

PURPOSE

You have chosen First Presbyterian Church for your wedding. Your wedding in a church is a religious and holy service with deep spiritual significance. It is with these things in mind that we are providing this information to assist you in your preparations for a meaningful and significant occasion.

THE CHRISTIAN WEDDING

While many customs and traditions have a secular origin, the purpose of a Christian wedding is clear from the Church's tradition. It is worship before God – acknowledging God's gracious love in which the marriage of two persons might grow, to hear words of encouragement about that relationship from the Scriptures, to pray for guidance, and to make a public promise of faithfulness to God and each other in the marriage vows. Couples desiring a wedding at First Presbyterian Church of Bay City should be willing to affirm these religious purposes when making arrangements for the church and officiating pastor. If not, then a civil ceremony before a magistrate would be more appropriate.

QUALIFICATIONS

It is expected that either the bride or the groom is a professing Christian, and it is hoped both share a common Christian faith.

Divorced persons wishing to remarry must demonstrate readiness for remarriage and competence to fulfill obligations to all persons involved in the former marriage. The counsel of Session and Presbytery may be sought by the Pastor for guidance in deciding such requests.

The decision to perform any marriage rest finally and entirely with the pastor in response to the pastor's call to ministry and in concert with the agreement of the Session.

SCHEDULING

Arrangements for a wedding in the sanctuary should begin by calling the church office as far in advance as possible to tentatively reserve the time and date desired and make an appointment with the pastor. Your wedding will be scheduled on the church calendar upon receipt of a \$50 deposit and wedding planning form.

Before meeting with the pastor, a wedding information form will be mailed to you. It should be returned to the church office at your earliest convenience. No weddings will be scheduled on Christmas Day or Good Friday through Easter.

Reservations for non-members can only be made, normally, three months before their wedding to allow church members the first opportunity to reserve the church.

The sanctuary seats 825: 500 on the main floor and 325 in the balcony. The Chapel seats 80 people and can be expanded with seating in the back of the Chapel.

When a date and time is scheduled, any other weddings for that day will be scheduled three hours before or after your designated time. Please plan photos and preparations accordingly. As a rule of thumb a three-hour time slot is reserved for your wedding. Access to the building up to 1½ hours prior to the wedding ceremony, and 1½ hours from the time the wedding service begins until the building is locked up – for a total of three hours. You cannot expect the church to be available for you the entire day.

Weddings at other locations are allowed at the discretion of the pastor(s) officiating.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The couple being married is expected to meet with the pastor for an initial interview and two or three marriage preparation conferences. These conferences will include discussions of the following:

- Readiness for marriage
- The marriage service
- All necessary arrangements

Conversations with the pastor are an essential part of preparation for any wedding performed by one of the ministers of the church. In times past, many supportive professionals in the community were involved in assisting couples and discussing with them matters of importance regarding marriage. Now, that important responsibility is left most entirely to the pastor.

Several sessions, where the most important objectives are to get to know each other and discuss the specialness of religious marriage, will be scheduled at the couples' convenience prior to the wedding. It is anticipated that both partners will take advantage of these opportunities. Marriage is held in high regard by the church and represents a serious and joyful step of relationship for the couple. The church, through its pastors, wants to do everything it can to recognize and support this new union.

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

Copies of the service traditionally used in First Presbyterian Church are available. If any modifications are desired, they should be discussed with the pastor. Couples may wish to write their own service or portions of it. This may be done under the direction of the pastor. The Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God, usually conducted within the house of God. Reverence shall be expected on the part of all present.

What is said and done in the sanctuary of the church will be understood by many guests to represent the belief and practice of this church. The church, then, has its own reputation and integrity at stake in every service of worship – including your wedding. Our minister has been trained in the theology and practice of worship. He/she will be responsible for the final approval of plans you may have for the service.

If the engaged couple desires the services of another clergy person to assist in the service, this must be discussed with the pastor, approved by the Session, and an invitation issued by the pastor. The pastor of First Presbyterian is always in charge of the wedding service.

Although weddings are normally held in the church itself, arrangements can be made with the officiating pastor to have a wedding in a garden, at home, or other suitable places.

HOLY COMMUNION

If a couple desires to have the Sacrament of Holy Communion celebrated during the wedding service, approval must be secured from the Session through the pastor. Communion is served not only to the bride and groom, but to all others who desire to receive it.

MUSIC

Since a wedding is a religious service, the music should reflect the best of our religious, classical and contemporary tradition. The selection of music for your wedding service should be made in consultation with the organist. Plan a conference with the organist before you make any decision or arrangements involving music or musicians.

The wedding ceremony is an act of Christian worship. The Christian tradition provides the setting of the service. The language, the architecture, the symbolism, and the music, all combine to express the faith of not only the couple being married, but also of the Christian community which is the church. For these reasons, operatic selections, art songs, popular and musical theater songs, as well as some of the old wedding standards, should be carefully examined. Often their texts glorify romanticized, secular ideas about love and marriage, and therefore detract from the worship of God. The selections should be consistent with the ideals set forth above. Hymns for congregational singing for the occasion are appropriate if desired.

Popular songs, Broadway tunes and other secular music which is special to the couple are very appropriate for the reception. At this time, the bride and groom can best share these with each other and with their guests; perhaps having "their song" sung at the time of the cutting of the cake or the first dance is more appropriate than using it in the service.

Our staff organist is expected to play at all church weddings. No less than **six weeks ahead** of your wedding you need to contact the church office for a list of available organists. The organist will assist you in selecting music for your wedding.

If you desire a soloist, you may provide the name of one of your own choice as you plan your wedding music with our staff.

The selection of music for your wedding should be done in consultation with the organist. Set up your appointment through the church office as you coordinate the rest of your wedding plans with the pastor.

DECORATIONS AND EQUIPMENT

Flowers

As a general rule, simplicity is in the best taste. Too many flowers are not only expensive, but it can be overwhelming. Flowers for decorating the sanctuary should not be elaborate and are to be in good taste. They should be of such a nature as not to deface or mar the physical property of the church. Please, no tape, tacks, etc. on the pews or other furnishings. Please arrange to have bows draped or hung. The wedding hostess and pastor can offer suggestions.

A good idea is to use either one central bouquet, for which the florist can supply a wire flower stand tall enough to stand immediately behind the Communion Table, or two large bouquets on the two stands which the church has for that purpose. No flower arrangements or other decorations may be placed on the Table itself, except for the chancel candles and the unity candle. All additional candles must be approved through the church.

We suggest candles of the dripless variety and candle savers are used as a precaution to prevent wax from dripping on the candelabra and floor.

An aisle runner (52 feet in length), can be supplied by florist, rental agency, or other sources, if one is desired. A kneeling bench is available, if desired.

Please check with the church office as to the time the florist may deliver the flowers or any other items. As a rule of thumb a three-hour time slot is reserved for your wedding. Access to the building up to 1½ hours prior to the wedding ceremony, and 1½ hours from the time the wedding service begins until the building is locked up – for a total of three hours.

If you schedule your wedding near or during the Christmas season, the sanctuary will already be decorated. If you desire additional wedding decorations, please check with the church office. If the wedding is held on Saturday, the chancel flowers may remain in the church for Sunday services. Please indicate your desire on the information form or speak with the church secretary.

Photographs

In order to protect the worshipful atmosphere of the marriage service, the following guidelines have been established. Photographers are required to abide by these guidelines. It is the couple's responsibility to instruct the photographer regarding these guidelines. Ushers are to see that these are made known to wedding guests.

Since the wedding ceremony is a most sacred covenant, photography should not disrupt any portion of the worship service. NO flash photographs are permitted during the worship service proper. This includes the professional photographer and guests. The official photographer may take flash photographs of the wedding party coming into the sanctuary and also of the recessional.

After the ceremony, when the wedding party reassembles for a picture-taking session, guests should be reminded to assist the official photographer in completing his/her task.

As a rule of thumb a three-hour time slot is reserved for your wedding. Access to the building up to 1½ hours prior to the wedding ceremony, and 1½ hours from the time the wedding service begins until the building is locked up – for a total of three hours.

Please note the guidelines for florists and photographers in the back of this booklet.

Video Tape

Video recordings are permissible and encouraged. The photographer shall be as inconspicuous as possible. That means he/she must stay in one place, or as directed by the pastor. Lighting equipment shall be limited to that built into the church building.

The church's video system can record your service for a modest fee. If you wish, you may make an audiocassette of your marriage service. Please discuss details with the pastor.

Should bulletins be desired for use by the congregation in the service, they can be secured from local bookstores and commercially printed.

REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is the time for everyone in the wedding party to practice his or her part and to know exactly what he or she will do at the wedding service. It is most often held the evening preceding the wedding. If there is to be a rehearsal dinner, the rehearsal itself should be scheduled at least one hour before dinner. The rehearsal itself lasts about an hour.

It is expected that appropriate attire be worn during the rehearsal by all members of the wedding party. While this is a joyous occasion, an attitude of reverence in both attire and conduct are expected within the house of God.

It is necessary that the marriage license be delivered to the church office three days before the rehearsal.

DRESSING ROOMS

A room will be reserved exclusively for the use of the bride and her attendants. A room is also available for the groom and groomsmen.

It should be understood that eating and drinking is prohibited in these areas, also alcohol is Not Allowed. In the excitement and confusion of the occasion, stains could easily occur on the carpeting and are very difficult to remove.

GUEST BOOK AND GIFTS

If the guest book is to be signed within the church, we suggest you make arrangements for someone to supervise it. The church will provide a guest book stand, if desired.

Gifts may be brought to the church, but you should arrange to have someone look after them, since the church cannot assume responsibility for any loss that might occur.

PARKING

There are two parking lots. The main lots are on the North end of the church building, with multiple handicapped parking places on the Northwest side. There is parking on the side streets and on the lots of area businesses (if not open for business).

CUSTODIAN

The custodian will open the building before the wedding so that the florist and wedding party will have access to the building. As a rule of thumb a three-hour time slot is reserved for your wedding. Access to the building up to 1½ hours prior to the wedding ceremony, and 1½ hours from the time the wedding service begins until the building is locked up – for a total of three hours. The custodian should be notified in writing through the church office a week prior to the wedding concerning your needs, such as arrangement of chairs, tables, or public address system for reception.

STATE MARRIAGE LAWS

Prior to obtaining a marriage license, both the bride and groom must have received AIDS counseling and secure a certificate that it has taken place. The certificate may be on a Michigan form, an out-of-state form, or an Armed Forces form.

Certificates must be presented at the time the marriage license is applied for at the County Clerk's office. It is not necessary for both parties to be present when application is made.

Out-of-state residents must apply in the county in which they will be married. If one or both of the applicants are residents of Michigan, application must be made in the county where one of them resides, but such license can then be used anywhere in the State of Michigan. Minimum age is 18; however, a female with parental or legal guardian's consent may apply for a license at age 16 or 17.

Information needed at the time of application:

Applicants' full names, ages, birthdates, place of birth, occupation, and parents' full names, including the maiden name of the mothers, is required. There is a three-day waiting period after the application before the license can be picked up. Example – application made on Monday can be picked up Thursday; application made on Tuesday can be picked up Friday; application made on Wednesday through Friday can be picked up Monday.

The license is valid for 30 days. Two copies of the license are issued. The officiating minister will sign both, give one to the couple after the marriage, and file the other with the County Clerk's office. It is imperative that the license is delivered to the church three days before the wedding rehearsal.

RECEPTIONS AT THE CHURCH

Subject to church functions and member priority reservations must be made at least one month in advance, and payment of all fees shall be made to the church office one week prior to the wedding. Arrangements for your reception should be made at the same time that you reserve the church for your wedding.

The church Fellowship Hall will be used for receptions. It can accommodate up to 240 guests. The facility is not air-conditioned. Additional information is available through the church office.

All wedding receptions held in this church, for both members and non-members, will be under the direction of the Wedding Hostess, or her designated alternate, at the stated fee.

CHILDREN IN THE CEREMONY

Children are welcome to participate in the worship service. It may be helpful to remember that young children have a way of becoming frightened. It is sometimes appropriate to have them be part of the processional and recessional only.

WEDDING FEES

Wedding fees have been set by the Session to cover the service of staff and the costs of equipment and facilities. Payment must be made at least one week prior to the wedding. For the sake of convenience, fees may be placed in individual envelopes, appropriately marked, and brought to the Church Office before the wedding. A deposit is due (active members – no deposit required; non-members - \$50 deposit) when the date is confirmed and will be applied to the wedding fees.

Wedding Date _____ Fees Due _____

	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Your Wedding</u>
*SANCTUARY (wedding)		
members (active)	N/C	_____
non-members	\$300	_____
*CHAPEL (wedding)		
members (active)	N/C	_____
non-members	\$150	_____
*ORGANIST	\$100	_____
CHURCH MEMBER SOLOIST	\$75	_____
INSTRUMENTALISTS	\$50	_____
BELL CHOIR (which includes a contribution to the choir fund & a fee for the director)	\$150	_____
*UNITY CANDLE	\$25	_____
*CUSTODIAN	\$50	_____
with reception at church, add	\$50	_____
*WEDDING HOSTESS	\$50	_____
with reception at church, add	\$50	_____
*RECEPTION (Fellowship Hall)		
members (active)	N/C	_____
non-members	\$150	_____
*RECEPTION ASSISTANTS ()		
\$25 per assistant	_____	_____
**VIDEO TAPING	\$100	_____
TOTAL		_____

MINISTER’S HONORARIUM

This is customarily the responsibility of the Groom and should be in keeping with time spent in counseling, rehearsing and supervising the entire wedding. The Session recommends a minimum honoraria of \$175.

*One check made out to First Presbyterian Church – Bay City is appropriate for any or all of these fees. Ordinarily, fees are paid by Bride’s family except Honorarium for the Minister (\$175).

**When camera project is complete this service will be available.

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW

The marriage service is one of great joy, but also of reverence and dignity. Ushers are to help all guests understand this expectation. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted within the church building or on the grounds at any time.

Smoking is not permitted in the church.

Rice, Confetti, etc. have created difficulties for the church and the staff in the past. The policy of the church is that there will be NO rice, confetti, or similar items thrown in the church building or on the grounds. This is for safety hazard, insurance and cleaning reasons. If you really want to throw something, birdseed would be okay. Ushers are responsible for enforcing these guidelines.

WEDDING HOSTESS

A Wedding Hostess is required for all sanctuary weddings. She will receive a copy of your Wedding Information form when you return it. However, you will personally need to contact her for an individual appointment to review arrangements. You will find her very helpful in suggesting protocol on the day of your wedding and assisting you during the rehearsal. She will show you the appropriate building facilities you will be using.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Personal possessions such as purses, wallets, and cameras should not be left in rooms during or after the wedding. The church is not responsible for the safety of these articles should they be left in rooms during the ceremony.

Persons arranging for the use of the church building shall assume responsibility for any burns or other defacements of church property occurring during the wedding and/or reception.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

The way to have a really great wedding is not always to spend the most money or do the most outlandish things, or to invent new symbols. The way to have a really great wedding is to show thoughtful observance of the religious significance, good taste and basic good sense. Those are qualities that everyone will respect and admire. Above all, you will respect yourself and remember this as the beautiful occasion it ought to be.

CHURCH STAFF
who will be working with you

PASTOR.....
.....

Dr. Jeffrey D. Weenink

ORGANIST.....
.....

(Names available through
the church office.)

CHURCH SECRETARY.....
.....

Carol Collins 892-1591

WEDDING HOSTESS.....
.....
.....
.....

Carolyn Lazarowicz
Charity Morse
Julia Starkweather

CUSTODIAN.....

Ron Wardynski

Office Hours: Monday through Friday
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.