

Weddings
at
First Presbyterian Church

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Welcome

We welcome you to First Presbyterian Church. Our ministers, staff and wedding guild members are eager to assist you in making your wedding day special and your marriage strong. As you might know, the first steps toward a joyful wedding need to be taken long before the processional notes sound. We hope this booklet will help you in that planning. The information draws from our Reformed Tradition, the wedding policy as approved by our Session and instructions for worship detailed in our Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Order. We will gladly answer questions for you that might arise as you read through this document.

What is a Wedding?

The Directory of Worship in the Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Order describes marriage as a “gift God has given all human kind for the well being of the entire human family. For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship” (W-4.0991). The wedding is a worship service: God calls a man and a woman together in holy marriage. Marriage is instituted of God, regulated by His commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and is meant to be held in honor among people.

A church wedding, therefore, is first and foremost a worship service. Christ, not the bridal couple, is the focus of the service. In orienting ourselves to God, it is our hope to ensure that each wedding is not only happy and joyful, but one of deep spiritual meaning, one that sets the foundation for a lasting marriage.

Preparing for Marriage Planning a Wedding

Our hope for you is more than a nice wedding. Our hope is for a strong marriage that brings joy to you and those you love and honors God Almighty. To assist in this, all couples must meet with the minister for premarital counseling. Couples will ordinarily meet twice with the pastor, with the first meeting occurring at least ninety days prior to the wedding. The marriage of any couple is left to the discretion of the pastor.

Of course, it is hard to plan a wedding without a date! All weddings at First Presbyterian Church are scheduled and arranged through the pastor. After contacting the church office, the church secretary and director of music will work with the pastor in order to set the date for the service. Weddings may be held any day of the week, but are subject to the availability of the sanctuary and other scheduled events. No weddings are scheduled between Christmas and New Year's Day or during Holy Week. Couples requesting a service within ninety days will meet with the pastor before setting a date for the ceremony.

The pastor is in charge of and will lead all weddings and rehearsals. If you wish to invite others to assist in the ceremony, make your desires known to the pastor who, in turn, will extend the invitation to the guest.

A marriage license needs to be obtained by the wedding couple and provided to the church office one week prior to the service.

Wedding Guild

The wedding is a worship service of the congregation; therefore, private wedding directors and/or consultants are prohibited in services conducted at First Presbyterian Church, Wilson. Support, though, is often needed to prepare a service. The Wedding Guild is an association of volunteers who assist the church with marriage ceremonies. Through their service, the church directors seek to provide the couple planning to wed in our sanctuary an experience of gracious hospitality. Their work ensures that the ceremonies reflect Presbyterian/Reformed theology and appropriate etiquette. Their service is a gift from those in the guild to the families of the wedding couple. Members of the Wedding Guild do not expect to be included in the wedding festivities, the rehearsal dinner or the reception

Wedding Guild members will assist you in planning your wedding service, will direct your rehearsal, and will direct the ceremony on the day of the wedding. Rehearsals will last no longer than one hour. Current members of the Wedding Guild at First Presbyterian Church are listed below.

Agnes Cherry
Gail Douglas
Susan Jones
Robin Lemaire
Beth Peters
Mary Piggott
Leslie Spencer
Sheila Wiggins

Planning the Wedding

Soon after meeting the pastor, you should contact the director of music. She will guide you in selecting music for the wedding. Special care is made to assure that music in the service is suitable and reverent. Together with the pastor, the director of music has final approval of all music played or sung. If another musician is desired, the invitation must be extended through the director of music. Guest musicians, vocalists and instrumentalists shall be guided by the policies of First Presbyterian Church and are expected to work congenially with our church staff.

Every wedding at First Presbyterian includes readings of scripture, pastoral reflections, prayer, an exchange of vows, and at least one hymn. By your second meeting, you and the pastor will have settled on elements of the service. The pastor will provide options for you to consider in regards to vows and scripture.

After the bride has met with the minister and confirmed a date for the wedding ceremony, a Wedding Guild member will contact her to begin the process of planning some of the details of the service.

Wedding Guild members work with the bride to provide information on the wedding service, to determine placement of the wedding party, to clarify policies for sanctuary adornments, and to assist the bride with the wedding program. When considering children as part of the wedding party, please consult with the pastor and/or the wedding guild. Young children over the age of four years are better attendants.

Preparation of the Sanctuary

First Presbyterian Church sanctuary has a seating capacity of 455. The nave accommodates 380 guests and 75 guests may be seated in the balcony. For smaller more intimate weddings, the chancel has a seating capacity of approximately 45. It is the desire of the Session that simple adornments be used.

Fresh flowers may be placed on either side of the front of the chancel to the left and right of the lectern and pulpit, respectively. A low arrangement may also be placed on the flower stand behind the communion table. Bows or small bouquets of flowers, attached with chenille stems, may be used on the pew ends to indicate the reserved sections for family members of the wedding couple.

The church has two seven-branch candelabras. Chase candles and brass candlesticks are also available for use. Only drip-less candles are permitted in the sanctuary.

Should you choose to light a unity candle during the ceremony, the church provides the table and candlesticks. You will need to provide drip-less candles.

A kneeling bench with a needlepoint cushion is available for use by those being married on site, inside of First Presbyterian Church.

If other adornments are desired, you will need to consult with the wedding guild director before making the arrangements with the florist.

If you desire to leave flowers in the sanctuary for the following Sunday morning worship service, an appropriate announcement will be placed in the church bulletin honoring the wedding couple. The church secretary needs to be informed one week prior to the wedding, so the announcement is in Sunday's bulletin following the day of the wedding.

The bottom row of window shutters can be opened. The higher rows remain closed because of their age and fragile nature.

The Day of the Wedding

The church is opened two and a half hours prior to the wedding. The church's education building is available that day, with the church library set aside for you and your attendants to dress. It provides privacy and is in close proximity to the ladies' restroom. A mirror and a few emergency supplies may be available. Groomsmen and ushers are expected to arrive one hour before the service, dressed in the attire for the day.

Instruct your florist to deliver your bouquet, the bouquets for your attendants, and the boutonnieres for the groomsmen to the church library. You may have a member of the Wedding Guild pin boutonnieres onto the left lapels of the groomsmen as they arrive for the ceremony.

In order to provide a respectful and timely service, our wedding guild members will assist you in keeping track of the time. Grandmothers of the wedding couple will be seated at 10 minutes before the hour. Mothers will be seated at 5 minutes before the hour.

Use of other facilities

The church has several rooms which are appropriately furnished for receptions and a spacious lawn which may be used in warm weather. Use of the facilities for the reception should be discussed with the minister.

Symbols of departure are prohibited from being cast upon the wedding couple inside First Presbyterian Church. Bird seed is a good item of choice for outside celebrations.

Please have caterers for the reception meet with the church secretary prior to the wedding so policies governing the use of the facilities are understood by everyone.

Other items

Photography

Photographs and use of video cameras by guests attending the wedding is prohibited during the service. The wedding couple should ensure that guests, family members and others in attendance are informed of this policy. Professional photographs will be performed in a professional manner. Photographers may take flash pictures in the narthex of the church before the processional, during the recessional, and after the service. Flash pictures are prohibited. Flash pictures of the bridal party maybe taken in the church after the service is concluded. Time-exposure photographs may be taken from the balcony. Videotaping is allowed from the balcony only, provided no special lighting is required. Please share this information with your photographer.

Alcohol and Smoking

It has been an established policy of First Presbyterian Church that food and beverages are prohibited from being served and consumed in the church parlor. Use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in church buildings and on church grounds. Smoking is prohibited in all church buildings.

Cleaning up

It is your responsibility to clear the church of your property, personal items of your wedding party and guests as well as appointments and flowers. Personal property must be cleared before leaving the church property that day and sanctuary appointments must be removed by the next worship service.

Schedule of Fees and Honoraria

The Session of First Presbyterian Church has adopted the following schedule of fees and honoraria for wedding ceremonies. Payment needs to be made to First Presbyterian Church three weeks prior to the ceremony.

Church Fees

First Presbyterian Church provides a lovely setting for couples who are not members of our congregation and wish to be married in our sanctuary. Requests to reserve the church by a wedding couple who are non-members of the church may be made at any time, however, such requests cannot be confirmed on the church calendar until six months prior to the date of the wedding.

Wedding fee for members	50.00
For wedding and reception	\$100.00
Wedding fee for non-members	\$550.00
For wedding and reception	\$750.00

Honoraria

The fee for the Director of Music shall be determined when the director meets with the wedding couple.

No fee is established for pastors leading the service. It is customary, though, to provide an honorarium of between \$100 to \$250 for pastors conducting the ceremony.

Wedding Programs

If desired, the church will prepare and print a wedding program for a fee of \$25.00 per 100. Programs will be printed on ecru paper, and will follow a standard format. To see an example, contact the church secretary.

Church Directory

Church Office

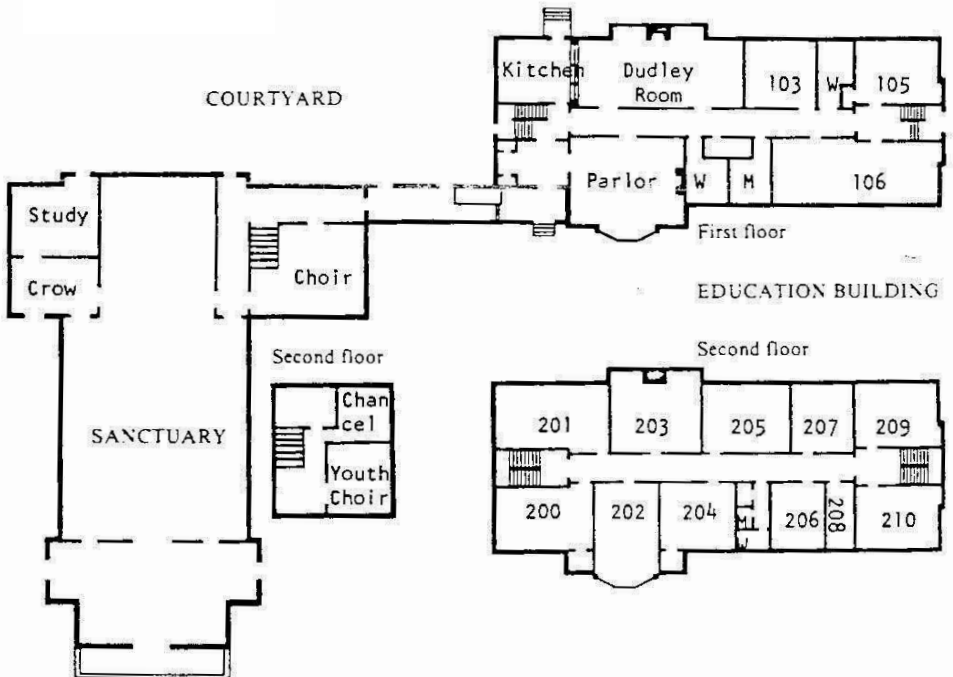
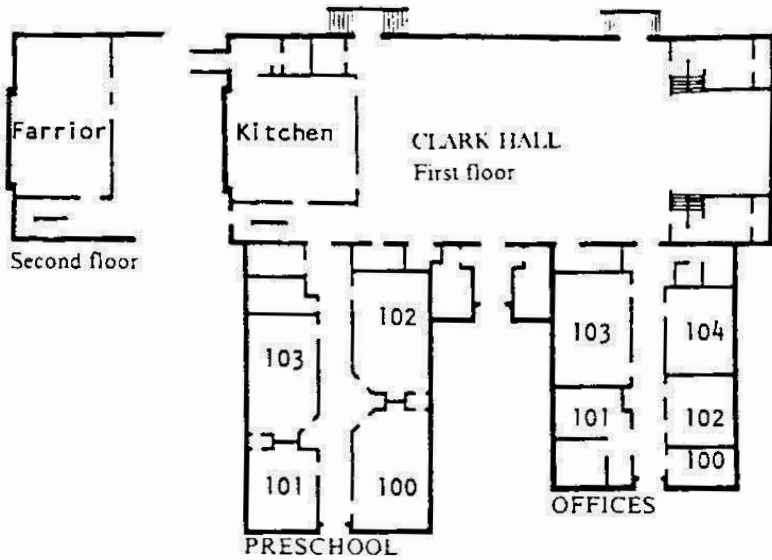
Location	414 Sunset Avenue Wilson, N.C. 27893
Mailing Address	Post Office Box 3184 Wilson, N.C. 27895
Telephone	(252) 243-3115
FAX	(252) 243-3116
E-mail	fpc@firstpreswilson.com

Staff

Pastor	Tom Watkins
Associate Pastor	Claire Colcord
Director of Music	Joan Gibbs
Youth Director	Ginger Jablonski
Financial Administrator	Dawn Hodges
Church Secretary	Jennifer Meade
Sexton	Alan Martin

Wedding Guild Coordinators:

Map of Facilities



Notes

- 1. ___ *Contact church*
- 2. ___ *Meet with pastor*
- 3. ___ *Meet with director of music*
- 4. ___ *Meet with wedding guild*
- 5. ___ *Obtain marriage license*
- 6. ___ *Meet again with pastor*
- 7. ___ *Pay necessary fees*
- 8. ___ *Complete arrangements*

