

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE SERVICE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**

### **AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FLORENCE, AL**

Congratulations on your engagement! The Minister, Organist and the Sanctuary Guild of First Presbyterian Church look forward to working with you. A member of the Sanctuary Guild will serve as the Wedding Coordinator.

The wedding guidelines and policies contained in this booklet are based on many years of experience at our church. We are committed to ensuring each wedding at First Presbyterian Church is a joyful and reverent service.

**PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES AND POLICIES CAREFULLY.**

### **CHRISTIAN WORSHIP SERVICE**

A wedding at First Presbyterian Church is a service of Christian worship. The ordained Minister of this church ordinarily officiates. A Minister of another denomination may perform the ceremony upon the invitation from the Minister of First Presbyterian Church and approval by the Session.

### **SCHEDULING A WEDDING AND A RECEPTION**

#### **Reserving the Sanctuary:**

The couple may tentatively reserve the Sanctuary for the wedding and rehearsal dates by contacting the Administrative Assistant at the church. Final confirmation is given after consultation with the Organist and a member of the Sanctuary Guild, as well as the completion of the Wedding Application Form, which must be returned to the Administrative Assistant. Priority is given to church members and their children. The Sanctuary is available on a limited basis to non-members. A member of the Sanctuary Guild of First Presbyterian Church must be present to coordinate the wedding. Final confirmation cannot be given until ninety (90) days before the wedding. At this time the Wedding Application Form must be returned to the Administrative Assistant along with the Security Deposit.

#### **Changes to information given the Wedding Coordinator:**

If you left spaces blank on the Wedding Application Form for the names of your florist, photographer, attendants, etc., please communicate these names and contact numbers to the Administrative Assistant as soon as possible.

#### **Black-out dates:**

Certain dates on the liturgical calendar are considered inappropriate by our Session for weddings. These dates include Holy Week, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

#### **Receptions at First Presbyterian:**

The Fellowship Hall is available for wedding receptions. Arrangements for a reception at the church must be made by contacting the Administrative Assistant. If the caterer wishes to use the kitchen

facilities on the day of the wedding, he/she must make arrangements with the Administrative Assistant.

**NO ALCOHOL OF ANY KIND IS ALLOWED OR MAY BE CONSUMED ANYWHERE ON THE CHURCH PROPERTY AT ANYTIME.**

### **ADVANCE PLANNING FOR THE WEDDING SERVICE**

**Reserving the Officiate:** It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to contact the Minister.

**Pre-marital counseling:** All persons being married by the Minister of First Presbyterian Church are required to engage in pre-marital counseling. It is the responsibility of the couple to contact the Minister to schedule their appointments well in advance of the wedding. If the ceremony is being performed by another Minister, it is strongly recommended that the couple contact him/her to schedule counseling.

**Marriage License:** It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain a Marriage License and deliver it to the Minister five (5) days before the wedding.

**Music for the wedding service:** The bride and groom must make an appointment with the Church Organist to plan suitable music for the wedding service.

**Meeting with a member of the Sanctuary Guild:** A member of the Sanctuary Guild serves as the Wedding Coordinator for all weddings at First Presbyterian Church. The bride must make an appointment with the Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the wedding to discuss details of the rehearsal and wedding. The Guild member will explain wedding procedures at First Presbyterian and answer any questions. The Wedding Coordinator will assist the Minister at the rehearsal and the wedding.

### **ELEMENTS OF A WEDDING SERVICE--MUSIC**

#### **Music selections, instrumentalists and vocal soloists:**

The Organist at First Presbyterian Church plays at all weddings celebrated in the Sanctuary. If the Organist is not available to play, he/she will secure a proper substitute. The couple must schedule an appointment with the Organist well in advance of the wedding day to select music for the wedding. Because a wedding is considered a worship service, all music must be appropriate to Christian worship. The Organist may suggest instrumentalists and vocalist to contact. In all cases, the Organist of First Presbyterian Church must approve the music. It is important that adequate rehearsal time is arranged with the Organist and any soloists.

### **ELEMENTS OF A WEDDING SERVICE--DECORATIONS**

**Floral Decorations:** The Sanctuary of the church is designed for worship and incorporates symbols of the Christian faith. Therefore, elaborate flowers and decorations are not required. Only live flowers and plants may be used.

\* Floral wreaths may be placed on the doors leading into the Sanctuary. Hooks for hanging wreaths are already in the doors. No other nails may be driven into the wood.

\* Floral arrangements may be used to mark pews if attaching them in no way damages the stained or painted surfaces of the pews. No nails, tacks or screws may be driven into the walls or furnishings anywhere in the church. In the Sanctuary, no tape may be used on any painted or stained surface or placed on the floor.

\* If used, window decorations should be small so the beauty of the stained glass windows is not obscured. Candles must be enclosed in glass.

\* No floral arrangements or other decorations may be attached to the balcony.

\* If the wedding service is during Advent, the poinsettias and window decorations in the Sanctuary must remain in place.

\* If the family wishes to leave the flowers for use on the Sunday morning following a Saturday wedding, please inform the Administrative Assistant at the time of final confirmation of the wedding.

**Candelabra:** The church has two brass candelabra that are available for your use and the church will furnish drip-less candles. Please notify the Wedding Coordinator if you wish to use the candelabra. No other candelabra are permitted. If a Unity Candle is used, it must be placed in a non-carpeted area.

**Church furnishings:** All furnishings in the Sanctuary are in place as aids to worship. No furnishings attached to floors or walls may be moved. The communion table will be moved to the upper level (pulpit area) and is not to be used as a receptacle for anything. The lectern and chairs on the lower level may be moved. The open Bible and the Cross must remain in the Sanctuary.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION AND LIMITATIONS**

**Dressing:** First Presbyterian Church has a Bride's Room in which the bride and her attendants may dress the day of the wedding. It is strongly recommended that each person bring a marked tote bag in which to store all personal items during the ceremony. The groom and his groomsmen may use the Appleby Room or Youth Room. The Wedding Coordinator will advise the bride and groom as to the location of these rooms. First Presbyterian Church does not accept any responsibility for the safety of any items stored in these dressing rooms during the ceremony.

**NO ALCOHOL OR SMOKING IS ALLOWED ANYWHERE ON THE CHURCH PROPERTY AT ANYTIME.**

**Refreshments for the wedding party:** Refreshments may be served to the wedding party and others prior to the wedding service only in the foyer. No food or drink is allowed in the Sanctuary .

**No thrown material:** No material of any kind may be thrown by members of the wedding party or your guests in the church building or on church grounds. This includes rice, birdseeds, flower petals, confetti, soap bubbles, or any other such items.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY**

**Time for photos before and after the wedding service:** The taking of photographs inside the church should begin no earlier than three (3) hours before the wedding. All photography in the Sanctuary must be completed forty-five (45) minutes before the start of the service.

**No photographs during the actual wedding service:** No photographs of any kind, with or without a flash, may be taken by the professional photographer or guests on the main floor of the Sanctuary after the music begins. Please share this information with your family and guests. If you have a wedding program, it is helpful to add a note that since the wedding ceremony is a worship service, the taking of photographs is not allowed. Non-flash photographs may be taken from the balcony, only by the professional photographer.

**Video cameras:** A video camera may be used to record the service. The video equipment must be placed in the balcony. **NO LIGHTS MAY BE USED AT ANY TIME.**

**Lighting:** The only lighting allowed is that which is already a part of the sanctuary system. The Wedding Coordinator will set the lighting as desired by the bride.

## **THE REHEARSAL**

**Leadership of the rehearsal:** The Minister is responsible for conducting the wedding rehearsal and will be assisted by the Sanctuary Guild member serving as Wedding Coordinator. Since the members of the Sanctuary Guild have conducted many weddings at First Presbyterian and are familiar with all aspects of church policy and procedure, it is an unnecessary expense to hire a professional coordinator. If an outside coordinator is present at the rehearsal, he/she will be under the direction of the Minister and the Guild member. In the event that the Sanctuary is rented, the Guild member will be in charge.

**Punctuality:** It is important that all members of the wedding party arrive at the Church on time for the rehearsal and the ceremony.

## **ROLE OF THE SANCTUARY GUILD MEMBER:**

**At the rehearsal:** The coordinator, working with the Minister, will direct the members of the wedding party as to where to stand and how to process and recess, instruct the ushers as to their responsibilities and make sure all participants are aware of the times to be at the church for preliminary activities the day of the ceremony.

**On the day of the wedding:** The Sanctuary Guild member will be present to help with any unforeseen difficulties and to lead the members of the wedding party into the church in the proper order at the proper time. Ushers should be in the back of the Sanctuary and ready to seat guests at least thirty-five minutes before the beginning of the service.

**\*A member of the Sanctuary Guild must be on the church premises at all times. The Guild member will lock the church after the rehearsal. The custodian will lock the church after the wedding.**

<b><u>WEDDING FEES</u></b>	<b><u>MEMBER</u></b>	<b><u>NON-MEMBER</u></b>
Sanctuary		\$1,000
Minister: Counseling, Rehearsal, Wedding		\$300
Organist: Consultation, Rehearsal, Wedding	\$250	\$250
Wedding Soloists	variable	variable
Sanctuary Guild Member: Consultation, Rehearsal, Wedding	\$200	\$200
Custodian	\$100	\$100
Security Deposit		*\$350
Receptions, Fellowship Hall only		\$250

\*Refunded after the wedding, if no damage is incurred.

**NOTE:** If the bride wishes to have the piano moved out of the sanctuary, the church will arrange for the removal by a professional piano mover. The estimated cost, to be paid by the wedding party, is \$700-\$750.

**NOTE:** If use of the nursery is requested, the church nursery worker must be hired. No other persons may supervise children in the church nursery. The fee will be \$20.00 per hour.

**All fees must be paid to the Administrative Assistant of the church two weeks prior to the date of the wedding.** Please make checks for the Minister, Organist, Soloists, Guild Member, Nursery Attendant and Custodian payable to each person and other fees payable to First Presbyterian Church.

**Weddings are a part of the responsibility of the Minister and no fee is charged to members of First Presbyterian Church.** However, weddings do involve additional duties and most families offer an honorarium to the Minister. The non-member fee may be used as a guideline.

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