

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE



Second Presbyterian Church

Lewis and Frederick Streets

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Substance policy. No alcoholic beverages or other mood-altering substances are permitted in the church, the church grounds, or the parking lots. All participants in the marriage service shall refrain from the use of such substances prior to both the rehearsal and the wedding service. Failure to abide by this policy could result in the cancellation of arrangements to use the church. *The bride and groom are responsible for informing all members of the wedding party of this policy.*

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. From the perspective of the church, marriage is more than a civil contract between a woman and a man. It is a covenant (solemn vow) through which a man and a woman are called to live faithfully together before God and the community. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith. [W-4.9001, *Directory for Worship*, The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)]

A church wedding is more than a social event. It is a service of Christian worship which recognizes the importance spiritual values play in our lives. Those who participate in it ought to have a sincere desire to establish their marriage on the firm foundation of the Christian faith. As God's blessing is invoked upon the new relationship, so should it continue to be sought through personal, family, and public acts of worship.

We believe that preparation for marriage is important, and that all aspects of the marriage service should reflect our Christian concerns. The following information is given as a guide to planning for the marriage service.

INITIAL PREPARATIONS

SCHEDULING

The pastor of Second Presbyterian Church should be contacted as far ahead as possible in order to schedule a date for the rehearsal and wedding.

PREMARITAL CONSULTATIONS

Couples being married by the pastor at Second Presbyterian Church are required to meet with the pastor a minimum of three times for premarital consultations. The purpose of these consultations is to discuss the following issues:

- the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
- the legal requirements of the state,
- the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
- the nature and form of the marriage service,
- the vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
- the relationships of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
- the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.

[from the *Directory For Worship*, W-4.9002]

RIGHT OF REFUSAL

“If the minister is convinced after discussion with the couple that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the minister shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision the minister may seek the counsel of the Session.”
[*Directory For Worship*, W-4.9002]

MARRIAGE LICENSE

GIVEN TO PASTOR

The marriage license is to be in the hands of the pastor no later than the time of the rehearsal.

OBTAINING A LICENSE

The marriage license may be obtained at the Clerk's Office of any County or City in Virginia. After the wedding, a copy of the license will be on file both in Richmond and the place where the license was obtained. The couples' preference should guide the choice of location to obtain the license.

A license is good for sixty days from the date of issue, and costs \$30.00. Both the prospective bride and groom must appear in person to apply for a license. There are no blood tests or minimum residency requirements involved in the application process.

You will be asked to provide the following information under oath:

- your current driver's license, to show that both persons are over 18 (Those under 18 need parental consent)
- your Social Security card
- the full names of both parents
- if divorced, you will be asked when the it was final, and you may be asked to show a copy of the decree.

There is no waiting period for obtaining the license; it will be issued at the time of application. The fee for the license is \$30.00 (as of July 2007).

SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE

Couples are advised to make application for the license about 30 days prior to the service. This will allow for time on the license beyond the scheduled date of the wedding, in case extraordinary circumstances arise.

COSTS

FACILITIES

Members.

There is no cost for the use of the sanctuary or chapel for weddings for active members of Second Presbyterian Church, including members of their immediate family. An active member is a person on the active membership roll of the church, as determined by the Session. “Immediate family” is defined as dependents still living in a parent(s)’ household. *[Exception: custodial fees; see below.]*

Non-Members.

- \$200 for use of the Sanctuary, restrooms, and other areas of the church, such as the parlor and Adult Choir Room (for dressing, etc.)
- \$150 for use of Fellowship Hall and the kitchen
- Cleaning charges are additional; see below.

ORGANIST

Second Church currently does not have a regular organist. If couples wish the church’s help in securing the services of an organist, the request should be made as early as possible. The exact fee will be set by the organist, depending on the specific music demands of the service. (Please see “Music,” on page 8.)

CUSTODIAN

The custodian is to be paid for preparation and the extra cleaning involved in the use of the sanctuary or chapel.

- \$50.00 for use of the Sanctuary or chapel, restrooms, waiting areas
- \$50.00 for use of Fellowship Hall and the kitchen (if used).

(This applies to members as well as non-members.)

PASTOR

Members

No contribution is expected from active church members.

Non-Members

The pastor’s fee for non-members is \$200.00, which includes pre-marital consultations, preparation time, rehearsal, and performance of the service.

ARRANGEMENTS GUIDELINES

Wedding coordinators.

As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the pastor and subject to the authority of the Session of Second Presbyterian Church. The use of a wedding coordinator is permitted, with the understanding that this person ultimately is under the direction of the pastor.

Guest ministers.

Ordinarily, the pastor of this church shall preside at all weddings. If, for any reason, there is a desire to have a guest minister assist at or conduct the service, this request must be made to the pastor before any invitation is extended by the couple to the guest participant. If approved, a formal invitation will be extended to the guest participant by the Session.

Location of Service.

Corporate worship normally takes place in the sanctuary or chapel. Either of these two places is appropriate for the marriage service. Alternative arrangements may be made in consultation with the pastor. Previously scheduled church events shall take precedence when arranging for the use of the building.

Once a wedding is scheduled, use of the church is guaranteed for both the rehearsal and the wedding.

DECORATIONS

General principle. Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshipers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life. [W-4.9005]

Flowers. The flower coordinator of the church is to be contacted concerning the couple's plans for the use of the church's vases, disposition of the flowers after the wedding, and other arrangements. Under no circumstances may any vases be taken from the church. Call the Church Office (885-8159) to find out the name of the person serving as flower coordinator during the month of the wedding.

Candelabra. The church's candelabra may be decorated with bows, greens, and or flowers, provided such items are hung with material which will not scratch the finish. If the candelabra are to be used, providing candles (14) for it is the responsibility of the couple.

Communion table. The cross and communion table may not be removed or obstructed.

Aisle runners. The florist handling the arrangements for the couple should be contacted concerning an aisle runner, should the use of one be desired. To reach the rear of the sanctuary, the aisle runner should be at least 70 feet long.

Removal. It is the responsibility of the couple to see that all decorations not belonging to the church are removed immediately following the wedding.

Responsibility for damages. The couple will be liable for any damages caused to the church facilities.

Rice. As a concern of Christian stewardship and for the hungry, the throwing of rice (food) is discouraged. An alternate suggestions is to throw bird seed. This activity is to take place outside the church, with care taken that materials are not tracked back into the church, complicating the cleaning of the facility.

MUSIC

Organist.

Ordinarily, the services of the church organist are to be used for the marriage service. Arrangements for music to be played during the service should be made directly with the organist. [*Currently, Second Church does not have a regular organist – see page 5.*]

Other musicians.

Arrangements for a guest organist or other musicians should be made in consultation with the organist and the pastor.

Music selection.

Music suitable for the marriage service is that which directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. The use of popular, sentimental music is discouraged, and should be avoided during the worship service. Again, please contact the church organist for consultation concerning appropriate music.

PICTURES

Flash pictures.

Flash pictures are not permitted during the wedding service. The wedding service begins when the pastor begins to speak (the “Call to Worship”) until he is finished (the “Benediction”). Therefore, the Processional, first kiss, and Recessional are not considered to be part of the worship service, even though they are part of the entire ceremony.

Immediately after the service, the pastor will be available to recreate any photographs with the wedding party. It is expected that the couple will explain this policy to the photographer.

Video.

It is permissible to have the service video taped. Arrangements for the location of video equipment are to be made with the pastor by the time of the rehearsal.

THE REHEARSAL

Scheduling.

The rehearsal works best if it is scheduled before, rather than after, any other planned activities for the day/evening. If the pastor and spouse are invited to the rehearsal dinner, it is necessary to make it known in time for them to make plans to be present.

Attendance.

The rehearsal is to be attended by all the members of the wedding party having a part in the service.

Procedure.

The wedding party shall take their places at the front of the sanctuary. The recessional will be rehearsed first, immediately followed by the processional. The pastor will then briefly describe the service, followed by a time for questions. The pastor will gladly run through any part of the service a second time, as needed.

FELLOWSHIP HALL RECEPTIONS

Arrangements for the use of the Fellowship Hall for the wedding reception should be made through the Church Office, in consultation with the pastor. The couple should make an appointment to meet with the church's custodian to make arrangements for how the Hall is to be set up.

Guidelines for the use of Fellowship Hall are available from the Church Office.

BASIC ORDER OF SERVICE – *Italicized* items are optional!

*The Marriage Service of
<Bride>
and
<Groom>*

*Second Presbyterian Church
Staunton, Virginia
<date> — <time>*

THE PRELUDE

“Title”..... *Composer*

EXAMPLE:

“Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring”..... *Bach*

THE PROCESSIONAL

“Trumpet Voluntary”..... *Clarke*

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

Call to Worship

Statement on the Gift of Marriage

Prayer

Declaration of Intent

Affirmation of the Families — “We do”

Affirmation of the Congregation — “We will”

Solo

Scripture Lesson

Wedding Meditation

The Covenant of Marriage

 The Vows

 Exchange of Rings

Candle Ceremony

Solo

Pastoral Prayer

Solo

Announcement of Marriage

Charge to the Couple

Benediction

THE RECESSIONAL

“Trumpet Tune”..... *Purcell*