



Second Presbyterian Church

Organized 1803

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Wedding Policy



The Second Presbyterian Church of Baltimore

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Discover Your Second Family

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

AND THE REFORMED TRADITION

The "Statement of the Gift of Marriage" is part of the beginning of every wedding service at Second Presbyterian Church. These words embody the sentiment with which we understand and approach marriage. Together, as a church congregation, we want to be as responsible as we can and need to be in sharing this rite as part of the community of faith to which we are called.

While planning your wedding at Second Presbyterian Church, please give prayerful thought to the following guidelines that have been established to help you create a wedding ceremony which joins the couple in holy matrimony, surrounds them with our prayers, and asks for God's blessing upon them.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

FAITH OF THE REFORMED TRADITION G-2.0500

These guidelines also honor one of the great themes of the Reformed tradition: In order to strengthen personal commitment and the life and witness of the community of believers we shall strive for "a faithful stewardship that shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of the gifts of God's creation."

The congregation and staff of Second Presbyterian Church are here to support your wedding service and the creation of a loving, inspiring, and beautiful atmosphere in the church, which honors your ceremony.

Keep the following excerpt from "The Statement of the Gift of Marriage," with which your wedding service will begin, in mind as you review these wedding policy guidelines:

THE STATEMENT OF THE GIFT OF MARRIAGE

"Dearly Beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of _____ and _____ in holy matrimony, to surround them with our prayers, and to ask God's blessing upon them so that they may be strengthened in their life together and nurtured in their love for God.

People were not made to live alone. The covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ blessed this way of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding at Cana in Galilee, where he turned water into wine. This then, is a religious time, calling forth the roots of marriage in faith and tradition from Biblical times ...

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity, for the support of children and their nurture in the love of the Lord, and for all their times together in life.

In marriage, husband and wife are called to a new way of life, created, ordered, and blessed by God. This way of life must not be entered into carelessly, or from selfish motives, but responsibly and prayerfully. We rejoice that marriage is given by God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let marriage be held in honor among all."

THE BOOK OF ORDER DEFINES MARRIAGE: CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE, W4.9001

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. 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. In a service of Christian marriage, a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

WEDDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Who may be considered for marriage at Second Presbyterian Church?

Marriage is an act of Christian discipleship, so both the man and the woman seeking marriage should be professing Christians. However, it is permissible for just one member of the couple to be a professing Christian.

Marriage takes place within the life, work, and worship of a Christian community, and Second Presbyterian Church is the heart of this community for its members. Therefore, couples who would like to be married in the church should be active members of Second Presbyterian Church.

Wedding Date

Members who wish to be married at Second Presbyterian Church may reserve a wedding date after they have been on the active membership roll for at least six months. To select the date and time for the wedding, contact the church office by calling 410.467.4210.

The Discernment Process

We recommend that couples embark on the discernment process as early as one year prior to their proposed marriage date. (The process must begin no later than four months before the proposed date.) The first step for those wishing to begin the process of discernment is to complete an application to be married at Second Presbyterian Church.

When the application papers are returned to the church office, a tentative date for the wedding may be placed on the church calendar.

The couple meets with the pastor of Second Presbyterian Church. Pastoral counseling is a necessary part of the journey known as the discernment process. The pastor may refer the couple to a counselor to help them prepare for marriage, or the pastor may conduct the counseling. If the couple goes to a counselor, the couple must grant the counselor permission to provide a counseling report to the pastor.

The couple then meets again with the pastor. If the pastor is convinced of the couple's commitment, responsibility, maturity, and Christian understanding, he or she may approve the application to be married at Second Presbyterian Church. If the pastor deems the marriage unwise, he will not conduct the ceremony, but will assure the couple of the Church's continuing prayerful concern for them. (Book of Order, W-4.9002b)

Wedding Coordinator

When the application to be married is approved and the wedding date is confirmed, the wedding party is assigned a wedding coordinator, a member of Second Presbyterian Church, who will act as your liaison with the church, and assist you at the rehearsal and wedding. The wedding coordinator also assists the pastor with logistics and arrangements at the rehearsal.

On the day of the wedding, the wedding coordinator is responsible for the oversight and coordination of the wedding party, as well as logistics of the church facilities ceremony. (Note: This is a different role from that of the wedding party's personal wedding planner.)

The wedding coordinator's specific responsibilities at the rehearsal and wedding are as follows:

1. To provide copies of the rehearsal program, prepared from information submitted to the wedding coordinator at least two weeks before the wedding.
2. To facilitate getting people down and back up the aisle.
3. To guide all parties in showing respect for this place of worship, including following the rules for photography, decorations, and conduct.

Fees

The wedding coordinator will discuss current fees with the bride and groom. A deposit is required at the time the tentative wedding date is reserved. The deposit becomes non-refundable 60 days before the reserved date. Final payment and all additional fees - for such things as soloist(s), musicians, and candelabra - must be paid in full two weeks prior to the wedding day. (For more details, see section entitled "Payment of Fees")

Pastors

Ordinarily, one of the Second Presbyterian Church pastors will preside at all weddings. If the Second Presbyterian Church pastor of your choosing is not available on the date you select because of a prior commitment, please be prepared to accept the services of another Second Presbyterian Church pastor, or to find an alternate date.

The pastors of Second Presbyterian Church may invite other pastors to assist, participate, or officiate, if personal reasons or circumstances warrant it. Couples must discuss such requests with the Second Presbyterian Church pastor as early as possible. As the host pastor, he or she will officially invite the guest pastor to participate. The couple may discuss this with the guest pastor but may not make official arrangements.

Suggested Order of Service - A Christian Wedding

- Ushers seat the guests during the prelude
- Special music begins *
- Special family members/VIPs enter
- Parents of the bride and groom are seated
- The minister and groom enter and proceed to the front
- The bridal party enters and proceeds to the front
- Music concludes for the bridal party *
- Music begins for the bride's entrance (processional music) *
- Opening words/welcome
- Bride and groom present flowers to parents and/or VIPs
- "Declarations of Intent" by the bride and groom
- First reading *
- Special music (congregational hymn, musical interlude, or musical and vocal offering) *
- Exchange of wedding vows
- Blessing of the rings
- Exchange of the wedding rings
- Minister's prayer of blessing for the bride and groom (Lord's Prayer)
- Bride and groom kiss
- Introduction of the new couple by the minister
- Recessional music begins *
- Bride and groom exit
- Minister's instruction to the congregation

* Selections for these elements of the Order of Wedding should be decided no later than 60 days prior to the wedding date.

Music

"Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church."
From *The Book of Order*, W-4.9005.

Worship and blessing through music is an important part of your wedding ceremony. The Second Presbyterian Church community believes that wedding music reflects this tradition of sacred and classical music, along with some of the finest musicians and soloists in the area.

Please obtain the Wedding Music Information Form from the church office, and bring the completed form to your first meeting with the pastor.

The music director is available to confer on your musical selections and can help guide you toward music that expresses this attention to God, who sanctifies marriage. (Congregational hymn singing is encouraged)

The pastor and the music director must approve all music. They have the responsibility to ensure that holy matrimony is supported by appropriate and reverent musical selections. In this spirit, music inappropriate for worship are not permitted as accompaniment to the wedding service.

Rehearsals

The rehearsal will take place on the Friday evening before the wedding date at 5 p.m. The assigned wedding coordinator and the pastor direct the rehearsal.

The rehearsal does not include music.

Rehearsals are intended to ensure a smooth ceremony, so all who have a role in the wedding are expected to be present. Please be prompt.

OTHER DETAILS

Marriage License

Bring your marriage license to the church office one week before the wedding date.

To be married at Second Presbyterian Church, your license must be obtained from Baltimore City, at the Clarence M. Mitchell Courthouse, located at 100 North Calvert Street, Room 628. The office is open from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. At least one of the individuals seeking the marriage license must appear in person. The fee is currently \$35 in cash. You may obtain more information by calling 410.333.3780.

Communion

The Session of Second Presbyterian Church must approve the celebration of the Lord's Supper at the marriage service. The officiating pastor shall take care that the invitation to the Table is extended to all baptized present.

Worship Facilities Available

Sanctuary, seating capacity 700

Chapel, seating capacity 100

Smith Hall is available for receptions.

Appropriate Behavior

Out of respect for this place of worship, Second Presbyterian Church expects that everyone on the premises will avoid using obscene language, acting in any discourteous manner, and smoking in any part of the church buildings. Wedding coordinators and church staff will enforce this rule strictly.

Second Presbyterian Church permits serving champagne and/or wine in the Westcott Room or Smith Hall, but not in the sanctuary or chapel. (Because you want to preserve a joyful but reverent atmosphere for your wedding, keep the champagne and wine for the reception only - never enjoy them before the wedding service.)

Please make sure your florist, photographer, wedding planner, caterer, and any other professionals you hire are aware of this policy. There will be no verbal warnings or reprimands; first-time offenders will be asked to leave the church grounds immediately, and those in violation of this policy will be removed from the approved vendor list.

Programs

If you choose to provide printed programs, we ask that you include wording to remind your guests of the following: Please, no flash photography, and turn off beepers and cell phones.

Live Animals

Live animals, including birds, are not allowed inside or outside the sanctuary.

Confetti, Rice, Bird Seed, Flower Petals

Because the use of such materials may create safety hazards, and always creates extra clean up, you may not use these or similar materials inside or outside the church buildings.

Carillon Bells

The use of the church's carillon bells at the conclusion of the service is a beautiful and appropriate celebration of the wedded couple.

Instructions to the Florist

"Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshippers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life."
From *The Book of Order*, W-4.9005

Decorations, including floral installations, can be beautiful, but keep in mind that you wish to preserve a worshipful atmosphere. Please refrain from over-elaborate decorations. A standard of elegant simplicity is encouraged and appreciated. Decorations are limited as follows:

- Second Presbyterian Church has two sets of seven branch, standing candelabra: one in brass, one in dark iron. No other lighted candles may be used in the sanctuary or chapel, with the exception of a unity candle.
 - The church provides matching carpet that must be placed beneath the candelabra to protect the floor.
 - The church's candles must be used, and they are included in the candelabra fee.
 - Because of the fire hazard and potential damage to the candelabra, no decorations of any kind are allowed on the candelabra
 - Aisle candles are prohibited because the narrow aisles prevent safe passage of the wedding procession and guests.
 - No one may hold or carry candles in the sanctuary, except for lighting the unity candle as coordinated with the officiating minister.
- The florist may provide the unity candle and holder, if you wish to include lighting the unity candle in your ceremony. The officiating minister will coordinate its lighting with the bride and groom.
- Floral arrangements may be placed on the windowsills of the sanctuary and chapel.
- Bows may be used on the pews, but, to prevent damage, the bows must be attached with plastic clips. Nails, tacks, and tape must not be used on the pews.
- Aisle runners pose a safety hazard and may not be used.
- Respect for the place of worship includes treatment of the liturgical furniture.
 - No decorations are allowed on, over, or in front of the chancel rail in the chapel.
 - One low flower arrangement may be placed on the Communion table. (It must not obscure the cross.) The candlesticks may not be moved from the Communion table.
 - Floral arrangements in moderate-sized containers may be used in the narthex or hallway outside the chapel. No other decorations may be used in these areas. Arrangements may be placed on the tables in the narthex, but the tables may not be moved or replaced with temporary structures.

The florist must leave the sanctuary, chapel, and the rest of the facility and grounds he or she traverses, "broom clean." The sexton on duty is there to open and secure the building, to attend to the lighting, to adjust the heating or air conditioning, and to set up the candelabra if they are to be used. The charge for the sexton's time does not include clean up for the florist.

Out of respect for this place of worship, Second Presbyterian Church requires that florists, their employees, and all guests avoid using obscene language, acting in any discourteous manner, and smoking in any part of the church buildings. Wedding coordinators and church staff will enforce this rule strictly. There will be no verbal warnings or reprimands. First-time offenders will be asked to leave the church grounds immediately, and any florist in violation of this policy will be removed from the approved vendor list.

Photographs and Video Recording

Documenting the marriage celebration is important, but the sight, sound, and movement of documenting it should not disturb the celebration itself. The photography and videography policy applies to all in attendance, professionals and guests alike.

It is the bridal couple's responsibility to make this policy known to their friends and the photographer.

Photographs during the marriage service are discouraged. However, by prior arrangement and with the permission of the pastor, limited photographs and/or video done in an unobtrusive manner may be permitted.

Advance permission from the pastor is required to use electronic equipment such as video or tape recorders. The use and placement of this equipment must not distract from the service of worship.

Out of respect for this place of worship, Second Presbyterian Church requires that photographers, their employees, and all guests avoid using obscene language, acting in any discourteous manner, and smoking in any part of the church buildings. Wedding coordinators and church staff will enforce this rule strictly. There will be no verbal warnings or reprimands; first-time offenders will be asked to leave the church grounds immediately, and any photographers in violation of this policy will be removed from the approved vendor list.

Catering

If you wish to provide catered refreshments, please work out the details with your wedding coordinator before signing the catering contract.

CHARGES FOR USE OF FACILITIES

Custodial Services

Minimum: \$100 per custodian for 4 hours of service

\$50 per custodian for each additional hour

Please make arrangements in advance with your wedding coordinator for additional time.

Facility Fees (excludes custodial services)

Sanctuary

Members: \$200

Non-members: \$1500

(Includes use of the Westcott Room and Library as dressing rooms for wedding participants)

Chapel

Members \$200

Non-members \$1500

(Includes use of the Westcott Room and Library as dressing rooms for wedding participants)

Smith Hall (without use of kitchen)

Members \$200

Non-members \$1500

Smith Hall (including use of kitchen)

Members \$300

Non-members \$2000

Westcott Room (without use of kitchen)

Members \$150

Non-members \$500

Meeting Rooms

Members \$100

Non-members \$400

(Use of the Library is included in sanctuary and chapel fees as dressing rooms for wedding participants)

Payment of Fees

For weddings, there is a refundable \$100 deposit, payable at the time the date is reserved. The deposit becomes non-refundable 60 days before the reserved date. All fees must be paid in full to Second Presbyterian Church two weeks prior to the event.

Your charges for the use of the church facilities include a payment to the building staff. If you would care to add a gratuity to express your appreciation for their assistance, you may do so!

Wedding coordinators are member volunteers, and as such do not accept gratuities.

Organist

The Second Presbyterian Church music director will provide organ music for all weddings, or designate an organist if he or she has a prior commitment. The fee begins at \$150. Additional fees for accompanying soloist(s) and providing additional music may be negotiated with the music director. The music director must approve the engagement of any other musicians.

Minister

The customary honorarium for the officiating minister is \$250, whose duties include meeting with the couple several times prior to the wedding and conducting the wedding rehearsal, in addition to officiating at the wedding.

One of the pastors of Second Presbyterian Church must officiate at all weddings, or invite another pastor to do so. Though the couple may request that another pastor participate or officiate, they may not make their own arrangements.

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BALTIMORE WEDDING POLICY ACCEPTANCE

We have read, fully understand, and agree to abide by the Wedding Policy of Second Presbyterian Church of Baltimore. We also agree to accept responsibility for our guests as well as any and all contractors we hire to participate in our wedding service.

Tentative Scheduled Date of Wedding

BRIDE

GROOM



*“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.
It does not insist its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things ...
Love never ends ... And now faith, hope and love abide, these three:
and the greatest of these is love.”*

-I Corinthians 13