

# **FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

## **WEDDING POLICY**

Faith Presbyterian Church  
3900 North Main Street  
Baytown, Texas 77521  
281-422-2938

## CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

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Marriage is a gift from God for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a man and woman. For Christians, marriage is also 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 man and woman to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

In preparation for the marriage service, the Minister that will lead the service will provide for a discussion with the man and woman concerning:

- the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
- the legal requirements of the state,
- the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
- the nature and form of the marriage service,
- the vows and commitments they will be asked to make
- the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
- the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.

If the Minister is convinced after discussion with the couple that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the Minister shall assure the couple of the Church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision, the Minister may seek the counsel of the Session.

Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the Minister and the supervision of the Session. The marriage ordinarily takes place in a special service which focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life.

The service begins with the scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The man and the woman shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God, the Minister shall declare publicly that the man and woman are now joined in marriage.

Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. Flowers, decorations and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the church worshipers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life.

A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple.

## **WEDDING POLICY STATEMENT**

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The marriage ceremony in the church is a religious ceremony and every part has a deep significance. To ensure the wedding is in keeping with these principles, various procedures and policies have been established by the Session.

### The Minister

The Session has delegated to the Minister the responsibility for all the wedding services in the church. If the couple desires a visiting Minister to assist our Minister, that Minister must be approved by our Minister and Session. The visiting Minister need not be from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) but, again, must be endorsed by our Minister and Session.

Any non-member requesting to be married in the church facilities by our Minister or their own must make a request through a sponsoring member of the congregation. All non-member weddings must be approved by Session.

### Pre-Wedding Conference(s)

The pre-wedding conference(s) with the Minister should be held as early as possible. The conference(s) will address among other things the items referred to in the Book of Order description of the Christian Marriage. This is outlined at the beginning of this Celebration of Marriage booklet. Call the church secretary to make your first meeting appointment with the Minister.

### The Service

The order of wedding services to be used in Faith Presbyterian Church is the Services of Christian Marriage of the Presbyterian Church as found in the Book of Common Worship.

### The Wedding Coordinator

The services of the Wedding Coordinator are required for all weddings at Faith Presbyterian Church. The Wedding Coordinator will help with your wedding plans and answer all questions concerning the wedding, be present for the rehearsal and the wedding to assist the Minister and help the wedding proceed as planned. The Wedding Coordinator will work with the church calendar on the available wedding dates and can check on the availability of the organist.

### The Reception

The church has available the Fellowship Hall for receptions. This should be arranged through the Wedding Coordinator. The Wedding Coordinator will make arrangements for the Fellowship Hall to be cleared of tables and chairs for the reception. Ideally, the bride will have her own caterer. For security reasons it is necessary that the caterer advise the Wedding Coordinator when they plan to arrive at the church. The caterer is responsible for the set-ups required for a complete reception. The caterer must provide everything necessary for a complete reception and is required to leave the facility in the condition in which it was found. Where the wedding party desires to do their own reception without a caterer, the church kitchen equipment can be made available by so requesting of the Wedding Coordinator. The kitchen items available include glassware, silver, silver servers, tablecloths, etc. The wedding party is responsible for any

breakage. The wedding party desiring to use the large dishwasher, the oven or the stove must be trained by the Wedding Coordinator. The wedding party is responsible for laundry of the linen used at the reception. All trash and leftovers must be bagged and placed in the dumpster at the rear of the parking lot and not left in the kitchen. Sweep birdseed from the sanctuary front porch or the Porte-Cochere.

Strict compliance with the following rules is required as a provision for holding the reception in the Fellowship Hall:

1. No alcoholic beverages are permitted.
2. No smoking in any part of the building is permitted.
3. Only birdseed is permitted in the area of the Porte-Cochere and never in the building itself.
4. Receptions must be concluded by 10:00 PM.

Please note: No food or drink is allowed in the parlor or sanctuary.

#### The Florist

1. Flowers, greenery and candles may be used in the sanctuary to suit the aesthetic desire of the bride. If the bride so desires the flowers may of course be taken to the reception and/or may be left for use in the worship service of the congregation.
2. No furnishings will be moved. Nothing is to be placed on the communion table.
3. No tacks, pins, nails, glue or tape shall be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture or to the building. Large heavy rubber bands can be attached to the ends of the pews. Then the wrapped wire or ribbon can be fastened under the rubber bands. These rubber bands can be obtained at the florists or office suppliers.
4. The church only furnishes candles used on the communion table. These are the liquid, dripless type. Any other candles shall be furnished by the florist who is responsible for providing dripless candles and is required to use wax savers to prevent candle drippings from falling on the floor or furniture. A floor covering must be put under each candelabrum and unity candle. Do not use taper candles. Even if beeswax and fitted with a top follower to stop dripping, they will still drip if tapered.
5. For security reasons it is necessary that the florist indicate to the Wedding Coordinator the time for decorating the church. Decorations must be completed at least one hour before the ceremony.
6. The florist will be held responsible for any damage done to the building or furniture and is responsible for clearing any wax from the carpet or furniture that may have resulted from the wedding.
7. The florist is expected to remove all decorations from the sanctuary immediately following the departure of guests. Unless arrangements have been made with the Wedding Coordinator, no florist equipment may be left in the narthex, Welcome Center, chancel or corridors.
8. In situations where there is no florist and church members are doing the decoration all the above instructions apply. The church has available to its members appropriate candles, candelabra, candlesticks for the windows and candelabra for the center aisle. Consult the Wedding Coordinator.
9. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to review these instructions with the florist in making her plans for the wedding and reception.

10. The wedding couple should inform the Wedding Coordinator of their floral plans.

### Making the Reservation

The initial request for a reservation of church facilities for a wedding is made with the Wedding Coordinator. The exact hour of the rehearsal and wedding must be recorded at the time the sanctuary is reserved. Non-members cannot reserve the church facilities by more than three months in advance.

Available dates may be checked by telephone. However, it is necessary for the bride, groom and or a parent to have a personal conference with the Wedding Coordinator before a date can be confirmed. A wedding information form will be filed out at that time. Fees are due in the office two weeks before the wedding. Fees are to be paid in full to Faith Presbyterian Church.

Wedding rehearsals, weddings and wedding receptions are not scheduled on: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve., New Year's Day, or any day during Holy Week, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day or Sundays.

Evening weddings scheduled through the wedding coordinator. The rehearsal is scheduled on the day preceding the wedding.

### The Rehearsal

To ensure a smooth worship experience it is expected that a full rehearsal will be held on the day prior to the wedding. All sanctuary weddings will have rehearsals. The rehearsal will begin at the time scheduled. The wedding couple and the entire wedding party are asked to be as prompt for the rehearsal as for the wedding. Please inform members of the wedding party that church regulations do not allow smoking or alcohol beverages inside the church facility.

1. The Wedding Coordinator will be in charge of the rehearsal.
2. The rehearsal will not last more than one hour.
3. Parents should be present for the rehearsal.
4. All members of the wedding party, including ushers, should be in attendance at the rehearsal.
5. Deliver the marriage license to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal.
6. The Wedding Coordinator will assist the bride in making sure the bride's predetermined order of attendants, escorts, ushers, and any other features, such as the unity candle or special flowers for the parents, are carried out.
7. Ushers should be told at rehearsal time to inform those persons with cameras that pictures may not be taken in the sanctuary at any time during the wedding.
8. Stationary video cameras are permitted.

### Alcoholic Beverages

Church policy prohibits the use of alcoholic beverages, including champagne punch, on church property. No rehearsal or wedding will be conducted when any member of the wedding party is obviously under the influence of alcohol or any drug.

### Smoking

The facility is designated as non-smoking. This policy prohibits smoking in any area inside the buildings including the church, reception facility and hallways.

### The Wedding Music

The church organist will be contacted by the Wedding Coordinator as soon as the wedding date is set to determine his or her availability to play. Please note that playing the organ for weddings is by contract the exclusive responsibility and right of the organist. Special arrangements can be made by the wedding couple for another organist. If someone other than the church organist plays for the wedding, he or she must be of satisfactory skill and experience as determined by the church organist. There will be a \$75 fee paid to the church organist if a substitute organist is used.

The purpose of music in a wedding is to enhance the sacred aspects of the occasion, and to set the warmth and tone of the service. The organist should be conferred with as far in advance of the ceremony as possible both to set the time and date for the wedding and rehearsal, but also concerning the choice of music.

It is expected that all music will be suitable for a sacred service. Both traditional classical music and contemporary worship music are permitted. The Minister and church organist will have the final authority as to the appropriateness of a particular piece.

In some cases, the organist may need to meet with the bride four weeks in advance. This is in the event a bride's music request requires time to acquire legal copies of the music.

### Regarding Wedding Dress and other Personal Valuables

The bride is responsible for contacting the Wedding Coordinator to determine the time that dresses are to be delivered to the church. The church will not be responsible for the receiving of dresses. A representative of the bride must be at the church to receive the dresses.

The church will not be responsible for personal items such as wedding dresses, wraps, purses, silver and glassware brought to the church for use in a wedding or a wedding reception, nor shall the church be liable for such items if lost, stolen or damaged. Every reasonable effort will be made to assist the wedding party in protecting such property, but it is the responsibility of the family to protect all personal items.

The parlor may be used as a dressing room for the bride and her attendants. If needed, the dressing room will be available one- and one-half hours before the wedding by making arrangements with the Wedding Coordinator. Facilities for the groom and his attendants can also be made available in the choir room.

The church cannot be responsible for any equipment or personal belongings after the wedding party and guests depart.

### Children in the Service

If it is planned that a child be in the wedding such as a ring bearer or flower girl, the child should be at least six years old or older. Also, the child should be present at the rehearsal.

### The Photographer

The photographer is free to take such pictures as may be desired in any part of the building before or after the ceremony. However, once the ceremony itself begins, the following pictures only are permitted in order to ensure the sense of worship and decorum fitting to the occasion: A photograph of the bride and father taken as they enter, from anywhere in the aisle and a photograph of the bride and groom during the recessional from the Welcome Center doorway.

The photographer may take time exposures without flash during the wedding service if he or she remains in the chancel and is careful that no noise is involved in the procedure. The wedding party may reassemble in the sanctuary after the ceremony to pose for pictures of the ceremony.

Should the family desire to use a stationary video recorder to tape the ceremony in its entirety, arrangements for a single video camera can be made with the Wedding Coordinator. Placement of the camera and lighting must be finished one hour before the ceremony. They should be arranged with the least distraction to the wedding party and guests. The church does not provide this equipment.

It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to review these instructions with the photographer in making their plans for the wedding.

## WEDDING INFORMATION FORM

<b>Groom:</b>	<b>DOB:</b>	<b>Occupation:</b>
<b>Address:</b>		<b>City:</b> <b>State:</b>
<b>Contact Phone:</b>		<b>Cell Phone:</b>
<b>Bride:</b>	<b>DOB:</b>	<b>Occupation:</b>
<b>Address:</b>		<b>City:</b> <b>State:</b>
<b>Contact Phone:</b>		<b>Cell Phone:</b>
<b>Number of Marriages: Bride (    )</b>	<b>Groom: (    )</b>	
<b>New Address:</b>		<b>City:</b> <b>State:</b>
<b>Marriage Date:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Place:</b>
<b>Marriage Date:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Place:</b>
<b>Rehearsal Date:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Place:</b>
<b>Minister(s) Officiating:</b>		
<b>Organist:</b>		<b>Soloist:</b>
<b>Special Music:</b>		
<b>Maid/Matron of Honor:</b>		<b>Best Man:</b>
<b>Single or Double Ring:</b>	<b>No. Bridesmaids:</b>	<b>No. Groomsmen:</b>
<b>Ring Bearer/Flower Girl (six years or older):</b>		
<b>Who will give bride away?</b>		
<b>Place of Reception:</b>		
<b>Church Membership: Bride:</b>		<b>Groom:</b>
<b>Marriage License Number:</b>		<b>County:</b>
<b>Date Issued:</b>		
<b>Photographer:</b>		<b>Videographer:</b>
<b>Florist:</b>		<b>Caterer:</b>

*Note: All fee payments should be made out to Faith Presbyterian Church and should be paid (60) sixty days prior to the wedding date.*