

# **Wedding and Reception Policy**

***"And the two shall become one..."***

## **THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

We believe a wedding to be a worship service celebrating the couple's commitment, made to each other in a communal setting in God's presence.

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

We believe that each couple has potential for building a strong relationship, and that the church has a role in nurturing that wholeness before, during, and after the wedding ceremony. When a couple seeks a Christian wedding, ministers and their churches are committed to fulfilling their special role in relating people to one another and their God.

Therefore, at First Christian Church the wedding ceremony, when conducted in the church, is not just a civil or social occasion performed within the walls of a religious building. It is a service of worship, an act of the deepest dedication. Prayers are offered, solemn vows are made, and great music of the church is heard. All who are present for such a service and particularly all the members of the wedding party are expected to be in the spirit of sincere worship.

One of the most lovely and beautiful ministries the church celebrates is the institution of marriage. Couples who desire to experience this ceremony in the spirit of God and who will use Christ's Church with reverence and good taste are welcomed by this congregation to use these facilities and the services of its staff.

## **REGARDING THIS POLICY**

This policy has been presented to the Board of First Christian Church, Peoria, Illinois. It is the expectation of the church that the couple, members of the church, and church staff follow this policy as set forth in this document. If you have any questions regarding this policy, be sure to talk them over with our minister prior to the wedding service.

## **THE PASTORAL TEAM**

The Pastor shall preside at all weddings. Under special circumstances the Pastor may, at his/her discretion, permit a qualified pastor not on the church staff to preside at a wedding held in First Christian Church. The final decision rests with the Pastor. [Note: In the event there is no Pastor on staff of the First Christian Church the Board of Elders will assume the decision making responsibilities on behalf of the Pastor.]

## **SCHEDULING A TIME AND DATE**

It is important that you consult our pastor early. He or she will help you in every way he or she can. His or her greatest concern will be that Christ is exalted in your marriage and that Christ's loving presence will be with you all your wedded life. Your wedding date can be final ONLY after it has been determined that the church calendar and our pastor's schedule will allow for the date you have chosen. This will be done at the first counseling session with the pastor. (You should not have your invitations printed until after you have this meeting) Our church understands that a wedding is a very important time in life for both the family and the church. At the same time, the worship of God is our

primary purpose, which this church takes very seriously. Our goal at First Christian Church is to find a balance that covers both of these important ministries.

### **PREMARITAL COUNSELING**

Our pastor will need to meet with you at least twice for this counseling. It will include a general discussion about your personal preparation as a couple for marriage, meaning of the wedding service, and details about the service. Please remember that the marriage is a sacred institution and the wedding is a service of worship seeking God's blessing upon the act of marriage. The premarital counseling then is to help you, as a couple, understand the act of marriage and the importance of Christ's church in the act.

### **THE ORGANIST**

The organist of the First Christian Church has the right of first refusal to play at all weddings held in the First Christian Church. A request to use another organist shall be submitted to the Pastor and the Director of Music Ministries. Persons qualified to use the church's musical instruments will be allowed to play under the direction of the Pastor presiding at the wedding.

### **THE WEDDING PARTY**

The choice of attendants is yours for the making. It should be noted however that in selecting a flower girl or ring bearer you should take into consideration the age and ability of the children. Younger children will often be the centers of attention rather than the couple. If all this is understood and all right with you, their participation is welcomed. All members of the wedding party should be in the building one-hour before the service. It may be even earlier if pictures are to be taken before the wedding.

### **THE REHEARSAL**

The wedding rehearsal should be held at a time when all members of the wedding party including ushers can be present. They should be reminded that both the wedding and the rehearsal are being conducted in a sanctuary and that they should act accordingly. The pastor will be in charge of the rehearsal.

### **RECEPTIONS**

At the first session with the pastor be sure to clear use of the fellowship hall if you desire to use it for a reception or rehearsal dinners.

## **RULES REGARDING THE USE OF THE CHURCH**

### **WEDDING PICTURES AND VIDEOS**

No pictures can be taken during the wedding service except under the following rules:

- During the ceremony, non-flash pictures or videos can be shot from behind the last pew.
- A video may be set up on a tripod on the chancel to one side according to the instructions of the pastor.
- During the processional and recessional, pictures with flash may be taken, but at NO time will the photographers be allowed beyond the front pew.
- Before and after the ceremony, you may stage all the pictures you desire.

- Be sure your photographer understands that this is a church and he or she is expected to act accordingly. They are invited to contact the pastor if there are any questions.

### **ROOM ARRANGEMENTS**

Comfortable seating for 260 (possibly more). The special arrangement of the property of the church (such as communion table, pulpit, candelabra, etc.) must be approved by the Senior Pastor prior to the rehearsal event. Decorations, flowers, or any items brought into the church must be taken care of by the family.

### **FLORAL PIECES, AND DECORATIONS**

Your florist will need to handle these items. Placement of all items must be discussed with the pastor. No nails, tacks, or staples are to be used on the woodwork or furniture. Those items as well as tape may not be used on the walls. No decoration shall be used so that it would deface any church property or leave any marks. All flowers, candles, and other decorations will have appropriate mats or protection under them to protect carpet and furniture. All decorations must be removed immediately following the wedding unless other arrangements have been made.

### **CANDLES**

Please use dripless candles. You will need to purchase or rent a unity candle set if you want one in your Service.

### **PROHIBITED ACTIONS AND ITEMS**

- Aisle runners can be used but are discouraged. They present a hazard to guests and wedding party alike.
- Smoking can occur only outside in designated areas.
- NO drinking of alcoholic beverages is allowed anywhere on the church property, inside or out.
- No food or drinks are allowed in the sanctuary.
- No rice or confetti is allowed. Birdseed may be thrown, but ONLY outside the building.
- The church staff must be treated with respect and kindness. The staff is working to provide the best results for your wedding while at the same time follow the policies set by the church.
- If there are problems, the church staff will report these to the church Pastor.

### **FORFEITURE OF THE WEDDING PRIVILEGE**

Your privilege can be forfeited if any of the above rules are broken or fees not paid.

### **WEDDING ITEMS FOR YOUR USE**

- Kneeling bench
- An organ that is both electronic and pipe
- Grand piano
- Sound system capable of playing CDs or digital music
- Flower Stands

## WEDDING FEES

	Building Usage	Pastor	Organist / Musician (Right of First Refusal)	Wedding / Bldg. Host (mandatory)	Technology (mandatory if using recorded music)	Custodian	Total Fees
Members, Member's Families & Regular Participating Non-Members	No Charge	Honorarium (Use non-member fee as guide)	To be negotiated	\$100	\$100	\$75	\$275.00 Plus Organist
Non-Members (Sanctuary only) Deposit \$100*	\$250	\$300	To be negotiated	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$850.00 Plus Organist
Non-Members (Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall) Deposit \$100*	\$350	\$300	To be negotiated	\$100	\$100	\$175	\$1,025.00 Plus Organist

All the above fees are due at the second counseling session with the pastor. The fees are to be paid directly to the individual staff member and the church. The pastor will help you get them to the right person. The fees for the church organist, other musicians, or singers must be discussed directly with the persons involved. Please note the section of the policy titled "Organist/Musician."