

Weddings



First Presbyterian Church

701 Beach Drive

St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

“We rejoice that marriage is given by God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let marriage be held in honor by all.”

—The Book of Common Worship

We are pleased that you are considering First Presbyterian as the place for you to celebrate your wedding. We share your joy as you prepare for the commitment of Christian marriage. The following guidelines are given to assist in planning your wedding.

God’s blessings on your engagement,

The Worship and Music Committee

A Summary of Wedding Policies and Guidelines

Christian Marriage

In Baptism, each Christian is claimed in the covenant of God's faithful love. Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people to love and support each other 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 civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant, in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witness and acknowledges.

Preparing for Marriage

Preparing a couple for marriage is even more important than preparing for the wedding. A wedding is one day, but Christian marriage is a life-long commitment. After your wedding date has been secured, the next step is for the couple to complete an online marriage preparation inventory. You will be sent an email with instructions for completing the inventory after meeting with the Wedding Coordinator. The result will be available for the pastor to review prior to your first counseling session. Our pastor requires that the couple participate in two to four hours of pre-marital counseling, as determined by the pastor. These counseling sessions should be scheduled well in advance of the wedding date with the pastor and completed no later than two months before the wedding. The range of topics discussed will be at the discretion of the pastor and customized to address areas of interest and concern to

the couple. These discussions are confidential. A certificate will be provided upon completion of the session, which will entitle you to a discount on your marriage license as provided by Florida law.

According to our beliefs, a couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the minister, who may agree to the couple's request only if, in the judgment of the minister, the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values.

The Marriage Service

All weddings held at FPC are conducted under the authority of the officiating pastor. Every effort will be made to allow couples latitude in fulfilling their wedding desires. First and foremost, the focus of weddings is the worship of Jesus Christ. The marriage service is a service of Christian worship and as such, should reflect Christian values. The service begins with scriptures, followed by a brief statement on the meaning of Christian marriage. Scripture is read and a homily may be given by the pastor. In a service of marriage, the couple marry each other by exchanging mutual promises. The minister of the Word and Sacrament witnesses the couple's promises and pronounces God's blessing upon their union. The community of faith pledges to support the couple in upholding their promises; prayers may be offered for the couple, for the communities that support them, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. Our pastor will discuss the service of marriage in greater detail with the couple during counseling sessions.

Baptism & Church Membership Requirements

In order to be married at FPC, at least one of the persons to be married must be a baptized Christian and must have been a member of a church for at least six months prior to the wedding.

Guest Ministers

If the couple wishes for an ordained pastor to officiate at the service other than the pastor(s) on staff, a request must be made in writing to the senior pastor, allowing ample time for approval. Upon approval by the pastor and the session (ruling body of the church), the guest pastor will be invited by the senior pastor FPC. Guest pastors must meet at least once to go over wedding guidelines with the wedding coordinator.

Reserving the Church

Members of First Presbyterian Church should call the wedding coordinator to begin the process of reserving a wedding date. A wedding application must be completed and submitted along with a deposit check of \$100. Once the wedding has been approved by session, then the date may be reserved on the church calendar.

If you are not a member of FPC but desire a Christian marriage ceremony at our church, please send a letter telling us why you wish to be married at our church. Please include helpful information, such as membership at another church or as stated previously, if you wish to have another pastor officiate. Please send your request to:

Moderator of the Session
First Presbyterian Church
701 Beach Drive NE
St. Petersburg, FL 33701-2618

No weddings may be scheduled during Holy Week, or on Christmas Day.

Music

The Presbyterian Directory of Worship guides in the selection of music: 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. All wedding music, both instrumental and vocal must be appropriate for a service of worship in the judgment of the FPC Director of Music. Recorded music is not permitted.

After the wedding date has been placed on the church calendar by the office manager, contact our organist to schedule an appointment for selecting the music for your wedding. If you wish to use additional instrumentalists or vocalists, our organist will help you in securing the musicians needed. The organist, in consultation with the FPC Director of Music and pastor, has the final authority for the approval of any music to be played during the wedding ceremony.

The Wedding Coordinator

The wedding coordinator will be happy to talk to any who seek information regarding weddings at FPC. The coordinator will help you with the process of requesting approval from session, reserving your date, and will meet with you once the application has been approved. If there are to be more than two attendants in your wedding party, the church requires the assistance of the wedding coordinator through the entire process. The coordinator will help ensure that your wedding event is a smooth and happy occasion by helping you with your wedding ceremony organization, assisting at the rehearsal and on your wedding day. She will make every effort to see that your ceremony is personal and unique, while still abiding by church policy.

The Church Facilities

Wedding reservations include the use of the Sanctuary, and the Chapel/Parlor as well as the Youth Center (or Choir Room) for dressing areas. The facilities have adjacent restrooms with mirrors and electrical outlets. We are unable to store wedding dresses and other personal items overnight. No valuables should be left in the dressing areas during the ceremony unless you have someone to stay with them. The church is not responsible for lost items.

The doors to the church open two hours before the stated time of the ceremony, and are locked ninety minutes after the conclusion of the ceremony. All personal items should be removed from the church within one hour of the conclusion of the ceremony.

The large green plants in the Sanctuary may not be moved without special permission from the pastor. Please note that Sanctuary decorations during special church seasons must remain in place, unaltered and undisturbed. There will be no exceptions. Floral arrangements are not permitted on the communion table, but may be positioned nearby on pedestals. A kneeling bench is available if desired.

Prior arrangements may be made through the wedding coordinator should you wish to utilize other areas of the church such as the nursery during the wedding ceremony. The use of Fellowship Hall for either rehearsal dinners or receptions is currently for members and their families only. Separate reservations are required; the wedding coordinator will help you with this process.

Parking for wedding guests is available in the parking lot at the back of the church and/or in the grass lot across the street, however, this may be limited if there are special events in Vinoy Park. You are advised to check the City calendar before reserving your date to make sure you will not encounter parking problems. Handicapped parking is available in the circular driveway at the front of the church. No alcoholic beverages are permitted on church property on any occasion by act of session.

The maximum number of people allowed by fire code is:

1092 in the Sanctuary

260 in Fellowship Hall (with round tables and chairs)

550 in Fellowship Hall (chairs only)

60 in the Chapel

Fees

Non-Member Fees

\$1450 - for use of Sanctuary, Chapel, Youth Center, including custodial support

\$225 – Organist; \$250 if there is a soloist

\$225 - Wedding Coordinator - (when more than 2 attendants)

It is customary to present the officiating pastor with an honorarium of \$250 - \$300.

Member Fees

\$225 - Organist, \$250 if there is a soloist

\$225 - Wedding Coordinator - (when more than 2 attendants)

\$175 – Custodial Support

It is customary to present the officiating pastor with an honorarium of \$250 - \$300.

As stated before, a \$100 deposit is due with the application form. All fees must be paid one month before the wedding.

General Policies for Vendors

The wedding coordinator will contact the florist, photographer and videographer to share the church rules with each of them. All vendors will be asked to submit affirmation that they understand the church rules and are willing to abide by them.

The Florist

We encourage the florist to refrain from elaborate decorations in our sanctuary or chapel. Please only use masking tape or Command to affix items to any part of the building or woodwork as nails, tacks, and screws are not permitted. No artificial platforms or structures may be used, except flower pedestals. Because of the marble floor, aisle runners and flower petals are not safe and may not be used.

Candelabra, candles and tapers are the responsibility of the florist. All candles and tapers must be dripleless and may only be used in the chancel. The florist must supply protection for the marble floor. Please keep the coordinator informed if candelabra will be used.

All property belonging to the florist (palms, ferns, etc.) and any decoration provided by the florist and/or bridal party must be removed from the sanctuary and the chapel immediately after the ceremony. The church must be left clean and orderly. If the wedding party wishes to donate flower arrangements to the church for use on the following Sunday, please arrange this with the wedding coordinator well in advance of the wedding. Arrange for your florist to pick up and transport any florals that will go on to the reception.

The Photographer

Since the wedding service is a worship service, flash photography will not be permitted during the service from the time the pastor begins until the ceremony concludes with the following exceptions:

- One picture of the bride on her escort's arm as she starts down the aisle at the back of the church
- One picture of the bride on her husband's arm as she passes the last line of seated guests in the recessional.

The photographer will not delay the wedding processional or

recessional. Time exposures, infrared exposures and telephoto lenses are permitted. The photographer may wander in the aisle area behind the seated congregation as long as they are inconspicuous and walk softly. They are not allowed to move forward in the aisles, or be in the chancel area.

After the ceremony the wedding party is welcome to return to the front of the church to stage any photographs desired with any lighting equipment the photographer wishes. The photographer is welcome to use the south balcony as well. We request cameras be set to 'silent shutter' so that they will not be heard during the ceremony. Please refrain from photography during prayers. Every effort should be made to complete wedding photography within an hour of the completion of the ceremony.

The Videographer

Videotaping of the service is permitted only if the camera is positioned and stationary in the balcony or in the aisle by the baptismal font in the carpeted areas. Unmanned cameras have been allowed to be placed in the choir loft as well, but please understand that this will be visible to the congregation and allowed at the discretion of the officiating pastor.

All photographers and videographers are expected to dress appropriately and professionally for the wedding.

Summary of Wedding Policy and Procedure

Pre-Marital Consultation: Must be completed two months before the wedding. The wedding coordinator will contact you regarding this once your wedding has been approved by session and placed on the church calendar.

Expenses: A fee schedule may be found in this booklet. Applications must be accompanied by a \$100 deposit. **An invoice will be sent for all remaining fees within 14 days of receipt of your application. Full payment is due one month before the wedding.**

Music: Once your wedding is on the church calendar, contact our organist to schedule an appointment to discuss music for your wedding. Recorded music is not allowed.

Wedding Coordinator: Will be your first contact. She will help with all elements of the process of reservations and is required for all weddings with more than two attendants.

Dressing Rooms: Bride and party will use the chapel; the groom and party will use the youth center when available. Room substitutions may occasionally be necessary.

Not allowed anywhere on the church campus: rice, bird seed, flower petals, bubbles. Our campus is alcohol and smoke free.

Photography: No flash photography is allowed during the ceremony. Video recordings may be made only if the camera is positioned and stationary in permitted areas.

Marriage Licenses: To be obtained from the Clerk of Court. All necessary information may be obtained at: www.pinellasclerk.org Bring the license to your rehearsal. A certified copy of your marriage license will be mailed from the Clerk's office 4 to 6 weeks after the wedding.

Questions? Call the wedding coordinator.

Wedding Contacts at FPC

Interim Pastor: Rev. Ginny Ellis
727-822-2031, ext. 103
GinnyE@fpc-stpete.org

Associate Pastor: Rev. Megan McMillan
727-822-2031, ext. 104
MeganM@fpc-stpete.org

Office Contact: Amy McCutcheon
727-822-2031, ext. 101
AmyM@fpc-stpete.org

Organist: Jack Rain
813-835-5225
JackRain@msn.com

Wedding Coordinator: Linda Santoro
727-897-9543
LindaJSantoro@gmail.com



...being and making disciples of Jesus Christ.

First Presbyterian Church

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