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## **YOU ARE PLANNING TO BE MARRIED!**

What a privilege it is for us to rejoice in the love and anticipation that greets you at this important time in your life! We hope these guidelines will help in your planning for this momentous event -- so that your wedding might be rich in meaning for you, your friends, and families -- and that it might serve to the glory of God.

### **A CHRISTIAN SERVICE . . . IN THE SIGHT OF GOD**

Humanly speaking, marriage is a civil contract among a man, a woman, and the state: the proverbial "piece of paper," some would say. But when a marriage is performed in the context of Christian worship, the promise of God in Jesus Christ descends to bless that union. When the man and woman respond affirmatively and by faith, their marriage is in the Lord.

We believe that marriage is established by God, that a man and a woman may pledge their love to one another and promise fidelity as long as both shall live.

So, a wedding, first and foremost, is a service of worship, taking place before the throne of Him who has called two to be one.

### **IT IS JOY**

Jesus' first miracle was not a healing, but the changing of water into wine at a wedding (John 2:1-11). Frequently, when He wanted to use an analogy for the joy of being with Him and of being a citizen of God's Kingdom, Jesus spoke of the joy of a wedding reception (Matthew 22:1-10; Luke 14:7-14).

### **AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMEMORATE YOUR DAY**

You can commemorate your wedding day with a special gift to the Church (a tree, a planting, an item from the Church's wish list). Just let us know and we will happily provide you with a current copy of the Church's wish list. Wish list items can be donated in celebration of your wedding day, and such donations will be recorded for posterity in the Church's Celebration Book on display by the Church fireplace!

## WHAT TO DO FIRST?

### BUILDING USE FORM

Any couple wishing to be married at First Presbyterian Church needs to contact the Church office and fill out a "REQUEST FOR BUILDING USE" form (for use of the sanctuary and/or Church building) which will allow us to put your event on the Church calendar and send you a letter to confirm your use of the Church.

The Church makes commitments to others based upon what you write on your building use application. Times and rooms you do not specifically reserve can and may be used for other Church activities. Please consider carefully your needs when filling out the application.

### CANCELLATION POLICY

A deposit will secure your reservation. Deposits cannot be refunded if cancellation takes place within 30 days of your wedding date.

### SCHEDULING

Current members of First Presbyterian Church (**at the time of first wedding inquiry**) will receive first priority in scheduling. The date of your wedding may be reserved eighteen months in advance. For non-members at the time of first wedding inquiry, the wedding day may be scheduled eighteen months in advance, but the time of the ceremony may not be finalized until **nine** months before the wedding. **Building use on your wedding day will ordinarily be restricted to four hours**, from the time of first access to the building to the time the wedding party and guests have exited the building. Please contact the Church office at 608.949.9445 to confirm your wedding date and time. Ordinarily no second wedding will be scheduled for the same day.

### OTHER FAITH GROUPS

Christian wedding ceremonies or ceremonies of other faith groups are permitted at First Presbyterian Church, subject to the review and approval of our Pastor and/or the Session. You may contact the Church office at 608.949.9445 for more information.

## PEOPLE IN YOUR WEDDING

### THE PASTOR

You may invite any Pastor of your choosing to perform your ceremony, subject to the approval of First Presbyterian Church. **If you wish to be married by one of the Pastors of First Presbyterian Church, you must contact the Pastor you would like to do your service at 608.949.9445 to find out if he or she will be available on the date you have in mind.**

Current members of First Presbyterian Church will receive first priority in scheduling.

If one of the Pastors of First Presbyterian Church will be officiating, he or she will meet with you prior to your wedding ceremony, guide you in preparing the service and in preparing for marriage. Please call the Pastor a month or two before your wedding to schedule your meetings.

**For members of First Presbyterian Church there is no required fee for Pastoral services, but it is customary for the bride and groom to give the officiating Pastor an honorarium. We recommend approximately \$200 as a guideline for that gift. For non-members (at time of first inquiry) the Pastoral honorarium (fee) is collected 30 days before your wedding day. (Please refer to the non-member fee schedule.) The Pastor's honorarium also covers the preparatory meeting or meetings with the couple.** The Pastor will perform your wedding ceremony, or will arrange for another Pastor to officiate, if he needs to, in which case an honorarium would only be due to the officiating Pastor.

### THE REHEARSAL DIRECTOR

Typically, one of our Rehearsal Directors will conduct your wedding rehearsal. The Pastor will perform the wedding ceremony itself, or will arrange for another Pastor to officiate, if needed. He will also arrange for a Rehearsal Director to conduct your rehearsal. For non-members and members, the Rehearsal Director fee will be collected by the Church office 30 days before your wedding day and is payable to First Presbyterian Church. (See fee schedule.)

## THE WEDDING HOSTESS

A Wedding Hostess is provided to act as a liaison between you and the Church. The Wedding Hostess is not a personal attendant and shouldn't be expected to perform such tasks as pinning on boutonnieres. She will also help insure that the rehearsal and wedding go smoothly. If you have any questions, please contact our Church Receptionist at 608.949.9445. Otherwise, one of **our wedding hostesses will contact you** approximately 1 week before your wedding date to reconfirm dates and times and to answer any questions you may have. The Wedding Hostess's duties include the following:

- A day before or the day of the wedding, she will set up the Church by setting up the bride's room, tidying up the Lobby and readying the sanctuary by cleaning the pews, choir area, and chancel.
- The night of the rehearsal, she will:
  - arrive early to open the Church, turn on lights, set fans, etc.
  - greet the wedding party and see if anything is needed;
  - make sure that the wedding rehearsal starts on time;
  - take notes during the rehearsal to insure the wedding will run smoothly;
  - reconfirm Church opening time and floral delivery for the next day;
  - after rehearsal is finished, close down and lock Church;
- The day of wedding, she will:
  - arrive early to open and ready the Church;
  - stay the entire time to assist the Pastor/wedding party;
  - help the ushers to begin seating people, as per arrangement from the rehearsal;
  - give wedding party fifteen-minute notice before start of ceremony, and make sure they are ready to begin on time;
  - follow arrangement set up at the rehearsal to begin the ceremony by cueing the music, lighting the candles, and having the ushers seat the grandparents/parents;
  - help get groomsmen and bridesmaids in their positions;
  - start the wedding on time;

- after the wedding, stay during pictures and other activities in case anything is needed;
- when wedding party is readying to leave, she will check bride's room to make sure everything is picked up and nothing is left behind. She will also make sure any flowers and decorations have been taken down and cleaned up before wedding party leaves;
- will make sure all candles have been extinguished;
- close down and lock Church;
- and finally, say a prayer of thanksgiving that another wedding has ended happily!!

For Non-Members, the fee for the Wedding Hostess is included in the cost of the wedding package. For members, this fee is collected by the Church office 30 days before the wedding day.

**Please note:** The Wedding Hostess is not responsible for any clean-up after your event.

## THE ORGANIST AND THE PIANIST

Our Organist will normally play for all weddings where organ music is desired at First Presbyterian Church, and should be consulted far in advance so that dates can be cleared. As with the Pastor, the Organist should be consulted first should another qualified Organist be desired.

**Note:** If an outside Organist will be playing for a wedding performed by one of our Pastors, that Organist must be present for the wedding rehearsal. It will be the couple's responsibility to advise their Organist of this requirement.

Our Organist and/or Pianist will consult with you in advance of the projected date so that appropriate music can be planned. Our Organist and Pianist each set their own fees. You will need to consult with them directly. You may get in touch with both the Organist and the Pianist by calling the Church Office at 608.949.9445. Fees are collected 30 days before the wedding day by the Church Office for both members and non-members.

## **THE SOUND TECHNICIAN**

A trained Sound Technician, approved by First Presbyterian Church, will be required for all weddings that take place in our Sanctuary. The Sound Technician will operate the sound system, play any recorded music (if applicable) during the wedding, and is able to make a recording of the ceremony. The Sound Technician is required to be present at both the wedding rehearsal and ceremony. The Sound Technician fee is due 30 days before the wedding day. (Please refer to current fee schedule).

## **SOLOIST AND OTHER INSTRUMENTALISTS**

You are free to make your own arrangements with others you would like to take part in your service. You should consult with the Pastor first and be sure to offer any soloist or instrumentalist an appropriate honorarium.

## **CHILDREN**

Sometimes friendly pressure is applied to the bride or groom to use a favorite niece or nephew as flower girl or ring bearer. Caution and common sense should prevail. Only a child mature enough to understand instructions and carry them out in front of a crowd of strangers should be considered. It is our suggestion that no one who has not yet entered kindergarten be in the wedding party. The demands of a service can be often too great for someone younger than that to handle.

## **TYPES OF MUSIC AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE SERVICE**

If you have questions concerning appropriate music, you may consult with the Pastor performing your wedding, who, ultimately, is responsible for the wedding service. The Pastor will also be able to answer any questions you may have about vows, special readings, scripture passages, and other elements of the service.

## WEDDING PROGRAM

After talking with the Pastor about the order and parts of your service, you may wish to have a program prepared. **The program is the responsibility of the wedding couple. We can provide you with samples.**

## FEES AND HONORARIA

A brief word here about fees. Sometimes people feel a Church should be available for free. The building *is available without rental cost to our Church members* because it is assumed that members are donating regularly to help underwrite the Church's costs and to provide a building for worship and service. **Non-members** (at time of first inquiry) are charged building use fees according to the current non-member fee schedule.

The budget of the Church does not provide for payment of the Organist to play for weddings, or for the extra cleaning after a wedding, or for soloists. Those are services for which these people should be paid. Therefore, we ask that **members and non-members** alike cover those costs as outlined on the current fee schedules.

*Wedding fees for the building, Wedding Hostess, Custodian, Sound Technician, Organist/Pianist, Rehearsal Director, and non-member Pastor Honorarium will be collected 30 days before the wedding day by the Church office according to the current fee schedules. You may contact the Church office at 608.949.9445.*

## DAMAGE DEPOSIT

A damage deposit will be collected from each Member and Non-Member couple who reserves the Church. **Your check for this deposit will be cashed by the Church upon receipt.** Your deposit will be refunded within 30 days of your event if there is no damage or extra clean-up required following the wedding ceremony. The damage deposit will be forfeited if:

- Alcohol is used on the premises (one warning will be given).
- The ceremony does not take place as scheduled,
- There is damage to the Church or its property in the judgment of the Building and Grounds Elder, or if extra clean-up is required.

## **PAYMENT OF FEES AND HONORARIA**

Fees are due in the Church Office no later than one month before the wedding.

## **ABOUT THE BUILDING**

An attitude of reverence is expected of all who enter the Church Sanctuary. We ask the bride and groom to ensure that their guests observe the following rules. Any special questions may be referred to the Wedding Hostess.

- Your use of the building will be limited to 4 hours on the day of the wedding. (The rehearsal usually takes about 1-1 ½ hours.) The Wedding Hostess has the discretion to allow for a grace period or not on the wedding day. Extended use may result in an additional fee.
- The Church makes commitments to others based upon what you write on your building use application. Times and rooms you do not specifically reserve can and may be used for other Church activities. Please consider carefully your needs when filling out the application.
- Only one wedding will be scheduled in a day.
- Smoking is permitted only in designated areas outside the building.
- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted anywhere on the premises— inside the building, in the parking lot, or in the Church yard. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to enforce this policy. Any alcohol use will result in forfeiture of deposit.
- No bubbles, rice, confetti or bird seed may be thrown inside the Church building. Bird seed may be thrown outside.

- Real flower petals may not be dropped on the carpet by a flower girl. We suggest you use the petals from inexpensive silk flowers.
- Refreshments may not be served in the Lobby.
- Any food left in the refrigerator will be disposed of.
- The Lobby or Sanctuary will not be "stripped" or significantly altered for weddings.
- The Sanctuary Grand Piano may not be removed.

The **CUSTODIAL FEE** (paid by members and non-members) covers clean-up of the building after your wedding:

- tidying pews
- straightening bathrooms
- turning off lights
- locking doors
- vacuuming carpets
- arranging furniture
- tidying the parking lot
- policing the grounds.

## THE SANCTUARY

- The Church will comfortably seat 300 persons.
- There are 14 pews on each side of the center aisle.
- The building is wheelchair accessible and has an elevator.
- **Runners are not recommended due to safety concerns.**
- The pews, the pulpit, piano and lectern may not be moved for weddings. The communion table may be moved forward or back but may not be taken down from the chancel. Measurements for the communion table are (72" wide, 29 3/4" deep, 32 1/4" height ).
- There are 4 windows in the sanctuary. The width of each window ledge is 77" and depth is 7 1/4".

## FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

- The bride may select her own florist and make arrangements for the placing of flowers, candles, and guest books. You may contact the Wedding Hostess to discuss having the Church opened for flower delivery. Flowers may be left to beautify the sanctuary for the Sunday worship services.
- Nails or tacks may not be driven into the walls, window frames, woodwork, pew ends, etc.  
You may use suction devices on the windows, not the hooks with double-faced tape.
- Pew bows and decorations may be hung using ribbon. **Please do not fasten flowers to the white pew ends. You may fasten them to the oak pew caps.**
- If you plan for a flower girl to throw petals, you should use silk petals. Real flower petals can stain the carpet.
- The Church has some beautiful antique flower stands/tables, which you may use. Please use plastic plant dishes under the arrangements to protect the wood.
- You may make arrangements with the Wedding Hostess so the Church will be open for flower delivery and decorating.

## CANDLES

Candles may not be attached to the oak pew caps or used in the pews during weddings. The Church has two 28-inch oil burning candles in gold candlesticks, which you may use. Our Wedding Hostess can instruct you in their use. The Church does not have large candelabrum. You may rent these, if you wish. The Church has two long-handled candle lighters/snifters, which you may use. Hurricane candle holders are available for your use. Couples may provide their own Unity candle and accompanied side candles.

## REHEARSAL AND WEDDING DAY

### THE MARRIAGE LICENSE AND CERTIFICATE

The couple shall be responsible for fulfilling all the lawful requirements of this State with respect to the act of marriage and shall present the marriage license and certificate to the officiating minister or Rehearsal Director **before the rehearsal**. You will be asked to sign these items **on the day of your wedding, before the service begins, though bride and groom do not have to “see each other” for this to be taken care of**. You may pose for a “signing” picture after the service if your photographer would like to take one. ***It is the responsibility of the officiating pastor or their administrative assistant to mail the marriage license.***

**PLEASE NOTE: 20a on the marriage license is the county of Dane and 20b is the township of Westport.**

### REHEARSAL

If your wedding party is very small, a rehearsal may not be needed. However, **the wedding rehearsal is normally held the evening before the wedding. Non-members may be assigned to other rehearsal times. All those participating in the ceremony should be present and on time:** including the bride's parents, ushers, soloists, and all attendants. Your rehearsal date should be cleared with the Church office, Wedding Hostess, Organist, Pastor or Rehearsal Director, and with the groom's family if a rehearsal dinner is involved. Conducting the wedding rehearsal will always be the responsibility of the Pastor performing the wedding ceremony, or his or her designate. **(It should be noted that the Pastors do not usually expect to attend the rehearsal dinner, or the reception.)**

### PRE-SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

Remembering that a wedding service is a worship service in the presence of God, intoxication of any kind on the part of any participant will not be permitted.

## STARTING TIME FOR WEDDINGS AND REHEARSALS

The hours for the start of the wedding and rehearsal should be set realistically for a time when the guests can be expected to arrive. Late arrivals will not be a reason to delay these starting times. Weddings and rehearsals at First Presbyterian Church will begin at the times announced. Those not present at the rehearsal will need to be later briefed by other wedding participants. To do otherwise is to be unfair to the time of many others involved who have made the effort to be there as planned. **Be sure to schedule your rehearsal at a time when you know your participants can be there.**

## THE BRIDE AND GROOM

The happy couple should be at the Church at least one-half hour prior to the start of the ceremony. The bride (and her attendants) may dress/finish dressing/primp in the "Bride's Room" off the Fellowship Hall; the groom, the best man and groomsmen may wait in the designated groom's room.

Note: **THE BRIDE AND/OR HER BRIDESMAIDS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR LEAVING A CLEAN AND TIDY BRIDE'S ROOM AFTER THE CEREMONY** (except for vacuuming, which will be done by our custodian).

## USHERS

No matter how small the wedding, ushers (at least two) are essential to greet and seat people and answer their questions. We suggest one usher for every 100 people invited to your wedding.

It should be underscored that the primary task of the usher is to *usher*. Much of the smoothness of the wedding day hinges upon the ability and maturity of the ushers to graciously seat people in order that the ceremony can begin as scheduled. Ushers will be given special instructions at the wedding rehearsal.

Ushers should plan to be at the Church one hour prior to the start of the ceremony; and to encourage guests to be seated as they arrive so that the ceremony can begin on time. They need to be familiar with

the location of exits, telephone, restrooms, fire extinguishers, defibulator, handicap access, and other building features. Ushers are also responsible for seeing that at no time is rice or confetti thrown in or about the Church.

## **LAST MINUTE PROCEDURES**

You should tell one of your ushers to light the candles, if they are used, at the beginning of the organ Prelude.

After guests are seated, the grandparents (if any) are seated, usually in the second row, leaving room for the respective parents of the bride and groom. The groom's parents and the bride's mother (in that order) are the last to be seated; the aisle runner (if used) is pulled down; and the service may begin. Latecomers may be seated after the bride's mother is in her place.

## **THE PHOTOGRAPHER/PHOTOGRAPHY**

Because it is a worship service, there will be no flash photography during the wedding ceremony, although natural-light photography is permissible, provided the photographer is careful not to be intrusive in his/her movements. No flash pictures may be taken during the ceremony proper (between the processional and the recessional), and no photographs should be taken from the chancel platform at any time during the service. A photograph may be taken from the center aisle as the bride and her father are about to begin the processional, and as the bridal couple returns up the aisle at the close of the service. We consider it the responsibility of the bride and groom to acquaint the photographer and guests with this policy. Pastors will gladly pose for re-enactments of portions of the service, should you desire.

Video-taping may be done only if pre-designated camera locations are strictly observed. Video equipment may be set up behind the last row of pews in the sanctuary or off to a side aisle. The camera operator may not move about in the sanctuary during the ceremony, or at any time be positioned on the chancel platform. Non-compliance will result in forfeiture of the deposit.

## **THE RECEIVING LINE**

The Lobby is available for a receiving line. We find that many couples now set up their receiving line at the reception. This gives you an opportunity to instead take pictures in the Sanctuary immediately following the service and allows you to arrive at your reception without keeping your guests there waiting long. Experience has shown that a receiving line at the Church can easily take an hour or more, though this decision is up to you.

## **AND AFTERWARDS - FIND A CHURCH HOME**

If it was important to be married in a Church, it becomes even more important to build upon this foundation by worshiping regularly in a Church home in which both partners feel comfortable. Many marriages these days involve a bride and groom from different Church backgrounds. The Pastor would be happy to advise you about different options, if this is your situation.

Do not wait until children come before finding a Church home. The sooner the worship pattern is begun, the stronger will be the home and faith into which children may be born.

If you do not have a Church home, we invite you to worship with us at First Presbyterian Church. Our worship is a progressive blend of contemporary and traditional styles. We are a vibrant and active church, putting our faith to work through strong children and youth programs, celebration in worship and with music, and dedication to serving as God's hands and feet on this earth.

Come and build your marriage in Christ, who has called you to be one! You have only just begun! Our very best wishes to you!

***Congratulations!***