

Planning Your Wedding

Welcome to our Church!

We are happy you are thinking about having your wedding at First Presbyterian Church. Marriage is the perfect example of the union of two Christians in love before God. We believe the vows you are about to exchange will be meaningful and have the deepest effect upon your lives because the wedding ceremony itself will be held in the context of worship before God as you are surrounded by your family and friends.

Your wedding will be one of the most memorable events of your life. Our church wants to work with you to make it beautiful and meaningful. May the grace of God and love of Jesus Christ surround you as you prepare for a life together.

INTRODUCTION

“God has ordained that a man and a woman may enter together into marriage, pledging their love and promising fidelity each to the other, as long as they both shall live.”
(Church Constitution)

Your desire to have a church wedding is indicative of the fact you want to ask God’s blessing upon your wedding. Since the Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God and normally conducted within a house of God, reverence is expected on the part of all present. A church wedding should not be a “show” for your friends. However, this idea does not prevent you from having a beautiful wedding. It does set certain limitations on what may properly be done.

The policy statements in this brochure are to help you understand how seriously we take your marriage and wedding plans. Though they may seem formal, they are written to avoid any misunderstanding about the purpose and process of the wedding ceremony itself.

SCHEDULING A DATE FOR YOUR WEDDING. One of the first things you will need to do is contact the church’s facilities coordinator to ‘pencil’ your wedding date into the church’s calendar. If you don’t already have a wedding packet, you will receive it at this time. You will need to have an initial meeting with a pastor from this church *before* your wedding date is entered into the official church calendar schedule. Our wedding coordinator is used for all weddings at First Presbyterian Church, she will contact you once the date has been set. *Please note: our ministers require at least three months notice to schedule a wedding.*

OFFICIATING CLERGY. One of the pastors of this church will officiate at all weddings. Guest clergy of your choice may be invited to co-officiate in your wedding. Our pastoral staff will extend the invitation to the other clergy. Our pastor will make the division of responsibility for different parts of the ceremony. It is understood that all visiting clergy participating in wedding ceremonies in our church will be ordained by a recognized church body. First Presbyterian Church’s clergy will meet with you and the guest clergy to finalize the wedding arrangements.

COUNSELING. You will need to arrange with the pastor for counseling sessions. There will be three (3) one-hour meetings during which the pastor will explore with the two of you the blessings and responsibilities of marriage. We encourage you to view the pastor as a resource intent on helping both of you prepare not only for your wedding ceremony, but also for your future together.

LICENSE. It is important that the license be in the hands of the church’s wedding coordinator several days prior to the wedding date and *not later than the wedding rehearsal*. To secure a wedding license in California:

- ❖ The couple to be married must apply for the license together in person.
- ❖ You must be 18 years old or older.
- ❖ The wedding license is good for 90 days anywhere in the state of California.

WEDDING COORDINATOR. The wedding coordinator is required for all weddings at First Presbyterian Church. The wedding coordinator organizes the secular parts of the wedding ceremony. There is an initial interview with the prospective Bride and (usually) Groom, and anyone else you wish to accompany you. During this interview details are discussed and noted with respect to the use of various accoutrements available i.e.: candelabra, pew lamps, flower arrangements, Unity candle and more. Also discussed is the order of the bridal party. Suggestions are made with respect to details or order that will enhance the ceremony.

MUSIC. The beauty of your wedding is greatly enhanced through the use of appropriate music. Music accompanying the marriage service "...should direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage, and special care be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent" (Church Constitution). You will need to contact the Director of Music at least one month before the wedding to plan your processional, recessional and all other music.

The Director of Music has final approval of all music performed before and during the wedding and you should submit your choices to him soon after consulting with the Wedding Coordinator. Normally our own organist plays for all weddings. Any guest organists will need to be approved by the Director of Music.

DECORATIONS (FLOWERS AND CANDLES). The paraments (pulpit and lectern hangings) remain in the liturgical colors for the season of the year in which the wedding is held. It is important the florist chosen by the couple to decorate the church for the wedding be informed about our customs and regulations. All floral items must be in place at least one hour before the wedding. If you wish to leave them for Sunday services, please let the Wedding Coordinator know so it may be mentioned in the Sunday bulletin. All other decorations in addition to chancel flowers should be discussed with the coordinator.

SANCTUARY OR CHAPEL? Both the sanctuary and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd are beautiful locations for your wedding. Size is something you will need to consider in making your decision. For a small wedding our chapel is a wonderful space. There is a limit of 92 persons, including the wedding party and clergy. If you wish to invite more friends, the sanctuary will comfortably hold 700 guests.

PHOTOGRAPHS. The marriage ceremony is a service of worship. We ask that no pictures be taken after members of the bridal party have entered the sanctuary and are proceeding to the communion table. Pictures may be taken from the last five (5) pews to the rear of the Sanctuary, or the last pew in the Chapel, as the Bride enters. After the service is concluded, pictures may be taken in the chancel.

Please be sure all photographers and any friends or relatives who wish to take pictures at your wedding are aware of these rules.

In order to expedite the taking of pictures after the ceremony, it is recommended the photographer receive a list of the groups or persons you wish photographed. Couples should consider having group-wedding photographs taken before the ceremony begins.

VIDEO TAPING. Video taping of the ceremony may be done *only* from the balcony of the sanctuary. Remote radio-controlled microphones may be placed inconspicuously in the chancel area for recording purposes.

REHEARSAL. The wedding coordinator attends the rehearsal and works with the minister to rehearse the ceremony from the processional to the recessional. Rehearsals help! Weddings go smoother when everyone knows what to expect.

WEDDING DAY. The wedding coordinator arrives one hour before the start of the wedding to take care of any unforeseen problems that might have arisen and any details that need to be attended to. She organizes the candle lighting, guest book, moves the congregation into the sanctuary or chapel, alerts the Minister and Groom close to the start of the ceremony. She also gives the Bride and attendants a 15, 10 and 5 minute heads up for the start. She sends the wedding party down the aisle at the appropriate time. She makes sure the marriage license is signed by witnesses and the minister, and will mail the original license to the County Recorder and will make copies for the bridal couple for their records.

ATTENDANTS. Please plan sufficient time for all members of the wedding party to dress before the wedding. Ushers should be fully dressed and ready *at least 30 minutes* before the wedding.

WEDDING RECEPTIONS. All food service on the church premises should be arranged separately with our preferred caterer and kitchen liaison Kay Bowman. You may call Kay at (805) 964-0267.

PLEASE NOTE. The church cannot be responsible for articles left after the ceremony. All items found after an event are placed in our lost-and-found, please contact our receptionist.

SCHEDULING EXCEPTIONS. Normally, no weddings will be held on Sunday, during Holy Week, or the week prior to and just after Christmas.

RICE OR CONFETTI. No rice, confetti, birdseed or flower petals may be thrown in or about the sanctuary, chapel or church grounds.

SMOKING. Smoking is not permitted in or around any of the church buildings. Please share these policies with all members of your wedding party.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES. The only alcoholic beverages to be served on the premises of First Presbyterian Church of Santa Barbara shall be wine or champagne, permitted only at wedding receptions and wedding anniversary celebrations. *Please see our Wine Policy for details.*

PROOF OF LIABILITY INSURANCE. The First Presbyterian Church insurance provider requires the church to be named as an additional insured on each outside group's insurance. "The outside group should submit evidence of its liability coverage naming the church as an additional insured. The Limit of Liability should be a minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence." The Certificate of Liability showing the church as additional insured must include Form B.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS. Financial arrangements are established on the basis of the church membership of the bride and/or groom *at the time of the initial application for reserving a date for your wedding.* Established fees pay for services performed by the church personnel and expenses connected with the operation of the various areas used for weddings and receptions. Fees for these services are not negotiable. Checks should be delivered to the church staff no later than two weeks prior to the wedding.