



# First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte

## Wedding Guidelines

The wedding service is not only a significant event for the couple and their families, it is also a service of worship signifying that marriage is a gift God has given 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 one another 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 the Reformed tradition, marriage is a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges. The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) – W-4.900

Because a marriage takes place within a service of worship, when a couple requests the involvement of the church in solemnizing their vows the pastors of First Presbyterian church have the responsibility to assess the intentions and readiness of the couple seeking to commit their lives together in the marriage covenant. In keeping with the Reformed tradition, pastors will exercise their freedom of conscience in choosing to participate in a marriage they are asked to officiate. In accordance with the *Book of Order*: “Nothing shall compel a pastor to perform a marriage that the pastor believes is contrary to his or her discernment of the Holy Spirit and his or her understanding of the Word of God.”

The following guidelines have been adopted by the Session of First Presbyterian Church and are to be used in connection with all weddings performed at this church.

### A. RESERVATIONS

1. An individual who has been a member on the active roll of First Presbyterian Church, or whose parent(s) or grandparent(s) is/are on the active roll, for at least six months is eligible to schedule his or her wedding here, and is to call the Assistant to the Senior Pastor at the church (704-332-5123) to obtain a Wedding Application.
2. The requesting couple must submit the Wedding Application form to the Assistant to the Senior Pastor, who will bring it to the staff for approval.
3. No weddings will be scheduled for the month of December.
4. After approval of the date and officiating pastor, a Wedding Director will be assigned and will schedule a meeting within three weeks to review the church guidelines and discuss the preliminary wedding details.
5. The reservation letter must be signed and returned to the Assistant to the Senior Pastor within three weeks of the meeting with the Wedding Director. This will confirm the wedding and rehearsal time, and that the couple agree to abide by the wedding guidelines of the church.
6. Weddings will not be scheduled more than 18 months in advance.

B. OFFICIATING PASTORS

1. All weddings will be conducted by a pastor of First Presbyterian Church.
2. Another pastor may assist in conducting the service only at the invitation of the officiating pastor of First Presbyterian Church.
3. All persons married in First Presbyterian Church will engage in a minimum of three hours of premarital counseling with the officiating pastor of First Presbyterian Church in order to understand:
  - a. The vows they will make,
  - b. the relationship of their commitments to Christian discipleship,
  - c. the nature of their covenant,
  - d. the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
  - e. the form and significance of the marriage worship service, and
  - f. the support available to them as a couple within this larger church community.

C. ORDER OF WORSHIP

1. The order of worship and the wedding service are the sole responsibility of the officiating pastor of First Presbyterian Church.
2. The officiating pastor of First Presbyterian Church is responsible for giving the wedding homily.
3. All readings in the wedding service will be from Scripture.

D. WEDDING BULLETIN

The wedding bulletin must be approved by both the officiating pastor and the Director of Music Ministries before being printed and must include:

*"In order to preserve the sanctity of this worship service, please silence cell phones and refrain from photography."*

E. MUSIC

1. The Director of Music and/or Assistant Director of Music (DOM and ADOM) of First Presbyterian Church is responsible for all of the music that is offered during the wedding service. The DOM will determine the organist for each wedding. In the event the DOM and ADOM are unavailable for the wedding, the substitute organist will be secured by the DOM and/or ADOM. The presence of the wedding organist or his/her substitute is required for all weddings held in the sanctuary.
2. All instrumentalists and vocalists will be secured and approved by the DOM or ADOM.
3. The wedding organist will offer suggested musical compositions, including hymns, preludes, processional, recessional and solos.
4. The final decision in all matters pertaining to the music will rest with the officiating pastor and the organist.

F. FACILITIES

1. The following are available for wedding services:
  - a. Sanctuary: capacity of approximately 600 (including the balcony and overflow)
  - b. Chapel: capacity of approximately 75
2. The Sanctuary and Chapel have been thoughtfully and prayerfully prepared for and dedicated to the worship of God. Therefore, alterations should be kept to a minimum. Decorations should be limited to two floral arrangements, floral pew markers and two candelabra.
3. The Fellowship Hall is available for the rehearsal dinner and reception. The room accommodates 525 guests standing or 350 guests seated at round tables. Contact the Food Service Manager for fee information and/or to reserve the space.

4. Several rooms are available for the wedding party beginning two hours before the service. The Wedding Director will discuss the options and reserve the rooms.

G. VIDEOTAPING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

1. Video recording is to be undertaken only by First Presbyterian Church, which has DVD recording capability in the sanctuary via our Television Ministry equipment.
2. Photography is to be undertaken according to the instructions of the Wedding Director. Flash photography is not permitted during the wedding service. No visible or audible use of cameras should intrude upon the service of marriage by **guests** or **professional photographers**. Professional photographers must remain behind the 4<sup>th</sup> pew and any seated guest.

H. REHEARSAL

1. The officiating pastor and the First Presbyterian Church Wedding Director shall direct the rehearsal.
2. The wedding rehearsal will begin promptly at the scheduled time, and it is the responsibility of the couple to ensure that the entire wedding party is present.
3. The marriage license, wedding bulletin, registry pad and pen, and checks for the wedding fees are to be brought to the rehearsal.
4. Parking in the church lot is free during the rehearsal. A charge will be incurred for spaces used after the wedding rehearsal.

I. WEDDING SERVICE DETAILS

1. First Presbyterian Church does not permit the following during wedding services:
  - a. Unity candles
  - b. Presentation of bouquets to mothers
  - c. Aisle cloths
  - d. Rose petals in the Sanctuary
  - e. Cell phones or pagers
  - f. Use of cameras by guests
  - g. Rice or birdseed
  - h. Outside consultants for the wedding service or rehearsal
  - i. Any other activity that is deemed by the officiating pastor to be inappropriate to Reformed worship
3. Floral arrangements, if used, are to be placed on the pulpit in the church's #4 vases. Two silver and two brass vases are available for the florist to use. Greenery is also permitted under instructions from the Wedding Director.
4. Wedding attire for all members of the wedding party shall be appropriate for a worship service in the sanctuary.
5. Children included in the wedding service must be at least 3 years of age. A responsible adult must remain with children until they walk down the aisle.

J. SECURITY

1. The church will make every reasonable effort to protect personal items left the church facility during the wedding but cannot be held responsible for such items should they be lost, stolen or damaged.
2. Security Requirements:
  - a. Weddings where the expected attendance number is below 250: *Security coverage is at the discretion of the Wedding Director.*

- b. Weddings where 250+ attendees are expected: *FPC Security Officer coverage is mandatory.*
- c. Weddings with 400+ expected attendees: *FPC Security Officer and Off-Duty Police Officer are mandatory.*

K. PARKING

Parking is available for the wedding party and guests in the church parking lot. Vendors may park in the driveway in front of the Sanctuary for loading and unloading only. No other cars may be parked in the church drive.

L. ALCOHOL

The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages on church grounds is prohibited.

M. SMOKING

As required by the City of Charlotte, the church and church buildings are tobacco-free facilities.

## Wedding Fees

*All checks should be given to the Wedding Director at the rehearsal in individual envelopes.  
The Wedding Director will provide bride with the name for each check.*

### REQUIRED FEES (Sanctuary and Chapel):

<b>Director of Music Ministries</b> <i>(Consultation, rehearsal + wedding)</i>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Wedding Director</b>	<b>\$350</b>
<b>Custodian(s)</b> <i>One custodian (Required for 2 hours for the rehearsal)</i>	<b>\$50/hour – 2-hour min.</b>
<i>Two custodians (Required for the wedding for 4 hours each)</i>	<b>\$50/hour – 4-hour min.</b>
<b>Soundboard Operator (Sanctuary Weddings)</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Officiating Pastor</b>	<b>\$500</b>

### SECURITY FEES:

<b>FPC Security Officer</b>	<b>\$50/hour – 4-hour min.</b>
<b>Off-Duty Police Officer</b>	<b>\$75/hour – 4-hour min.</b>

### OPTIONAL FEES:

**Vocalist** – fee amount provided by the Director of Music Ministries.

**Instrumentalists** – fee amount provided by the Director of Music Ministries.

<b>Candles for Candelabra</b>	<b>\$22</b>
-------------------------------	-------------

<b>Videotaping of Wedding (Sanctuary Weddings)</b>	<b>\$475 – 3 DVDs</b>
<i>Additional copies are available for \$25 each, if ordered at the time of the wedding.</i>	

## Wedding Reception Fees

*(All fees payable to FPC except where noted)*

**Fellowship Hall Facility Fee**

**\$400**

*Space seats 250-300*

**Audio Visual Coordinator**

**\$50/hour – 3-hour min.**

*(payable to A/V Coordinator)*

- *Additional costs TBD based on a/v needs*

**Linen Rental**

**\$2.00 per tablecloth**

- *FPC can provide color schemes needed*

**\$.50 per napkin**

**Custodial Fee**

**\$50/hour – 3-hour min.**

*(payable to Custodian)*

**FPC Security Officer Fee**

**\$50/hour – 3-hour min.**

*(payable to Officer)*

- *Security officer required for > 200 guests*

**Off-Duty Police Officer Fee**

**\$75/hour – 3-hour min.**

*(payable to Officer)*

**NOTES:**

- Removal of exterior decorations and equipment is the responsibility of the Wedding Party by end of day.
- A dance floor must be provided by the couple for any dancing.

*Revised March 2025*