

WEDDINGS AT THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AUGUSTA

We are delighted that you have requested to celebrate your wedding at First Presbyterian Church of Augusta. It is our desire to assist you with your plans by presenting you with information gleaned from the experiences of many couples who have been married in our beautiful sanctuary. This packet of information is intended to prevent any “surprises” and make your arrangements precise and smooth as well as preserve the beauty and dignity of our church property for many generations to come.

First Presbyterian Church of Augusta

Marriage is a relationship instituted by God for the mutual happiness of His people and for the glory of His name. The service which you are anticipating is different from many other wedding services in that it is a Christian wedding. The fact that you have come to First Presbyterian Church for counsel and guidance indicates that your concern is for a marriage that will bring glory to God. It is appropriate that the wedding service reflect this.

Christian couples want their wedding ceremony to be characterized by dignity, reverence and joy. Our church rejoices in such occasions and this imposes particular responsibilities just as it offers particular blessings. Your wedding will mean more to you, your families and your friends when there is careful concern for all the reverent aspects of the holy occasion.

All wedding policies have been established by the Session (Board of Elders) to accomplish that purpose and to assist the bride and groom and their families in answering questions regarding the wedding ceremony. Any exceptions to these policies are required to be brought before the Session for approval.

SCHEDULING

Plan in advance for the use of the church. Before we can confirm your requested date the completion of a Wedding Questionnaire and a conference with the parish elder and the officiating pastor is required.

No wedding may be scheduled on Sundays, during Holy Week, Christmas week or on any Holiday weekend. Other dates may not be available due to church calendar events.

OFFICIATING

It is the policy First Presbyterian that one of the pastors of this church will officiate over all weddings. If desired, another Protestant Trinitarian pastor may be invited to assist in the ceremony after approval of the Session and consultation with the officiating pastor. The officiating pastor will coordinate the service.

The marriage license must be in the pastor’s possession before the ceremony and preferably should be given to him at the rehearsal time.

COUNSELING

The prospective bride and groom must participate in the "Preparing for Marriage" program provided through Hindsight Biblical Counseling. The program includes four 90-minute counseling sessions that cover the critical knowledge essential to building a strong relationship. Couples will also learn how to apply that biblical foundation throughout their marriage. The bride and groom are responsible for contacting Rev. Berry Hudson, Hindsight Biblical Counseling, 706.910.5000, to schedule their counseling sessions.

PROCESS FOR TWO NON-MEMBERS WANTING TO MARRY AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

The non-member couple must wait until six months prior to their desired date to begin the process. At that time the couple will submit the Marriage Questionnaire (personal testimonies) to the wedding liaison who will forward it to the appropriate Elder. The Elder will schedule a time to meet with the couple to hear their testimony. If the Wedding is approved, the date will then be put on the church calendar and the couple may proceed with all the arrangements. At that time they will need to begin their Marriage Counseling sessions.

WEDDING COORDINATION

All arrangements are coordinated through the church administrator and the wedding liaison. They will help with all particulars of the wedding concerning janitors, lighting and sound, the preparation of the facilities, use of candelabra, kneeling bench, reception and/or rehearsal dinners at the church.

The couple must secure the services of a Wedding Director. The wedding director is the liaison between First Presbyterian Church and the bride and her parents. The Director, first and foremost, represents First Presbyterian Church. It is her duty to see that the wedding arrangements at the church proceed smoothly and in keeping with the worshipful and holy calling of Christian matrimony.

Following is a list of approved directors for First Presbyterian Church.

Janis Gatlin 706-736-8836
Angela Rogers 706-733-0512
Lauren Wieme 678-230-9396
Janet Haburchak 706.863.3358

WEDDING ATTIRE

Weddings at First Presbyterian Church are worship services. The honor of God must therefore be taken into consideration when selecting dresses for the bride, bridesmaids and other bridal party members. The church does not want to enter into the matter of styles and personal taste, but it does have guidelines. Strapless gowns are not considered appropriate for a worship service. All gowns must be modest in cut for both the neckline and back. Dresses should reveal no cleavage. If there are any questions in regard to appropriate dress, the Wedding Director should be consulted.

MUSIC

Music is an important part of a wedding ceremony and should be in keeping with the reverence observed in the House of the Lord and appropriate for an occasion of worship. The Director of Music Ministries at First Presbyterian Church shall oversee all music at weddings. He will assist you in the selection of music and arrangements. Please consult the Wedding Music Planner later in this packet. All music and instruments must be approved by the Director of Music Ministries.

FACILITIES

Weddings may be held in the church sanctuary which seats approximately 850 people. Smaller weddings may be performed in the Eve Room. The date and time of the wedding and the time of the wedding rehearsal are to be given to the pastor's secretary for recording in the calendar. All sanctuary lights are on dimmers for desired light intensity. The bride may wish to check with her photographer prior to the wedding regarding the amount of lighting needed to achieve the desired effect for pictures, or have him check the sanctuary with one of the sextons before the guests begin arriving.

The reception hall, St. Andrew's Hall, the Geneva Room or the Eve Room, may be reserved for the wedding reception and/or the rehearsal dinner. The fees for the use of these rooms for those outside of the congregation are listed in the Wedding Fees section of this information. **St. Andrew's Hall will accommodate 500 people, the Eve Room 45 people and the Geneva Room, has a 30 person capacity.** No alcoholic beverage may be used for receptions and/or rehearsal dinners at the church and smoking is not permitted in the buildings. The hosting party is responsible for informing guests of no smoking in church buildings. **Punch should contain no Kool Aid or food coloring of any kind.** These are the two things that are not removable from carpets. It is to be understood that in the event that church property is damaged or destroyed, the church will replace or repair such articles and will bill the wedding party. It is the caterer's responsibility in supplying the needed services for the wedding reception to leave the church's facilities in the same good order in which they are found. Our sextons will clean the floors.

CANDELABRA

The church owns eight white wrought iron seven branched candelabra and eight brass candelabra. Nothing may be placed on the brass candelabra. The church's candle lighters are available for use. The only type of candles allowed for use in the sanctuary are chace candles. These are a type of candle surrounded by a metal casing which are almost completely dripless. They are identical in appearance to a regular wax candle and they are guaranteed to light and do not drip or melt down as much as a regular candle. These are available for purchase for \$.50 each. Due to safety concerns unity candles are not allowed.

DECORATIONS AND FLOWERS

The First Presbyterian Church sanctuary does not require decorations to make it suitable for a service such as a wedding. Efforts to change the appearance of the sanctuary by overly elaborate decorations only mar the intent of this sacred place. The following regulations are established to preserve the proper atmosphere and to safeguard the furnishings.

1. The decorations and flowers should enhance the ceremony and the church and not be unbecoming to God's House. Flowers may be used on the platform or choir rail. **Floral arrangements should not be placed on the floor in back of the presiding Pastor.**
2. The baptismal font, communion table and chairs are to be moved to specified locations by the church sextons.
3. Non-drip candles are required. Nothing may be placed on the brass candelabra.
4. No tacks, nails, glue or tape may be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture or building. Covered wire, forms and plastic clamps should be used in attaching decorations. No decorations are allowed in the choir loft.
5. The furniture and floor must be fully protected at all times from moisture and candle wax. The florist will be responsible for any damage.

PHOTOGRAPHERS, VIDEOGRAPHERS AND RECORDINGS

The photographer should be instructed that flash photographs are not permissible in the sanctuary during the ceremony. We ask that there be only one pre-set photograph taken during the service itself (without the use of a flash) from the balcony or the rear of the sanctuary. The moving of equipment and the clicking and snapping of photographs is quite disruptive during the ceremony. Photographs may be taken during the recessional from the narthex.

If photographs of the Bride and Groom are desired following the ceremony, the Pastor's photographs with the Bride and Groom should be taken first.

If it is desired, an audio recording of the wedding will be made. Ordinarily, the portion of the wedding service recorded is the solo before the processional (when applicable) or the processional through the recessional. If you wish to have the prelude music recorded, please indicate on your wedding sheet. Please notify the Director of Music to request this service. Please discuss audio needs with the Director of Music. The audio technician involved with amplification is responsible to be present two hours before the wedding service to assure all mikes, etc., are in place.

If the services of a videographer are secured by the couple, the videographer should be instructed that video taping is allowed only from the balcony and by remote from a corner of the choir loft.

SEXTONS AND MAIDS

Every wedding must have at least two (2) sextons on duty. One comes early to open the church, and both stay late to close the church and to see that heating/air conditioning and lights are appropriate. Weddings with receptions are required to have two (2) sextons on duty. The fee for each sexton will be \$13.50 per hour. Wedding receptions and/or rehearsal dinners require at least one (1) maid and receptions and/or rehearsal dinners of 50 guests or more require two (2) maids. The fee for each maid will be \$13.50 per hour. There is a \$20.00 per hour rate for Maids and Sextons for hours worked over 8 hours or hours worked after 12:00am.

SECURITY

First Presbyterian Church will not be responsible for any personal property such as automobiles or valuables in automobiles on our campus. **The wedding party is required to hire at least one outside security guard to police the parking area for all weddings, receptions and/or rehearsal dinners and two or more security guards are recommended for weddings, receptions and/or rehearsal dinners of 200 guests or more. The fee for this service is \$18.00 per hour per officer. Contact Kathy Gilreath at 738-8860 or 829-5078 for more information.**

NURSERY

Nursery services are available for the wedding and for the rehearsal dinner and/or reception provided that the rehearsal dinner and/or reception are at First Presbyterian Church. The fee for the workers is \$8.00 each per hour with a minimum of 3 hours. At least two workers are required and the ratio of workers to children is one worker for every four children. If you wish to use two nursery rooms you will need four staff workers. Contact the Wedding Director for a list of approved workers.

OTHER IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

1. There shall be no smoking in the church or in any of the rooms or other buildings.
2. No rice or confetti may be thrown at the wedding party. Bird seed, rose petals and bubbles may be used outside any of the church buildings.
3. Under no circumstances shall any member of the wedding party come to the rehearsal or the wedding under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
4. If the car is decorated, no debris should be left on the church grounds.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WEDDING REHEARSALS

The preferred time for Wedding Rehearsals is 5:30 p.m. on the evening prior to the wedding.

DRESSING ROOMS

The bride and bridesmaids may dress in the Eve Room, first floor, Reese Hall, East. The Eve Room has a full length mirror. The men may dress in the Classroom across from the large kitchen, on the first floor, in Reese Hall, West.

KNEELER

The use of the kneeler during the wedding service for the bride and the groom is optional in the First Presbyterian Church. There is no right or wrong as far as First Presbyterian Church is concerned about the use of the kneeler; it is up to the preference of the bride and groom.

CENTRAL PULPIT

The central pulpit on the platform is not constructed for movement and so the entire wedding is performed on the main floor level.

WALKWAY CANDLEHOLDERS

The wedding florist is responsible for appropriately placing the walkway candleholders. The Wedding Director is responsible for assuring that they are properly and timely lit by the ushers.

FORMS

Please complete all forms (13 through 22) and bring them with you when you meet with Pam Turley and Joan Gay at least four weeks prior to your wedding.

PAYMENT FOR WEDDING

You should make an appointment with Pam Turley and Joan Gay **four weeks prior to the wedding**. They will go over the fees for sextons, maids, candles, tablecloth cleaning, use of the facilities etc. Payment should be made at this time. Your specific set up needs will be discussed at this appointment as well.

DISTRIBUTION OF WEDDING FEES

To insure that applicable fees are distributed to the appropriate individuals please see the guidelines below. The Wedding Party is responsible to pay for the following services:

Pastor ~ Give check to the Wedding Director at the rehearsal

Security ~ Give checks to the Wedding Director at the rehearsal

Wedding Director ~ Give check to the Wedding Director at the rehearsal

Musicians ~ Give checks to the Wedding Director at the rehearsal

Audio ~ Give checks to the Wedding Director at the rehearsal

Caterer ~ Make payment arrangements with your caterer

Florist ~ Make payment arrangements with your florist

Videographer ~ Make payment arrangements with your videographer

Photographer ~ Make payment arrangements with your photographer