all services.

For most brides and grooms today, simplicity is the keynote for a wedding in good taste. Most couples find that the following appointments are all that are necessary to accomplish this aim:

- Six large candles representing the six days of creation.
- A single, central floral arrangement may be placed between the six large candles behind the communion table to lend further simple beauty and dignity; two other green arrangements may be used (i.e., ferns, palms) on the two side tables.
- A kneeling bench is available on request. The Wedding Guild should contact the church custodian for placement in the sanctuary or chapel.
- Hurricane globes are available upon request and must be placed in the sanctuary by the church custodian. It is the wedding couple's responsibility to make arrangements with the office administrator for the use of the globes and for the purchase of white or ivory 15" or 18" dripless candles for the globes. No other candles may be used. Payment for the candles is required at time of purchase. Greenery may be placed around the globes.
- For the sake of beauty and simplicity, no other decorative arrangements will be allowed in the sanctuary or chapel.
- No devices which might scratch or mar the pews may be used for identification or reservation on the pew ends.
- Floral arrangements, dripless candles, hurricane lamps, or greenery will be allowed in the narthex entrance area with approval by the Wedding Guild.

Parlor

The parlor is for use by the bridal party to dress. We urge that special care be taken when using the parlor. No food or drink allowed in the parlor. Water may be placed in the adjoining kitchenette.

Make sure a member of the Wedding Guild locks the parlor during the ceremony. Do not leave any valuables in the parlor. The church is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Fellowship Hall and Kitchen

The fellowship hall and kitchen are available for receptions. Arrangements must be made through the office administrator. Access to the kitchen and fellowship hall for set up or decorating will not be granted until the day before the wedding. The church does not provide linens.

If a caterer is used, it is the responsibility of the caterer to set up the fellowship hall and to leave the kitchen and all church utensils clean and put away. The caterer must contact the office administrator prior to the wedding to discuss kitchen use, trash take out, etc.

Kitchen use must be supervised by an approved adult during the entire use, including clean up. All items must be returned clean to their proper places. Do not leave any leftovers. Do not use any food found on shelves; these items are for church use only. A representative of the church must be present at the end of the reception in order for the party to receive approval for compliance of kitchen rules.

General Rules

The following regulations are designed to guide the applicant in the proper use of the church facilities and to encourage a dignified and appropriate simplicity in their use. Individual tastes differ widely in any group or congregation, and it is, therefore, necessary to observe some governing principles so as to insure that all things are done appropriately and in order.

- The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not ordinarily celebrated in the wedding ceremony. However, upon request it may be celebrated, providing that all believers present are invited to partake. Private communion for the bride and bridegroom is prohibited by the *Book of Order*.
- No rice or confetti or other products that litter and make clean up difficult may be used inside or outside the buildings of the church. Birdseed may be used only in the parking lot.
- No decorations or candles, other than those listed in the Sanctuary and Chapel section of this policy, will be permitted.
- The use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in the church buildings and on the church grounds for all weddings and wedding receptions. Members of the wedding party should also refrain from such use before the rehearsal and wedding ceremony.
- Smoking in any part of the church facilities is not permitted.
- Dress and behavior should reflect respect for being in a house of worship.
- Please do not let children play with musical instruments or any equipment, including microphones.

Wedding Fees

Fees for non-members:

Use of sanctuary	\$400
Use of fellowship hall	\$200
Use of chapel	\$150
Use of parlor	\$100

Fees for all wedding parties:

*Pastor:	
Pre-marital counseling (3 sessions required)	\$ 50/session
Wedding planning	\$ 50
Wedding rehearsal	\$ 50
Wedding preparation and service	\$100
Wedding Guild:	
Service only	\$175
Rehearsal and service	\$200
Rehearsal, service, and reception	\$250
Organist for rehearsal and wedding service	\$300
Organist for wedding service only	\$250
Soloist and/or instrumentalist	fee set by individual(s)
Custodial services	\$225/day
Child care attendants (optional)	\$ 26/hour for 2 attendants, 2 hour minimum

***Fees for pastor(s) should be paid directly to them.**

All other fees are to be paid in one check to the office administrator two weeks prior to the rehearsal. Please make that check to First Presbyterian Church.

I have read, understand, and will abide by this Wedding Policy in order for my wedding to proceed at First Presbyterian Church.

Bride: _____ **Date:** _____

Groom: _____ **Date:** _____