

Notes Regarding My Wedding

YOUR MARRIAGE

We at Fallston Presbyterian Church are delighted at your coming marriage. We know this is an exciting and happy time for you as you prepare for your life together in Christ. All of us here want to be of the greatest possible assistance to you

as you make your plans in order that the occasion of your marriage will be not only a happy one, but also one with deep spiritual meaning. We are looking forward to sharing in the wedding with you.

As Christians and Presbyterians, we believe that the Christian marriage is a solemn and sacred covenant. A church wedding is a public profession of faith in which the couple and the community seek the blessing of God, so that the couple may be strengthened for their life together and nurtured in their

love for God. A church marriage, as contrasted to a civil marriage regulated only by State Law, is governed by the laws of Christ as well. The Church pledges its loyalty and prayers to the couple being married; and the couple, asking permission to

be married in the church building, publicly promise their loyalty to Christ's Church and announce their intentions to live in marriage as Christian witnesses.

These policies revised and approved November, 2014 by Session.

EXPENSE POLICIES

1. Use of the facilities for any wedding is to be approved by the Session and is subject to their fee schedule. For use of the Sanctuary, equipment and room for dressing, the fee is \$250. For Fellowship Hall, please check with the church office. Prior arrangements to reserve facilities must be made through the church office in order to avoid scheduling conflicts.
2. It is the pastoral privilege of the Pastor of the Fallston Presbyterian Church to officiate at weddings. All couples pay \$350 directly to the Pastor to cover pre-marital counseling, the rehearsal, and the wedding. If counseling is sought elsewhere, the fee is \$150, and the counselor must be willing to speak with the Pastor.
3. The Director of Music has the privilege of playing the music for services. The fee is \$225, paid directly to the Music Director, for preparation, rehearsal, and wedding. If unfamiliar pieces of music must be learned, fees are arranged privately. Contact the Director to arrange a meeting.
4. Parties using church facilities are expected to clean up immediately following the event, and all furniture is expected to be replaced to its normal location. Non-members will be expected to provide a \$250.00 security deposit when their paperwork is submitted. This deposit will be returned by the church after a satisfactory inspection by the Facilities and Grounds Committee the week following the wedding.
5. Post-event cleaning service is arranged through the church office. The fee is \$50, paid to the church directly.
6. **All facility fees are to be paid by the end of business at least two weeks before the day of the wedding, or we reserve the right to cancel your reservation.** If the bride or groom cancels the wedding less than 2 weeks before it is scheduled to take place, the facility deposit is not refunded. If the wedding is cancelled after the Pastor or Director of Music have begun counseling and/or preparations, half of the fees for the Pastor and Director of Music are still owed. **All individual fees are due to be paid by the night of the rehearsal.**

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

The Presbyterian Perspective

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the wellbeing of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between two people. For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a couple is called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a couple to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith. (*Source: Book of Order W-4.9001*)

Therefore, within our church there are certain guidelines that couples seeking to be married must follow:

1. At least one of the partners is a professing Christian; it is hoped that both will share a common faith. Should there be any questions regarding the eligibility of a couple to marry, the Pastor bears the responsibility for a final decision. However, the Pastor may request the advice and counsel of the Session, though the Pastor is not bound by the Session's recommendation.
2. The couple shall seek the permission of the Session for use of the building, reserving it a reasonable time in advance of the wedding date.
3. The couple must understand that the service of marriage is not a sacrament, but that it is a service of holy worship. As such, the order of service and the conduct of the service is under the jurisdiction of the pastor. Details of the service, including music, will be discussed by the couple, the Director of Music, and the Pastor, but final approval of the service rests with the Pastor. The Pastor is also responsible for the direction of the rehearsal.

4. If the couple desires to have a minister other than or in addition to the Pastor of Fallston Presbyterian Church, they should consult with the Pastor in order that the Session may issue an invitation to the guest minister.
5. Fallston Presbyterian Church considers pre-marital counseling an essential part of weddings performed in this church. Therefore, couples wishing to be married will meet with the Pastor or a counselor approved by the Pastor for a series of sessions. It is the responsibility of the engaged couple to contact the Pastor well in advance of the wedding date to schedule counseling.

If the Pastor is convinced after discussions with the couple that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the Pastor shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and inform the couple of those issues of concern and reservation, and may choose to not conduct the ceremony or suggest postponement. In making this decision, the Pastor may seek the counsel of the Session.

Destination or off site weddings require separate considerations with the Pastor regarding expenses.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. All persons taking part in the wedding, including ushers, attendants, processing family members, musicians, and soloists should attend the wedding rehearsal.
2. The rehearsal time should be arranged when the facilities are initially reserved. In fairness to all those involved, the rehearsal must begin promptly and should proceed without unnecessary delay. Candid photographs are permitted during the rehearsal, so long as they do not interfere with or delay the progress of the rehearsal. The rehearsal should last no more than one hour, and is under the direction of the Pastor.
3. If the Fellowship Hall or any other rooms are used for dressing or refreshments prior to the wedding, it is expected that the bridal party will remove all articles of apparel, boxes, paper, and other items immediately following the wedding. These rooms and the sanctuary are to be left in the condition in which they were found. The custodial service will clean floors, bathrooms, etc. following the wedding. If cleanup is excessive, the couple will be charged for the additional expense. In planning a reception at the church, it is important that arrangements be made with the church office well in advance.
4. No alcohol or tobacco are allowed on the premises at any time. Sanctuary furniture may not be moved outside the sanctuary area. The cross shall not be moved inside the sanctuary. The church playground is not authorized for use during a wedding except at one's own risk.
5. Rice, birdseed, and other similar substances are not permitted inside the building under any circumstances. Birdseed only is permitted outside the building, and it is the responsibility of the wedding party to see that the seed is swept from all walkways and steps after the service.

Please make sure the wedding party is aware of the rules.

FLOWERS AND DECORATING

1. Please ensure that no decorations or flowers block, detract from or are attached to the cross.
2. All candles must be non-drip wax.
3. In securing decorations, you may not use any permanent or semi-permanent means to attach them (no nails, screws, tape, etc. that would affect the furniture or carpet).
4. If you have any questions about procedures for decorating, please contact the church office, since any damage to the facilities would be charged against your deposit.

HOLY COMMUNION

A couple may choose to have the Lord's Supper included as part of the wedding service, but it must be approved by the Session ahead of time, and be a table open to all baptized people who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. To make this request, please contact the Pastor.

COORDINATOR

The church can seek a member of the church as the coordinator of the wedding. This member would attend the rehearsal, help with any facility need, and be available to answer questions and help with the wedding.

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

While the Presbyterian Church does not have a specifically prescribed form for the wedding ceremony, there are some elements that must be included and some guidelines for the conduct of the service. These elements and guidelines are described as follows in the *Book of Order* (W-4.9004):

The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The couple shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the couple is now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.

The couple may suggest other material to be used in the service. Detail regarding the order and the content of the service shall be discussed and arranged by the couple and the Pastor, who has final authority over the order and conduct of the service.

If a couple wishes to write their own vows, the Pastor must review and approve them ahead of time.

PHOTOGRAPHS, RECORDINGS and VIDEOS

Consideration for the sanctity of the worship service must be observed at all times when making arrangements for photographs, recordings and videos.

1. No flash photography is permitted under any circumstances during the service, which includes professional photographers, family and guests. The service begins after the processional and ends with the charge and benediction before the recessional. Any photography during the service, without flash, must be done from the back or the balcony.
2. Photographs may be taken in the sanctuary before and after the service.
3. Any installation of audio and video recording equipment must be approved by the Pastor, shall not be attached to church furniture, and must not hinder the movement of the wedding party or the vision of the guests.
4. Approved equipment must be set up at least one hour prior to the service, and equipment operators and photographers are strongly encouraged to attend the rehearsal.
5. All work must be done with good judgment and the least amount of confusion and is under the discretion of the Pastor.

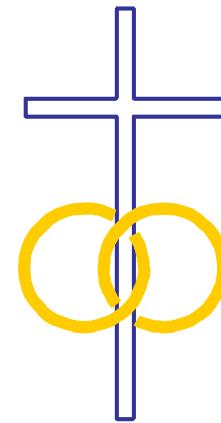
WEDDING MUSIC

The wedding ceremony is intended to be a service of holy worship, and the sanctuary is intended for use in the gathering of the faith community for public worship, therefore wedding music shall reflect these spiritual intentions.

1. Music used in the wedding service shall be sacred, classical, or liturgical in nature. Music suitable to the occasion directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church (Book of Order W-2.1004). Music must be approved by the Director of Music.
2. The singing of hymns by the congregation may be included in the wedding service.
3. The couple has the responsibility of contacting the Director of Music regarding the wedding music. Ordinarily, the Director of Music handles the music for the service. Other organists, musicians or soloists are permitted, but the Pastor and/or Director of Music reserve the right to approve the musicians. Any fees or contracts with other musicians are to be handled by the couple, and are not the responsibility of the church.



GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS



*Fallston Presbyterian Church
600 Fallston Road, P.O. Box 54
Fallston, Maryland 21047
(410) 879-7729*