

Policy & Fees for Weddings at First Presbyterian Church



11 Washington Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

301-777-3700
fax: 301-777-1462

firstpresbyteriansecretary@gmail.com

The members of the First Presbyterian Church Family congratulate you and wish God's every blessing for your upcoming marriage. We are happy you have chosen First Presbyterian Church as the location for your wedding, and we are eager to help make your wedding a meaningful, faithful, and joyous experience.

The Session 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.

Statement on Christian Marriage - A wedding is a joyful celebration of the love between two people. In the Christian church, it is more than just a social event or an act of the State. Christian marriage is an act of God, a religious covenant, in which vows are exchanged not only between the couple being married, but also between the couple and God. What the couple promises to each other in marriage, they are also promising to God. It is a time in which the couple comes together before God, together with their family and friends, to worship and praise God for bringing them together and to thank God for the new life they will share. It is a time to ask God's guidance, strength, and blessing to be upon the couple throughout their lives together.

Reserving a Wedding Date and Fees – Under normal circumstances, all weddings should be scheduled with the church at least six (6) months prior to the desired wedding date. To reserve a date, please call the Church Administrator. The date will be placed on the church calendar only after the Pastor and staff's availability and approval of the Session are confirmed, and a deposit of \$250 has been paid to the church. The deposit will be refunded in full, subject to the cost of any replacements or repairs necessitated by the wedding party's use of the facilities. Wedding fees are described at the end of this policy and should be paid thirty (30) days prior to the wedding date.

Premarital Counseling – The couple should participate in premarital counseling with the Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, or with another pastor or appropriate counselor, if the couple lives out of town. Counseling is very important as you plan your wedding and your future, and typically includes the theological and Biblical understanding of marriage, communication skills, conflict resolution, and other issues. The couple should schedule these sessions with the pastor.

Wedding Coordinator- First Presbyterian Church's Wedding Coordinator will be the main point of contact with the couple after the wedding date is confirmed. This representative of the church acts in a coordinating role to ensure that assigned responsibilities of all involved are carried out and that the wedding goes as planned. The Wedding Coordinator will set up an initial meeting with

the couple to discuss First Presbyterian Church's wedding policy. Questions about arrangements, officiating clergy, music, fees, and use of the facilities will be discussed at this conference. If the couple has employed the services of a wedding consultant or planner, we ask that his or her involvement be limited to the reception and other non-church activities. (Consultants may assist the bride in the dressing room if desired.)

Wedding Service – Weddings at First Presbyterian Church are structured according to the theology and liturgy of the Presbyterian Church (USA). As a service of Christian worship, the wedding service is under the direction of the Pastor and the supervision of the Session. The service focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life. As such, music, readings and other aspects of the service should be appropriate to a service of worship and will be discussed in advance with the Pastor, Director of Music Ministries and the Wedding Coordinator. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the Pastor. If the leader is a clergy person, the couple will provide the Wedding Coordinator with the name, title and complete address of the clergy person so that an invitation may be sent.

Music - The Director of Music Ministries at First Presbyterian Church has the privilege and responsibility for providing a significant part of the wedding service. Normally the Director of Music Ministries will provide the music at all weddings requiring music. If the Director of Music Ministries is unavailable, the Wedding Coordinator will provide a list of substitutes from which the couple may choose.

If the couple employs an organist/musician in lieu of the Director of Music Ministries, the guest organist/musician will contact the Director of Music Ministries to discuss the wedding at least a month before the wedding, including the music to be played and arrangements for accessing our sanctuary and piano or pipe organ.

Otherwise, two months prior to the service, the couple should meet with the Director of Music Ministries to discuss and choose appropriate music for the service. Vocal, instrumental, piano and organ music are all appropriate for a wedding since the Psalms call for us to worship God with all kinds of instruments. However, in keeping with the setting of worship, there should normally be no amplified music other than that of the organ or that which comes over the church's sound system. If desired, the Director of Music Ministries will make arrangements for additional musicians such as vocal soloists and/or instrumentalists, for an additional fee.

Wedding Photography/Videography – As the wedding is a worship service, the use of photography and videography is restricted to ensure that the mood of the wedding and your own pleasure and concentration on each other and the occasion are not compromised. No flash photographs are to be taken during the service itself. The service begins with the first note of the organ or instrumental voluntary and ends with the last note of the organ or instrumental voluntary. Non-flash photos by a designated wedding photographer may be taken from the balcony or from positions at the back of the sanctuary. Stationary videotaping is permitted from the same location using available light. Photographers and photography equipment are not permitted in the chancel area or in front of the pews at any time. It is the couple's responsibility to inform the photographer/videographer of this policy and to make family members and guests aware that the use of flash cameras is not permitted during the service. The wedding party is welcome to stage photographs either prior to or following the service.

Flowers and Decorations – You are welcome to add to the beauty of the sanctuary and church with floral arrangements and/or decorations (no tape). The couple will make arrangements for all decorations to be removed from the sanctuary and the church by the end of the wedding day.

Rehearsal - The rehearsal will take place the evening before the wedding unless other arrangements are requested by the couple and coordinated by the Wedding Coordinator. The couple should bring a copy of their State of Maryland marriage license with them to the rehearsal. The Wedding Coordinator will make sure it is properly signed and submitted for recording with the county clerk's office.

General Guidance on the Use of the Church

- Throwing of rice, birdseed, paper, or other materials at any time on church property is not allowed, with the exception of silk flower petals, which may be used in the sanctuary.
- The use of tobacco or drugs in the building, grounds or in the vicinity of the church building before or during either the rehearsal or the wedding is prohibited.
- If wine or beer is to be included with a meal at the reception, the church office will give the couple a copy of our alcohol policy.
- The use of tape to fasten items on wooden pews and other surfaces is not permitted because it damages the finish. Please inform your florist to check with the church sexton for the appropriate ways to hang or fasten decorations in the sanctuary. Flower deliveries should be coordinated with the Wedding Coordinator for a mutually acceptable time.
- Church furniture should not be removed from the sanctuary.
- It is expected that the facilities will be left in a neat and orderly condition. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to ensure that all equipment and furniture are replaced in the position in which they were found before the church is secured. Those using the building shall assume responsibility for damage or breakage that may occur during the wedding and reception.
- Rooms in the church are available for use by the wedding party. All personal supplies and clothing will be removed at the time of departure from the building.

Policy Revised 6/4/2025