

Forest Hills Presbyterian Church
Martinsville, Virginia

Wedding Policy

Approved by Session [4/15/13]
Reviewed by Session [10/20/14]

A Service of Christian Marriage

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the wellbeing of the entire human family (Genesis 2:18-24). 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 (Ephesians 5:21-33). In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a man and a woman to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

(Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Order W-4. 9001)

As a service of Christian Worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the session. (W-1. 4004-4006) 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.

(Presbyterian church (USA) Book of Order W-4. 9003)

The wedding service is designed to express praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of marriage, and to embody the Trinitarian faith of the Christian community. Therefore, at least one of the marriage partners should be a faithful Christian. The promises of marriage are to be made in response to the Word of God, in the context of prayer, and in the presence of the community of believers.

Preparation

When a wedding is being planned, the Pastor should be informed of the couple's intention as soon as possible. Pre-marital counseling will be scheduled with the couple by the Pastor. Wedding dates for use of the Sanctuary and the Chapel will be arranged by the Pastor and approved by the session. A wedding information form (included with these guidelines) must be completed and turned in to the church office. The church office manager will then reserve the dates on the calendar for the rehearsal and the wedding.

Weddings at the church are ordinarily performed by the Pastor. If the couple desires to invite visiting clergy to perform or share in the service, such arrangements are to be made with the approval of the session and by invitation of the Pastor. Whenever visiting clergy is invited to perform a wedding, the Pastor of the Church reserves the right to participate in at least one element of the wedding ceremony at his or her discretion.

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The details of the rehearsal and the wedding service are under the direction of the Pastor. If a wedding consultant or wedding coordinator is used, that person will be under the Pastor's direction and will be regarded as the Pastor's assistant.

If the bride wishes to use the Memorial Parlor to dress for the wedding, it will be necessary to make sure the room is available. This should be cleared through the Pastor and the church office. Those using the Parlor are responsible for leaving it exactly as found.

Music

The music selected for the wedding should embody the same high standards applied to the music for worship generally. Wedding music should focus upon God and emphasize the faith of the Christian community rather than romantic love or sentimentality. Ordinarily, secular music will not be acceptable as a part of the service. If desired, the congregation may be invited to join in the singing of hymns during the service.

A meeting with the church organist must be held to discuss and plan music for the wedding. Music for the service is to be chosen in conference with the pastor and church organist. If the couple wishes the services of another organist, the church organist must be consulted in advance and approve the request.

All final music selections must be approved by the Pastor.

Decorations

Flowers and candles should enhance the beauty of the worship service in the sanctuary or chapel; not obscure it. Simple arrangements are the best choice. Suitable materials must be placed under the candelabra to catch any wax which may drip. Potted plants must be placed on saucers to protect the carpet and furniture. No tacks, scotch tape, wire, nails or other damaging method of fastening decorations on the church furniture may be used. Church furniture or chancel appointments must not be moved or rearranged. No rice or confetti may be thrown either inside the building or outside. Birdseed may be thrown outside.

Florists must make arrangements with the church office for access to the building in order to decorate. Decorations must be removed the same day as the wedding. If the flowers are to be left for the church service on Sunday, please notify the church office well in advance, so that the office can reserve that Sunday for the flowers and note in the Sunday's bulletin that the wedding took place and the wedding flowers are being shared with the congregation.

Reception

The Fellowship Hall and kitchen are available for the reception, but their use should be cleared with the Pastor at the first conference. The office

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manager should be made aware of the dates of the wedding and reception in order to provide the information about equipment and to secure the services of the custodian. The bride and her family will be responsible for proper use of the equipment, providing sufficient help for the reception, and making sure the kitchen is cleaned afterwards to be left as found.

No alcoholic beverages will be permitted on the premises. Smoking is not permitted in the building.

Photographs

No pictures are to be taken during the service. Photographs may be made before the processional and after the recessional. The use of a video camera must be cleared with the Pastor.

Bulletins

Special bulletins for the wedding are available and can be ordered through the church office, if the couple desires to use them. The church office manager will prepare the order of the wedding service as instructed by the Pastor in consultation with the couple and make copies for the congregation.

Rehearsal

The date and time of the rehearsal will be set during the initial consultation with the Pastor. All members of the wedding party will need to participate in the rehearsal and take advantage of the opportunity to learn what their responsibilities are and what the character of the wedding service will be.

Fees

Members of Forest Hills Presbyterian Church and their families may use the church facilities free of charge as part of the ministry of the church. Non-members of the church will be charged with the following fees for use of the church facilities. Fees should be made payable in cash or by check to **Forest Hills Presbyterian Church** and are due before the week of the wedding.

Custodial Fees are included in the fees below.

Honoraria for participants is considered separate from church usage and is payable in cash or by check to these persons individually and not through the church, prior to the service. It is expected that these individuals will be given an honorarium by both members and non-members of FHPC. In addition, the couple must accept responsibility for expenses incurred by visiting clergy such as lodging, travel, food, etc.

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<u>Member Rate</u>	<u>Non-Member Rate</u>	
Sanctuary	\$0	\$300
Chapel	\$0	\$200
Fellowship Hall	\$0	\$200
Pastor (includes Premarital Counseling)	\$400	\$400
Organist/Pianist		
Consultation and Wedding	\$250	\$250
Consultation, Wedding, and Rehearsal	\$350	\$350

*The total amount will depend on what facilities/services are used and will be payable to different parties.

*Damages or cleaning costs above and beyond what is considered reasonable by FHPC shall be the responsibility of the couple. Evaluation of damages and additional cleaning costs is at the discretion of FHPC.

Questions about Policies

Questions concerning these guidelines may be addressed to the Pastor or appropriate members of the church, staff and session.

Your wedding in the church will be a holy occasion. It is our hope that this celebration will be a joyous time for you, your families, and your friends. It is our prayer that the memory of your wedding will be cherished and that your marriage will have God's eternal blessing.

Notes: Reviewed 10/1/14

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Date
