



Philadelphia Presbyterian Church
Organized 1770

Wedding Procedures

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR UPCOMING WEDDING

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. (W-4.9001 *Book of Order*).

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I. Introduction

Marriage is a blessed and sacred union, and we are delighted to be a part of your plans. It is our desire to make your preparations for this shared life together, and the wedding ceremony as memorable and meaningful as possible. To this end, the Session of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church has approved certain policies regarding weddings, their arrangements and the use of church facilities. The primary reason for having such policies is to assist you in planning a wedding service that is marked by worshipfulness, dignity, and joy.

As a general rule, the bride or groom should be a member of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church.

Please read this information on wedding policies carefully and do not hesitate to raise questions or concerns with the pastor during your conferences together. Kindly complete the Wedding Information Form and Building Usage forms attached and return them to the church office as soon as possible.

II. Directory of Worship Requirements from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

"In preparation for the marriage service, the minister asked to lead the service 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, or a marriage following divorce."

"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” (W-4.9000).

“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 (W-1.4004-.4006). 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. 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” (W-2.4010; W-3.3503).

III. Role of the Minister

The role of the minister is to counsel with the bride and groom, to assure that the service is conducted in a worshipful manner and in accordance with policies of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church. In addition, the minister is an agent of the state as required by law, and all applicable state laws are in effect. If you desire that another pastor officiate at the wedding, that pastor must be approved by the Session and invited by one of the pastors of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church.

VI. Counseling

Since the marriage ceremony is the beginning step in the establishment of a Christian home, it is necessary that you arrange with the minister in charge for a series of conferences prior to the wedding. Arrangements for counseling should be made at least six months prior to the wedding date.

Normally the conference(s) with the minister will consist of counseling with the bride and groom together.

V. Arrangements

A. Worship Service

Above all else, the ceremony of marriage is a Service of Worship. State law does not require that weddings take place in the church, nor does it require that the officiant be an ordained minister. When you make the decision to marry in the church, it should be because you wish to glorify God for the gift of each other; because you desire to affirm your vows in the presence of God, asking God's blessing on your marriage; and because you wish to make the service a witness of faith in Jesus Christ to the gathered congregation.

B. Date

Before a date for the wedding can be put on the church calendar, you must complete the Wedding Application Form and arrange to meet with the minister and with the wedding coordinator. Non-members must pay the Security Deposit and Building Usage fees before the wedding date will be put on the church calendar. A minimum of six months notice prior to the date of the wedding is encouraged.

1. Church Calendar

You shall meet with one of the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church ministers before any arrangements are made, or contracts are signed. The church cannot schedule a wedding or rehearsal in conflict with established services or programs or in close proximity with previously reserved wedding dates and times. A wedding application form and a building usage form must be completed with the Wedding Coordinator.

2. Dates to avoid

Because of the difficulties of securing adequate help and pastoral services, certain holiday and holiday weekend dates should be avoided if at all possible: Christmas week, Holy Week, Thanksgiving weekend.

VI. Wedding Committee/ Wedding Director

A member of the Church Wedding Committee will be the second person for you to meet with to plan the wedding ceremony and to acquaint you with available facilities, services, and equipment. The bride must choose a wedding director from the approved list of directors.

VII. Facilities Available

A. Wedding Service

Two options are available

1. **Main Sanctuary**, seating up to 600 guests,
2. **Chapel**, seating up to 250 guests.

B. Other Facilities

A number of excellent facilities are available to accommodate your needs for post-rehearsal activities, bridal showers or receptions. These facilities must be scheduled through the church office and a building usage form must be filed with the church office.

1. **Kerr Family Recreation Center** accommodates up to 500 persons, 225 if seated at tables. Kitchen facilities are available.
2. **Baxter Bigham Hall** accommodates up to 175 guests or 125, if seated at tables. Limited kitchen facilities are available.

C. Furnishings for Wedding Functions

Depending on the facility used, the church has available round, oval, and rectangular tables, and has an adequate supply of chairs. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to set up and take down all tables and chairs for functions. All furnishings must be placed the same way the room was found.

D. Dressing Rooms

An attractively furnished dressing room for the bride and her attendants is available.

A room may also be provided for the best man and groom if a changing or waiting area is needed. It is expected that the wedding party arrive no more than three hours prior to the ceremony.

E. Reception

If a reception or reception dinner is planned at the church, you will be responsible for engaging a caterer. The caterer must first meet with a member of the Wedding Committee, at least 30 days prior to the wedding, in order to use Philadelphia Presbyterian Church's kitchen facilities. The church cannot accept responsibility for accepting the cake or other food items. When the kitchen facilities are used, the Wedding Coordinator must be contacted to appoint a representative from Philadelphia Presbyterian Church to be present

throughout the time the kitchen is in use. The kitchen must be left as it is found with respect to the cleaning and storing of dishes, condition of floor, silverware, utensils, and the removal of trash.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform the caterer of the church policies. The caterer is to indicate his or her acceptance of and compliance with the policies by signing and returning the enclosed blue sheet entitled "Guidelines for Caterers."

VIII. Rehearsal

Generally, a rehearsal should be scheduled for all wedding services. All members of the wedding party should be in attendance and should arrive promptly before the scheduled time of the rehearsal. Generally the time allotted for the rehearsal is one hour

It is recommended that the rehearsal be scheduled as early as possible in the evening. Any extension in the time of the rehearsal beyond one hour will require additional fees for staff assisting with the wedding.

IX. Music

Music should be chosen with the specific intent of giving glory to God, and expressing faith and belief of the Church.

A conference must be planned with the organist at least six weeks prior to the wedding to discuss the selection of music and the choice of a soloist, if needed. You may wish to include congregational singing, recognizing that your service is primarily a Service of Worship. Music for a church wedding may include an instrumental prelude (approximately 20 minutes of music before the hour of the service and during that time when the mothers of the bride and groom are seated), processional music (for the entrance of the clergy and wedding party), any hymns to be sung by the congregation, solos and the Recessional music (for members of the wedding party in the processional to exit).

Organ and/or piano may be used during the service. It is expected that the organist of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church shall play for all weddings. In the event that the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church organist is not available, the organist will provide the name of another approved organist.

Other instruments may be used, subject to the approval of the pastor and organist. **No recorded music is permissible.**

All wedding music, whether played by the organist or by other instrumentalists, shall be approved by the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church organist.

If there is to be vocal or other music as part of the service, all pertinent sheet music must reach the organist at least one month prior to the service, unless the organist agrees otherwise. Rehearsals with the organist can be arranged immediately preceding the rehearsal and/or wedding. Additional rehearsals may be scheduled for an additional fee. It is strongly recommended that only experienced, musicians be used.

X. Photographs

Every opportunity and courtesy will be given prior to and/or following the service for photographs to be taken. Any part of the service can be posed at that time, and the minister(s) will be available for such photographs. Please arrange for the minister(s) to be in the first photos. Any pre-service photographs should be finished one hour prior to the wedding service.

In order to preserve the dignity of the service and to respect God's house, **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHS** may be taken during the service. Failure to follow guidelines could result in the photographer's being barred from working other weddings at our church. Permission may be granted only to the official photographer to take a photograph without flash of the processional and recessional, One or two photographs may be taken from the balcony during the service with a silent shutter without flash.

The Wedding Party is urged to advise all guests with cameras that no photographs may be taken during the service itself.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform the photographer of the church policies. The photographer is to indicate his or her acceptance of and compliance with the policies by signing and returning the enclosed yellow sheet entitled "Guidelines for Photographers."

XI. Videography

Video recordings of the service may be made from the balcony. An unmanned video camera may be placed on a tripod in the choir loft or in other locations hidden from view at the discretion of the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church director using natural light only. The camera operator in the balcony should restrict movement to an absolute minimum, or the camera may be

placed permanently on a tripod for the duration of the service. Video cameras are **not** allowed in any locations without permission of the Wedding Director.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform the videographer of the church policies. The videographer is to indicate his or her acceptance of and compliance with the policies by signing and returning the enclosed pink sheet entitled "Guidelines for Videographers."

XII. Audio Recording

Only a Philadelphia Presbyterian Church sound technician will operate the sound equipment. Two wireless microphone sets are available, and may be used under the supervision of an approved sound technician. A cassette recording of the wedding ceremony will be provided for the couple. No outside sound equipment may be used.

The Chapel has no recording capabilities.

XIII. Decorations

Great care and expense have been invested in the design of the sanctuaries so as to give glory to God. Mindful of this, we seek to keep additional decorations to a minimum. Floral or ribbon markers for the pews of the immediate family are acceptable, but beyond a simple adornment of flowers and candles in the chancel, other decorations are discouraged (*W-4.9005 Book of Order*).

The church traditionally uses the beautiful white and gold paraments (embroidered drapes for pulpit and lectern) for weddings.

When the church has been decorated for a particular Christian season, such as Easter, Advent or Christmas, rearrangement or removal of the church's decorations is **not** permitted. Please be sure to check on the extent of these arrangements if your wedding is planned for either of these times. Nails, tacks, staples or tape may not be used on church walls or furnishings.

A. Furnishings

The chancel furnishings (pulpit, communion table, lectern, baptismal font) and flags may not be removed from the chancel. A kneeling bench, a brass unity candle, and a pair of brass 7 branch candelabra, and candle lighters can be provided by the church. (\$25 will be charged for use of the candelabra to replace required candles.)

B. Flowers

Our church has two flower stands and matching brass containers for floral arrangements that use standard #4 mache liners. Our permanent containers must remain in the Sanctuary. When used tastefully and modestly, simple floral arrangements can greatly enhance the setting of the service in the chancel (i.e., raised) area. No flower arrangements are to be placed on the Communion table. Please give these guidelines to the person handling the flowers for the wedding. Please check with the minister or wedding director if you have questions in this regard.

If a flower girl is used to distribute petals along the aisle, only white petals may be used to prevent carpet stains. No aisle cloths or runners are permitted.

A special pew holder must be used to place bows and flowers on the pews. Wire tacks and tape cannot be used to attach these items to the pews.

Flowers, candelabra, and other decorations should be completely removed within two hours following the service, unless prior arrangements have been made. Appropriate floral decorations will be welcomed by the church for the Sunday worship services, and can be appropriately acknowledged in the Sunday bulletin, providing no other floral arrangements have been previously arranged for that Sunday. If you wish to do so, please contact the church office.

Florists should make arrangements with the wedding director regarding delivery and set-up of floral decorations.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform the florist of the church policies. The florist is to indicate his or her acceptance of and compliance with the policies by signing and returning the enclosed green sheet entitled "Guidelines for Florists."

C. Candles

Candles may be used in the chancel area only (Chase or spring-loaded candles are not recommended). No more than two free-standing candelabra, in addition to the unity candle may be used. A clear drip mat should be placed on the floor beneath the candelabra.

Candles may not be used in the aisles, on pews, in windows or elsewhere in the main Sanctuary or Chapel for safety reasons.

XIV. Other Regulations

Smoking is not permitted inside the church buildings at any time.

Alcohol may not be consumed on church property. Under no circumstances are members of the wedding party, their guests and persons providing wedding services allowed to attend the wedding or rehearsal under the influence of alcohol. Violation may be cause for the minister not to perform the wedding.

Birdseed, bubbles and rose petals may not be distributed or thrown anywhere inside the church buildings but are permitted outside. Rice and confetti may not be used.

When breakage or damage or loss of items is incurred to the church property as a direct result of wedding activities (i.e., rehearsal dinners, receptions), the bride and groom will be expected to make restitution of such damage.

If you choose to create a wedding bulletin, please have the order of worship approved by the minister before the final printing. **The church staff is unable to prepare wedding bulletins.**

If you desire that the congregation be invited to the wedding, please mail an invitation one month in advance to: Congregation of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church, 11501 Bain School Road, Charlotte, NC 28227.

A person representing Philadelphia Presbyterian Church, who has authority to enforce the rules set forth for weddings in the church, shall be present at every rehearsal, wedding, and reception. The person in charge shall have complete authority to cancel a wedding or a rehearsal for any deviation from this church's policies, including any disruptive or inappropriate behavior.

The church will make every effort to protect personal items such as wedding dresses, purses, and silver brought to the church to be used in a wedding or a wedding reception. However, the church cannot be liable for items that are lost, stolen or damaged.

XV. Fees

There are no fees for building use when either the bride or groom is a member or former member (active, inactive, or baptized) of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church.

A. Building Usage fees (non-members)

1. Fees/Security Deposit for Non-Members

A \$250 refundable security deposit and all required building usage fees must accompany the wedding application form to the church office before the wedding date will be put on the church calendar. If the wedding is canceled by the wedding party more than 30 days prior to the wedding, all fees and the security deposit will be refunded in full. If the wedding is canceled by the wedding party less than 30 days prior to the wedding, the entire security deposit and one-half of the building usage fees will be refunded. The security deposit will be refunded in full within five business days after the wedding, if all guidelines and regulations as stated herein are observed.

2. Building Usage

Sanctuary with rehearsal	\$400
Main Sanctuary, wedding only	\$300
Chapel with rehearsal	\$300
Chapel, wedding only	\$250
Kerr Family Recreation Center (for each use)(max. 6 hr.)	\$350*
Baxter Bigham Hall (charge for each use)	\$200*

*These charges include the use of facilities (including kitchen) for up to 6 hours. If church tables and chairs are used, the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church custodian must set up and take down for an additional fee. Plates, glassware, table linens, silverware are not available for non-members' use. These items may be rented from an outside supplier.

B. Staff Fees (These fees apply to both members and non-Members)

Minister: an honorarium is acceptable.
(suggested honorarium is \$350.00, which includes counseling session(s), the rehearsal and the wedding service). Note: for Non-members the fee will be \$350.)

Organist (rehearsal and wedding): \$250.

(If rehearsal takes over 1 hour, an additional fee is charged.)

(Wedding only - less than 30 people)\$150.

Wedding Director: \$200.

Sound Technician (sanctuary): \$75.

Sound Technician (Kerr Building): \$25 per hour.

Custodian (rehearsal and wedding): \$150.

(wedding only): \$100.

(additional function*): \$100 (minimum).

Kitchen Supervisor: \$25 per hour

(*Other activities requiring set up and clean up by the custodian, in addition to the wedding, would constitute additional functions.)

Wedding fees for director, organist, custodian and sound technician and kitchen supervisor must be paid at the church office at least 10 days prior to the wedding. The check is to be made to Philadelphia Presbyterian Church.

C. Other Fees

* Candelabra - \$25

If rehearsal dinner or reception is held on church property, restitution for breakage, damages, or loss of any church glassware, silverware, utensils, or equipment will be the responsibility of the bride and groom.

D. Deposits

Linens - \$10 per table cloth and/or skirt.

XVI. Policy Communication

It is the responsibility of the families of the bride and groom to communicate these policies to all members of the wedding party and to all persons involved in the preparation for the wedding. Included with this Policy booklet are various colored sheets for you to give to the caterer, florist, photographer and videographer. The signed sheets must be returned at least 30 days prior to the wedding in order for that individual to be given permission to be involved in your wedding at Philadelphia Presbyterian Church..

Approved by Session: March 20, 2006

Checklist summary for planning a wedding at Philadelphia Presbyterian Church

1. Call the church office at 704-545-6172 and speak with one of the pastors to arrange pre-marital counseling (*W-4.9002 Book of Order*). All weddings must be approved by one of the pastors before the sanctuary or reception areas can be reserved. We strongly recommend that you do not make any arrangements or sign any contracts with vendors until after you meet with one of the ministers for counseling.

Note: If you desire to have another minister involved in the wedding, approval must first be given by one of the pastors and the Session. You need to provide the guest minister's name, denomination, work address, home and work phone number. If approval is given, the Philadelphia presiding minister will then issue the invitation to the guest minister.

2. Contact the wedding coordinator, Becky Griffin, at 704-545-5766 to make an appointment to review the wedding policy, complete the Wedding Application Form, and select a wedding director from the approved list.

3. After the required wedding information form and building usage form (with any required fees) have been returned to the church office the wedding date will be placed on the church calendar and the wedding information sent to the Session for approval.

4. Contact the church organist, Leslie Anderson at 704-545-1880 to confirm his availability, to discuss music selections, and to obtain his approval.

5. Ten days prior to the wedding, submit payment of all fees and signed forms from florist, photographer, videographer, and caterer, as applicable.

Wedding Details
(For Bride's Use)

Best Man _____

Groomsmen _____

Matron or Maid of
Honor _____

Bridesmaids _____

Ring Bearer _____

Flower Girl _____

Wedding Director: _____

Phone No. _____

Soloist _____

Other participants _____

Number expected for service _____

Number expected for rehearsal _____

Notes: