

**A Guide to Weddings
at
First Presbyterian Church
Columbus, Georgia**



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Columbus, GA 31901**

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Revised August 2007

A Guide to Weddings at First Presbyterian Church

Our Christmas decorations are special to us and it would be expected that our traditions be appreciated.

Revised April 2006

THIS SHEET SHOULD BE GIVEN TO YOUR FLORIST

The sanctuary and the chapel lend themselves to simple wedding decorations. Since your wedding is a service of worship the decorations should be appropriate for a place of worship.

The baptismal font and pulpit may not be removed in the sanctuary or the chapel. No decorations are permitted on these fixtures. No tacks, pins or glue may be used to fasten any decorations on furniture or walls. No decorations of any kind, including candles, are to be placed in or in front of the stained glass windows. No decorations of any kind are to be placed on or attached to the organ. This includes the organ facades and exposed pipe chests.

All plans for decorations should be thoroughly discussed with the Wedding Guild member provided by the church. All decorations must be removed immediately following the ceremony.

It is the tradition of this church to use live flowers only. We are happy to have you leave the flowers placed on the pedestals provided for Sunday worship if date is available. All other decorations and flowers should be removed.

Rice, confetti, and rose petals have been proven to cause hazards to people and to animals, and should not be used. Family and friends are welcome to gather on the steps or on the grounds for photographs and celebration, but should refrain from throwing anything that would create additional clean up for the sextons or create a problem for those passing by.

Candles are a fire hazard but may be used in a manner befitting a service of worship. All candles must be dripless and placed well away from walls and furniture and never placed in the aisles or in the windows.

Christmas decorations are usually placed in the sanctuary during the week following the first Sunday in December and removed during the last week in December. If the calendar dictates a change to this schedule the bride will be advised in the early planning stages. The church should be used as decorated for the holidays.

*A Guide to Weddings
At First Presbyterian Church*

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Frequently asked questions	
Who can be married	2
Reserving the facilities	2
Staff support for planning	2
Honoraria and Fees	2-3
Officiating Pastor	3
Music	4
Pre-Marriage Counseling	4
Marriage License.....	4
Capacity	4
Parking	5
Video/audio Recordings.....	5
Photographs	5-6
Decorations/Flowers	6
Rice and Confetti	6-7
Candles.....	7
Rehearsal.....	7
Reception at the church.....	7
Caterers.....	7
Use of alcohol	8
Smoking.....	8
Where you may dress for the wedding.....	8
The Book of Order on Marriage.....	8-10
Preparing for Marriage	
Time and Place of the Service	
Form and Order of Service	
Music and Appointments	
Recognizing Civil Marriage	
Notes.....	11-12
Agreement.....	insert
Fee Schedule.....	insert
Information for the Florist	insert
Information for the Photographer	insert
Information Form for church	insert

**THIS INFORMATION SHEET
SHOULD BE GIVEN TO YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER**

Weddings are a joyful event at First Presbyterian Church of Columbus, Georgia. A wedding is a service of worship, and should be treated by all in attendance as such.

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church has guidelines which should be adhered to by those participating in the service, including photographers. Failure to cooperate with us will preclude your participation in the future.

We encourage the wedding party to have photographs made at the church. Photographers may meet the wedding party before or after the ceremony, in the sanctuary or chapel. Photographs may also be made in the narthex as the wedding party leaves. ***All formal photographs taken before the wedding should be completed at least 45 minutes prior to the established time that the ceremony is set to begin.***

Unrestricted use of cameras is a distraction to the wedding party and guests, and inappropriate to a service of worship. To make sure that worship itself remains the primary focus of the wedding ceremony ***no flash photographs may be taken during the ceremony, including the bride's entrance into the sanctuary.*** At no time during the ceremony is anyone to stand in the aisles or move around the sanctuary or chapel with a camera. This applies to professional photographers as well as individual family members or guests.

Reception: _____

Location of reception: Fellowship Hall Parlor
Courtyard Reception Hall
Location other than First Presbyterian

If reception is at First Presbyterian: Caterer: _____

Fee Schedule:

Wedding and rehearsal at the church	\$250**
Wedding, rehearsal and reception at the church	\$500**
Minimum Honarium for Organist	\$250

If you need a nursery, arrangements need to be made with the church offices and fees will be discussed at that time.

These fees include services two sextons. (One sexton at the rehearsal; two the day of the wedding.) Any additional staff presence may require a small additional fee.

Other fees: A video of the wedding ceremony is available for an **additional** fee of \$250. This service is optional at your request.

**** Half of your fee is due to First Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 1094, Columbus, GA 31902 is required upon confirmation of wedding date. The balance is due at least ten days prior to the wedding. Any additional charges will be billed following the ceremony.**

Introduction

The pastors and staff at First Presbyterian Church of Columbus consider it a privilege to assist you in having your wedding service here. We are available for consultation as you begin a successful marriage, both in planning the service and for support and counseling as you begin your new life together and thereafter as needed.

Marriage is a relationship instituted by God for the mutual happiness of His people and for the glory of His name. Thus, a wedding is a joyous and holy occasion of Christian worship in which a man and a woman unite their lives to establish a Christian home.

Planning the details of your wedding well in advance will eliminate most last minute questions and decisions. The procedures which follow are at the direction of the Session and are calculated to render every possible assistance in the planning of your wedding. We hope that you will find this guide helpful in planning your wedding service. We have attempted to address general and specific questions and concerns. Please read the entire booklet carefully.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can be married at First Presbyterian Church?

Active members of First Presbyterian Church and their immediate family members related by blood and/or marriage may be married at First Presbyterian Church or others as deemed appropriate after consultation with a pastor. (w-4.9002 – 4.9003).

How do we reserve the facilities?

Once you have decided you would like to have your wedding at First Presbyterian, contact the Church staff to request a date, time and space. The Church staff will present your request for approval and will contact the pastor and the organist to confirm their availability. After these approvals are obtained an appointment with the pastor and a deposit are required. No invitations should be printed until you have met with a pastor and made your deposit.

Is there someone on staff who will be available to help me and answer my questions?

Yes. Once you have met with a pastor and your initial deposit has been received, you will be assigned a member of our Wedding Guild to assist you with your planning. The Guild member will be available to meet with you and answer any questions. The Guild member will be present at the rehearsal and the wedding.

What about an Honorarium for the organist?

A suggested minimum honorarium for the organist will be provided to you by the church staff when you make your initial arrangements. The services of the organist include assistance in selecting appropriate music and preparation for and participation in the rehearsal and wedding.

What about Honoraria for soloists or musicians other than the organist?

Wedding: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Bride and her attendants arrival time: _____

Groom and his attendants arrival time: _____

Photographer's arrival time: _____

Location of wedding service: Sanctuary Chapel Parlor

Officiating Minister: _____

Florist: _____ Phone: _____

If you would like for your wedding flowers to be used at Sunday worship, check with Kimberly Moseley for availability.

If the date is available, the bulletin should read: The flowers in the sanctuary today are given to the glory of God _____

Organist: _____

Soloist: _____

Photographer: _____

Bride has selected music with organist: Yes No Not yet,
but is scheduled

No. Bridesmaids: _____ No. Groomsman _____

Approximate number of wedding guests: _____

Please return this form with information completed by _____.

**First Presbyterian Church
Columbus, Georgia
Wedding Information Form**

Bride's Full Name: _____

Bride's Address: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____

Church Affiliation: _____

Bride's Parents' Names: _____

Parents' Address: _____

Parents' Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____

Groom's Full Name: _____

Groom's Address: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____

Church Affiliation: _____

Groom's Parents' Names: _____

Parents' Address: _____

Parents' Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____

Contact for wedding details: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____

Address after marriage: _____

Rehearsal: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Wedding Director: _____

A Guide to Weddings at First Presbyterian Church

The bride and groom will arrange for independent soloists and/or musicians services and will be responsible for their compensation directly.

What about the Pastor's Honorarium?

The Pastors of First Presbyterian do not "charge" members for performing a wedding and the commitments surrounding it. Therefore, an honorarium is not required but is suggested at the discretion of the groom or his family. For non-members a minimum honorarium will be suggested in your initial meeting with the church staff.

What fees are associated with a wedding at First Presbyterian?

The basic fee is part of the costs disclosed to you in meeting with the staff. A portion of your deposit will be non-refundable. Fees for weddings in the sanctuary and the chapel are the same except under special circumstances. Fees include the services of one sexton for the rehearsal and two sextons the day of the wedding. One sexton will be available before, during and after the rehearsal to open and lock up the building. Two sextons will be available on the day of the wedding to open the building for the florist and bridal party, to provide security within the building during the ceremony and to clean up and secure the building after the ceremony. The bride and groom are responsible for any rented or personal items left in the building and these may be discarded if left on the premises unless prior arrangements are made. First Presbyterian Church does not assume any liability for such items. There are additional fees if you wish to have a reception at the church or if you wish to have a nursery provided. Please contact your Wedding Guild member about these needs.

A video of the wedding ceremony is available for an **additional** fee. If you elect this service please let your Wedding Guild member know. Please see the section on videos for details.

Who may serve as officiating pastor?

Weddings at First Presbyterian are officiated by a member of our pastoral staff. You may request a specific pastor or pastors but your

request may not be honored due to that individual's schedule. If you are interested in having an officiant who is not a member of our pastoral staff, you should make your desires known to the pastor during your initial meeting. Other clergy are welcome at the invitation of the Senior Pastor of First Presbyterian with Session consent. You may not extend an invitation to another pastor to participate since this must be done by the Senior Pastor in conjunction with the Session. The couple to be married is responsible for obtaining denominational approval and any documentation required by another denomination.

How do we select the music for our wedding?

Music is traditional at weddings and adds to the beauty of the service. Our Organist will normally play for all weddings. Other organists may play with the approval of the Senior Pastor, Organist and the Session. Our Organist will meet with you early in the planning stages to assist you in selecting music which must be suitable for a worship service. All vocal music should have a sacred text. Scriptural texts and those of most hymns are quite acceptable. Secular music and popular songs that have special meaning for you should be saved for the reception. The acoustics of First Presbyterian Church are very good. All music should be presented without additional amplification. All decisions about music played or sung shall be made by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Organist.

Does the church require pre-marriage counseling?

Yes. One or more of the Church Pastors will meet with the couple for pre-marriage counseling. A part of your initial appointment will begin the pre-marriage counseling which is required before the facility and date are reserved.

Do we need our marriage license?

Yes. It is the responsibility of the couple to present the marriage license to the celebrating pastor for his signature on the day of the wedding.

How many guests may we invite?

First Presbyterian Church Wedding Fee Schedule:

Wedding and rehearsal at the church	\$250
Wedding, rehearsal and reception at the church	\$500
Minimum Honorarium for Organist	\$250
Video of Wedding (Optional)	\$250

If you need a nursery, arrangements need to be made with the church office and fees will be discussed at that time.

AGREEMENT

We have read and understand the Wedding Policies of First Presbyterian Church and agree to abide by all rules, regulations and policies contained therein and to be governed by the decisions of the Pastors, Organist, Staff and Wedding Guild members regarding the same. We understand and accept that any failure to follow the Wedding Policies and directions of responsible persons may result in cancellation of the ceremony at any time and with no refund of any fees

Bride's signature

Date

Bride's name printed

Groom's signature

Date

Groom's name printed

The sanctuary will hold about 500 people and the chapel about 100. When planning your guest list, please keep these numbers in mind. Inviting more guests than can be comfortably seated is a hazard and may violate the fire code.

Where should the guests and wedding party park?

Handicapped parking is available in our church parking lot which is adjacent to the sanctuary. There is also street parking in front of the sanctuary and the chapel and ample parking in the Columbus Bank and Trust Company parking garage (on Saturdays) directly across the street across from the sanctuary. If you feel the parking garage will be needed, due to the number of guests invited, please let the Wedding Guild member assisting you know so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

Can video and/or audio equipment be used in the sanctuary or chapel?

The First Presbyterian Church sanctuary is equipped with professional-grade video and audio equipment which may be made available for video and/or audio recordings of your wedding if you request them. There is an additional fee for church provided services. If you wish to use the church video or audio services or those of an independent provider you should express your wishes at an early date in your discussions of the service with the church staff so that proper planning can occur and trained personnel can be scheduled. When the church equipment is used no other equipment will be allowed. The church equipment will be operated remotely from our control room by church employees. Our chapel does not have video or audio equipment but our portable video recorder may be employed there. Because weddings are a part of worship, recording equipment must be used in a manner which will not detract from worship and the music you select must be selected in keeping with the worshipful nature of the service. These issues will be resolved in planning your wedding.

When should photographs be taken?

We encourage the wedding party to have photographs made at the church. Photographers may meet the wedding party before the

ceremony in the narthex, sanctuary or chapel. All pre-wedding photography must be completed 45 minutes before the start of the wedding service.

What about photographs during the ceremony?

Unrestricted use of cameras is a distraction to the wedding party and guests and is inappropriate to a service of worship. No flash photographs shall be taken during the ceremony which includes the bride's entrance into the sanctuary so that worship remains the primary focus of the wedding. At no time is anyone to stand or move around the sanctuary or chapel with a camera. This applies to professional photographers as well as individual family members or guests. Unobtrusive tape recording devices may be used. It is the responsibility of the bridal party to convey these rules to the photographer, family members and guests.

How may we decorate?

The sanctuary and the chapel lend themselves to simple wedding decorations. Since your wedding is a service of worship, the decorations should be appropriate for a place of worship.

The baptismal font and pulpit may not be removed in the sanctuary or the chapel. No decorations are permitted on these fixtures. No tacks, pins or glue may be used to fasten any decorations on furniture or walls. No decorations of any kind, including candles, are to be placed in or in front of the stained glass windows. No decorations of any kind are to be placed on or attached to the organ, the organ facade and exposed pipe chests.

All plans for decorations shall be thoroughly discussed with the Wedding Guild member and approved by the Church staff. All decorations must be removed immediately following the ceremony. It is the responsibility of the bridal party to advise the florist of these rules.

May we leave flowers?

NOTES

Form and Order of Service

The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The man and the woman 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 proclamations. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of the discipleship and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the woman and the man 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 and Appointments

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. 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.

Recognizing Civil Marriage

A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of the vows by the husband and wife and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the woman and man are already married to one another according to the laws of the state.

Yes. We are happy to have you leave flowers placed on the pedestals provided for Sunday worship. All other decorations and flowers should be removed.

If you wish to leave flowers for church purposes please make this clear to the staff when you are making your initial plans. Arrangements for placement of flowers are generally made several months in advance, so please let us know your intentions as directed.

May we use rice, confetti, rose petals or bird seed?

No. These items cause hazards to people and animals and shall not be used. Family and friends are welcome to gather on the steps or on the grounds for photographs and celebration but shall refrain from throwing anything that would create additional clean up for the sextons or create a problem for others.

May we use candles?

Yes. Use candles under the following conditions:

Candles are a fire hazard but may be used in a manner befitting a service of worship. ALL CANDLES MUST BE DRIPLESS AND PLACED WELL AWAY FROM WALLS AND FURNITURE AND NEVER PLACED IN THE AISLES OR IN WINDOWS.

When should we have the rehearsal?

The rehearsal is usually held the day before the wedding. You should plan for it to last no more than one hour. The pastor and the Wedding Guild member will be available to assist you with the rehearsal. Nevertheless, you should have a wedding director in charge of the processional, placement of wedding party and recessional under the guidance of the officiating Pastor. Please remind everyone in the wedding party to be prompt.

Is the church available for our reception?

Yes. Our Fellowship Hall, Reception Hall and courtyard are available for an additional fee. Please discuss this at the time you are making your

plans. The fee is based on several factors which include the size of the wedding and the amount of labor needed to staff the facility.

May we use our own caterer?

Yes. Your caterer may be used with the approval of the Food Services Director. The Food Services Director must meet with the caterer not less than one week prior to the reception to review our facility and equipment. The caterer shall leave the facility clean and orderly. The Food Service Director shall inspect the facility after the caterer is finished and may assess any applicable fees which the couple must pay.

Is alcohol permitted?

No. Alcohol is not permitted on church premises. This includes our parking lot. The officiating pastor reserves the right to refuse to participate in a rehearsal or a wedding at which members of the wedding party are intoxicated.

Is Smoking Allowed?

No. The First Presbyterian Church is a smoke free facility.

Where may we dress?

The bride and her attendants may dress in the Parlor. The sextons will have available hanging racks for dresses and full length mirrors. There is one rest room directly across the hall. Groomsmen may dress and gather in the Boyd room located in the Chapel wing of the church.

Policies on Marriage from The Book of Order (PCUSA)

The First Presbyterian Church is a member of the larger church known as the Presbyterian Church (USA). We are governed by the Book of Order and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Book of Order contains the following statements about 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.”

Preparing for marriage

a) In preparation for the marriage service, the pastor 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.

a) If the minister is convinced after discussion with the couple that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the minister shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision the minister may seek the counsel of the session.

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. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the pastor. 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 present. The marriage service may take place during the service for the Lord's Day upon authorization by the session. It should be placed in the order as a response to the proclamation of the Word. It may then be followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.