

# Weddings at First Pres



FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
Ann Arbor | Michigan

*Revised June 2016*

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## Weddings

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming wedding! We are delighted to know that you are interested in having your wedding at First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor. We believe that “marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family” (Directory for Worship, from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA), and for that reason we take very seriously our role in assisting couples to plan for their wedding day.

Marriage is a civil contract and some guidance is given in this booklet for obtaining a marriage license. Christian marriage is a service of worship. Couples seeking to be married at First Presbyterian should contact the church Office Manager. She will arrange for a wedding coordinator to talk further with you and will set up a meeting with a pastor as soon as possible. No wedding is officially scheduled on the church calendar until this meeting has taken place. Guest ministers may be a part of the wedding ceremony, and this booklet provides some direction for those situations.

The wedding ceremony in our tradition may be characterized as one of simple dignity. “Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance worshipers’ consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life” (Directory of Worship).

The key to understanding wedding ceremonies in a Presbyterian church is to remember that weddings are, first and last, a service of worship.

The information provided here, including all policies and procedures, assists couples to plan for a wedding ceremony that is simple, joyful, beautiful, and appropriate for our faith tradition. It is the couple’s responsibility to communicate all of First Presbyterian Church’s policies and procedures to any outside coordinators or service providers.





## Planning & Preparing for Your Wedding & Marriage

The pastors at First Presbyterian Church take seriously their responsibility to prepare couples not only for the wedding ceremony but for their life after the ceremony. Couples who are married at First Presbyterian Church are asked to prepare for their wedding and marriage in at least two ways.

First, couples must schedule an appointment with the pastor who will be officiating at their service as soon as that assignment is made. The pastor will discern their “commitment, responsibility, maturity, and Christian understanding” of marriage. (Directory for Worship). Each pastor will have his or her own strategy for preparing couples, and this information will be shared in the initial meeting.

Some of the areas to be discussed include:

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 commitment

Second, couples married at First Presbyterian Church are required to participate in counseling or a marriage preparation workshop. Details about these sessions will be shared during the initial meeting with the pastor.

## Scheduling

Not every day or weekend is a good time for a wedding at First Presbyterian Church. Sundays, for example, ordinarily are not good days for weddings. Weddings may not be scheduled where there are conflicts with the church schedule which must take priority.

### **Weddings ordinarily may not be scheduled on:**

- Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday (which is the period known in the Christian faith as “Holy Week”)
- The week of the Ann Arbor Art Fairs
- Saturdays with University of Michigan home football games
- The weekend of the University of Michigan spring commencement

### **Weddings for Non-Members**

Members of First Presbyterian Church, as well as members of their immediate families, may be married at the church. In certain circumstances, non-members may be married at the church as well, though there will be an additional fee for building usage.

Special consideration will be given to non-members:

- if the couple is currently or has been active members of another church and wish, for a variety of reasons, to be married in Ann Arbor,
- if the couple has been regularly involved in the life and worship of First Presbyterian Church for six months or more,
- if the couple commits to uniting with First Presbyterian Church soon after the wedding or if they commit themselves to uniting with another church in their new community

### **Officiating Minister**

The process for scheduling a wedding at First Presbyterian Church begins with making an appointment through the Office Manager with the pastor. It is the policy of the church that one of the pastors of First Presbyterian Church officiates at every wedding held at church. When a couple requests the participation of a guest minister, the pastor from First Presbyterian Church will extend the invitation to the guest minister.





## Music

A wedding ceremony is a service of worship. Suitable music directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. The congregation may join in hymns or other musical forms of praise and prayer.

The Director of Music Ministries must be contacted as soon as possible

after your wedding date has been approved and cleared with the minister who will perform your ceremony and before any musicians are engaged. All music at First Presbyterian Church is acoustical and performed 'live,' that is, without the use of pre-recorded accompaniments or amplification. The use of microphones to amplify soloists' voices is not permitted. Musical selections must be approved by the Director of Music Ministries who will be helpful in discussing your options with you.

One of First Presbyterian Church's organists will provide all services which include the organ, piano, or keyboard during the ceremony. If First Presbyterian Church's organist is unavailable, the Director of Music Ministries will arrange for a well-qualified organist for your wedding. That organist will meet with you to plan the processional, recessional, and supplemental selections.

## Decorations

The sanctuary has a beauty of its own that requires little additional adornment. One floral arrangement may be placed under the cross. The size must not exceed 10-1/2 inches in diameter and 5-1/2 inches in height. The arrangement cannot be higher than 17-1/2 inches above the top of the liner.

A simple flower, fern, and/or bow may be attached to the sides of pews along the center aisle. No tacks may be used. This must be provided by the family or the florist. No other floral arrangements or decorations are allowed in the sanctuary.

Aisle runners (no plastic) may be used and can be provided, if desired, by the florist. The aisle is 114 feet long.

## Candles

For Sunday worship two candles in the chancel are lighted, and these are available without charge for weddings as well. A pair of floor candelabra (7 candles per stand) may be used on either side of the communion table. A full candlelight service requires 24 candles on the walls (sconces) and 18 aisle candles. Please note that there is an additional fee for a full candlelight service.

“Unity candles” are not a part of a Presbyterian wedding service, but may be used if supplied by the couple. A holder is available at the church. The center candle should be at least 6 inches tall and 2 inches in diameter. Two taper candles will also need to be provided. The most appropriate size is 12 inches tall and 3-4 inches in diameter. If a unity candle is to be used, it must be brought to the rehearsal.

## Rehearsal

Rehearsals take place the evening prior to the wedding day. Ordinarily rehearsals begin at 5:00 p.m. The couple should clearly communicate the starting time of the rehearsal to the wedding party. Every detail of the wedding will be carefully covered at the rehearsal, so the entire wedding party, including readers and other participants, must be prompt and in attendance. Rehearsals are not required for small or informal weddings, but may occur in consultation with the pastor.

## Dressing Rooms

Rooms with mirrors are available at the church for both women and men. The Wedding Coordinator will direct members of the wedding party to these rooms.

## Rice, Confetti, Bird Seed, Etc.

First Presbyterian Church does not allow rice, confetti, bird seed, or anything else to be thrown at the conclusion of the service – either inside or outside the church. Soap bubbles are acceptable outdoors.



## Cigarette Smoking and Alcoholic Beverages

No smoking or alcoholic beverages are allowed in the church building or on the grounds. Failure to abide by this policy will result in the cancellation of the wedding.

## Photography/Videography

Since a wedding is a service of worship, working within the parameters at First Presbyterian for photography and videography is essential. Flash photography is not permitted. Couples are to advise their guests that the church allows no pictures during the wedding ceremony. The official wedding photographer will be able to photograph unobtrusively, but even official photographers must be reminded of the church's policy. During the wedding service the photographer must remain in the rear quarter of the Sanctuary, closest to the narthex, and take only non-flash pictures. There is ample time before and after the service for picture taking. Please be sure to convey these restrictions to your photographer before the wedding date.



If pre-wedding photographs in the Sanctuary are desired, the photographer should begin no earlier than 1-1/2 hours before the service and end no later than 45 minutes before the service.

If post-wedding photographs in the Sanctuary are desired, the church asks that these be completed no more than 30 minutes after the conclusion of the service.

Video taping of the wedding ceremony from the balcony is permitted. Arrangements must be made with the Wedding Coordinator at least a week prior to the ceremony. Extra lighting or other equipment is not permitted.

## Bulletins

The church does not provide bulletins for the wedding ceremony. However, the officiating pastor will be happy to review with you the order of service and show you examples of bulletins from other services if you choose to prepare a bulletin for your service.



## Wedding Fees

The fees are divided into four parts:

1. A security deposit of \$300, due upon the confirmation of your wedding date on the church calendar. This is refundable following the service if there are no damages noted by the Wedding Coordinator, 100% refundable if paid by check, 90% refundable if paid by credit card due to bank charges assessed the church.
2. A professional services charge (\$750/members, \$850/non-members) which includes the fees of the minister and the music director.
3. Facility Fees (waived for members)

Chancel (fewer than 20 guests)	\$100
Terrace or Monteith Hall (20-100 guests)	\$150
Sanctuary (up to 600 guests)	\$750
Social Hall	\$250

**Checks for parts 1, 2, and 3 are payable to First Presbyterian Church.**

4. The services of our Wedding Coordinator are required for all weddings larger than 50 guests. Our Wedding Coordinator is an independent contractor and is to be paid (\$300) by separate check made payable to the coordinator. The check may be mailed to the church with your other fees.

Forty-five days before your wedding a statement of final charges will be sent, with payment due thirty days before your wedding.

### Optional Extra Fees

Candelabra – two free standing	\$ 25 each
Aisle Candles (18) and Sconces (8)	\$100
Additional Musicians	To be determined as contracted





## Washtenaw County Marriage License Requirements

Requirements:

1. Persons 18 years of age and older may be married without parents' consent.
2. Michigan residents must apply in the county where one of the applicants lives (the license is then valid throughout the state). Out of state residents must apply in the county where they plan to be married. The license is then valid only in that county. Marriage licenses in Michigan are valid for 33 days after application.
3. The following is required of **BOTH PERSONS** at the time of application:
  - a. valid driver's license OR state ID
  - b. birth certificate
  - c. certified copy of divorce judgement, if divorced less than 12 months.
4. Fee of \$20 for Michigan residents and \$30 for out of state residents. Only one applicant need appear to apply for the license, but that person must have all of the items listed in #3 above (a photocopy of the other person's driver's license - front and back - is acceptable).

Reminder: The marriage license must be presented to the pastor or wedding coordinator at the time of the rehearsal. Please plan ahead. The license will be completed, signed, and sent to the County Clerk's Office by the church staff after the wedding ceremony.

For more information, go to [www.ewashtenaw.org](http://www.ewashtenaw.org) or call (734) 222-6720

(Note: First Presbyterian Church provides this information as a service to couples. We try to be as accurate as possible, however, final responsibility rests with couples to determine exactly what the county requires to secure a valid marriage license.)

## Wedding Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Linda Robinson, Office Manager at (734) 662-4466, ext. 359 or [Lrobinson@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:Lrobinson@firstpresbyterian.org)) to arrange a meeting with a wedding coordinator and to schedule an appointment with the pastor or her designee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pay the \$300 Security Deposit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with the pastor who will officiate at the wedding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with a Wedding Coordinator.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Tom Granum, Director of Music Ministries at (706) 207-6010 or [tgranum@firstpresbyterian.org](mailto:tgranum@firstpresbyterian.org) after your wedding date has been scheduled and before any musicians are engaged.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Participate in counseling or a marriage preparation workshop.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inform florist of rules and requirements for arrangements and decorations at Frist Presbyterian Church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inform photographer of rules and requirements for photography and videography during the service.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Payment in full is due 30 days before the wedding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding rehearsals are scheduled at 5:00 p.m. the evening prior to the wedding. Inform all members of the wedding party including readers, musicians, etc., of the time of the wedding rehearsal and the expectation of promptness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Don't forget to bring your marriage license to the rehearsal!



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1432 Washtenaw Avenue  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
734 • 662 • 4466  
Rev. Dr. Fairfax F. Fair, Pastor