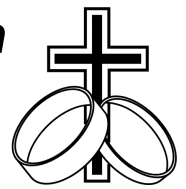




First Presbyterian Church of Dunellen

WEDDING GUIDE



"Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man.' That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." (Genesis 2:22-24)

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY TOGETHER

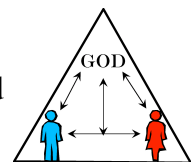
Congratulations! You and your fiancé are beginning an exciting journey together. It is a partnership that men and women were made to share together. We are glad you desire to be married at First Presbyterian Church of Dunellen, New Jersey. At FPCD we take our commitment to care for, nurture and support you very seriously. We hope that this Wedding Guide will help you in your wedding preparations, tell you what you need to know about our beliefs regarding marriage and our wedding policies, and hopefully answer many of the questions you may have at this time.

A CHRISTIAN WEDDING

At FPCD we only celebrate Christian Weddings. We believe that marriage was created by God and is to be governed by God's word under the Lordship of Jesus. The First Presbyterian Church of Dunellen is a member of ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, and together we believe that marriage is a life-long covenant between one man, one woman, and God. Regardless of any civil laws to the contrary, and in accordance with this doctrine, only such weddings may be conducted in our facilities, or by our pastors, regardless of location. Ordinarily, at least one member of any couple married at First Presbyterian Church is a Covenant Partner (Member) of First Presbyterian Church. In all cases, both members of any couple shall be professing Christians, active in the work and worship of their own local church. For those who are not Covenant Partners of First Presbyterian Church a letter of reference will be requested from the pastor of their church affirming their active participation in the work and worship of the church. In the case of children of our church who have moved away but wish to be married in their "home church," letters of reference will be requested from the pastor of the church where each person is active.

A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

A Christian Wedding begins a Christian Marriage. Marriage is a covenant: a binding relationship made between one man and one woman that is rooted and established in God. As Genesis 2:22-24 indicates, the reason a man leaves his family to be united as one flesh with his wife is because that is the way God made humankind to be. A Christian marriage joins two individual Christians into an intimate and exclusive marriage relationship with each other before God. As such, the marriage relationship is the foundational unit of the Christian family. It is a sacred and honored covenant relationship. It is important that both individuals are followers of Jesus in order to be married at FPCD.



CHRISTIAN PURITY

A Christian marriage is binding, exclusive (monogamous) and is to be kept pure. As Hebrews 13:4 states, “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.” Therefore, not only is adultery forbidden, but pre-marital sexual relations as well. Sex was created by God to be a wonderful blessing for a man and a woman to enjoy. It is a covenant creating act, binding a man and woman together in marital unity. Therefore sexual intimacy finds its home only in marriage between a man and a woman. That is why God calls us to fidelity within marriage and chastity outside of marriage. We take seriously the Biblical commands concerning divorce, remarriage, fidelity, and chastity.

If however, this is an area in which you have struggled in past or present relationships, know that there is forgiveness to be found in Christ. There are also changes that have to be made. If you are currently engaging in sexual relations, you will be asked to refrain, seek God’s forgiveness, and commit yourselves to abstain from sexual intimacy until you are married. If you are “living together” you will be asked to separate for the remainder of the engagement period. Or you will be asked to get married immediately, within the next few weeks, as you have already acted as married through sexual intimacy. This will all be discussed confidentially and privately with the officiating pastor.

PRE-MARITAL SESSIONS

We believe strongly that time should be spent in preparing for a life together as husband and wife during the engagement period. Because of this conviction, we consider it essential to hold a series of pre-marital counseling sessions with each couple prior to the wedding date. Our commitment is to celebrate the marriage of persons, not just names. We are committed to getting to know you. Pre-marital counseling, conducted by one of our pastors. It is also a good way for us to encourage the building of strong marriages, in addition to planning beautiful weddings. Once your wedding date has been confirmed, it is **your responsibility** to contact the officiating Pastor to set up the pre-marital sessions. It is helpful when the pre-marital sessions can begin at least six months prior to the wedding date.

WEDDING DATES AND TIMES

To help our pastoral staff, the Session (leadership board) must approve all weddings before a date can be confirmed. Knowing this, as soon as your engagement is official and you have a date in mind we advise you schedule to meet with the pastor and complete the Wedding Information Form and Pre-Marital Counseling Covenant. A confirmation will be sent once the session has approved a wedding.

THE WEDDING SERVICE

At First Presbyterian Church, we believe that wedding services are corporate services of worship, not merely private family gatherings. This leads us to the conviction that the elements of the service, the music, the decorations and the floral arrangements should be tasteful and appropriate for services of Christian worship. The church staff makes the commitment to you to be helpful in this regard. The officiating Pastor has the final say in any and all matters regarding the wedding service.

THE VOWS

The vows used at FPCD are from the Book of Common Worship and promise faithfulness in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as both shall live. This is important to begin the covenant relationship with one other. A couple makes this commitment to each other under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The vows themselves are worship to God and emphasize the lasting nature of the marriage.

WEDDING MUSIC

As in any worship service, the music must please God & equip the congregation to glorify God. Please take time to select the music you will have played or sung. There is a wide variety of music appropriate for weddings, and our Pastor and worship leaders will help you with all your music choices. Our musicians are assumed to play at your wedding, and have the right of first refusal in this capacity. Should they be unavailable, substitutes are to be arranged through the pastoral staff. You may choose to have soloists during your service. The pastoral staff can help you with some names. Should you have someone special in mind, please discuss with our pastoral staff and musicians what their responsibilities are in accompaniment. Again, it is **your responsibility** to speak with the pastoral staff and our musicians as soon as soon as it's practical before making any musical selections.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

Normally, a wedding rehearsal is held the evening before the wedding. The rehearsal should be held before any rehearsal dinner. It is expected that all the members of the wedding party plus parents (*if they are taking part in the ceremony*) will be present. On average it will take about one hour for the rehearsal. The musicians are typically present at the rehearsal, but additional rehearsal time may be required if there are special musical elements in the ceremony (*particularly with outside soloists*). In this case, the musicians should receive additional compensation for the extra service provided.

FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Many local florists are familiar with our sanctuary set up. Some of the flowers from a Saturday wedding are often left in the sanctuary for Sunday service. Please arrange with the Pastor to have an elder, deacon, or wedding coordinator meet you to set up a time for decorating the sanctuary or meeting the florist, either the evening before or the day of the wedding. **Please keep in mind that we have a Friday evening service!** We strongly discourage the use of aisle runners during the ceremony. While popular with florists, they cannot be rehearsed and present a tripping hazard for the wedding party and guests.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Both still photography and videography are allowed during the service. It is helpful for the officiating Pastor to be introduced to the photographer or videographer as soon as they arrive so that guidelines can be communicated clearly to avoid difficulties. ***Simply stated, your photographer may take flash pictures during the processional and recessional. During the wedding service, available light photography may be taken from the balcony or from the Narthex.*** Often certain wedding scenes are re-created following the service. For the sake of the pastor, we ask that the re-staged pictures are taken immediately after the receiving line is concluded. Video cameras may be set at fixed positions in the sanctuary. The videographer may use a hand-held camera to record the processional and recessional. **In neither case may the professional roam freely during the service.**

OTHER DETAILS

Many couples include the lighting of a ***Wedding or Unity Candle*** into their service. We do not own holders for these candles, so the holders and candles must be purchased by the couple should they want this ceremony in their service. Please bring them to the rehearsal.

Wedding bulletins, if used, are the responsibility of the couple. The officiating Pastor will provide you with an order of worship and help you design the service.

We regret to say that we do not allow rice to be thrown after the service. It is unsafe for birds and extremely difficult to clean up. Birdseed is permitted, but only outside the building. Many couples find that providing their guests with bubble-blowers provides a festive exit from the sanctuary.

ON THE DAY OF THE WEDDING

On the day of the wedding, the groom and his attendants should arrive at the church forty-five minutes prior to the ceremony.

RECEPTIONS

Our Fellowship Hall can be reserved for receptions. It is limited in size and often used for Church functions so early reservations are advised. Please complete and turn in the Application for Use of Church Facilities available on the church website. It is Church policy that NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES may be served and NO SMOKING is observed throughout the church buildings and property..

MARRIAGE LICENSE REQUIREMENTS IN NEW JERSEY

Marriage Licenses are obtained through the City Hall Office of the bride or groom's residence. It is best to contact them directly and as soon as possible so that all requirements can be fulfilled in advance of the wedding date. **The wedding license *must* be presented to the officiating pastor at the rehearsal.**

SUGGESTED HONORARIUMS

All honorariums should be given to the officiating Pastor at the rehearsal, along with the wedding license. When paying by check please payment directly to the Pastor, Organist, Wedding Coordinator, Custodian & Soloists not to the church. The suggested honorariums at FPCD are:

Officiating Pastor – \$500 Rev. Timothy Osborne or Rev. Dr. Silvio Del Campo

This includes premarital sessions, wedding planning, rehearsal and wedding service

Organist/Musicians – \$200

This includes consulting with the couple regarding music choices, rehearsal and wedding. Additional rehearsal time with soloists should be negotiated with the officiating pastor and worship leaders.

Soloists – \$100.00 - \$150.00

Wedding Coordinator– \$100

Custodian Sanctuary Setup – \$75

There is an additional fee of \$100.00 if Voorhees Hall is used.

If any of these fees present a legitimate financial hardship, please notify the officiating Pastor ASAP (and at least one full month before the wedding) so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR PLANNING A WEDDING AT FPCD

6 Months or more

- ✓ Initial meeting with Officiating Pastor
- ✓ Request to session for approval of wedding and dates for wedding and rehearsal
- ✓ Contact Musicians to confirm availability

4 Months or more

- ✓ Begin pre-marital counseling with officiating Pastor

8 Weeks

- ✓ Absolute deadline to begin pre-marriage process
- ✓ Finalize any plans for use of outside musicians
- ✓ Apply for wedding license

3 to 5 Weeks

- ✓ Plan wedding service with the Officiating Pastor

1 Week

- ✓ Submit wedding bulletin to wedding coordinator or pastor for proofreading (if desired)

1 to 3 Days – Wedding Rehearsal

- ✓ Bring marriage license
- ✓ Bring honoraria
- ✓ Rehearse before any meal or party

Evening Before or Day of Wedding

- ✓ Decorate Sanctuary (and Voorhees Hall if desired)

Wedding Day

- ✓ Men arrive 45 minutes before ceremony
- ✓ Photographers & Videographers introduced to Pastor
- ✓ CELEBRATE your new life together as Husband and Wife!

PLEASE CONTACT US!

Christian marriage begins a new adventure in your life. We are excited and honored to walk alongside you as you make this new beginning. We look forward to hearing from you so we can begin the process of planning your wedding at FPCD. Please see our contact information below.

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