



First Presbyterian Church

New Bern, North Carolina

Wedding Guidelines

Christian Marriage

A wedding is - first and foremost - a service of worship celebrating the covenant of marriage -- a gift from God. We believe that marriage is given by God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. This way of life must not be entered into carelessly, or from selfish motives, but responsibly and prayerfully in order to build your marriage on the strongest possible foundation.

As Christians we believe the life you will share with your spouse will be more joyful if God is that foundation. In that way, the wedding service is designed to help you and all your assembled guests to focus on the nature of that covenant and to celebrate the faith that has brought you to take this joyful step.

The first steps toward a joyful wedding and fruitful marriage are taken long before the processional notes sound. As a means of providing assistance during the planning stages, this booklet is offered by the Session (the governing body of the church) of First Presbyterian Church of New Bern, North Carolina. The booklet is divided into sections oriented toward wedding preparation, the wedding ceremony, and the reception.

The ministers and staff of First Presbyterian are eager to assist you in your wedding plans and to support you throughout your marriage. We pray God's richest blessing upon you and the home God is establishing through you in our midst.

Legal Requirements

for Marriage in the State of North Carolina

Before one can be married in any ceremony, the State of North Carolina requires that you have a marriage license. Timelines, locations, and requirements may change across the years (Is the license obtained in the county of residence or the county where the wedding will occur?), so you are encouraged to inquire and confirm your plans well in advance of when you need to obtain your license. In Craven County marriage licenses are normally obtained at the Register of Deeds office at 226 Pollock Street (phone 252-636-6617).

What to give the pastor

The Register of Deeds issues a license (in duplicate) and an envelope. The pastor needs all of these items **no later** than the evening of the rehearsal.

General Information

Who May Be Married

It is the policy of First Presbyterian Church that weddings generally only be conducted for members and their families because of the high demand for the use of the historic sanctuary and limited staff time. Non-members may be married in our Sanctuary at the discretion of the pastors with the approval of the Session. The fee for non-members' use of the Sanctuary and facilities is \$2,500. All fees must be paid at least two weeks before the wedding.

Premarital Counseling

Those who request to be married at First Presbyterian Church must schedule premarital counseling sessions with the pastor who is officiating at their wedding or make other arrangements for premarital counseling that are approved by that pastor.

Scheduling Your Wedding

It is important to schedule your wedding as far in advance as possible. In order for the minister to lead the required premarital counseling sessions with the couple, weddings are generally scheduled no later than sixty days before the date of the service. No wedding will be scheduled during Holy Week, the seven days prior to Christmas, or the day before a Sunday that will serve Communion by trays.

Officiant for the Wedding

All weddings at First Presbyterian Church will be conducted by one of our own pastors. Other clergy may assist our pastor or conduct the ceremony alone if they are invited by one of our pastors and approved by the Session. A notice of sixty days is required to invite other clergy.

The Wedding Service

Biblical and Theological Meaning

The wedding service is first and foremost a service of worship of God. All other considerations are secondary. While the state has given our pastors authority to function as its legal agent in solemnizing marriages, a wedding held at First Presbyterian Church is primarily a special service of Christian worship as two people make a life-long commitment to each other. However, marriage vows are first made to God in recognition of the One who made us, and by whose providence a couple is persuaded of God's calling to this new estate.

As the wedding is one of Christian worship, the order of worship is very similar to that of a Sunday morning worship service, including readings of scripture, hymns, sacred music, prayers of gratitude for God's providence and desire for God's blessing and continual leading.

The ministers will consider special requests from the couple regarding the service itself, however no additions or alterations should change or distract from the Christian understanding of marriage

Order of Worship*

A Service of Worship Celebrating the Christian Marriage of ____ and ____

Prelude (instrumental)
Seating of particular family members
Solo/Music
Processional wedding party and bride
Call to Worship
Statement on the Gift of Marriage
Prayer
Hymn of Praise/Solo
Declarations of Intent
Affirmation of Families
Affirmation of the Congregation
Hymn of Praise/Solo
Prayer for Illumination
Scripture Reading
Sermon
The Lord's Supper**
Exchange of vows and rings
Prayer & The Lord's Prayer
Hymn of Praise/Solo
Announcement of Marriage
Charge & Benediction
Recessional

*Required parts of the service are indicated in **bold**.

**In Presbyterian Worship, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated by all baptized people and not exclusively the couple. If desired, 60 days notice is needed to secure permission from the First Presbyterian Church Session.

Frequently Used Scripture Passages

Old Testament

Genesis 2:21-25
Ruth 1:16
Solomon 2:10-13
Solomon 8:6-7
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
Proverbs 3:3-6
Isaiah 54:5-8
Jeremiah 31:31-34

New Testament

Mark 10:6-9
1 Corinthians 13
Ephesians 5:25-32
Philippians 4:4-7
1 John 3:18-20
1 John 4:7-16

Apocrypha

Tobit 8:4-8

Music

Music in a wedding service glorifies God. Whether traditional or contemporary, music is to aid worshippers to fix their hearts and minds on God. All music must be approved by the director of music. Both the director of music and organist will have many helpful suggestions that you can discuss when you meet with them for a consultation when you are planning the service, but below are some frequently requested and often used pieces of music that work well for a wedding in our sanctuary.

Preludes

<i>Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring</i>	Bach
<i>Arioso</i>	Bach
<i>Deck Thyself, My Soul, With Gladness</i>	Bach or Brahms
<i>Rhosymedre</i>	Williams
<i>A Mighty Fortress</i>	Marpurg

Processionals and Recessionals

In addition to hymns, there are other fine pieces of music to consider. While the *Bridal Chorus* from Wagner's *Lohengrin* has been associated with processionals, its appropriateness is questionable, as is Mendelssohn's recessional march from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Some suggestions are:

<i>Psalm 19: The Heavens are Telling</i>	Marcello
<i>Rigaudon</i>	Campra
<i>Processional</i>	Sullivan
<i>Trumpet Processional</i>	Fedak
<i>Trumpet Tune in C</i>	Purcell
<i>Trumpet Voluntary</i>	Clarke

Congregational Hymns

<i>Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee</i>	611
<i>Now Thank We All Our God</i>	643
<i>Holy, Holy, Holy</i>	1
<i>Though I May Speak</i>	693
<i>I Sing the Mighty Power of God</i>	32
<i>Love Divine, All Loves Excelling</i>	366
<i>All Things Bright & Beautiful</i>	20
<i>Be Thou My Vision</i>	450
<i>Come, Christians, Join to Sing</i>	267
<i>For the Beauty of the Earth</i>	14

Solos

<i>Father in Heaven (tune Ave Maria)</i>	Bach/Gounod
<i>Wedding Hymn</i>	Handel
<i>Be Thou With Them</i>	Bach
<i>My Heart Ever Faithful</i>	Bach
<i>O Lord Most Holy</i>	Franck
<i>The Gift of Love</i>	Hopson
<i>Jesus Stand Beside Them</i>	Lovelace
<i>Prayer of St. Francis</i>	Banks
<i>The Lord's Prayer</i>	Malotte
<i>The Wedding Song</i>	Schutz

Other Instruments and Outside Musicians

Instruments such as the piano, harpsichord, guitar, flute, trumpet, violin, and bagpipe, may be used with or without the organ. Questions are to be directed to the director of music. All non-staff vocalists or musicians are employed and compensated by the couple. The couple is to be certain such persons are in contact with our music staff to set a time for rehearsing together.

Worship Bulletin

The church office does not print wedding bulletins. If they wish, the couple may purchase commercially printed bulletins. The pastor must be consulted about the order of worship, and both pastor and director of music about the contents of the bulletin. A picture of the sanctuary is available for use on the cover of the bulletin. Contact the church secretary.

Wedding Director

The pastor who approves the content and order of worship and conducts the service, is the “rehearsal director.” At the actual wedding, the wedding director directs. The wedding director works with the couple in pre-planning, assisting at the rehearsal and directing the wedding. (Contact Nancy Perdue at 638-3291.)

Rehearsal

The rehearsal is held the evening before the wedding and begins between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. and lasts approximately one hour. The couple is to inform the wedding party to arrive promptly to rehearse. All suggested changes in procedures at the rehearsal must come to the pastors(s) from the bride and groom.

Alcohol Policy

NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES may be consumed or served on Church premises by anyone at any time.

Bathrooms

There are NO BATHROOMS IN THE SANCTUARY.

There are bathrooms in the Session House and on each floor of the Ministry Center.

Wedding Participants

Only five participants are required in a wedding by North Carolina law: the couple, an officiant, and two witnesses. All other participants (the wedding party) are at the discretion of the couple.

While there are no requirements or expectations for the participants, First Presbyterian’s Wedding Director will be prepared to instruct the wedding party in roles to assist everything going smoothly on the day of the wedding.

It is not unusual for a couple to consider having children participate in the wedding, but this should be done carefully with a mind towards what are reasonable expectations to ensure the children as well as the couple have a positive experience (child ring-bearers don’t actually carry the ring, for example and are never expected to remain up front for the entirety of the service). If you are considering having children participate in the wedding please discuss this with the pastor who is to officiate so you can agree on reasonable expectations.

Photography & Recording

Photographs, Recordings, Cell Phones, Pagers

Because a wedding service is an act of worship, it is not the occasion for photography; however, certain exceptions may be made.

The couple's photographer may take flash pictures of the bridal party entering the sanctuary so long as such pictures are taken at the back of the sanctuary.

The photographer may take non-flash pictures of the service from the back balcony so long as he/she does not move about. The service may be videotaped from a stationary position in the balcony. If the photographing from the balcony is planned, make arrangements to open the rear balcony door.

In order to maintain focus on the worship service, the congregation is asked to refrain from taking pictures or videos.

Photographs may also be taken in the sanctuary after the worship service, but arrangements should be made with the photographer to limit this to no more than thirty minutes after the end of the worship service. If more time is needed it is advised that the couple take photos before the service (either earlier in the day or on another day)/

Please either plan to announce or include in your wedding bulletin something along of the lines of "to help keep our focus on worship, please silence your phones and refrain from taking any photographs or videos during any portion of the service."

Decorations in the Sanctuary

To maintain the beauty of the two-hundred-year-old Sanctuary, First Presbyterian Church provides the following guidelines which must be given to your florist.

Candles - Use only dripless candles in floor stand candelabra provided by florists. Candles on the Lord's table must be dripless and have bobeches on each candle.

Lord's Table - The Lord's Table is central to Presbyterian worship. Neither of its two sections are to be moved. The center legs will break easily. Use only waterproof containers that do not sweat or leak. Bases may be used and are available from the church office. Nothing may be taped or wired to the tables.

Pulpit and Stairway Railings - Do not attach anything to the arch over the pulpit. The wood is fragile and there is no means of securing decorations. Both sets of stairway railing may be roped or sprays maybe secured with wrapped wire.

Pew Markers - Do not use any tape, wire, or tacks on the ends of the pews to secure bows or bouquets.

Windows and Light Fixtures - No decorations are allowed in, on, or around the windows or on the light fixtures.

Flower Petals - Only silk flower petals may be used in the sanctuary.

Wedding Flowers may be left for worship if prearranged with the church office. There are two church-owned white wrought-iron stands that hold glass containers that may be placed in the curve of the pulpit stairs in lieu of floor-stand candelabra.

Guest Book: The guest book is frequently placed on the table near the New Street entrance or on the lectern.

Receptions & Available Buildings Facilities

The Session House has a parlor where members of the wedding party may dress. There is also a kitchen and a large room that may be used for a rehearsal dinner or a wedding reception. There are also men's and women's handicap-accessible bathrooms.

The J. Murphy Smith Fellowship Center at 508 Middle Street is also available for either or both a rehearsal dinner and reception.

Use of the Session House and/or Fellowship Center for a rehearsal dinner or reception should be scheduled in consultation with the facilities supervisor. Because their rental will require additional set up and cleaning, additional fees will be negotiated based on what is needed.

Note - There are no bathrooms in the Sanctuary.

Catering

The couple is responsible for making all catering arrangements, informing the caterer of church policies, and acting as liaison between the church and the caterer. Caterers may not use church silver, punch cups, or linens.

No Alcoholic Beverages may be served or consumed on church premises by anyone at any time.

Fee Schedule

Since weddings require special services on the part of some members of the church staff and volunteers, the following fees apply for weddings in the church and are to be paid **at least two weeks** in advance, with checks for facilities made payable to First Presbyterian Church and checks for individuals (minister, organist, wedding, and custodian) made payable directly to them. If there are special circumstances affecting these fees, please discuss them with the pastor before the application is submitted.

The use of the sanctuary includes use of the Session House to get ready as well as restrooms and space to prepare in the Ministry Center. If other facilities are used for a rehearsal meal or the reception, additional fees for space usage and the custodian will be established based on what is required.

If additional soloists or musicians are hired, those fees will need to be negotiated with them as well as fees for additional rehearsal time with the organist and/or director of music, as needed.

Members:		Non-Members	
Sanctuary	\$0	Sanctuary	\$2,500
Minister	\$0	Minister	\$500
Wedding Director	\$300	Wedding Director	\$300
Director of Music	\$0	Director of Music	\$200
Organist	\$450	Organist	\$450
Custodian	\$0	Custodian	\$175

First Presbyterian Church

Mail P O Box 1069
New Bern NC 28563-1069

Location 400 New Street
New Bern, NC 28560

Telephone 252.637.3270
e-mail church@firstpresnb.org
website www.firspresnb.org

First Presbyterian Church Staff Contact Information

* Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Anna Pinckney Straight, anna@firstpresnb.org

* Facilities Administrator: Tim Elliott, property@firstpresnb.org

* Director of Music: Pat Kerr Rowlett, pat@firstpresnb.org

* Office Administrator: Marcy Latteman, church@firstpresnb.org

Wedding Director: Nancy Perdue ~ 252.638.3291 Email: nperdue@suddenlink.net

* The email addresses for these individuals are their first name followed by @firstpresnb.org

Your "To Do" List

- Set date for wedding with pastor
- Schedule rehearsal with pastor
- Reserve buildings
- Schedule premarital counseling sessions
- Plan wedding with pastor
- Contact wedding director
- Meet with director of music
- Meet with organist
- Make arrangements for any additional/special music or musicians
- Confirm that florists, photographer, and any additional musicians are aware of the church's guidelines and are in touch with the wedding director to determine appropriate schedules and access to the building.
- Obtain marriage license
- Pay fees to church/individuals – two weeks prior to rehearsal
- Bring license to the pastor at (or before) the rehearsal



**First
Presbyterian
Church**

New Bern, North Carolina

Wedding Request Form

Wedding Date: _____ Time of Wedding: _____

Time of Rehearsal (typically between 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm the evening before): _____

Preferred Minister: _____

Bride/Groom _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Home/Cell Phone: _____

Bride/Groom _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Home/Cell Phone: _____

Interested in using other church facilities for a rehearsal meal or reception? (Y)_____ (N)_____

Signed

All wedding services held in First Presbyterian’s sanctuary or chapel must be approved by the Session. Session normally meets on the second Tuesday of each month. The signatures on this application indicate that you have read and agree to abide by all wedding guidelines and policies.

Please return to the church office:
First Presbyterian Church ~ P.O. Box 1069 ~ New Bern, NC 28563 ~ church@firstpresnb.org