



Preparing for Marriage

At

Covenant Presbyterian Church

Revised July 2014

Preparing for Marriage at Covenant Presbyterian Church

We are delighted that you are considering having your wedding at Covenant Presbyterian Church! We wish to offer the full benefit of the Church's ministry to its members and to non-members in the community who are contemplating marriage. A wedding is a sacred occasion and a service of worship. Everything that is planned as a part of the service should be with this objective in mind and in accordance with the doctrines, beliefs, and regular worship practices of Covenant Presbyterian Church. For weddings, the Session (which is the governing body of Covenant Presbyterian Church) has approved the following policies and procedures.

A Statement of Christian Marriage

Marriage exists first and foremost to glorify God. Human beings individually are image bearers of God (Genesis 1:26), but a man and woman in marriage also display His glory (vv. 27-28). Marriage as a creation ordinance glorifies God as Creator. Beyond that however marriage is to glorify God as Redeemer, for Christian marriage is the consummate illustration of the redeeming grace of God in Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33). To the degree that Christians live out this pattern of God's love through His grace in Christ (Ephesians 5:1-2), they witness to one another, their children, the church and the world the Gospel of God's redeeming love in Christ. We also affirm that:

1. Marriage is a holy union of one man and one woman in which they commit, with God's help, to build a loving, life-long, faithful relationship. God has established the married state, in the order of creation and redemption, for spouses to grow in love of one another and for the procreation, nurture, formation, and education of children.
2. In marriage many principles of the Kingdom of God are manifested. The interdependence of a healthy Christian community is clearly exemplified in loving one another (John 12:34), forgiving one another (Ephesians 4:32), confessing to one another (James 5:16), and submitting to one another (Ephesians 5:21). These principles find unique fulfillment in marriage. Marriage is God's gift, a living image of the union between Christ and His Church.
3. When a marriage is true to God's loving design it brings spiritual, physical, emotional, economic, and social benefits not only to a couple and family but also to the church and to the wider culture. Couples, churches, and the whole of society have a stake in the well-being of marriages. Each, therefore, has its own obligations to prepare, strengthen, support and restore marriages.

To that end, we at Covenant Presbyterian Church affirm that marriage is a covenant, formal and sacred, and is to be held in honor among all people. Marriage is a serious commitment, involving vows taken publicly before the God of truth and covenant. The familiar text of the wedding liturgy states, "Dearly beloved we are assembled here in the presence of God to join this man and this woman in Holy marriage, which is instituted by God, regulated by His

commandments and to be held in high esteem among all people.” May the words of our Lord Jesus Christ rule in our hearts: “What therefore God has joined together, let no person put asunder (Mark 10:9).”

Step by Step

The FIRST step to be taken in making plans for your marriage ceremony is to contact the church office to confirm that both the church and a Covenant pastor are available for the planned date of your wedding. Before agreeing to officiate at the service, the Covenant pastor may require that the couple meet with him/her to determine whether or not the expectations are agreeable to both parties.

(Please note that the Covenant pastor will supervise the content of the service and officiate at the ceremony. We are happy to invite ministers from other churches to participate, at the approval of the Session, when that request is appropriate.)

The SECOND step is to request a Wedding Packet from the church Scheduling Coordinator. The Wedding Packet includes all the forms and information necessary to reserve your wedding date on the church calendar. (Please note the section marked “Scheduling Your Wedding” in this brochure) Dates are scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis and are dependent upon the return of all the necessary forms and fees. Failure to submit forms and fees may jeopardize your use of the church facilities. All requests for weddings are subsequent to the approval of the Session of Covenant Presbyterian Church. The Session meets once a month.

The THIRD step is to schedule a time(s) when the couple can receive pre-marital counseling. Pre-marital counseling is mandatory for all couples married at Covenant Presbyterian Church. Normally, the couple will schedule four (4) sessions with the pastor officiating at the wedding. These sessions are required but may vary depending on the circumstances. Pre-marital counseling **must** be completed before the wedding date.

Scheduling Your Wedding

Members of Covenant Presbyterian Church, or children of members, may reserve the facility up to one year in advance. Non-member couples may reserve the church up to six months in advance. Only one wedding will be scheduled per weekend in our sanctuary. Due to the full schedule of worship on Sundays, weddings will not be held on Sundays or during Holy Week. The weeks immediately during and after Christmas may be scheduled only after the calendar for Christmas music programs has been finalized (usually by September 15th of that year) hence, we cannot schedule December weddings more than three months in advance. Any December request must be cleared by the Director of Music.

Our Facilities

The sanctuary will seat approximately 400 people. The chapel seats 100 and can be used for smaller weddings. Space is available for receptions in the Fellowship and Education Building and Eaton Hall. The fees for the use of all Covenant facilities have been determined by the Session and are included in the Wedding Packet.

Wedding Ceremony Fees

	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
Minister	Family's Discretion	\$250
Sanctuary	\$0	\$525
FEB Chapel	\$0	\$300
Custodial Fee	\$150	\$150
Wedding Coordinator	\$300	\$300
Church Organist/Pianist	\$250	\$250
Church Soloist	\$100	\$100
A/V Operator	\$100	\$100
Wedding Deposit	\$200	\$200

Wedding Reception Fees

	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
Facility Use	varies by location	varies by location
Custodial Fee	\$150	\$150
Wedding Coordinator	\$300	\$300
A/V Operator	\$150	\$150

Wedding Coordinator

The Wedding Coordinator on the Covenant staff will be an invaluable asset in the preparation for your wedding Service of Worship. She will meet with you for consultation after you have scheduled a date on the church calendar and will be able to help you make many decisions. In addition, the coordinator will direct the wedding party through the rehearsal and assist at the wedding. Contact the Wedding Coordinator to schedule a time to meet to discuss the policies and procedures of the church. Contact information for Covenant's current Wedding Coordinator is available from the church office.

Wedding Music

The beauty of your wedding is greatly enhanced through the use of appropriate music. It is the policy of the Presbyterian Church (USA) that the music accompanying the marriage service "...should direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage, and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent." It is requested that our own organist play for all weddings unless he is unavailable on your selected date. Our church organist must be contacted at least a month before the wedding to schedule rehearsal and wedding appointments to plan your music. If it is necessary that a guest organist play for the ceremony they must be a professional organist and be approved by the Covenant organist. Further details about acceptable wedding music is printed in the packet you will receive when the wedding date and pastor has been secured.

Wedding packets are available upon request.