

First Presbyterian Church
WEDDING POLICY



PART I

Introduction

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed, and acknowledged by the community of faith.

It is further policy of this Church, in accordance with Scripture and the Confessions, that the property of this Church shall not be used for any marriage service or in any other Rite of Union other than for the marriage of a man and woman as authorized in Scripture and the Confessions; nor shall any Pastor of this Church engage in conducting such services at any location while maintaining an official capacity with this Church.

Preparing for Marriage

In preparation for the marriage service, the minister shall provide for a discussion with the man and the woman concerning

1. the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
2. the legal requirements of the state,
3. the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
4. the nature and form of the marriage service,
5. the vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
6. the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,

7. the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.

This discussion is equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse, and a marriage following divorce.

If the Marriage Is Unwise

If the minister is convinced after discussion with the couple that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the minister shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision the minister may seek the counsel of the Session.

Time and Place of the Service

Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the session. The marriage ordinarily takes place in a special service which focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the Pastor. Celebration of the Lord's Supper at the marriage service requires the approval of the session, and care shall be taken that the invitation to the Table is extended to all baptized present. The marriage service may take place during the Service for the Lord's Day upon authorization by the session. It should be placed in the order as a response to the proclamation of the Word. It may then be followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Form and Order of the Service

The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The man and woman shall declare their intention to enter into the Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the woman and the man are now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.

Music and Appointments

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. Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshippers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian

life.

Recognizing Civil Marriage

A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of the vows by the husband and wife, and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the woman and man are already married to one another according to the laws of the state.

FURTHER PROVISIONS

In support of the statement from the *Directory for Worship*, the following provisions are made with regard to weddings at First Presbyterian Church, Greenwood, Mississippi:

1. Scheduling

As soon as a decision is made to marry in this church, the Pastor who is to officiate at the wedding will arrange for the necessary planning sessions and pre-marital counseling. Only with the officiating Pastor's approval, shall the wedding date be placed on the church calendar. The bride or her family should contact the Director of Music/Organist to confirm the date and time, if music for the service is desired.

2. Officiating

Weddings in our church facilities are the responsibility of its Pastors and Session. All weddings must be approved by the Session but such approval is conditioned upon the officiating Pastor giving his or her approval to the marriage. Other clergy persons may be invited to conduct or assist in the wedding service with the approval of the senior Pastor and Session of this church. Any guest minister serves at the invitation of the Session and with the understanding that he or she will abide by these policies.

There will ordinarily be a rehearsal with the entire wedding party at a time set by the officiating Pastor, the couple, and the Wedding Coordinator. The officiating Pastor will preside at the rehearsal.

A couple marrying in the First Presbyterian Church is expected to utilize the services of a Wedding Coordinator provided by the church. This person will be compensated according to the fee chart and will be knowledgeable concerning all areas of how weddings are conducted in this church. A couple may wish to provide a "bridal consultant" or "wedding planner" of their choosing, however it will be clear that this person will work under the direction and supervision of the church's Wedding Coordinator. A sample chart is included in Part II to be filled out by the Wedding Coordinator and brought to the rehearsal.

The Wedding Coordinator is NOT responsible for the following:

1. Decorating
2. Catering

3. Seating Assignments
4. Setting Up (including reception)
5. Taking Down (including reception)
6. Invitation or Guest List
7. Cleanup

The **marriage license** must be in the officiating Pastor's possession by the time of the rehearsal.

3. Music

The Director of Music/Organist ordinarily plays for all weddings. If another organist is desired for special reasons, arrangements must be made through the Director of Music/Organist, who will invite the guest organist, upon approval by the Worship and Music Committee. The music of the pipe organ may be supplemented with other musical instruments and vocal music. However, no guest musician, instrumentalist or soloist, should be invited to participate in the service without prior consultation and approval by the Director of Music/Organist and the Worship and Music Committee. Information concerning the guest musicians, the instruments to be used and the music selections should be submitted to the Director of Music/Organist as soon as possible but, in any event, not less than sixty (60) days prior to the wedding.

Music selections for instrumentalists and soloists should be consistent with the statement on music from the *Directory for Worship*. Texts of vocal music, as well as implied texts of instrumental music, should reflect the sacred nature of the service as outlined above. Whereas some secular music texts may not be objectionable, they are nonetheless considered less appropriate than sacred music texts which acknowledge the divine blessing of human love. Pre-recorded music is not permitted during any portion of the service, whether alone or as accompaniment. During the planning of the wedding, an appointment with the Director of Music/Organist should be made to discuss the music for the service. The Director of Music/Organist is prepared to play portions of a wide selection of suitable music to assist in your planning and can suggest appropriate instrumental and vocal music.

4. Facilities

First Presbyterian Church of Greenwood, Mississippi, does not rent its facilities for weddings. It will, however, permit their use as a House of God for a Service of Worship to celebrate your wedding.

The Wedding Coordinator will meet with those planning the wedding to discuss church facilities and equipment. There are rooms where receptions may be held and where members of the wedding party may dress.

The Wedding Coordinator will direct the wedding party to those rooms in the church which may be used for dressing. Hair and makeup are to be fixed and applied prior to arriving at the

church. Touch-ups are to be done only in the appropriate restroom. Failure to follow the directions of the Wedding Coordinator may result in the forfeiture of the damage deposit.

On the date of the wedding, the wedding party may arrive at the church not more than three (3) hours before the scheduled commencement of the ceremony. The building must be vacated within ninety minutes after the conclusion of the ceremony or three hours if the reception is held at the church.

Decorations for weddings and receptions must be discussed with the Wedding Coordinator who will make recommendations consistent with the policies of the church. No liturgical furniture may be moved. No nails, tape, or tacks are to be used on woodwork. Non-drip candles only are to be used. Rugs and furniture must be protected from stains or drippings when potted plants or greens are used. It is the responsibility of the florist to remove all decorations from the church immediately after the wedding ceremony except for Saturday evening weddings when the flowers will remain for the Sunday worship service . The florist shall advise the church office as to the time selected to decorate and remove decorations so as to avoid conflict with church programs.

In the event **seasonal decorations** are in the sanctuary, parlor, and the contiguous entrances, they are not to be disturbed or rearranged. (Note: This is mostly Christmas and Easter – poinsettias, lilies, or palm plants which would likely compliment the space and provide a cost savings to those requesting use of the facilities.)

The church has available the following equipment for use at weddings, by arrangement with the Wedding Coordinator.

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Communion table cover | Hurricane globes |
| Pulpit parament | Punch bowl, cups, and ladle |
| Kneeling bench | Silver service |
| Candelabra (tall black iron) | Gilded Wooden Candlesticks |
| Candelabra (small brass) | |
| Candle lighters | |

Parties enjoying our facilities will be held responsible for any damage to the building or furniture. It is the Session's policy that there will be **no smoking** in the church buildings and **no alcoholic beverages** are permitted on the premises, except for the possible use of communion wine. **A violation of this policy will result in a forfeiture of the damage deposit.**

5. Photographs and Videotaping

The environment of the wedding service is one of worship. For this reason, all photographs and videos to be made in the Sanctuary must be completed no later than forty-five (45)

minutes prior to the start of the ceremony. Photographs may be made after the conclusion of the ceremony. **No flash photographs** are to be taken during the wedding service by professional photographers or guests. Available light exposures and video filming may be made from the balcony so long as there is no disruption of the ceremony and no distraction to the worshipers. No additional lighting is to be used during the service. Photographers shall be notified of these rules by the bride or groom, and the Wedding Coordinator.

Following the wedding, the couple is asked to provide a vertical 8 x 10 wedding photograph to be placed in the Heritage Library.

6. Banners in Ceremony

The use of any banner must have prior approval. Non-liturgical, non-religious themed banners are not permitted to be carried in procession, or displayed at any wedding ceremony. Only banners with Christian symbols, or Scripture related to marriage may be carried in the procession.

7. Deposit and Fees

This church does not rent its facilities for any purpose, including weddings. However, since weddings are almost always scheduled at times when the church facilities are closed and the church staff is off duty, those scheduling weddings are asked to cover the cost of utilities, custodial services, and organist's costs as follows.

- * A **\$500.00 damage deposit** is required from both covenant partners and non-covenant partners at the time the facility is booked. Covenant partners will not be charged for use of the facilities but will pay custodial and sound charges. All fees are to be paid when the facilities are booked. The persons booking the facilities will issue separate personal checks for these items. These checks will be held by the church office until the wedding is concluded at which time the checks will be distributed accordingly. Any damages or shortages will be deducted from the damage deposit. If there have not been any problems, then the damage deposit will be refunded.

**Honorarium for the officiating Pastor is not required, but is left to the discretion of the family.

| | Covenant Partners | Non-Covenant Partners |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Wedding Ceremony</u> | | |
| Sanctuary | * | \$1,000.00 |
| Parlor | * | \$ 500.00 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| <u>Rehearsal Dinner</u> | | |
| Shuler Hall | * | \$ 150.00 |
| Parish Building | * | \$ 100.00 |
| <u>Reception</u> | | |
| Shuler Hall | * | \$ 150.00 |
| Parish Building | * | \$ 100.00 |
| <u>Organist</u> | | |
| Rehearsal & Service | (\$200.00 suggested) | \$ 500.00 |
| <u>Officiating Pastor</u> | | |
| Rehearsal & Service | ** | \$ 500.00 |
| <u>Wedding Coordinator</u> | | |
| Rehearsal & Service | \$500.00 | \$ 500.00 |
| <u>Sound</u> | \$ 50.00 | \$ 50.00 |
| <u>Custodial Services</u> | \$200.00 | \$ 200.00 |

8. Miscellaneous Matters

The **seating capacity** of the sanctuary is approximately 400.

No weddings may be scheduled during Holy Week, or on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, or New Year's Day.

Questions about these policies may be discussed with the officiating Pastor. It is expected from time to time that special circumstances may receive special consideration. We want to do everything possible to make your wedding a spiritually significant experience.

9. Adherence to Policies

The bride and groom should review all policies and adhere to them as well as making sure that all involved in the wedding understand and follow them. A copy of these policies, with each page initialed by the bride and groom, must be submitted to the church office when the facility is booked.

10. Disclaimer

First Presbyterian Church strives to keep its facilities and grounds in good condition. However, the Church, in a rare instance, may have to alter wedding plans due to mechanical, electrical or plumbing problems; weather damage, or other unforeseen circumstances. First Presbyterian Church is not liable for any damage or expense incurred by any person or persons due to any such occurrence.

11. Wedding Programs

The Director of Music and Organist is willing to produce the layout of your wedding program. The final product can then be emailed as a PDF to the printer of your choice. Information for the program must be given to the Director of Music and Organist no later

than two weeks prior to the wedding date. Should you require an elaborate monogram on the cover page, you must either supply a JPEG of the design, or ask a graphic artist or the printer to create one for you. If someone other than the Director of Music and Organist produce the layout of your wedding bulletin, the final draft must be submitted to the Pastor and Director of Music and Organist two weeks prior to the wedding date to check for accuracy and completeness.

12. Security Guard

First Presbyterian Church requires an off duty police officer be on the premises for weddings not concluding before darkness. The church will secure the officer on your behalf. The rate is \$30 an hour with a minimum of \$60.

ALL DEPOSITS AND FEES MUST BE PAID WHEN USE OF THE FACILITY IS BOOKED.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office:

phone: 662/453-4680

email: fpcoffice@firstgreenwood.net

pastor@firstgreenwood.net

fax: 662-453-4699

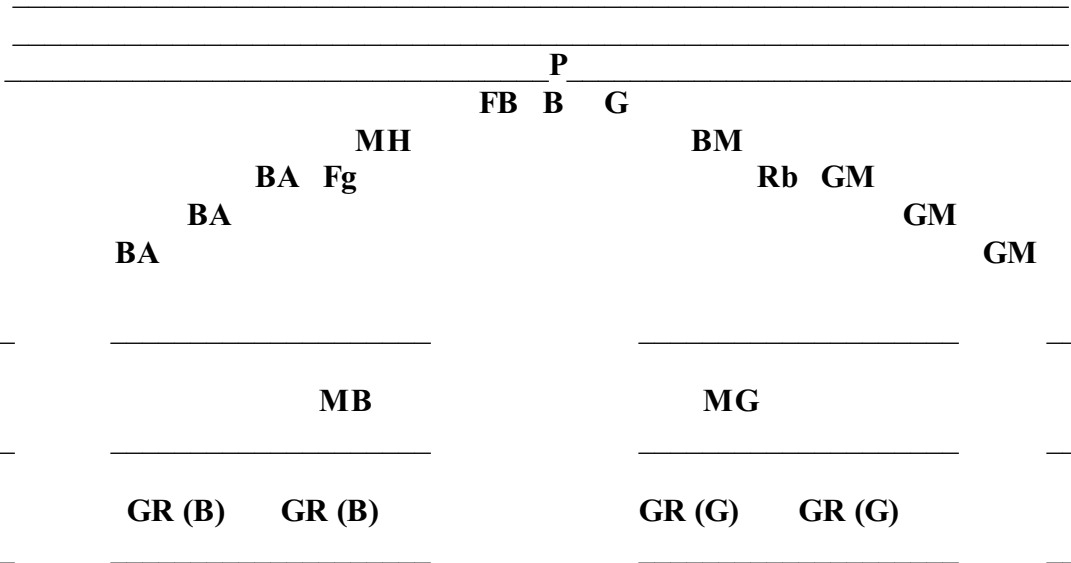
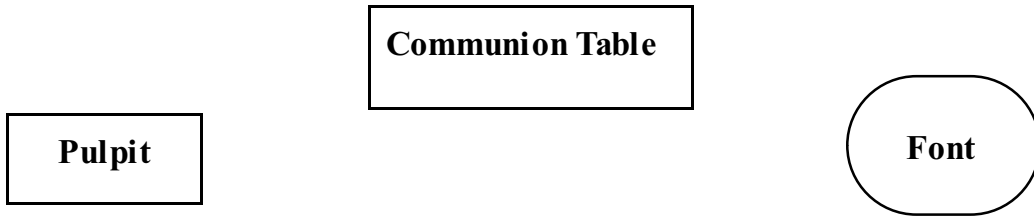
mail: P.O. Box 485, Greenwood, MS 38935-0485

PART II

SAMPLE CHART TO BE USED AND FILLED OUT BY THE WEDDING COORDINATOR PRIOR TO THE REHEARSAL.

P, G, BM

Door



KEY

- P Pastor
- B Bride
- G Groom
- FB Father of the Bride
- MB Mother of the Bride
- MG Mother of the Groom
- GR Grandmother
- MH Matron/Maid of Honor
- BM Best Man
- BA Bride's Attendants
- GM Groomsmen
- Fg Flower girl
- Rb Ring bearer

- Ushers should be dressed and ready 1 hour before the service.
- Candles are usually lit 30 minutes before the start of the service.
- Pastor, groom, and best man enter from the doorway near the baptismal font.
- Ring bearer and flower girl ordinarily process immediately before the bride processes.
- The congregation stands when the mother of the bride stands for the bride's procession.
- Ushers should be assigned to seat and escort the mothers and grandmothers.

SEATING OF THE GRANDMOTHERS / MOTHERS

- 1. Usher for groom's paternal grandmother _____
- 2. Usher for groom's maternal grandmother _____
- 3. Usher for bride's paternal grandmother _____
- 4. Usher for bride's maternal grandmother _____
- 5. Usher for the mother of the groom _____
- 6. Usher for the mother of the bride _____

Pastor, Groom, and Best Man enter from doorway near baptismal font.

PROCESSIONAL

- 1. GM _____
- 2. GM _____
- 3. GM _____
- 4. BA _____
- 5. BA _____
- 6. BA _____
- 7. MH _____
- 8. Rb _____
- 9. Fg _____
- 10. B / FB _____

RECESSIONAL

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|-------|----------|
| 1. | Bride / Groom | | |
| 2. | Fg | _____ | Rb _____ |
| 3. | MH | _____ | BM _____ |
| 4. | BA | _____ | GM _____ |
| 5. | BA | _____ | GM _____ |
| 6. | BA | _____ | GM _____ |

ESCORTING THE GRANDMOTHERS / MOTHERS OUT

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 1. | Usher for the mother of the bride | _____ |
| 2. | Usher for the mother of the groom | _____ |
| 3. | Usher for the bride's maternal grandmother | _____ |
| 4. | Usher for the bride's paternal grandmother | _____ |
| 5. | Usher for the groom's maternal grandmother | _____ |
| 6. | Usher for the groom's paternal grandmother | _____ |

CONGREGATION EXITS