

Wedding Guide



The information included in this booklet is to help you to arrange for your wedding at Shepherd of the Hill Presbyterian Church.

It is a basis for discussion when you meet with the Pastor and again with the Wedding Coordinator. Please don't hesitate to ask questions about any of the areas you do not understand.

Further information may be obtained by calling the church office.

SHEPHERD OF THE HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

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Rev. Gary E. Mathiesen, Pastor

Marriage in the Presbyterian Church..

...a message from our Pastor

A wedding performed in the Church is an act of worship. The wedding may include a brief meditation on the meaning of marriage and actively involve the gathered congregation through participation in hymns, a responsive reading, or prayer. In these instances, a wedding bulletin is quite appropriate.

Whatever the form of the service, the heart of the ceremony consists of vows which the couple affirm to each other and to God. These vows realistically assess the possibilities of life and involve pledging a mutual faithfulness in life's changing circumstances. They are public vows, for they are taken "before God and these witnesses." The vows pledged are all-inclusive, for they speak of the economic ("in plenty and in want"), the emotional ("in sickness and in health"), and they are meant to be permanent ("as long as we both shall live"). Each partner pledges to be bound to the other by voluntary ties of love and tenderness, living with the other and for the other, whatever happens. However, what is pledged is not simply duration of the marriage or toleration of the partner, but a lifetime together in which a couple may learn what it is to be married and to find meaning in their relationship. Indeed, each time a married person attends a wedding, the vows may well take on new significance and richness.

These vows dispel the fairy-tale ending, "and they lived happily ever after." The marriage vows realistically recognize that the tragic may be a part of married life, and they call upon the couple to affirm that they accept each other in bad times as well as in good. The real tragedy of many marriages is not that difficult times occur, but that these periods of trial drive husband and wife further apart rather than draw them closer together.

Blessedness may be a part of married life as each learns to give oneself to the other; as each learns, however painfully, to accept the other as she or he is, and as each finds herself/himself fulfilled in the other. When genuine intimacy and self-giving are present, the couple live together "as heirs of the grace of life."

Americans, more than any other people in the world, believe that love is the only criterion for marriage. For a couple to say they love each other is the one response that cancels all protests. Those who subscribe to this viewpoint treat the wedding as the culmination and fulfillment of mutual love.

Christians see a deeper and more lasting meaning in a wedding, however. We treat it as the beginning of a new relationship more than as the culmination of awakened love. It takes years to become married. Only as a couple live together in marriage, sharing all that life holds, making new discoveries about each other, and finding their love growing in its richness and significance do their vows come alive and find fulfillment.

A wedding in the Presbyterian Church (USA) is meant to place marriage in the context of worship, to acknowledge God as a partner in the married life, and to prepare the couple to savor the potential blessedness of a shared life as husband and wife.

May God bless your marriage.

WEDDING GUIDELINES

AT SHEPHERD OF THE HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

All wedding ceremonies performed at Shepherd of the Hill Presbyterian Church shall be subject to the following guidelines:

1. Wedding ceremonies are to be accommodated for:

- a) Members currently on the active rolls at Shepherd of the Hill;
- b) Children/dependents of members at Shepherd of the Hill (whether the child/dependent is also a member or not);

The fees for the above individuals will be charged according to the "members" schedule in the current wedding handbook.

2. For the following individuals who do not meet the previous qualifications, wedding ceremonies at Shepherd of the Hill will be allowed only at the discretion of the current pastor and with final approval by session:

- a) individuals who are currently participating in membership classes at Shepherd of the Hill with the intention of becoming an active member of the congregation;
- b) Individuals who are active members of another Presbyterian or other Christian faith church, who for reasons such as (but not limited to) military service or schooling, are currently living in our community;
- c) Individuals in cases of extreme hardship, to be determined by the pastor;
- d) Individuals with a past history with our congregation, with circumstances to be determined reasonable by the current pastor and session.

The fees for the above individuals will be charged according to the "non-members" schedule in the current wedding handbook.

3. All wedding ceremonies held at Shepherd of the Hill will be officiated by the current pastor of Shepherd of the Hill. If the couple to be married requests for another ordained Christian pastor to participate with Shepherd of the Hill's current pastor in the ceremony, it shall be considered by our pastor and approved by the board of session.

4. If the current pastor of Shepherd of the Hill is not available to officiate at the ceremony due to unavailability or emergency, the current pastor shall approve, along with session, for another ordained Christian pastor to officiate.

5. All wedding dates are subject to the availability of the pastor and the church facility.

6. All wedding couples are subject to the guidelines and fees described in the current wedding handbook.

7. All wedding couples must participate in premarital counseling sessions with or as approved by our current pastor, with the number of sessions to be determined by the pastor.

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING AT SHEPHERD OF THE HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The staff of the church is eager to help make your wedding a pleasant and memorable occasion.

Initial Arrangements Pastor - Rev. Gary Mathiesen

All weddings are arranged only after a date and initial consultation with the pastor have been made. Pre-marital counseling will be discussed at this time. If there is a special request for another pastor to share in or conduct the ceremony, this should be discussed with the pastor.

Confirmation of Date Within two weeks of the initial contact, it is necessary to confirm the date on the church calendar by paying a non-refundable **reservation fee**. The reservation fee is applied toward the sum of all fees. It is also necessary to set a meeting date with the wedding coordinator, as part of your confirmation. **All additional fees for weddings must be paid 30 days in advance of the ceremony.** All but the reservation fee is refundable if cancellation is necessary.

Wedding Coordinator The services of an approved wedding coordinator from Shepherd of the Hill are **required**. She must be contacted before the date is confirmed on the calendar. The coordinator assists the pastor in carrying out the wishes of the bridal couple, while conforming to the customs of this church.

Music The church pianist is used for all weddings unless other arrangements are made. Prior approval of another pianist must be obtained. Use of a soloist must be approved by the pastor. Musical selections must be approved by the pastor. Prerecorded music is discouraged, and must be discussed with the pastor.

Sound System The use of a church Sound System Technician is required for all wedding services.

USE AND CARE OF CHURCH FACILITIES

The sanctuary has a maximum capacity of 250. Smoking, and the use of alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the church premises. Furnishings, hangings, seasonal arrangements and symbols cannot be moved, altered, or obscured without prior approval from the wedding coordinator. Any items that are approved for moving, must be replaced in their proper location by the wedding party, following the service. No tape or tacks may be used on the furniture. No food or drinks are permitted in the sanctuary. In lieu of rice, bird seed or wheat may be used to shower the bride and groom. This should be in individual packets, tied so it will not leak, and handed out just prior to the couple's departure.

Flowers and Decorations - The bride makes all arrangements for flowers and decorations. Flowers may be left for church services and picked up later. Bows may be attached with ties (no tape or tacks) to the ends of the pews and other decorations are permitted at the direction of the coordinator. Arrangements for decorating the church prior to your wedding must be made with the coordinator.

Photography - No photographs requiring the use of flash equipment are permitted during the ceremony. Once the bride has arrived at the front of the sanctuary, no flash pictures will be taken until the recessional begins. Other photographs and video taping are permitted after consultation with, and approval of, the officiating pastor.

Candles - With the exception of the two candles on the communion table, all candles are supplied by the bride. Use of the church candleabras may be arranged through the wedding coordinator.

Custodian - Services of the church custodian will be necessary, before and after the wedding.

Receptions - The Fellowship Hall is available for receptions. Catered meals and refreshments will be provided by the wedding party.

Kitchen - If the kitchen is used in conjunction with a rehearsal dinner or reception, all items are to be cleaned and returned to their proper places. Please leave the kitchen in proper order. Refrigerator and freezer space is limited, and must be discussed with the wedding coordinator.

Nursery - There are no nursery services provided.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

USAGE FEES		
	Shepherd of the Hill Member	Non-Member
Non-refundable deposit (Required) applied towards total fee	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Wedding (Required) Fee includes use of sanctuary for rehearsal and ceremony, wedding coordinator, pianist, custodial fees, & sound system technician	\$400.00	\$800.00
Pastor	No set amount of honorarium	Honorarium is negotiable with the pastor
Rehearsal Dinner (Optional) Includes use of kitchen, fellowship hall, custodial fees	\$ 100.00	\$200.00
Reception (Optional) Fee includes use of fellowship hall, kitchen, reception coordinator, and custodial fees	\$200.00	\$400.00

- All applicable fees must be delivered to the church office 30 days prior to the date of the ceremony.
- One check written to "Shepherd of the Hill Presbyterian Church" will be adequate.