



**FIRST
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Wedding Policy 2023

**First Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale
401 SE 15th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

To the Bride & Groom,

Your wedding should be one of the happiest events in your life. We will do everything possible to ensure that your wedding at First Presbyterian Church will be a memorable one, and that its beauty will give you strength and inspiration as you begin your life journey together.

We are eager to make every aspect of your wedding one that you will remember with deep satisfaction. A wedding does not have to be elaborate to be meaningful and beautiful. True meaning and beauty come from the spirit and attitude of those who take part.

In the excitement of planning a church wedding, many questions may arise. We would like to acquaint you with our church's policies for all weddings held here. We hope this booklet will address any questions you might have and help you prepare for your special day.

Sincerely,

The Pastors, Staff and Elders of First Presbyterian Church.

Couple's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to read this wedding policy carefully and to see that its provisions are kept by all members of the wedding party. The couple will also need to sign and return the statement page at the back of the policy information confirming that it has been read and understood. This is to ensure that there will be no misunderstanding or deviation from the established guidelines and policies.

Before the Wedding

Due to the many functions that take place on our church property, all weddings are held in the Sanctuary or Watts Chapel on Fridays or Saturdays. The Sanctuary can seat up to 850: Watts Chapel has an intimate seating capacity of 50.

Wedding dates and times are scheduled ahead on the church calendar. A date may be reserved up to one year in advance. Weddings are not scheduled within six weeks of any requested date. Only one wedding can be scheduled on any given day.

Selection of a primary and alternate wedding date is subject to the overall calendar of the church. Weddings are not held on Sundays, nor on the following days:

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Holy Week

- Saturday before Easter
- Memorial Day weekend
- July 4th
- Labor Day weekend
- December 24 (Christmas Eve)
- December 25 (Christmas Day)



The rehearsal is usually held on the day before the wedding no later than 5:00 p.m.

Officiating Pastor

A First Presbyterian Church pastor must perform or assist at all weddings performed on our property. It is your responsibility to contact the pastor of your choice to learn whether he or she will be available on the day you are planning to be married. Your assigned church wedding coordinator will be happy to help you make that contact.

If you would like to invite guest clergy to participate in the ceremony, please tell the First Presbyterian pastor who will be officiating your wedding and give him or her the contact information. Our pastor will extend an invitation to the guest clergy.

Church Wedding Coordinator

Our church assigns a wedding coordinator to each wedding. The coordinator is charged with assisting and coordinating the rehearsal and wedding with clergy. He/She will talk with you about seating, processional, recessional, placement of the wedding party and serve as your point person at the church.

An outside wedding consultant may assist the bride and her attendants, but in all cases must yield to the direction of the church wedding coordinator and, ultimately, the pastor.

The church wedding coordinator who will be handling your wedding will contact you as soon as she receives the assignment. You will also be given her contact information. Should you have a wedding-related question before you receive this information, feel free to contact our Executive Assistant to the Pastor, Michelle Shev, at 954-598-9311 or michelles@firstpres.cc.

Premarital Counseling

After your wedding date has been reserved on our church calendar, it will be your responsibility to schedule premarital counseling with the pastor. You can use that time to discuss any questions you might have about the ceremony.

To fulfill the premarital counseling requirement, you may meet with the pastor who will be officiating your wedding, or if you are considering an outside pastor, you may provide a letter from that clergy person or Licensed Marriage and Family Counselor stating that you have undergone at least three hours of pastoral or premarital counseling. Please know guest clergy will be accompanied by one of our pastors for all services.

Marriage License Requirements

It is against the law to perform a marriage ceremony without a marriage license. Therefore, our pastors will not perform your ceremony unless they have your marriage license in hand. You must

bring it to your wedding rehearsal and give it to the pastor or assigned church wedding coordinator. Alternatively, you may drop off your license ahead of time at the church to the attention of the pastor who will be performing your ceremony.

If either the bride or groom is a Florida resident, the license may be applied for in any Florida county. If the bride and groom are not Florida residents, the license must be obtained in the county where the marriage ceremony will take place. First Presbyterian Church is located in Broward County.

Marriage License Division - Broward County Clerk of Circuit Courts

201 S.E. 6th Street, Room 270 , Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

954-831-6525, Ext. 7842 | Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Monday through Friday

Please be sure an original copy of your marriage license is given to the church prior to the wedding date. The license must be received no later than on your rehearsal date.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal is an important part of your wedding. It is absolutely necessary that the rehearsal begin at the planned time due to the pastors' tight schedules. It will last 45 minutes.

Please be sure all members of your wedding party must arrive 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled time. You will want to check for events or other issues that might tie up traffic on Las Olas, A1A or US 1 and plan accordingly.

Your church wedding coordinator will meet you and work the rehearsal with the pastor. Unless there are mitigating circumstances, the organist and other musicians will not participate in the rehearsal.

Note: All fees must be paid no later than the date of rehearsal. Please refer to the list of fees.

In addition, the pastor must have your marriage license in hand prior to the ceremony. We suggest you give it to the pastor or your assigned wedding coordinator prior to the wedding, the latest date being at the rehearsal.

Alcohol Policy

The use of alcohol or drugs before or during the rehearsal or wedding is prohibited.

First Presbyterian Church is an alcohol-free campus. This applies to the buildings, grounds and cars in the parking lots. Anyone who violates this policy will be asked to leave the property.

If the pastors discover any member of the wedding party is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, that person will not be allowed to participate in the ceremony. If the bride or groom is involved, the pastor reserves the right to cancel the ceremony.

On the Wedding Day

First Presbyterian is an "on-time" church. The doors will open for your guests 30 minutes prior to the service time. The bride and her attendants are expected to arrive one hour prior to the opening of the doors. This ensures there will be sufficient time to prepare and take any pre-ceremony photos. The groom and groomsmen may come 15 minutes later since all parties are coming through the same door.

Your church wedding coordinator will be there to meet you. She will also ensure all members of the bridal party, parents, grandparents and other family members are lined up and escorted to the appointed place for the processional.



The church wedding coordinator will work with the organist to ensure that the wedding processional proceeds smoothly. After the service, she will direct the wedding party to the Spanish Room to sign the marriage license. Once the venue is clear of guests, she will usher the wedding party back into the venue for up to 30 minutes of post-ceremony photographs. Should a photo with the officiating clergy be desired, we ask that this photo be taken first, so that the clergy may be released.

Bride's Preparation

There is no bride's room in the church, so hair and makeup must be done before arriving. A restroom is allocated for last-minute touch-ups. By the time the doors open 30 minutes prior to the service, the bride and her attendants will be escorted to the Spanish Room where they must stay until they are escorted to the procession.

Groom's Preparation

The groom and his attendants are expected to arrive 15 minutes after the bride and her party.

Music

First Presbyterian Church's Minister of Music is in charge of all music in the church. He will assign the organist, assist you in selecting appropriate music for your wedding and provide any soloists or additional instrumentalists you might desire. The Minister of Music makes all final decisions concerning the appropriateness of musical selections, type of music selected and any soloists or instrumentalists other than those we provide. The goal is to ensure you have a joyous and worshipful wedding service.

Please note that prerecorded music (CDs, tapes, etc.) is not allowed.

It is not usually necessary for the organist or any of the other musicians to be present at the rehearsal unless specifically requested or the Minister of Music feels it is necessary.

Wedding Bulletin

If you elect to have a wedding bulletin, bride and groom would be responsible for the creation and printing of the piece. Please let your coordinator know if you will have a bulletin for your wedding and inform him/her as to where and how you would like them distributed.

Ushers

Please plan for your groomsmen to be ushers welcoming your guests prior to the service.

Sample Order of the Wedding Service

- Prelude
- Lighting of the candelabra (optional)
- Lighting of the Unity Candle (optional)
- Solo (optional)
- Processional
- Greeting by the Pastor
- Statement on the Gift of Marriage
- Prayer of Invocation

- Declaration of Intent
- Affirmation of Families
- Affirmation of Congregation
- Reading of Scriptures
- Solo (optional)
- Vows

Ring Service

- Lighting of the Unity Candle (optional)
- Pastoral Prayer
- Declaration of Marriage, kissing each other in joy and peace
- Blessing of the Couple
- Congregational Benediction
- Introduction of the Couple / Charge to the Couple
- Recessional

Flowers

“Flowers, decoration and other appointment 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” Book of Order.

Your wedding service is adding to the heritage established at First Presbyterian Church. We think of our Sanctuary as a place of beauty created to enhance any service of worship. It is your prerogative to add flowers, but their use is optional and at your expense. It is your responsibility to give the florist a copy of the church’s policy. (Florist instruction included)

Photography and Videography

Please be aware that no flash photos may be taken by the photographer, relatives or guests after the processional begins—that is, when the mothers are escorted down the aisle. It creates a disturbance that destroys the dignity of the worship service. It is your responsibility to inform your photographer and guests about this policy.

Please ask your photographer to call your assigned church wedding coordinator at least one week prior to your wedding day to avoid wedding-day problems. She will tell your photographer where equipment may be located.

The pastor will be happy to pose for photos with the bride and groom immediately following the ceremony. All photography must be completed within 30 minutes after the service ends.

Videotaping of your wedding ceremony is permitted. Your videographer is required to adhere to church policies under the direction of the pastor and church wedding coordinator. Please ask your videographer to contact your church wedding coordinator no later than one week prior to your wedding.

Please see the “Rules for Photographers” and “Rules for Videographers” . These rules must be read, signed and returned to the wedding coordinator before your rehearsal.

Use of Colee Hammock Park

Please be aware that the church is not associated with the adjacent park. In the event a bride or groom would like any part of their wedding or reception at the park, they will have to make special arrangements through the city of Fort Lauderdale. The phone number for the park is: 954-828-PARK (7275).

Fees and Honoraria

Fees and honoraria for all services and individuals must be paid by the evening of the rehearsal. Please make checks payable to the individuals specified by your assigned wedding coordinator.

Fees

Sanctuary (First Presbyterian Church members).....	\$0
Sanctuary (First Presbyterian Church non-members)	\$500
Watts Chapel (First Presbyterian Church members)	\$0
Watts Chapel (First Presbyterian Church non-members)	\$250
Officiating Pastor (includes premarital counseling)	\$450
Organist	\$300
Organist to accompany vocalist (additional)	\$50
Vocalist (may be more, depending on the soloist)	\$150
Church wedding coordinator	\$350
Custodian	\$175
Sound technician (add \$50 for each hour over three hours)	\$150
Candelabra (per pair - two pairs available with candles)	\$50

Two (2) altar-type candles and brass cross are standard on the Communion Table. Any Unity Candles to be used during the ceremony must be provided by the Bride and Groom. The church has a brass unity candle holder for use at no charge if so desired.

***Deposit for non-members:** A deposit in the amount of \$500 will be due to reserve your date, which will go towards your final payment.





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