

First Presbyterian Church



Wedding Guide

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Welcome!

First Presbyterian Church is delighted to share with you as you joyfully prepare for your upcoming Christian marriage. We will do everything possible to make the planning and celebration of your wedding meaningful and memorable as is fitting for such a sacred occasion. This guide has resulted from our experience in conducting thousands of weddings since we were established over 175 years ago. We hope you will find these guidelines helpful in the many preparations which are before you and your families as you plan for this special occasion.

THE CHRISTIAN NATURE OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is a universal experience of humankind. However, the Church applies its own particular understanding to marriage and all that it involves. Our church is guided by the directives of the Presbyterian denomination. A copy of the Denominational Guidelines for Marriage will be given to you by the church minister who will be performing your ceremony. We require that these and all other guidelines provided to you be read and followed carefully. Confirmation of your plans to be married in our church indicates you agree to abide by our requirements.

The purpose of Christian marriage is to acknowledge marriage and the family as gracious gifts from God and to celebrate with joy and gratitude your acceptance of these gifts. Christian marriage also affirms your life together as a couple as well as your responsible participation in the wider structures of family and human society. Thus, it is appropriate that family and friends be invited to share in your celebration and happiness.

The ceremony itself in all its aspects, including music and decoration, is an act of worship. Primary focus is to be on God and God's blessing of the marriage. You and your guests should keep this uppermost in mind in the planning and conduct of the entire service.

We at First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham are proud to serve you on this special day. We consider it a sacred obligation to provide to you the means and setting for marriage. We will try to serve you with the highest standards of spiritual and professional integrity.

SETTING THE DATE

- 1 - Allow at least 6 months to properly prepare for your wedding, if possible.
- 2 - Phone the church office and request a date. Dates will be arranged based on the member/nonmember guidelines discussed under Church Member Defined.
- 3 - You will be asked to provide basic information over the phone. The ministerial staff will be informed of your interest. Wedding forms will then be sent to you. When these forms are returned to the church, your date will be confirmed.
- 4 - No weddings are scheduled on Sundays or legal holidays, during the Holy Week, on Christmas Eve, or Christmas Day.
- 5 - No wedding will be scheduled to begin before 10:30 am or after 7:30 pm.
- 6 - Up to 3 hours will be allowed for your wedding including dressing, receiving line, through take down. If you choose to hold a receiving line in the church, more time may be reserved.

WEDDING FEES

Members

Sanctuary* - \$700
Chapel* - \$675
Off – Premises - \$250

Non-Members

Sanctuary* - \$1,150
Chapel* - \$950
Off – Premises - \$300

See page 5 for Church Member/Non-Member definitions.

Costs listed include fees for Minister, Organist, Building Rental, Custodian, Wedding Coordinators.

There may be additional fees for soloists, instrumentalists, exceptional musical arrangements, church hall reception, or any other add-ons not listed above.

A nonrefundable deposit of \$200 is due at the time the day is reserved. The remaining balance is due one month prior to the wedding.

CHURCH MEMBER DEFINED

Church Member* vs. Non-Member Defined**

*A church member is defined as someone on the active church rolls for one year, or a child or grandchild of such a member.

**A church non-member is defined as someone who is not on the active church rolls, or a child or grandchild of such a member.

Church Member* Wedding

When a Church Member couple requests a date for their wedding at the church, it shall be immediately scheduled. A minister will be assigned to counsel with and conduct the service for the couple.

Church Non-Member Wedding**

When a church non-member requests a date for their wedding, the following conditions must be met before a date may be scheduled:

- 1-The couple must have an interview with one of the ministers of FPC.
- 2-Permission must be received from the Session on recommendation of the minister.
- 3-The couple shall give to the minister reasonable assurance that they intend to adhere to the spirit of worship inherent in weddings of our tradition.
- 4-The couple shall agree that their wedding is a service of worship and so as to be engaged in as a worshipful experience.
- 5-They shall give further reasonable assurance that they shall become part of a worshipping community in the future and that this church is a community of faith in which they would be included as participants, if circumstances allow.

INSTRUCTION, REHEARSAL AND CEREMONY

Minister

You may request any minister on our staff for your wedding. Because of prior commitments, the minister you request may not be available, but when a wedding has been scheduled, one of our ministers will be available to perform the ceremony.

When a minister is assigned to you, the bride and groom together should arrange an early marriage conference. The minister will discuss with you the nature of Christian marriage and all details of the ceremony. The minister may require one or several consultations. These sessions are to afford an informal atmosphere not only to plan your wedding but also to support you in this vital moment in your lives. Please feel free to talk freely and frankly. What you say will be held in the strictest confidence. Our ministers' ordination vows assure this. Be assured our ministers also stand ready to assist you after your wedding in any way possible.

The wedding ceremony, including the rehearsal, is under the sole direction of the minister who is guided by our church's standards for Christian marriage. The minister will be assisted by trained wedding coordinators.

If you desire the participation of an additional minister, priest, or rabbi at your wedding, such can be arranged. Assisting ministers must be fully ordained clergy. In such instances, a member of our ministerial staff must direct the rehearsal and the service. Also, the service order used must be one consonant with the directives of our denomination. You are expected to ask any assisting clergy to contact our minister for necessary orientation.

The Rehearsal

The purpose of a rehearsal is to prepare for the service of worship. All participants should observe this in both dress and decorum. It is absolutely essential that ALL members of the wedding party be present and on time, to participate in the wedding rehearsal. For this reason, the time of the rehearsal should be set so as to insure their attendance. Any children participating in the service must be assigned a responsible adult for the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. Your wedding rehearsal will be directed by your minister, and assisted by the wedding coordinators.

The Ceremony

The minister will discuss ceremony guidelines and scripture reading suggestions during your meeting together.

MUSIC

A church wedding is a sacred service of worship in which the congregation gives praise to God and asks blessings on the bride and groom. It follows that all wedding music must be appropriate to the worship of the church, and must possess a level of musical integrity consistent with that of our congregation; therefore no secular music will be allowed.

The Director of Music Ministries, or his designate, will play the organ for all weddings. Additional musicians may be hired to play or sing for weddings, at the expense of the bride and groom. All music and musicians for the ceremony shall be under the direction and approval of the Director of Music Ministries. Final approval of any guest musician will be the sole decision of the Director of Music Ministries.

It will be necessary for you to meet with Director of Music about 3 months prior to your wedding day.

Andrew Herbruck, Director of Music Ministries
First Presbyterian Church
1669 West Maple Road
Birmingham, MI 48009

248-644-2040, x-136

ARRANGEMENTS

1 - Michigan Marriage Licenses are issued for 30 days. There is a 3-day waiting period after application and before the license may be picked up.

2 - A Wedding Party Information Sheet listing your wedding date and time, the names of the bride, groom, maid of honor and bridesmaids, best man and ushers, flower girl and ring bearer, each with a responsible adult not in the ceremony, parents, grandparents of both the bride and groom, honored guests to be seated with the families and a wedding party contact number, is in this packet and should be returned 2 weeks before your wedding date.

3 - The minister will be assisted by the church's wedding consultants.

4 - If you retain a professional wedding planner, they must remember that the ministerial staff and church wedding consultants will be coordinating the church service.

5 – The sanctuary can seat 545 people, including the balcony. The chapel can seat 90 people.

6 – The sanctuary is handicapped accessible. Please make arrangements in advance of your wedding, no later than the rehearsal, so that we may accommodate those guests requiring assistance.

7 – It is your responsibility to review these guidelines with your wedding party, family, florist, photographer and videographer.

8 - Bulletins or programs may be created and distributed by the wedding party.

9 - The throwing of rice, flower petals, bird seed or confetti is prohibited.

10 – Parking Guidelines – The front circle is reserved for the wedding party and handicapped guests.

REMEMBER THAT A WEDDING IS A WORSHIP SERVICE AND ALL ASPECTS OF ARRANGEMENTS, FLORAL DECORATIONS, PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY ARE TO BE TOTALLY UNOBTRUSIVE SO AS TO NOT INTERFERE WITH THE SACRED NATURE OF THE CEREMONY.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

- 1 - Our sanctuary and chapel are sacred settings for a service which is dignified and beautiful. A minimum of decoration is required. Flowers, decorations and other appointments should not be unduly elaborate.
- 2 - The florist must check with the church's wedding coordinator regarding plans for the delivery of all decorations. Deliveries must arrive at least one hour prior to the ceremony. Wedding party flowers should be delivered to the Fireside Room.
- 3 – Attendant flowers and boutonnieres should arrive marked with the bride's name, in case another wedding is planned for the same day.
- 4 – No flowers may be placed on the organ or piano.
- 5 – Simple flower arrangements or ribbons may be placed to mark reserved and/or guest pews. Clips or high quality masking tape may be used to secure these items. No wire, nails or scotch tape are allowed.
- 6 – A Unity candle may be used in the ceremony. Contact the church secretary to make arrangements.
- 7 – Candles are not allowed on the pews.
- 8 – If a runner is used, it must be white and made of cloth, flora-lace, or polyethylene. The runner must be anchored by the florist one hour before the start of the wedding.
- 9 – Inform the church office if your wedding arrangements will remain at the church, or if you will be arranging your own transportation to get them to the reception.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

- 1 – Photographers should check in with the officiating minister upon arrival.
- 2 – Formal pictures of the wedding party may be taken in the Sanctuary or Chapel before or after the ceremony.
- 3 - If pictures are to be taken before the ceremony, such arrangements must be made when the wedding is scheduled. Restaging of the ceremony for photos may be done after all guests have recessed.
- 4 – During the ceremony, photographs and videos may be taken with available light. No flash is permitted.
- 5 - All equipment must be completely in place before the prelude begins, approximately 30 minutes before the announced time of the service.
- 6 – Photographers and Videographers must dress themselves in appropriate wedding attire and may arrive 1 ½ hours before the ceremony.
- 7 – Photographers and Videographers may stage themselves within the sanctuary for the duration of the service.
- 8 – A self-contained camera (no wires, cords or monitors) on a tripod with one videographer may be located at the locations designated.
- 9 – No equipment may be moved during the ceremony. The ceremony is defined as beginning when the mothers enter the sanctuary and ending when the guests have fully recessed.
- 10 – An aisle chair may be reserved for 1 photographer who will remain in that chair for the duration of the ceremony.

THE WEDDING DAY

Attendants – Pre-Ceremony

- 1 – Wedding Coordinators from the church will be on hand to assist you.
- 2 – The bridesmaids should report to the Fireside Room at least one hour prior to the service. The Fireside Room is equipped with an iron and ironing board, mirror, small sewing kit, steamer, water pitcher, glasses, napkins, bridesmaids list of duties and other helpful items.
- 3 - The ushers should report to Room 141/142, at least one hour before the service. Boutonnieres should be secured in this room.

Guests Arrival

- 1 – Guests are requested not to visit the Fireside Room as the wedding party is assembling before the wedding.
- 2 - Ushers set the tone of quiet dignity for arriving guests.
- 3 - FPC Birmingham is a non-smoking and alcohol-free facility. No smoking or drinking of alcohol is allowed within the church.
- 4 - Guests arriving with cameras should be reminded that flash photography is not permitted inside the sanctuary or during the ceremony.

*******Ushers should remind guests of these policies.*******

Seating

- 1 - Guests should be seated to balance the sanctuary, unless a guest requests bride's side or groom's side.
- 2 – The first 4 rows are reserved for the bridal party and family.
- 3 - Ushers should urge guests to be seated and not congregate in the narthex.
- 4 – An usher should extend his right arm to a female guest. If she is accompanied by a gentleman, he will follow behind the usher and the lady.
- 5 – Should several guests arrive together, the usher should always offer his right arm to the eldest woman (guess, don't ask) the others should follow without escort. This applies to groups desiring to be seated together.

6 – Ushers continue to seat guests until the bridal party is ready for the processional.

7 – Special guests and family will identify themselves upon arrival. They should be seated in the reserved pews on the proper side – facing the altar, the left is bride’s side, the right is the groom’s side.

8– Grandparents may be seated whenever they wish. They must be seated before the parents.

The Ceremony

1 - When the wedding party is ready for the processional, the parents are seated first.

2 - The bride’s mother’s entrance constitutes the beginning of the wedding and all ushers should take their place in the procession.

3 - No guests are to be seated in the sanctuary at this point. The wedding coordinator will direct late arriving guests to the balcony.

Groomsmen

1 - The groomsmen will enter the sanctuary with the minister by the side door. They should be careful to walk softly and not speak as sound will carry as you take your places.

2 - The Best Man is usually responsible for the wedding rings and should double check that they are in his possession before the ceremony begins.

The Processional

1 - The wedding coordinator will direct the bridesmaids to process at regular intervals.

2 - Bouquets should be carried naturally with wrists resting on their hipbones.

3 - When each member of the wedding party reaches the front, they should turn to watch the remaining wedding party members process.

4 - Ushers and Bridesmaids form a “V” from the front of the church, and always face the bride and groom.

Following the Ceremony

1 - Immediately following the ceremony, the head usher is to return to the front of the church to escort the mother and father of the bride out of the sanctuary, followed by the mother and father of the groom. Other designated special guests are then escorted by the ushers to the narthex.

2 - Then two ushers come forward and pause by each row in turn to allow guests to leave in an orderly manner beginning with the first pew and working their way to the back, one row at a time.

3 - Assign a close friend or family member to check the Fireside Room and Room 137 for any articles forgotten by the attendants.

Church Hall Reception

1 - Receptions within the church are available for members only, for an additional charge.

2 - Church Hall Receptions should be reserved at the time the church is reserved for the wedding.

3 - Receptions may be catered by an approved caterer.

4 - No dinner reception will be approved for a wedding beginning later than 5:00 pm

5 - No alcoholic beverages are permitted within the church.

ACTION NEEDED - CHECK LIST

These items, located in the left hand pocket of your folder, need to be returned to:

First Presbyterian Church
1669 West Maple Road
Birmingham, MI 48009

3 months prior to wedding date:

Make appointment with Director of Music, Andrew Herbruck to discuss Music for your ceremony. 248-644-2040, ext. 136

2 weeks prior to your wedding date:

The Wedding Party Information Sheet
and
The balance of your payment

Return this form and check to the attention of Jan Peters

1 week prior to your wedding date:

Bring your Marriage License to Jan Peters at the church at least 3 days prior to your wedding date.