

WEDDING POLICY AND PROCEEDURES

First Presbyterian Church

A Home in the Heart of the City
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OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES:

1. The initial request to schedule a wedding is made through the church office, where the office administrator will determine that the church calendar is clear for the proposed date and time and will pencil in the date on the church master calendar. **This does not constitute a firm commitment by either party.**
2. The administrator will refer the inquiring party to the Wedding Director for consultation and an initial interview, where this policy will be reviewed.
3. If the party and the Director agree to proceed, the party will be given an application form and a copy of the Wedding Policy. The application is to be completed and returned to the church office within two weeks, along with the refundable security deposit and a signed affidavit indicating that the policy has been read and agreeing to abide by it in full.
4. The application goes to one of the pastors for review and approval within two weeks, and if approved a pastor is assigned as minister-in-charge for this wedding. Disapproval may be with or without cause. [Please note that First Presbyterian Church has both male and female clergy.]
5. When approved by a pastor, the application is placed on file with the office administrator, the party and the Wedding Director are informed, the check for security deposit is processed, **and the date is confirmed and placed on the church master calendar.**
6. The party contacts the assigned clergy-in-charge to proceed with planning and premarital counseling.

THE WEDDING POLICY

Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman, entered into in the presence of God and lived out with the support of a community of faith. Christian marriage is a life-long relationship lived out in God's presence and committed to God's will. The wedding ceremony, therefore, is a service of worship of God, celebrates that relationship and asks God's

blessing on it. Those who come to the church seeking God's blessing on their relationship should do so with a clear intention of maintaining an active participation in the life of a church. **Ideally, weddings take place in the church where the couple intends to worship** so that the couple can be surrounded by the people and environment that will support them throughout their marriage. Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, that is not practical or possible. We are willing to work with non-member couples to serve their needs when it is not possible for them to be married in their home church, or if they do not have a church home.

Ordinarily, weddings for members of First Presbyterian Church shall receive priority in scheduling. Upon recommendation of the pastor(s) and approval of the Session, weddings also may be performed for: (1) family members of church members; (2) for those persons who may be looking for a church home and considering First Church as their home; (3) for members of Presbyterian churches outside the city when the persons are living in the city on a temporary basis, or (4) those who, for pastoral reasons, the pastor(s) recommend.

Under no circumstance does First Presbyterian Church rent its facilities for use as a wedding chapel.

Persons desiring to be married at First Church must meet with one of the pastors to discuss premarital preparation, and must complete the recommended course provided by the pastor or a counselor to whom the couple may be referred. There may be additional costs associated with counseling referrals.

Ordinarily, one or more of the pastors of First Church must officiate at weddings in the church. Pastors of other churches, denominations or faiths may be invited to participate by our Pastor(s), with concurrence of the Session. **Under no circumstances shall a marriage be performed at First Church without a minister in good standing of the Presbyterian Church USA participating.** All wedding ceremonies shall be approved by one of our pastors.

The Lord's Supper may be celebrated during the ceremony, but under no circumstances may it be celebrated privately for the wedding party or a limited group of individuals only; the elements must be offered to all gathered during a wedding service. Elders of First Church can be available to assist with the Lord's Supper, if desired, and requested in advance through the Wedding Director.

Stipulations and Fees:

1. All use of the Sanctuary or Chapel facilities must be cleared through one of our pastors. The approval of your application will accomplish this. **Please fill out the application completely and return it to the church office with the deposit within two weeks of the initial interview with**

the Wedding Director. If the wedding party employs the services of an outside wedding planner that person shall work under the supervision of the church Wedding Director.

2. Schedule of fees for use of facilities:

These payments are made by check to each person and can be coordinated through the Wedding Director or mailed directly to the church office. The wedding cannot proceed until all fees are paid. Payments to the Minister and Organist are to be given directly to them before the ceremony. The security deposit and certain fees listed below do not apply to members of the First Presbyterian Church or their direct family members except as indicated. The other payments are due no later than one month prior to the wedding date.

A. There is a refundable security deposit in the form of a check made payable to First Presbyterian Church (non-members) -----\$500.00.

This deposit is due when the application is submitted. The deposit will be returned within a week following the ceremony, if no damage or unpaid charges are involved, or in the event the application is denied or the ceremony is cancelled.

B. Use of Sanctuary (non-members) -----\$1,000.00

C. Use of Chapel (non-members) -----\$500.00

3. Schedule of fees for Wedding Ceremony and rehearsal:

Minister's honorarium (Payable to the minister)

For members-----\$150.00

For non-members-----\$250.00

Wedding Director (members and non-members) -----\$350.00

Organist (as agreed upon; payable to the organist)

Housekeeping (members and non-members) -----\$250.00

Sound and lighting operator(s) (members & non-members) ---\$50.00

Tapers for use in the candelabras with candles-----\$50.00

Additional tapers \$2.00 each.

4. Receptions. Church facilities are available for receptions only to members of First Presbyterian Church or their immediate family, with the following stipulations and fees. Prior arrangements must be made with the Wedding Director, who shall be responsible for oversight of such use. The kitchen may be used only as a staging area by caterers, but not for food preparation. With prior approval by the Wedding Director, wine or champagne may be served in moderation during the reception in Fellowship Hall only. If the piano in Fellowship Hall is used, the party will be responsible to see that it is properly tuned before and after the event.

Fees associated with use of church facilities for the reception are as follows:

Additional fee for wedding Director -----	\$100.00
Use of the space, tables and chairs -----	\$275.00
Use of kitchen as staging area -----	\$50.00
Housekeeping -----	\$100.00

5. As part of the application process, one of the pastors of First Presbyterian Church must approve the date and starting times for weddings and rehearsals. The Wedding Director will facilitate this. **Weddings will not be conducted on Sunday.** When the application is approved, it is the responsibility of the couple being married to contact the assigned minister-in-charge to set up an appointment to discuss the service. This should be done as early as possible, and in no event less than three months prior to the date for the ceremony. Members may apply for a firm scheduled date up to one year in advance; non-members within three to nine months before the wedding date. Once a date is committed to a party, whether member or non-member, no other weddings may be scheduled in conflict with it.

6. The church does not decorate or remove decorations in the Sanctuary or Chapel; this is the responsibility of the user. In the event of a Saturday wedding, the church must be cleaned and ready for Sunday services no later than 8:00 a.m. on Sunday morning. Failure to comply will constitute forfeiture of the security deposit.

7. The church organist may be available to play for weddings or to suggest other appropriate musicians. Please confer with the organist concerning fees, rehearsals and appropriate music. Use of another organist or musician(s) requires prior approval from our organist before making such arrangements. **No secular music may be used during a ceremony held in the church.**

8. The Communion Table, Baptismal Font or other furnishings may not be removed or rearranged, except that the Communion Table may be pushed toward the clergy seats. For reasons of safety, an aisle cloth may not be used.

9. Intoxicants are not permitted on church property except as specified in this policy. No smoking is allowed on the church property. For safety reasons, no rice, confetti, birdseed or similar material may be thrown inside or outside the church; flower petals inside and/ or bubbles outside are recommended.

10. Only driplless tapers provided by the church may be used. All other candles and their use must be approved by the Wedding Director. Protective materials may be required under candles if the Wedding Director feels this is necessary.

11. No tacks, staples, nails, adhesives or other such items may be used in decorating, and no tape or other adhesives may be affixed to walls, pews, or furniture. Rubber bands, ribbon or padded clips may be used. Clear any questions through the Wedding Director in advance. In the event there is damage to church property, the party will be held financially responsible.

12. Because the wedding ceremony takes place within a context of worship, photography must not detract from the beauty and solemnity of the service. Therefore, photography is not allowed in the Sanctuary or chapel during the ceremony. It is the couple's responsibility to inform their photographer about this and to instruct him or her to be discreet at all times in taking non-flash pictures. Pictures may be taken during the processional and recessional only, and are to be made from the balcony or behind the worshippers. **Prior to the ceremony, the photographer(s) shall provide the Wedding Director with a written statement that they understand and will abide by this policy.** Likewise, wedding guests should be advised not to use cameras of any kind during the service. This information should be included in printed wedding programs. The Wedding Director can advise about this policy, and the Wedding Director and/or pastor will enforce it.

13. A stationary video camera is permitted if it is set up prior to the service, as long as it is not obtrusive. The location of the camera must be approved in advance by the Wedding Director. No lighting device may be used, nor may anyone move around during the ceremony in order to make videos or photographs.

14. The sound or lighting system may not be used, moved or adjusted except by the church's approved operator(s).

15. The Wedding Director. When the church administrator receives an initial inquiry about the possibility of a wedding at First Presbyterian Church, the administrator will determine that the church calendar is clear for the proposed date and time and will pencil in the date on the church master calendar. **This does not constitute a firm commitment by either party.** The administrator will then refer the inquiring party to the Wedding Director for consultation and an initial interview, where this policy will be reviewed. If the party and the Director agree to proceed, the party will be given an application form and a copy of the Wedding Policy. The application is to be completed and returned to the church office within two weeks of the initial meeting, along with the refundable security deposit and a signed affidavit indicating that the policy has been read and agreeing to abide by it in full.

The Wedding Director is the primary link between the party and the church. Should the party choose to employ another wedding planner, that planner will work under the supervision of the Wedding Director with regard to all matters involving the church, church staff and facilities. It is the responsibility of the Wedding Director to return calls in a timely manner and set up the initial meeting to discuss the wishes of the party and to review the wedding policies of the church. **It is the**

responsibility of the party to assure that church policy is understood and followed by everyone connected to the wedding. The Wedding Director is not authorized to make exceptions to the written policy.

The Wedding Director will provide a form for detailed information about the wedding party and ceremony, and will be available by phone for additional consultation, questions or guidance leading up to the wedding date. The Director will coordinate plans for the rehearsal, in consultation with the minister-in-charge, and will assure that the facilities are available to the wedding party at appropriate times. The Wedding Director and minister-in-charge will conduct the actual rehearsal. On the day of the wedding, the Wedding Director will make sure the facilities are accessible to any vendors (florists, photographers, caterers, etc.) at the predetermined and agreed times. The Wedding Director will coordinate and direct the wedding party in fulfilling their duties to insure that the wedding ceremony goes smoothly. In addition, the Wedding Director will coordinate with the party and the custodial staff to assure that the facility is cleaned prior to and following the ceremony and made ready for subsequent church use.

[Approved by Session 2/27/06]

AFFADAVIT

We, the undersigned, being the bride and groom whose wedding is proposed to be held at First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Alabama, do hereby state and affirm that we have received a copy of the wedding policy of the church, and that we have read and understood it in detail. We solemnly pledge that we will abide by it in full and will assure that all members of our wedding party, families, guests, vendors and representatives will comply with the policy in all of its particulars. We pledge to see that our photographer(s) in particular understand and will follow the policy regarding photography, and we will provide the church with a written statement to that effect from the photographer(s) prior to the ceremony.

Bride

Groom

Date: _____