

First Presbyterian Church

Wedding Policy



A. Introduction

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. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

-- Presbyterian Book of Order W-4.0601

A service of Christian marriage is more than a social convention. It is an ordinance of the church and a witness to the world of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The session of First Presbyterian Church has adopted this policy in order:

- To enable couples married at First Presbyterian Church to understand the nature of their Christian Commitment;
- To insure that the facilities of the church are used in keeping with the Directory for Worship of the Book of Order;
- To bear a faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

B. Who may be considered for marriage at First Presbyterian Church?

Because marriage is an act of Christian discipleship, both the man and the woman seeking marriage should be professing Christians. At a minimum, either the man or the woman must be a professing Christian.

Because marriage takes place within the life and work of a Christian community, couples should ordinarily be active members of the First Presbyterian Church at least nine months before date of marriage. Members' fees will apply to those meeting the above requirement.

Exception: Non-members and former members of First Presbyterian Church who wish to be married in the sanctuary must apply to the pastor, who may exercise discretion in deciding who may enter the pre-marital counseling process. Those residing in other communities should be active members of a local church.

C. Pre-Marital Counseling

The pre-marital counseling process may begin as early as one year, but no later than four months prior to a proposed marriage date.

1. Those wishing to begin pre-marital counseling must first fill out an initial inquiry form and arrange for a conference with the pastor. At this time, the pastor may pencil in a tentative date for the wedding on the church calendar. This date should not be publicized, or should invitations be printed until the pre-marital counseling is completed and the pastor's approval has been given.
2. The couple may be referred by the pastor to a counselor for a minimum of three sessions. The pastor may elect to do the counseling him/herself.
3. The pastor meets with the couple following their counseling sessions and if the pastor is convinced of the couple's commitment, responsibility, maturity, and Christian understanding, the pastor may approve the marriage. If the pastor deems the marriage unwise, the pastor shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. (Book of Order W-9003b)
4. If the pastor approves the marriage, the wedding date is confirmed on the church calendar.

D. The Wedding: A Service of Worship

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 pastor. With the approval of the Session, the Lord's Supper may be celebrated during the marriage service, and the invitation to the Table will be given to all baptized Christians.

E. Ministerial Leadership

Ordinarily, the pastor of First Presbyterian Church will have the privilege of performing weddings in its sanctuary. The invitation for another minister to lead or take part in the service must come from the pastor of First Presbyterian Church. Couples should not invite other clergy to take part in the service before consulting the pastor, who takes the request to the Session for its decision.

E. Order of Service

The pastor must approve the order of service. All parts of the ceremony should be appropriate to Christian worship and acceptable offerings to God.

F. Wedding Coordinator

First Presbyterian Church has a Wedding Coordinator who directs all weddings for members as well as non-members. The bride will be contacted by the Wedding Coordinator, and appropriate meetings will be scheduled prior to the wedding date.

G. Music

Music which accompanies the service should direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage, and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent. The singing of hymns by the congregation is encouraged. All music must be approved by the pastor and the organist of First Presbyterian Church.

H. Musicians

Like the pastor, the organist of First Presbyterian Church has the privilege and responsibility of leading worship at weddings, and shall ordinarily play for all weddings. Another organist or other musicians may be invited to take part in weddings at the discretion of the organist of First Presbyterian Church. Instrumentalists and vocal soloists shall be approved by the pastor and/or the organist of First Presbyterian Church.

I. Symbols and Decorations

The communion table, pulpit, and baptismal font are symbols of faith and may not be moved from the view of the congregation or obscured by flowers, candles, or other decorations. The placement of such decorations must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator.

Decoration of the sanctuary will be at the expense of the wedding party. The sanctuary is designed so that a minimum of flowers and greenery is needed. Flowers may not be placed on the communion table. If the bride and groom wish to have flowers remain in the

sanctuary for worship on Sunday as a way of sharing the event with the congregation, please discuss this with the Wedding Coordinator.

Two candelabras are available for use. If other candles are desired, they must be provided by the wedding party. Only dripless tube type candles will be permitted, as the wind from the heating/air conditioning can cause wax candles to burn unevenly, which causes the wax to drip. Aisle cloths/runners are not necessary on the carpeted floor of the sanctuary.

No tacks, nails, pins, screws, or any other object shall be driven into the walls, floors, pews, or other furnishings. Pew markers may be tied with ribbons or secured with rubber bands or pipe cleaners only.

Because of the safety hazard they pose, no rice or bird seed may be thrown in the building or on the sidewalk. We recommend the use of bubbles.

J. Photographs and Video Recording

Flash photos may be taken in the sanctuary before or after the service by arrangement with the Wedding Coordinator. Flash photos are also allowed during the processional and recessional.

The service begins with the first word spoken by the pastor and ends with the last word. Before the service begins, flash photographs may be taken in the narthex. Photographers may not enter the main floor of the sanctuary during the service.

Time exposure not requiring flash or distracting noises may be taken from the balcony by the professional photographer or by some other designated person.

Videotaping is permitted in consultation with the Wedding Coordinator. Video cameras may be set up in the balcony.

Immediately after the service, the wedding party may return to the sanctuary for the taking of pictures.

K. Cell Phones

Please ask the ushers to remind wedding guests to silence their cell phones or other alarm/sounding technologies prior to the wedding service.

L. Rehearsals

Rehearsals are ordinarily scheduled the evening before the wedding and will be placed on the church calendar at the time the wedding is scheduled on the calendar.

M. Children in the Wedding Party

The use of children as ring bearers or flower girls must be discussed with the Wedding Coordinator.

N. Intoxicants

No one, who is compromised due to the effects of alcohol or any other controlled substances, shall be allowed to take part in the rehearsal or the marriage service. At the discretion of the pastor/wedding celebrant, the wedding rehearsal and/or wedding ceremony may be delayed or rescheduled, if necessary.

O. Custodial Service

The church custodian shall be employed to clean up the sanctuary and/or fellowship hall before and after all weddings. The custodian's fees are stated in the *Summary of Fees and Honoraria* at the back of this pamphlet, and this fee should be give to the Wedding Coordinator for disbursement.

P. Use of the Sanctuary

Wedding parties will be responsible for the order of the church property for the next service. This is especially important for weddings held on Saturdays. All properties of florists, caterers, or other persons employed to assist with the wedding must be removed after the wedding.

Q. Use of the Fellowship Hall

The Fellowship Hall is available for receptions. Alcohol or any other intoxicants are not allowed in the building or on the premises. Custodians will bill wedding parties for

additional cleaning services, if necessary. Please clean up after yourselves as much as possible.

R. Scheduling

If more than one wedding is requested for the same date, a four hour time schedule will be reserved for each, with the first request being given priority at the time the wedding is confirmed and placed on the church calendar.

Summary of Wedding Fees and Honoria
First Presbyterian Church
Maysville, KY

Sanctuary (Rehearsal and Wedding)	\$100	per hour
Chapel (Rehearsal and Wedding)	\$100	per hour
Fellowship Hall (Reception)	\$50	per hour
Pastor	\$150	Payable to the Pastor
Church Organist	\$150	Payable to the Organist
With Soloist/Instrumentalist	\$200	
Wedding Coordinator	\$125	Payable to the Coordinator
Custodian (Sanctuary/Chapel)	\$75	Payable to the Custodian
(Fellowship Hall)	\$75	

Fees for the use of the Sanctuary and/or Fellowship Hall must be paid to First Presbyterian church one week prior to the rehearsal date. Payments to the above persons should be made separately to each individual. Please put the payments (which may; be made in advance, but no later than one week prior to the rehearsal date) in separate envelopes for the Church, Pastor, Organist, and Custodian. These are to be given to the Wedding Coordinator for distribution.

A \$25 non-refundable deposit is due to the First Presbyterian Church at the time the wedding and rehearsal dates are requested, to hold the dates. The requests should be made in writing to the Session as soon as possible before the relevant dates, as the Session meets monthly. Requests should be mailed to First Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 490, Maysville, KY 41056. Please include all pertinent contact information with the request.

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