

EMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Wedding Guidelines

Emmanuel Presbyterian Church
March 2007

Book of Common Worship

The service of marriage as described in this booklet is based entirely on the *Book of Common Worship, Presbyterian Church (USA)*.

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 a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

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 pastor 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 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 that 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 pastor shall declare publicly that the woman and the man are now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.

In preparation for the marriage service, the pastor asked to lead the service shall provide for a discussion with the man and the woman concerning: (1) the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian; (2) the legal requirements of the state; (3) the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage; (4) the nature and form of the marriage service; (5) the vows and commitments they will be asked to make; (6) the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship; (7) the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments. This discussion is equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse, and a marriage following divorce.

Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. The congregation may join in hymns and other musical forms of praise and prayer.

Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshipers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life.

Book of Common Worship, Presbyterian Church (USA)

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***Guidelines for the Service of Christian Marriage
At Emmanuel Presbyterian Church***

Congratulations on your engagement to be married! The Session and pastor look forward to working with you as you prepare for the happy occasion of your wedding here.

In this booklet you will find a set of wedding guidelines and policies, based on the years of experience of many with weddings and a firm commitment to ensuring that each wedding at Emmanuel be a joyful and reverent worship service. *PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES AND POLICIES CAREFULLY* and refer to them during your months of planning.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP SERVICE

1. **Weddings at Emmanuel:** A wedding service at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church is, first and foremost, *a service of Christian worship*.
2. **Officiant:** The pastor of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church *officiates* unless the Session has extended this privilege to another ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA). An invitation to pastors of other denominations may be extended under certain guidelines, and with the permission of the Session. The Clerk will issue a formal letter of invitation on behalf of the Session.
3. **Form and content of a wedding service:** Ordinarily, the wedding service will follow the form and content found in the *Book of Common Worship*, Presbyterian Church (USA). Variations may be negotiated with the officiating pastor. In every case, the order and content of worship will conform to the standards of Reformed worship as set forth in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

SCHEDULING A WEDDING AT EMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

4. **Getting the wedding on the Church Calendar:** Reservations for weddings are taken on a “first come, first served” basis for active members of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church (and their children) and non-members alike. A confirmed date will be given after there has been a consultation meeting with the pastor and the Wedding Application Form with a deposit of \$25.00 has been returned to the pastor. The \$25.00 deposit is non-refundable after confirmation from the church has been given for the rehearsal/wedding dates.

5. **Black-out dates:** Certain dates on the liturgical calendar are considered by our Session to be inappropriate for weddings. Weddings **may not be scheduled** on the following days:

Sundays

Friday or Saturday prior to Christmas Day

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

During the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Easter day

6. **Changes to information given to the pastor:** Any changes in the basic information provided to the pastor must be communicated to the pastor as soon as it is known. *This is critically important to avoid conflicting events on the church calendar.*

If your phone number(s) or address changes after you have submitted your application form, please notify the pastor *in writing or by email.*

If you left the spaces for the names of your florist, photographer, assisting pastors, caterer or personal wedding coordinator blank when you turned in the application form, please communicate these names and contact information to the pastor by phone or email *as soon as possible.* If these individuals wish to view the facilities prior to the date of the wedding, they must make an appointment with the pastor to do so.

7. **Seating capacities for the Sanctuary:** The Sanctuary will seat approximately 100 persons.

ADVANCE PLANNING FOR THE WEDDING SERVICE:

8. **Reserving the officiant:** It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to contact directly the Emmanuel pastor and ask her/him to officiate at their wedding service.
9. **Pre-marital counseling:** All persons marrying at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church are required to engage in a minimum of three (3) hours of pre-marital counseling. The pastor utilizes this time to 1) assess marriage readiness, 2) to ensure a basic understanding of Christian marriage and 3) to discuss the Wedding Service in detail. If desired, the couple may request that the counseling be extended to a minimum of four (4) hours in order to obtain a marriage license in the State of Tennessee at a reduced fee. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to contact the pastor to schedule their appointments well in advance of the actual wedding.
10. **Planning music for the wedding service:** The bride and groom are expected to make an appointment with the pastor for the purpose of planning suitable music (“appropriateness” determined at the discretion of the pastor) for the wedding service. *In*

all cases, the final decisions regarding the music for a wedding will be made by the pastor.

ELEMENTS OF A WEDDING SERVICE—MUSIC

11. **Music selections, instruments and instrumentalists:** An “Emmanuel approved” pianist plays for all weddings celebrated in the church facilities. The pianist for the wedding must meet with the couple well in advance of the wedding day to make the music selections for their service. Because a wedding is considered a worship service at Emmanuel, all music must be appropriate to Christian worship. “Popular” music, ballads, love songs, etc., are not considered appropriate in the context of Christian worship at Emmanuel, so would not be appropriate for a wedding. Wedding music, like all music used in worship, should direct one’s attention to Almighty God and should celebrate God’s goodness and love. The pastor or an “Emmanuel approved” pianist have many wonderful and suitable suggestions for preludes, processions, recessions, and vocal and instrumental music. They can also suggest various instrumentalists to contract, should instrumental music be desired. The grand piano is the principal instrument for weddings at Emmanuel. Therefore, the use of electronic keyboards and recorded music of any kind is not allowed.

Ultimately, “approved musicians” and/or “appropriateness in musical selections” shall be determined at the discretion of the pastor on a case by case basis.

12. **Vocal soloists:** The pastor or the approved pianist (providing the music for the wedding) can help with the selection of soloists. If outside soloists are to be used, *it is important that the pianist be involved in the choice of music and that adequate rehearsal time with her/him be arranged in advance.* This assures a high level of artistry for this significant part of your wedding.

ELEMENTS OF A WEDDING SERVICE—DECORATIONS

13. **Placement of floral decorations:** The Sanctuary of the church is designed for worship and incorporates symbols of the Christian faith. Therefore,
- No arrangements of flowers may be placed on or in front of the Communion Table.
 - *No candles or floral arrangements may be placed on the piano, the pulpit, the Baptismal font or the Communion Table.* If additional decorations in the Chancel are desired beyond what is described above, they must not obscure or damage any furnishings or symbols of worship. Please contact the pastor to discuss the use or placement of any decorations not specifically mentioned in this booklet.
 - Ordinarily, floral arrangements of appropriate size, appropriately placed may be used in the chancel area. In addition, candelabra, enhanced with greenery, may also be used in the Chancel.

- Small floral “reserved” markers may be used if the means of attaching them to the chairs does not in any way damage the painted surfaces of the chairs.
 - Floral wreaths may be placed outside on the front doors leading into the Sanctuary. Hooks for hanging these wreaths are already affixed to the doors, so no other nails should be driven into the wood.
14. **Candelabra:** A limited number of candelabra (4), provided by an outside source, may be used with drip-less candles.
 15. **Furniture placement:** No furniture or symbol will be moved from its usual location in the Sanctuary.
 16. **Nails, screws and tape:** No nails or screws may be driven into the walls, floors, or furnishings anywhere in the church. No tape may be used to attach items to any painted or stained surface in the church.
 17. **Moisture protection:** Protective cloths or plastic sheets must be placed under all floral arrangements, containing added moisture.
 18. **Aisle cloths:** Since the sanctuary floors are hardwood, aisle cloths (runners) are sometimes unmanageable, causing a potential safety hazard to the wedding party and guests. Therefore they will not be allowed.
 19. **Removing non-church-owned decorations:** All non-church-owned decorations should be removed from the church facilities immediately following the wedding. The church has no storage areas for such items, and will not be responsible for any loss of or damage to the items.
 20. **Leaving floral arrangements for Sunday morning worship:** If the family wishes to leave the wedding flowers for use in worship on the Sunday morning following the wedding, arrangements should be made with the pastor upon confirmation of the wedding. An acknowledgement will be placed in the Sunday bulletin.
 21. **Times for set-up and decorating of the Sanctuary:** The church facilities will be available for decorating by a florist no more than 4 hours prior to the time of the wedding service unless other arrangements have been approved by the pastor. If your florist would like to preview the Sanctuary in the weeks prior to the service, the person must make an appointment with the pastor to do so.

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

22. **NO ALCOHOL OF ANY KIND IS ALLOWED OR MAY BE CONSUMED ANYWHERE ON THE CHURCH PROPERTY.**

23. **Refreshments for the wedding party:** Refreshments may be served to the wedding party and others prior to the wedding service. **No food or drink, including alcohol, is allowed in the Sanctuary before or after the wedding.**
24. **Childcare:** No childcare will be provided and no nursery space will be available at the church for use at either the rehearsal or wedding. **Children must always be accompanied by an adult, when in the church.**
25. **No thrown material:** Because it presents a potential safety hazard, no material of any kind may be thrown by members of the wedding party or your guests, including, but not limited to, birdseed, rice, flower petals, confetti, or soap bubbles, either in the church buildings or on the church grounds.
26. **Scheduling activities with the pastor:** To avoid conflicts with other groups using the church facilities the same day, please be certain that **all activities** scheduled for the wedding day, for example, the arrival of the florist, decorating the Sanctuary, the arrival of the wedding party, photographs before and after the service, etc., are scheduled through the pastor.
27. **Guestbooks:** If a guestbook(s) is used before the wedding service, placement away from entry doors is encouraged; otherwise the signing of guestbooks before the wedding service may cause a delay in seating your guests and congestion in the doorways to the Sanctuary.
28. **Numbers of ushers needed:** Please arrange to have one (2) usher present for every fifty (50) guests that you have invited to the wedding. Ushers must be in place in the foyer ready to seat guests no later than thirty-five (35) minutes prior to the start of the service.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

29. **Pre-wedding visit by your photographer:** If your photographer would like to preview the Sanctuary in the weeks prior to the service, the person must make an appointment with the pastor to do so.
30. **Time for photos before and after the wedding service:** The taking of photographs should begin no earlier than two (2) hours before the service is scheduled to begin. Photographers may stay no longer than sixty (60) minutes after the conclusion of the service in order to take photographs.
31. **No still photographs of any kind, with or without a flash, during the actual wedding service:** No still photographs of any kind, with or without a flash, whether by professional photographers or guests, will be permitted during the actual wedding service, from inside the Sanctuary. Pictures of family members and the bridal party as they are about to enter the Sanctuary for the service may be taken in the foyer, but not from inside the Sanctuary. A picture of the bride and groom as they leave the worship service may be made (with a flash, if desired), only if the photographer does not enter the Sanctuary. This picture may be made from the foyer through the double doors.
32. **Photos in the Chancel area:** If the wedding party desires pictures to be made in the Chancel area, these may be staged up to sixty (60) minutes prior to the service or immediately following the service.
33. **Video cameras:** Video cameras may be used when operated from a stationary location (preferably at the back of the sanctuary). Any other location must be approved by the pastor on behalf of (or in consultation with) the Session.
34. **Theatrical lighting:** No theatrical lighting may be used nor any other lighting than that which is already a part of the Sanctuary lighting system.

35. **Cameras brought to the wedding by guests:** Guests are asked **not** to use cameras inside the Sanctuary during the ceremony. Please share this information with your family and friends. It is especially helpful if you would add a note in your wedding program, (if you have one,) with wording such as: *Because the wedding ceremony is a worship service, the taking of pictures is not appropriate nor will it be allowed during the service.*

THE REHEARSAL

36. **Leadership of the rehearsal:** The pastor will be responsible for conducting the wedding rehearsal.

NOTE: If a professional wedding coordinator is present at the rehearsal, this individual will be under the direction of the pastor.

37. **Pre-planning for the rehearsal:** The bride and groom will have filled out a “Rehearsal Information” form when they meet with the pastor, prior to the time of the rehearsal. This information will be used by the pastor in directing an orderly and expedient rehearsal.
38. **Duration:** If all members of the wedding party are punctual, a rehearsal should take no longer than forty-five (45) minutes.
39. **Punctuality:** If all key participants have not arrived within thirty (30) minutes after the appointed time for the beginning of the rehearsal, the pastor will depart; and the rehearsal will be cancelled. (However, we can always accommodate for an occasional missing attendant!)
40. **Worship Committee:** A Worship Committee member will be present at the rehearsal to assist the pastor, as needed.

USE OF THE CHURCH KITCHEN

41. **Reserving the church’s kitchen facilities:** There are kitchen facilities available at the church for use by the caterer on the day of the event (if the pavilion or a party tent located on the church grounds). These will be reserved through the Fellowship Committee Chairperson who will provide information and answer questions on behalf of EPC.

FEES All fees shall be paid at least fourteen (14) days prior to the wedding.

Weddings	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-member</u>
Deposit with Wedding Application Form	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
Cleaning/ Use Fee	\$100.00	\$100.00
Sanctuary/Support Space (R. Rooms, Classroom, Kitchen)		\$200.00
Pastor: Counseling, rehearsal, wedding (1)		\$300.00
Security Deposit (May be credited to fees)		\$200.00
Approved Wedding Pianist or Soloist	Variable	Variable

Vocal soloists/instrumentalists may be engaged by the pastor or pianist, who will assist you in finding the appropriate musicians.

An assessment of any damage to church property will be made following the wedding. A determination of the cost to repair any damage to the church property or to replace any broken items will be calculated by the Building/Grounds Chairperson. This amount will be deducted from the security deposit, and the balance will be returned to the payers.

¹ Weddings are a part of the normal responsibility of the pastor, and no fee is charged to Emmanuel members for the pastor's service. However, weddings involve additional duties, including pre-marital counseling and the wedding rehearsal as well as the wedding itself. Most families offer an honorarium to the pastor. The non-member fee for the pastor may be used as a guideline for the honorarium.

We look forward to working with you as you prepare for your wedding!

*Reviewed/Modified
EPC Session 032807*

FB/Worship Committee