

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of GALVESTON

WEDDING POLICY

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people... to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges. (Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA), W-4.0601)

Congratulations! We are grateful that you are seeking a Christian marriage and are inquiring about having your wedding in our church. Any couple wanting to be in a committed Christian marriage is welcome to be married at First Presbyterian Church of Galveston.

Wedding Liaison

Note: in this policy, the wedding “service” is defined as beginning after the processional and ending prior to the recessional; and the wedding event includes the entire time the wedding party is in the building.

First Presbyterian Church provides a Wedding Liaison who must be used at all weddings. The tasks of the Wedding Liaison are to:

- interpret the wedding policies of the church to the wedding party;
- be available for consultation with those responsible for planning the wedding event;
- serve as liaison between the wedding party and all members of the Church staff (Pastor, Director of Music, AV Technician, Sexton/Custodian, Church office staff);
- arrange for room usage/scheduling and custodial service;
- assist outside vendors with building access and placements (e.g., florist, photographer, videographer, caterer);
- assist the pastor(s) at the wedding rehearsal and the service.

The Wedding Liaison is the one to whom questions regarding church facilities and wedding policies should be directed. Please inform your florist and photographer where to direct their questions.

Officiant

The Pastor of First Presbyterian Church will meet with the couple for pre-marital counselling, which is a requirement of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Pastor will officiate at the rehearsal and at the wedding service. If the couple wishes to include another minister in the wedding, they must discuss this with our Pastor early in the planning. The Pastor may invite the requested minister to take a part in the service. If the other minister has a Master's in Divinity, our Pastor may allow the minister to complete the premarital counselling and /or officiate the service without using FPC's Pastor.

Scheduling

Scheduling your wedding event involves both the schedules of the participating Church staff (officiating pastor, director of music, AV technician, and sexton) and the church activities calendar. A tentative date and hour for a wedding may be reserved on the church calendar by making initial arrangements with the Wedding Liaison. The date and time will be confirmed once the deposit is received (see section on fees below). Weddings, rehearsals, or receptions may not be scheduled for: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Sunday mornings, or during Holy Week.

Music

The music is a traditional and beautiful part of the service. All music and musicians must be approved by the Pastor and the Director of Music Ministry. For help planning music, please reach out to the Director of Music Ministry for a list of appropriate music suggestions as well as contacts for outside approved music groups (e.g., string quartets, vocal groups, etc.). Should you want to add these to your service, the Wedding Liaison and Director of Music Ministry can help coordinate this with you and the groups.

Decorations

The sanctuary and the chapel are places of dignified beauty that do not require over-elaborate decorations. Please work with the Wedding Liaison when planning and executing decor to ensure best placement and to preserve the sacred and historic nature of the church. The following regulations are given to preserve the spiritual atmosphere and to safeguard the furnishings.

1. All candles are to be drip-less and must be furnished by the florist or the wedding party.
2. No decorations may hinder view of the pulpit.
3. The organ and furnishings attached to the floor or walls are not to be moved. The Communion table and the Baptismal Font may be moved but not removed from the sanctuary. Other furnishings may be moved but all furnishings must be returned to their proper places after the wedding.
4. Floral deliveries and pickups should be as close to the time of the wedding as possible and should in no way interfere with, nor distract from, any other activity of the church.
5. The wedding party is to be responsible for leaving the church exactly as it was prior to the wedding. The sanctuary, chapel and all rooms used in the building must be in proper order for services on Sunday morning. Florist boxes or paper, garment bags, programs, etc. are to be removed from the church.
6. The church is not responsible for any valuables left anywhere at any time in the church.

Photography

The wedding "service" is defined as beginning after the processional and ending prior to the recessional.

At no time during the service will flash photography be permitted. Video cameras may be used discretely to record the service only if the equipment does not obstruct the view of worshippers or the officiant and no lights are used. Videographers must wear appropriate dress (i.e., all black or business casual).

Alcohol

The couple is requested to advise members of the wedding party that they shall refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages before the rehearsal and before the wedding. If any member of the wedding is determined to be intoxicated, the Pastor or Wedding Liaison has the discretion to remove the offending person or cancel the service.

The church allows limited use of alcohol at events on the grounds. With its use comes the expectation that all participants will conduct themselves in ways that preserve the goals, image, dignity and beauty of the church, and assure the personal comfort and safety of other participants and the public. We expect the party and guests to drink responsibly.

1. Allowable alcohol is limited to beer and wine, no liquor, served in the Fellowship Hall for a reception or dinner.
2. When scheduling the wedding, the couple must inform the Wedding Liaison of the intent to serve alcohol.
3. Any beverage that contains alcohol (e.g., a punch) must be clearly labelled for the guests. Alternate non-alcoholic beverages must also be offered to participants with equal hospitality.
4. For anything more than a simple wine toast, the party hosts must provide the Church a copy of the [Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission certification](#) of the person(s) serving for the event, and security services must be provided.
5. The wedding party assumes full responsibility to ensure that no alcoholic beverages are made available, accessible or served to persons under the legal drinking age, even from a parent or guardian.
6. Invitations to the wedding, and any social media posts about the event, are not to mention alcoholic beverages even if they are to be available.
7. Consumption to the point of intoxication will not be tolerated and will result in immediate cancellation of function.
8. The wedding party is responsible to ensure that no illegal drugs are present on the church property. Any such activity will result in immediate cancellation of function and authorities will be notified.

Fees

A 50% deposit must be made to confirm a wedding date on the church calendar. This deposit is fully refundable up to 6 months prior to the wedding, after which time the deposit is forfeited.

SANCTUARY WEDDING	Member*	Non-Member
Sanctuary Use	\$0	\$3500
Pastor	\$0**	\$500
Wedding Liaison	\$500	\$500
Organist	\$500	\$500
Sound Tech	\$350	\$350
Custodian	\$350	\$350
Total	\$1700	\$5700
<i>optional</i>		
Organist Bench Fee+	\$150	\$150
FELLOWSHIP HALL RECEPTION		
Fellowship Hall/Kitchen Use	\$500	\$500
Wedding Liaison additional fee – may be used to support an assistant	\$500	\$500
	\$1000	\$1000

*To receive the member price, at least one member of the wedding couple must have joined the church and actively participated in the church’s ministry for at least 18 months.

**The families generally consider offering the pastor a monetary gift.

+Only applicable when *not* using a staff musician of the church. All outside musicians must be approved by the Director of Music Ministry.

Chapel Wedding

If you want a smaller, more intimate service than using our sanctuary, we also have a beautiful chapel which seats up to 50 and has a piano. Discuss your plans with our Wedding Liaison.

- Requirement and cost for the Wedding Liaison, deposit fee, building use fee and other fees depend on the complexity of your event plan (i.e., will you have music? piano? need an accompanist? reception? need AV services?)
- Pastor fee is \$500. Policies for use of our Pastor as the officiant are the same as above for the sanctuary.

	Sanctuary wedding – No reception	With reception
Wedding Liaison Fee	500	700- wedding liaison <u>300 – assistant</u> 1000

Updated 2-27-25 by Worship Ministry. Approved by Session 2-27-25