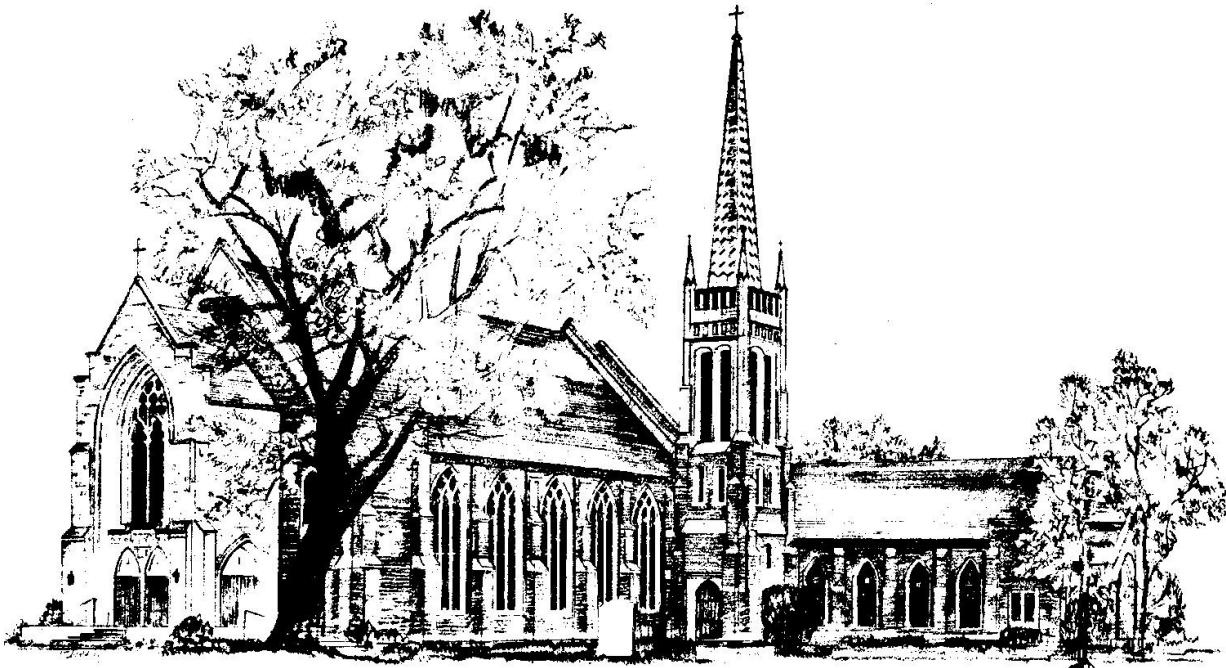


Wedding Handbook



DECATUR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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DECATUR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Wedding Policies and Procedures

Greetings,

We would like for you to have the best possible marriage, and we want you to begin it through an organized, yet relaxed wedding ceremony. In the pages to follow we offer you our experience about weddings in these facilities. Hopefully, this information will facilitate the making of your major decisions with little conflict and lessened anxiety. We also define our understanding of Christian marriage, state the policies of our Session, and outline the procedures by which your wedding can be ordered at the Decatur Presbyterian Church.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Christian Marriage.....	1
Reserving the Church.	1
Fees.....	1
Pastoral Care.	2
Officiating Pastor.....	2
Marriage License.	2
Location of the Wedding Ceremony.....	2
The Marriage Service.	2
Music.	2
Pre-recorded music.....	3
Minister of Music.....	3
Soloists and Other Music.....	3
Wedding Director.	3
Flowers.....	3
For Your Florist.	4
Candles.	4
Candelabra.....	4
Unity and Remembrance Candles.....	5
Photography and Videotaping.....	5
For Your Photographer.	5
Bulletins.....	6
Rehearsal.	6
Dressing Facilities.....	6
Rice, Birdseed, Petals, Balloons, etc.....	6
Reception Facilities.	6
Alcohol, Smoking.....	6
Handouts.	7

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

In these United States a marriage is a legal, civil contract that is binding upon the two parties until either a party dies, or both parties enter into another legal contract call a “writ of divorce.” Everywhere, marriage is to one degree or another an interpersonal relationship between two people forming a social unit. For Christians who are identified with the Presbyterian Church, marriage is first and foremost a covenant between the couple and God, witnessed by a worshipping congregation, and ordered by the Session.

The Directory of Worship found in the Presbyterian Book of Order states the following with regard to Christian marriage:

“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, traditionally a man and a woman, 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.” (W-4.9000)

Marriage is the beginning of the family unit, and the family we seek to establish is Christ-centered in its relationship. By choosing Decatur Presbyterian Church as the site of your wedding, you are choosing to begin your married life in the sight of God in an established church family of Christians.

Because “Christian marriage is a covenant through which two persons are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship,” it will be expected that at least one of the partners is a professing Christian, and that ordinarily both will share a common Christian faith or at least be open to prayerfully considering a profession of faith. We also believe that marriage was given as a medium through which persons can serve God and witness the Christian faith.

Therefore, we will do what we can to prepare persons for this sacred vocation and order the wedding ceremony as both a service for the worship of God and a witness to the values inherent in a Christian marriage. To those ends the guidelines presented in this handbook will ensure that all phases of preparation for your wedding will go smoothly and you will be able to enjoy and rejoice in your wedding ceremony.

RESERVING THE CHURCH

Because of the number of weddings held at Decatur Presbyterian Church, couples need to reserve the sanctuary or the chapel, and Slack Fellowship Hall (for receptions) as early as possible. Because of the regularly scheduled activities demanding the time and energy of the church staff, ordinarily no weddings will be scheduled on Sunday (see “The Marriage Service.”) **Communicate with the DPC Minister to establish the wedding date and discuss the timing of premarital care counseling sessions.** No weddings will be held during Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday), or on December 23, 24, or 25.

Once your official request has been received, in the form of the filled out application, your request will be recorded on the wedding calendar. One of the Pastors will present your request to the Session which will approve the date, time, place, and officiating Minister for your wedding.

FEES

Your first step will be to review the Handbook, then, once your request is confirmed by the Session, the first half of the non-refundable wedding payment is due. This confirms your wedding on the Church calendar. The remaining one-half must be paid no later than one month prior to the wedding.

PASTORAL CARE

Ordinarily, several sessions will be scheduled with one of the pastors for the purposes of ordering the wedding ceremony and preparing persons for the covenant of marriage. The timing for premarital counseling will be determined in the discussions with our Minister.

OFFICIATING PASTOR

One of the Pastors of the Decatur Presbyterian Church, or an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved by the Session, officiates at all weddings held at this site. The officiant conducts the wedding, decides who does what parts of the service, and signs the marriage license.

"Should the couple wish to invite some relative or close friend to participate in the ceremony, this may be done at the discretion of and by invitation from the Pastor." (W-4.9003).

The Pastor expects no honorarium when either the bride or the groom is a member of this congregation. The marriage service, like the sacraments, is a part of the ministry of the Church. A fee for pastoral services is included in the wedding fees for non-members.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

Prior to the wedding the pastor is required to obtain from the couple the "marriage license" issued by the Probate Judge and filed through that officer with the Georgia Department of Human Resources. You are responsible for bringing the marriage license with you to the wedding rehearsal where you will give it to the officiating minister.

LOCATION OF THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The Presbyterian Directory of Worship in the Book of Order prescribes that "Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship (W-4.9003)." The chapel or the sanctuary can be scheduled. The Chapel seats approximately 100 comfortably; the Sanctuary seats approximately 800.

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

Music and readings selected for the service shall glorify God who sanctifies marriage. The Pastor has authority over the ordering of worship and the selection of the elements used.

The Lord's Supper may be celebrated as a part of the wedding service, but it is not encouraged since it requires the prior approval of the Session and the serving of **all** baptized persons participating in the worship. Communion must be offered to the entire congregation.

The marriage service may take place during the Service for the Lord's Day upon authorization by the Session. It should be placed in the order as a response to the Proclamation of the Word. It may then be followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

MUSIC

"Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. The congregation may join in hymns and other musical forms of praise and prayer."

Any instrumental music should evoke the spirit of prayer or praise, and any vocal texts should be God-centered. The wedding music shall emphasize the faith of the Christian community rather than romantic

love or sentimentality. Love ballads, show tunes, movie music, some contemporary religious music, etc., are not appropriate.

Pre-recorded music will not be allowed. Musical standards and aesthetic judgement are subjective, but a trained church musician can be helpful regarding standards of musical excellence and theological integrity. The Minister of Music will provide a complete selection of the best available music for use in this service.

Minister of Music

All music to be used in connection with the wedding service should be selected in consultation with the Minister of Music and with the approval of the Pastor. Therefore, the couple should schedule a meeting with the Minister of Music at least six weeks prior to the wedding to discuss their musical selections. The Minister of Music is a full-time member of the Church Staff and will play the organ for all weddings. Should the Minister of Music be unable to play, a qualified substitute will be secured by the Minister of Music.

Soloists and Other Music

If vocalists or instrumental soloists are to be utilized, the Minister of Music will assist in providing someone who is qualified. If you have a suggestion as to a particular person whom you would like to participate, the Minister of Music must be consulted before any arrangement is made or invitation issued.

Attendance at the rehearsal by other musicians or soloist is at the discretion of the Minister of Music and the Pastor. On the wedding day, they are expected to be at the church at least one hour prior to the wedding time for rehearsal and set up.

WEDDING DIRECTOR

Upon approval of your request, the church provides a representative to facilitate your wedding. This person is responsible for the following:

1. Meeting with the Couple four to six weeks prior to the wedding, regarding the Handbook and the logistics of the wedding;
2. meeting with the photographer and florist;
3. opening and closing church facility for both rehearsal and wedding services;
4. assisting the Minister in organizing, conducting, and instructing the participants at the rehearsal;
5. opening the church facilities the day of the wedding- up to but no more than three hours prior to the wedding-for dressing, floral delivery, and photography;
6. ordering the processionals, recessionals, and seating of mothers;
7. replacing furnishings and order of facility for the next service of worship.

FLOWERS

The information contained below is in the Handout entitled "For Your Florist." It is to be given to your florist, signed by the florist, and returned to the Church Office.

"Flowers, decorations and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshiper's consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life."

Decorations are not in any way to deface church furnishings nor diminish the worshipful atmosphere of the sanctuary or chapel. No flower petals are to be thrown, whether real or artificial.

Families are responsible for the removal of flowers if they wish to keep them. If the flower arrangements are to be left in the chancel at the conclusion of the wedding service, this should be communicated to the Church Office well beforehand. Acknowledgment for these arrangements can then be given in the succeeding Sunday's bulletin for morning worship.

Florist Responsibilities

The Florist is to schedule an appointment with the Church Wedding Director to preview the space (Sanctuary, Chapel, Parlor) in planning for the decorations. The Couple is encouraged to be at this meeting. The Florist and the Wedding Director will establish an appropriate time for access to the church on the wedding day for decorating and for the delivery of flowers.

Acceptance of a contract to handle special decorations for a wedding in the Decatur Presbyterian Church facilities constitutes the Florist's acceptance of responsibility to pay for damage done. The information contained in the Handout entitled "For Your Florist" is to be given to your florist, and a signed copy is to be returned to the church office.

In planning the decorations, the following guidelines are to be used:

Sanctuary:

No flowers or other articles are to be placed on the organ console, piano, or harpsichord.

Chapel:

The cross on the chapel altar must not be removed. Small arrangements may be placed on either side of the cross. If larger flower arrangements are desired, they may be placed on either side on stands, but not obstruct the view of the cross.

Both Sanctuary and Chapel:

Decorations are not in any way to deface church furnishings nor diminish the worshipful atmosphere of the sanctuary or chapel.

No flower petals are to be thrown, whether real or artificial.

No nails, tape, or tacks are to be used in decorating the Sanctuary or Chapel.

If candles are used, they must be "chaste" (dripleless).

Rubber mats, plastic wrap, or other adequate protection must be placed under vases, pots, etc.

At least one extra boutonniere should be provided in case of breakage/damage.

All flowers are to be labeled so that the Wedding Director(s) can easily distribute the appropriate flowers to the right person.

Deliveries

Deliveries of flowers for a Sanctuary wedding are to come to the office door at the driveway between the Church Sanctuary Building and the Library. If delivering flowers for a Chapel wedding, park under the canopy on Church Street. If the delivery is to be later than what was scheduled, the delivery person is to call the Wedding Director with the expected arrival time.

CANDLES

Candelabra

The church can provide two brass candelabra (with seven candles each) for placement in the chancel.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING

Please remember that a wedding is a service of worship. Attention should be focused on the vows to be made and the couple being united in marriage.

Absolutely no flash photography is allowed during the wedding service except during the processional and recessional. At other times during the service non-flash pictures may be taken from the balcony (Sanctuary weddings) or the back pew (Chapel weddings). No additional lighting for use of any camera equipment will be allowed during the service. We encourage you to inform your guests of our policy regarding no flash photography.

Videotaping can be done from the back pew of the chapel or from the balcony of the sanctuary. No video cameras are allowed to be used in the chancel area or in the front of the sanctuary. Those recording the wedding ceremony on videotape should consult with the Wedding Director of the Decatur Presbyterian Church prior to the service.

The Wedding Director of the Decatur Presbyterian Church can arrange for re-enactment of any portion of the ceremony after the service.

The information below is contained in the Handout entitled "For Your Photographer." The handout is to be given to your photographer, and a signed copy is to be returned to us. Your photographer/videographer should consult with the Wedding Director prior to the service.

Guidelines For Your Photographer

The Officers of Decatur Presbyterian Church welcome you to our facilities as you carry out your responsibilities for this wedding. We ask your cooperation in making this an appropriate Service of Worship.

In observing weddings here through the years, we find a wide divergence in the skill, attitude, and performance of wedding photographers. Some delay the reception unduly, and this causes needless irritation on the part of all concerned. As many pictures as possible should be taken before the wedding.

Picture taking will run more smoothly if you get the Couple to make a list of all the pictures they want taken. Take as many as possible, if not all, before the ceremony. You are allowed only ½ hour after the service for pictures. If at all possible, be through with the Attendants and the Couple ½ hour before the service and definitely all Sanctuary or Chapel pictures. The Church Parlor (Room M 209) is available for pictures. The church is open no more than three hours before the wedding ceremony time. The Couple is responsible for setting this time with the Wedding Director and communicating this to you.

Time exposures from the balcony are permitted during the service. Video cameras must be used **only** from the balcony (Sanctuary weddings) or from the back pew (Chapel weddings). **NO FLASH PICTURES ARE ALLOWED DURING THE SERVICE and VIDEOS MUST BE FILMED FROM THE BALCONY (Sanctuary) or BACK PEW (Chapel).** No additional lighting for use of any camera equipment will be allowed during the service. This detracts from the service by distracting the attention of the congregation from the service and the wedding party.

Our office is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 9:00 a.m. to noon on Fridays. **To preview the space (Sanctuary, Chapel, Parlor), make an appointment with the Church Wedding Director.** The Couple will have this contact information for you."

BULLETINS

Printed programs may be used for the wedding ceremony if desired. Couples may obtain bulletin covers from near-by church supply stores. Programs may be printed by a professional printer.

For a nominal fee of \$75.00 (payable to the church), up to 500 copies (8.5" x 11" or 8.5" x 14") can be printed in the church office. A member of the Church Staff may be employed to provide word processing

and typesetting for a fee of \$50.00 (based on 2 hours; payable directly to that person). Should you choose to have the church and its staff help with the bulletins, please let them know well in advance.

The Minister needs to proof the order of your service and bulletin prior to printing. Please bring copies of your bulletin to the rehearsal for the wedding director(s) and organist.

We encourage you to inform your guests of our policy regarding no flash photography by printing this in your bulletin.

REHEARSAL

All members of the wedding party are requested to be at the Church and ready for the rehearsal at the appointed time. Promptness is respectful of others and considerate of their schedules. Members of the wedding party should be properly attired, duly respectful the sanctuary, and attentive to the instructions of the Wedding Director and the Pastor.

One hour is allowed for the rehearsal. This is one hour from the time you have requested on your wedding application. It includes practice time for readers, soloists, etc. Be on time.

Bring the marriage license for the minister, and bulletins for the wedding director(s), organist, and minister.

DRESSING FACILITIES

There are two dressing facilities available: Main Level McGeachy classroom across from Keith Parlor with an adjoining bathroom and the Session Room. *Traditionally the bride and bridesmaids have used Main Level McGeachy classroom and traditionally the groom and groomsmen have used the Session Room.*

RICE, BIRDSEED, PETALS, BALLOONS, ETC.

No rice, birdseed, flower petals (real or artificial), or any other objects are to be thrown inside or outside the buildings of the Church. Our experience has shown that it is both hazardous and difficult to remove. Because of the possible danger presented to birds and wildlife, the releasing of balloons outside the sanctuary is not allowed.

RECEPTION FACILITIES

Slack Fellowship Hall in the Bradley Building may be used for wedding receptions and can accommodate approximately 200 guests. There is a separate fee and time allowance for a reception.

There are complete kitchen facilities available. Arrangements can be made to use the services of a professional caterer, or food can be prepared by our in-house Caterers. If an outside caterer is employed, the handout entitled "For Your Caterer" that should be given to your caterer.

ALCOHOL, SMOKING

Alcoholic refreshments are prohibited on church property. Smoking is not permitted inside any of the Church buildings.



[Sentences within quotation marks are taken from the Book of Order, Directory of Worship, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Louisville, KY 40202-1396.]

Approved by the Session: May 27, 1997

Use of and fee for aisle candles approved by Session May 25, 1999

Updated October 17, 2006 by Worship Council (for clarity and meaning).

Updated November 2007 by Dr. J. Todd Speed for additional clarity in wording.

Updated February 14, 2011 by Dr. Speed, minor changes. Worship Council approved, Session approved 2/22/11.

Updated by Worship Council September, 2015, approved by Session October 27, 2015.

HANDOUTS

In compliance with the Wedding Policies and Procedures, please assume the responsibility of reading, understanding, and promptly giving the appropriate handout to your Florist and Photographer, and Caterer (for receptions held here). If you have any questions, please contact your Wedding Director.

Enclosed Handouts:

For the Couple

For Your Florist

For Your Photographer

For Your Caterer

Enclosures

Wedding Reservation Request Form

Fee Schedule