

WEDDING POLICY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GEORGETOWN, TEXAS

703 S. Church Street
Georgetown, Texas 78626
512/863-3381

Wedding Coordinator – Christina Bondesen
Pastor – Dr. Bobby Hulme-Lippert

Introduction

The congregation and staff of the First Presbyterian Church extend to you our warmest congratulations and best wishes for your wedding. The marriage service is a joyful and sacred occasion during which a couple declare before God and their friends and family their commitment to each other and their desire to be united by the Church in a new and lasting relationship.

Since we understand the wedding ceremony to be a service of worship, the following guidelines have been prepared to help you plan your wedding and to suggest procedures that are in keeping with the spirit of Christian marriage and worship.

Additional information, including the wedding ceremony and suggestions about Scripture and music, is included to help with your preparation for this memorable occasion. Please familiarize yourself with this wedding policy and call upon the Wedding Coordinator or Pastor if you need assistance.

Please note that due to constraints on staff and church facilities, weddings will no longer be scheduled in the month of July and wedding parties cannot exceed six attendants each.

To confirm a reservation, the Wedding Reservation Form must be completed and the reservation fee must be paid. This form is attached to the back of this Wedding Policy.

Christian Marriage

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. With this in mind, the Session has adopted the following Wedding Policy to aid in making all weddings a very meaningful experience.

Time and Place of the 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 ordinarily takes place in a special service, which focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life. Celebration of the Lord's Supper at the marriage service requires the approval of the session, and care shall be taken that the invitation to the Table is extended to all baptized persons who are present.

The Pastor

Ordinarily a minister of First Presbyterian Church or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will officiate at all church weddings in this facility. If a guest pastor is desired, the guest pastor must be invited to officiate the wedding by either the Pastor or the Session of First Presbyterian Church. The guest pastor's name, church name, address, and telephone number will be required. We must be assured of the guest pastor's credentials and that he or she will abide by this Wedding Policy. The guest pastor will provide a copy of the service they will use at the wedding to our Wedding Coordinator two weeks before the date of the wedding. The guest pastor will be furnished a copy of this wedding policy.

Form and Order of the Service

The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The two people shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the two people are now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.

Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. The congregation may join in hymns and other musical forms of praise and prayer. All music to be played or sung shall be approved by the minister of this church.

Making the Reservation for Your Wedding

A reservation can be made with the Wedding Coordinator well in advance of the wedding date to insure adequate time for scheduling pre-marriage conferences with

the officiating pastor. The Wedding Coordinator will check the church calendar for availability.

To confirm a reservation, the Wedding Reservation Form must be completed and the reservation fee and damages deposit must be paid. The Wedding Reservation Form is found attached to the back of this Wedding Policy. Dates are not considered firm until these fees has been received. Dates should not be announced until confirmation is given by the church.

Weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays, during Holy Week or during the month of July because of constraints on the staff and church facilities.

If a pastor from this congregation is desired, contact should be made directly to assure their availability for the service. If a guest pastor is desired, the guest pastor must be invited to officiate the wedding by the Pastor or Session of First Presbyterian Church.

Preparing for Marriage

Pastors in the Presbyterian Church officiate at weddings only after pre-marriage conferences with the couple. Conferences should be arranged well in advance of the wedding date and are scheduled directly with the pastor.

In preparation for the marriage service, the minister asked to lead the service shall provide for a discussion with the couple concerning

- the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian.
- the legal requirements of the state.
- the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage.
- the vows and commitments they will be asked to make.
- the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship.
- the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.

A period of pre-marital preparation is required for those who will be married in our church. Two sessions with the pastor and outside preparation are normally required.

The Rehearsal

If you plan to have more than one attendant, a rehearsal should be held and directed by the officiating minister. Due to space limitations in our Sanctuary, Wedding parties may not exceed six attendants. A rehearsal is scheduled to be completed in sixty minutes. The Session requests that it proceed in a dignified manner.

Normally all participants in the wedding should be present for the rehearsal, including ushers. The Wedding Coordinator orients the ushers and directs the wedding party's

entrance into the Sanctuary. It is suggested that any children participating in the wedding ceremony service should be mature enough to participate in other worship services (usually at least five years old).

If candelabras are used, the couple should, prior to the rehearsal determine the person in charge of lighting the candles. Prior to the rehearsal, the couple should determine the ushers in charge of seating the parents, grandparents, or any special guests. The marriage license must be given to the officiating pastor prior to the rehearsal.

Smoking is not permitted in the church facilities. In addition, no rehearsal or ceremony will be conducted with any member of the wedding party under the influence of alcohol.

Facilities Available for the Wedding

The Sanctuary, which seats 150 guests, is available for the rehearsal and the wedding. The Fellowship Hall is available for a wedding reception only and will seat 250 at round tables. The Fellowship Hall or Conference Room may be used for a rehearsal dinner.

Since our Fellowship Hall is used for Sunday morning worship, a wedding reception must be completed by 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays. One dressing room is available in the church parlor which has a separate restroom. One of the upstairs classrooms is also available as a second dressing room.

Chancel furniture shall not be moved or rearranged. This includes the Pulpit and the baptismal font. The communion table is moved up into the Chancel for weddings. The piano in the Sanctuary may not be moved. Any seasonal decorations or flowers (poinsettias, lilies, etc.) will remain in the Sanctuary. The church bell, installed in 1877, may be used at any point in your wedding.

Floral arrangements may be placed to either side or behind the Communion Table. No flowers are placed on the Communion Table. Flower petals are not permitted on the floor of the Sanctuary. 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.

Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the church buildings or on the church grounds. Smoking and other tobacco or vaping products are not allowed within the church facilities. The church facilities will be opened two hours before the service for the wedding party, photographer, or florist.

Marriage License

To apply for a marriage license in Williamson County, both applicants should come to the courthouse in downtown Georgetown. Once you purchase the license, you do have

to be married within 30 days from the date that you purchase it, but you will have to wait 72 hours after you purchase the license before you can marry. The State of Texas requires that both people to be married must be 18 to marry without consent of parents.

Wedding Coordinator

The purpose of the Wedding Coordinator is to assist the officiating pastor of the wedding. Our Wedding Coordinator is required for all weddings in our facility. All inquiries about arranging weddings should be directed to the Wedding Coordinator. The Wedding Coordinator will meet with the couple to discuss this Wedding Policy and will give the couple a brief tour of the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, and rooms used for dressing. The coordinator will answer any questions pertaining to church facilities.

On the day of the wedding, the coordinator will arrive at the church before the service to make sure everything is ready and in place. The coordinator will check floral decorations, instruct the still and video photographers, direct any ushers in seating guests, assemble family and wedding party, direct the entrance of the wedding party, and close the church facilities.

Organist and Soloist

It is the responsibility of the Wedding Coordinator to secure a church Organist for the wedding service. It is the responsibility of the couple to be married to secure a soloist (if desired) for the wedding service.

The Departure following the Wedding

It is suggested that the couple leave after the reception via the 7th Street door. Rice and birdseed should not be thrown at the couple either inside the church facility or outside on the grounds. Sparklers are not allowed at the church facility due to the fire hazard. Attendants should be advised of this policy.

Please designate someone to remove all articles from both dressing rooms immediately following the ceremony. First Presbyterian Church is not responsible for items left at the church.

Using Our Pastor for Off-Site Weddings

It is common for weddings to take place at an event center, park or another local Church. Our Pastor is available to church members for off-site weddings with the following guidelines. The Pastor must be contacted well in advance of the wedding date to insure adequate time for scheduling pre-marriage conferences with the couple. Weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays or during Holy Week. If more than one attendant will be in the wedding party a rehearsal must be scheduled prior to the

wedding. A Wedding Coordinator must be available to assist the Pastor. If there is no on-site coordinator where the wedding is planned, arrangements should be made with the Wedding Coordinator of First Presbyterian Church to assist with the wedding.

Facility Fees

<u>Wedding</u>	Members	Non-Members
Sanctuary	No Charge	\$700.00
*Staff for Weddings	\$600.00	\$600.00
Total	\$600.00	\$1300.00

* Staff for Weddings includes the fees or honoraria for the Pastor, Wedding Coordinator, Organist, and Custodian.

<u>Reception</u>	Members	Non-Members
Conference Room	\$50.00	\$100.00
Fellowship Hall including kitchen	\$100.00	\$250.00

Damages Deposit

A deposit of \$300 to cover any damages sustained to church property by a wedding party member, guest or vendor will be made at the time of the wedding reservation. This deposit will be refunded within 30 days after the ceremony if no damage is assessed.

To reserve a date on the church calendar, a total deposit of \$600.00 (\$300 damage deposit + \$300 wedding deposit) will be made. Checks are made payable to First Presbyterian Church. The additional fees for the wedding and reception will be due one month prior to the wedding date.

A member wedding is defined as a wedding where either of the two people being married, a parent of either person, or a grandparent of either person is an active member of First Presbyterian Church of Georgetown. All other relationships are considered non-member weddings.

Off-Site Wedding Fees

Staff Fees	\$350.00
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WEDDING CEREMONY

(Music:

STATEMENT OF THE GIFT OF MARRIAGE

Friends, we gather to celebrate the marriage of N. and N., to witness their vows, pledge our support, and seek God's blessing upon them. From the beginning, God created us for relationship and kept covenant with us. Jesus gave himself in love and taught us to give continually. And the Holy Spirit, given in baptism, renews God's grace within us day by day, enabling us to grow in faith, in hope, and in love.

Those who marry are called to a way of life marked by grace, fidelity, and mutual respect, as they bear one another's burdens and share one another's joys. As N. and N. make their promises today, families are joined, friendships are strengthened, and a new community of love is formed.

Let us surround N. and N. with our affection and prayer, giving thanks for their love for one another and for all the ways that God's love is made manifest in our lives.

PRAYER

Gracious God, you are always faithful in your love for us.
Look with kindness upon N. and N., who come seeking Your blessing.
Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them
so that with steadfast love
they may honor the vows they make this day,
through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

DECLARATIONS OF INTENT

N. and N., having heard how God has created, ordered, and blessed the covenant of marriage, do you affirm your desire and intention to enter this covenant?

RESPONSE: I do

AFFIRMATIONS OF THE FAMILIES

(To the family members)

Do you, the family members of N. and N., give them your blessing
and promise to uphold them in their marriage,
and encourage them in their life together?

RESPONSE: We do

AFFIRMATION OF THE CONGREGATION

Do all of you witnessing these vows
promise to uphold N. and N. in their marriage?

RESPONSE: We do.

SCRIPTURE READING (S)

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:26-31
Genesis 2:18-24
Psalm 67
Psalm 95:1-7
Psalm 100
Psalm 136:1-9, 26
Proverbs 3:3-6

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 5:1-10
Matthew 22:35-40
John 2:1-11
Romans 12:1-2, 9-18
I Corinthians 13:1-13
Ephesians 5:21-33
Philippians 2:3-7
Colossians 3:12-17
I John 4:7-12

VOWS

N. and N.,
since it is your intention to marry,
join your hands,
and make your vows to one another.

N., you are my beloved, and I promise, before God and these witnesses, to be loving and faithful to you in plenty and in want; in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in health; as long as we both shall live.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

What do you bring as the sign of your promise?

By your blessing, O God,
may these rings be to N. and N.
symbols of unending love and faithfulness,
and signs of the covenant they have made this day,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The couple shall exchange rings using these words:

This ring I give you,
as a sign of our constant faith
and abiding love,
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

(OPTIONAL: UNITY CANDLE)
(MUSIC:)

PRAYER

(MUSIC:)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

Before God and in the presence of this congregation
N. and N. have made their solemn vows to each other.
They have confirmed their promises by the joining of hands
(and by the giving and receiving of rings).
Therefore, I proclaim that they are now married.

CHARGE TO THE COUPLE AND BENEDICTION

As God's own,
clothe yourselves with compassion,
kindness, and patience,
forgiving each other

as the Lord has forgiven you,
and crown all these things with love,
which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

The grace of Christ be with you,
the love of God surround you,
the Holy Spirit keep you,
that you may live in faith,
abound in hope,
and grow in love,
both now and forevermore.

Amen.

KISS

RECESSIONAL

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
For the Beauty of the Earth
O Worship the King, All Glorious Above
O God Our Help in Ages Past
Be Thou My Vision
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
O Perfect Love
Before Thee, Lord, We Join Our Hearts
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty

Wedding Reservation Form

**First Presbyterian Church
703 S. Church St.
Georgetown, TX 78626
(512) 863-3381**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____ Evening Telephone: _____

Church Membership: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____ Evening Telephone: _____

Church Membership: _____

Permanent Address after the wedding: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Wedding Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Wedding Location _____

Wedding Reception Location: _____

Officiating Pastor and Church: _____

Organist _____ Soloist _____

Florist _____ Caterer _____

Photographer _____ Videotaper _____

The wedding date and time will be reserved on the church calendar only upon receipt of fees specified in this wedding policy.

Liability Statement:

It is understood and agreed that the applicant assumes all of the risk to persons and property which may be connected with the use of the premises, and that the Church will have no liability for personal injuries or property damage or both suffered by any person or persons in connection with such use. The applicant hereby releases the Church from all such liability, and agrees to indemnify the Church, its officers, agents, employees, and to hold it and them harmless from any loss (including attorney's fees and court costs) from any and all claims by any person or persons for damage or injury arising from the use of such premises.

I have read the First Presbyterian Church Wedding Policy and the above Liability Statement and agree to all provisions listed.

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Fees Received:

Wedding Deposit (\$300)	Date: _____	Amount _____	By: _____
Damages Deposit (\$300)	Date: _____	Amount _____	By: _____
Remaining Balance	Date: _____	Amount _____	By: _____

Wedding Policy Revised January 2019

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

(Please read, then remove and give to your florist)

The Session of First Presbyterian Church has developed these guidelines and urges the cooperation of the family and the florist regarding the following:

- Decorations should not obscure the simple beauty and dignity of the wedding service or the church sanctuary. Floral and other decorations are to be simple and shall not restrict the view of the Pulpit, Communion Table, Baptismal Font, or Cross.
- Do not move the church furnishings. This includes the Pulpit, Communion Table, Baptismal Font, and worship leader chairs.
- No nails, pins, tacks, tape, or glue are to be used to attach flowers or decorations to any furniture or walls. If pew bows or similar decorations are used, great care must be taken to protect the pews.
- If candelabras are used, the candles must be dripless and must have metal sheaths placed over them. Candelabras can be placed in the chancel area.
- If a unity candle is used, an appropriate covering or glass must be placed underneath the unity candle.
- Nothing (candles, flowers, etc.) is to be placed on the Communion Table.
- The florist is responsible for furnishing dripless type white candles and to use wax savers. There must be sufficient wax proof material used to protect the floor, carpet, and furniture.
- Most florists in Georgetown have a key to our building. Florists who do not are responsible for contacting the church office to set a time to decorate the church. Decorating should be done at a time when the church is normally open.
- The florist is expected to remove all decorations and equipment promptly following the ceremony and/or reception, and to remove only those flowers designated by the family.
- Any seasonal decorations or flowers used by the church (Christmas decorations, Easter Lilies, etc.) will remain in the Sanctuary.
- The church will be open two (2) hours before the wedding for delivery and set-up of floral arrangements and decorations.
- Smoking or vaping is not allowed in the building at any time. No food or drinks are allowed in the Sanctuary.

GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

(Please read, then remove and give to your photographer.)

- The wedding ceremony is a worship service. The Session of First Presbyterian Church has developed these guidelines and urges the cooperation of the family and the photographers, both amateur and professional, regarding the following:
- Photographers are free to take pictures before or after the service in any part of the building.
- Photographs taken before the service in the Sanctuary must be completed 45 minutes before the wedding begins.
- Photographers are to be instructed that **no** flash photography may be taken during the ceremony (from Processional through the Benediction). Available light shots may be taken from the back of the Sanctuary during the wedding.
- If a video recording of the service is made, it must be done as unobtrusively as possible and without bright lights. There are certain locations in the Sanctuary where we allow video cameras. This matter must be considered ahead of time with the Wedding Coordinator. The wedding rehearsal is a good time to take video pictures.
- Photographers are asked to be as unobtrusive and as quiet as possible.
- The Church will be opened two (2) hours before the wedding for photographs.
- Smoking or vaping is not allowed in the building at any time.
- No food or drinks are allowed in the Sanctuary.

QUICK GLANCE WEDDING REMINDERS

(Please make sure the couple, wedding parties, and parents are aware of these)

- Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the church buildings or on the grounds. No rehearsal or ceremony will be conducted with any member of the wedding party under the influence of alcohol.
- Smoking and other tobacco or vaping products are not allowed within the church facilities.
- The church facilities will be opened no earlier than two (2) hours before the service for the wedding party, photographer, or florist. All pre-ceremony pictures should be completed 45 minutes before the service.
- Light snacks and bottled water are recommended for wedding parties while dressing prior to the wedding. Please plan accordingly as food and drinks are not provided by the church. No food or drink is allowed in the Sanctuary.
- Please designate someone to remove all articles from both dressing rooms immediately following the ceremony. FPC is not responsible for items left at the church.
- A rehearsal is scheduled to be completed in sixty minutes. The Session requests that it proceed in a dignified manner. Please make sure seating, ushering of family and wedding party order and placement have been determined prior to the rehearsal and shared with the Wedding Coordinator.
- All participants in the wedding should attend the rehearsal, including ushers. The Pastor will review the entire service twice to ensure everyone knows what to do. Please plan accordingly.
- Childcare is not provided by the church. Any children attending the wedding should be supervised by an adult at all times.