



*“God is love, and those who abide in love, abide in God,
and God abides in them.” ~ 1 John 4:16*

Wedding Guidelines

First Presbyterian Church
2701 Rochester Avenue
Iowa City, Iowa 52245

319.351.2660

www.firstpresbiowacity.org ✪ tammy.foster@firstpresbiowacity.org

Subject to change without notice.

CHECK LIST

- Confirm the date and time with church manager, pastor, wedding coordinators and organist. The date will be confirmed on the church calendar when the office manager receives the contract, along with the deposit.*
- Schedule a meeting with the wedding coordinators.*
- Schedule pre-marital counseling sessions for couple with officiating pastor.*
- Schedule a conference with organist.*
- Secure approval for wedding music from organist at least 6 weeks prior to wedding.*
- Pay the remaining fees to church manager the Wednesday prior to the wedding (see p. 8-9).*

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church! We celebrate with you your decision to ask for God's blessing on your marriage. Marriage is a civil contract between couples. For Christians, marriage is a covenant and commitment to live together before God in a life of discipleship. Most often the marriage is celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship, offering a public witness to your commitment and acknowledgement by the community of faith.

This booklet assists couples with wedding arrangements at First Presbyterian Church (hereafter referred to as FPC), Iowa City, Iowa. It is meant to help every couple and their families plan a joyous occasion. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the pastor and the supervision of the session (the official board). (W-1.4004-.4006) We ask that the pages of this booklet be read carefully. Some items may not apply to your wedding. You may have questions about others, and we welcome them.

Weddings for FPC members and their children, who, for the purposes of this policy are classified as members, are given priority. Non-members who wish to marry at FPC must attend the new member class offered either in the spring or fall (membership is not required) and to attend premarital counseling sessions or classes. After these requirements are met, your wedding may be scheduled. Please understand that we are firm in these requirements for your sake. These procedures are also in place if one has had a civil ceremony and wishes to have a blessing ceremony.

It is our prayer that God, the Giver of Life and Love, will bless the beginning of your married life as you look forward to the vows that you will take in God's House and in God's Presence!

THE WEDDING COORDINATORS

Every couple planning a wedding through FPC is required to utilize our wedding coordinators. Couples will have an opportunity to discuss the many details of your wedding service. These include: size of wedding party, reception plans if you want to use our fellowship hall, sanctuary decorations, ushering, use of dressing rooms, rehearsal plans, photography & videography, etc. The coordinators will have a checklist of these and other items and will strive to honor your personal expectations for the wedding service.

Coordinators are members of FPC who assist the couple in planning their wedding in accordance with these policies. The coordinators will be present at the rehearsal, prior to and throughout the service to assist the wedding party and assure continuity and fluidity. Any outside coordinators will take instruction from the church's wedding coordinators.

THE CHURCH STAFF

The staff of FPC is glad to be of help in planning your wedding. It is advisable to plan as far ahead as possible when arranging a church wedding in order to assure availability of the sanctuary and other church space and to secure all staff members who are to take part. Tammy Foster is our Church Manager and can be reached at tammy.foster@firstpresioowacity.org.

CLERGY AND COUNSELLING

Normally the FPC pastor performs weddings at FPC. Other Presbyterian Church (USA) clergy or clergy of corresponding denominations may be invited by the pastor to perform a wedding or to assist the FPC pastor if they are willing to abide by these guidelines. Invitations to clergy to participate or perform a wedding must be approved by the pastor of FPC and the church's session unless they are members of the PC(USA); the pastor will extend the invitation to the clergy if the way be clear, in keeping with customary courtesies among the clergy.

In accordance with Presbyterian Church (USA) governance, all persons married at FPC receive two types of counseling. Normally, the FPC pastor provides counsel on the Biblical, theological and ecclesiastical understandings of the marriage covenant, which includes preparation of the wedding service as an act of worship. In addition, couples are invited to seek professional faith-based coursework or counseling on the emotional and familial dynamics of the covenant of marriage. The pastor can assist couples in obtaining adequate professional assistance in this regard. It is recommended that all counseling be completed early in the wedding planning process.

In addition to counseling, all non-member couples are required to complete the membership classes of the FPC in order to understand the faith, worship, and work of FPC. They are invited, but not required, to join. By prior arrangement, if one member of the couple is unavailable when the course is offered, that person may meet with the pastor individually to meet this class requirement.

SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING

Before any public announcements are made, scheduling should be cleared with the church manager, Tammy Foster, (tammy.foster@firstpresioowacity.org) who can confirm with the pastor and organist. You will need to fill out a contract and return it to the church office. It is important that you indicate the time of day, due to the possibilities of multiple weddings. Saturday weddings are scheduled up to, but no later than, 5:00 p.m.* There is a \$100 deposit for non-members, refundable if notice of cancellation is given at least 30 days prior to the wedding date. This amount must be submitted to the church with the contract before the wedding can be confirmed on the church calendar.

*Wedding services held on other nights of the week can be held at a later time. The Saturday limitation is due to the need of worship staff to prepare on Saturday night for Sunday morning worship.

ABOUT THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The pastor will discuss the worship service with you and advise you as to any additions to the service you may desire. All services will have scripture read and prayers spoken.

In dress, decoration, and manner, the wedding party shall acknowledge that their service is an act of worship that glorifies God. The pastor and wedding coordinators reserve the right to make changes in wedding details or to cancel the wedding in cases of non-compliance with this policy.

If a flower girl or ring bearer is to take part in the wedding, he/she should be old enough to carry out these duties. Children vary in their abilities and should be chosen carefully. The actual rings to be exchanged shall be carried by a specified adult attendant.

The number of ushers needed for your wedding depends on the number of guests attending. The wedding coordinators will help you estimate attendance.

Birdseed may be thrown outside the building only. (For ecological reasons, we no longer use rice or release balloons.) **Potpourri, dried flowers and confetti are not allowed** due to difficulty in cleaning.

Please inform the wedding coordinators if you want to use the church nursery during your wedding. The wedding party will need to provide at least two sitters (18 years of age or older) and supervision for all children. FPC is not liable for injury or misconduct. The nursery should be cleaned by the nursery attendants and put back in order as it was found upon arrival.

Our church and grounds are smoke-free / alcohol- free / drug-free. Smoking, alcohol* and drugs are absolutely prohibited outside and inside the church.

**Consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances by any member of the wedding party on the day of the rehearsal or service is reason for cancellation of the service. There is one exception; couples who have their reception in Ryerson Fellowship Hall may obtain special permission from the church's session, upon recommendation of the Worship and Celebration Ministry, for a champagne toast.*

MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

Wedding music at FPC should embody the same high standards applied to the music generally chosen for the worship of God. The Office of Worship of the Presbyterian Church (USA) maintains a list of suggested music and we have copies available for your use. **Wedding music shall focus upon God and emphasize the faith of the Christian community rather than romantic love or sentimentality.** Any questions should be addressed to the Coordinators and/or the Director of Music and Liturgical Arts, the latter having final say in consultation with the pastor.

FPC's approved organist will play for all weddings. This ensures having a competent musician and makes possible the best music arrangements for your wedding. If an FPC organist is unable to play because of schedule conflicts, he/she will secure another competent musician, in consultation with the couple and Minister of Worship, Music, and Children's Programs. If you wish to hire a different organist, this must be approved by the Minister of Worship, Music, and Children's Programs. The wedding party should discuss the selection of music with the organist as early as possible.

Guest instrumentalists and vocalists can be a wonderful addition to your wedding ceremony. **However, all music to be used must have the approval of the Minister of Worship, Music, and Children's Programs.** The soloist, if there is one, is usually chosen by the couple. If you do not know of a soloist and wish to have one, the coordinators can offer recommendations. Music shall be provided to the organist in the proper keys at least six weeks prior to the wedding. Remember, photocopies are subject to copyright laws and are therefore not acceptable. Solo rehearsals are arranged with the approved organist in advance, apart from the regular wedding rehearsal. Contact the organist to determine the time and fee.

If you wish the piano tuned (at your expense), the FPC approved piano technician is John Bixler at 319-331-6164 or jbix@inav.net.

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

A rehearsal with the pastor, wedding coordinators, organist and all wedding participants is scheduled for the day preceding the wedding at a time to be arranged through the wedding coordinators. Out of courtesy for all those involved in the rehearsal and because of other events planned for the evening, all wedding participants shall arrive at the rehearsal at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled rehearsal time. The wedding coordinators will be present to direct the rehearsal with the pastor and to assist the pastor at the wedding ceremony.

Soloists will rehearse with the organist at a separate time either prior to or following the wedding rehearsal. The processional and recessional procedures are rehearsed with music. Selected sections of the wedding liturgy, the ring ceremony, ushering procedures, lighting of candles, etc., are reviewed at the rehearsal. The sequence of key participants to enter during the processional, designation of ushers to usher in loved ones, etc. and to care for lighting of candles, etc., shall be determined prior to the rehearsal. Wedding rehearsals generally last one hour.

FACILITY AND DECORATIONS

The seating capacity of our Sanctuary is 350 on the floor (main level). The balcony will seat an additional 50 people.

The communion table remains in its usual location for weddings as a reminder of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. A unity candle and a small flower arrangement may be placed on the communion table.

FPC has two brass candle stands. You may choose to use additional decorations on the stands, such as bows, or use candle stands provided by your florist. Candle stands are placed only in the chancel area.

Decorations must be designed so that they do not impede access to doors or to the entrance, exit and movement of the wedding party. No glitter shall be used on any decorations, flowers or dresses, as this is extremely difficult to clean up.

Artistic banners that are in place to denote the Liturgical Season will not be removed. There may be some exceptions. If you would like to request a change in sanctuary décor, consult with the wedding coordinators.

A kneeling bench is available if the couple chooses to use it.

We have two additional small tables; these may be used for the guest book. Inform the wedding coordinators if you want to use these tables.

Extra chairs are not permitted in the aisles due to fire codes.

PHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEO TAPES, and SOUND TECHNOLOGY

Ushers are asked to advise guests carrying cameras that no photographs of any kind may be taken in the sanctuary during the wedding service. Couples using a wedding bulletin are to include the following statement: "Guests may take pictures or videotape without flash during the processional and recessional only. The wedding couple request that no photographs be taken during the ceremony."

Video taping by the official videographer is allowed from the balcony provided no lights are used and equipment is quiet. A small video camera on a tripod may be placed off the side of the chancel to take close-ups, **but no operator is permitted with the camera during the ceremony.** If there is violation of this policy, it will result in the cessation of the worship service until the behavior is corrected.

The official photographer may only take flash photographs at the back of the sanctuary at the time of the processional and the recessional. **The photographer must stay out of the aisle and not be farther forward than the eighth pew from the back to take these pictures.** It is the responsibility of the couple to inform their photographer of these guidelines.

The photographer must stay out of the sight of the congregation and away from the chancel during the wedding service so as not to interrupt worship. Couples are required to provide these rules to any photographer or videographer prior to the wedding rehearsal.

All pre-wedding ceremony photographing in the chancel must be completed by 45 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the ceremony.

If you wish to use sound amplification, this equipment can be **operated only by one of the church's Sound Technicians**. This person will be at the rehearsal and wedding to set up microphones and run the P. A. system. Make arrangements through the wedding coordinators for this service in advance.

GIFTS BROUGHT TO THE CHURCH

The couple's families assume responsibility for all gifts brought to the church or reception. The church is open, as a public building. Precautions should be taken to protect gifts. The church is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Couples are urged to designate someone to take charge of gifts before and during the ceremony and to take all gifts from the church building immediately after the wedding. Wedding participants who plan to dress at the church should also safeguard personal effects during the wedding.

PROGRAMS

Couples are responsible for printing their own programs or bulletins. If you are including the order of worship in your bulletin or program, please consult with the pastor about the order of worship and where to put any optional items such as readings or solos.

RECEPTIONS

Presbyterian Women of FPC will serve wedding receptions held in Ryerson Fellowship Hall for those who choose to engage their services. Please check with the wedding coordinators as to fee schedule.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

The State of Iowa requires that all couples have a marriage license to be legally married. This is obtained from the county courthouse. If a marriage license is not presented to the pastor prior to the wedding, the ceremony will be cancelled. For more information call the Johnson County Clerk of Court, 319-356-6060. The officiating pastor is responsible legally for the return of the signed license to the Marriage Bureau offices. A photocopy of the license can be made available to the couple at the conclusion of the wedding ceremony. The basic information about the wedding and participants is entered into the permanent records of the church. The marriage license is signed by all parties prior to the wedding. These procedures are also in place if one has had a civil ceremony and wishes to have a blessing ceremony.

CHURCH WEDDING FEES:

Checks are be made out separately and received by the wedding coordinator, in the church office, the Wednesday prior to the rehearsal. (All persons and services listed below are required for a marriage service at FPC—soloists are the exception.)

For use of the church building (sanctuary and 2 dressing rooms)

\$300 (includes deposit of \$100). This does not apply to members and their children.

Wedding Coordinator(s): Tammy Schroeder at tammy.schroeder@firstpreswacivcity.org and Karen Hurt at thehurts@dybb.com. \$400 (\$200 per coordinator).

Pastor: Sam Massey at sam.massey@firstpreswacivcity.org. Suggested minimum amount is \$200 (for rehearsal and wedding).

Organist/Pianist: Melissa Moll at melissa.moll@firstpreswacivcity.org. \$200 for rehearsal and wedding only. If extra time spent rehearsing with soloists or instrumentalists is desired, contact the organist to negotiate the exact fee.

Soloist/Other Music: Couples will arrange privately with musicians. Wedding Coordinators may have recommendations if needed or you may contact Minister of Worship, Music, and Children's Programs, Leah Bergman at leah.bergman@firstpreswacivcity.org.

Sound Technician: \$100. If you wish to have an audio recording of the service please contact the wedding coordinator about arranging this service.

Sexton: Gerald Hill at gerhill@aol.com. There is a \$100 charge for cleaning the sanctuary. If a reception is held in the fellowship hall, there is an additional \$100 Sexton charge for cleaning. An additional custodial fee may be requested if further cleanup is required in the building or on the grounds.

Special Arrangements: It is important to note that for persons with limited finances or those wishing a more intimate service, special arrangements may be made by conference with the pastor. All discussion of this nature is, of course, confidential.

Subject to change without notice
 Print date 02-09-2015

Checks to be received by the office the Wednesday prior to the Wedding.

Date	Check amt.	Recipient	Function
			Pastor
			Organist/Pianist
			Wedding Coordinator
			Wedding Coordinator
		First Presbyterian Church	Balance for building use
		Gerald Hill	Sexton
			Sound Technician
			Soloist
			Other Musicians
			Reception fee (if applicable)