

Wedding Policy

Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church, Clearwater, Florida

Revised and Adopted by the Session

August 25, 2008

A. Introduction

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 man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.-- Book of Order W-4.9001

A service of Christian marriage is more than a social convention. It is an ordinance of the Church and a witness to the world of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The session of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church has adopted this policy in order to:

to bear a faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

to enable couples married at Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church to understand the nature of their Christian commitment;

to insure that the facilities of the church are used in keeping with the Directory for Worship of the Book of Order;

B. Who may be considered for marriage at Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church?

1. Because marriage is an act of Christian discipleship, both the man and the woman seeking marriage should be professing Christians. At a minimum, either the man or the woman must be a professing Christian.
2. Because marriage takes place within the life and work of a Christian community, couples should ordinarily be active members of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church, Clearwater, Florida. Membership in Peace Memorial Church is not passed on through family membership.
3. Non-members and former members of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church who wish to be married in the sanctuary must apply to the Pastor, who may exercise discretion in deciding who may enter the discernment process. Non-member residents of Clearwater are expected to have been active in the life of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church for at least three months before beginning the discernment process.

4. It is not wise to conduct a marriage of non-residents since there is not the opportunity to discern adequately, nor is there any meaningful connection to the church. Those residing in other communities should be active members of a local church.

C. Discernment Process

The discernment process may begin as early as one year, but no later than six months, prior to a proposed marriage date.

- ***Those wishing to begin the process of discernment must first complete an application. When the application papers are returned to the church office a tentative date for the wedding may be placed on the church calendar. This date cannot be relied upon until approval of the Pastor and the Session of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church. Invitations shall not be ordered until the discernment process is completed and the pastor's approval has been given.***
1. The couple meets with the Pastor of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church.
 2. The pastor may refer the couple to a counselor to help the couple prepare for marriage, or the pastor may conduct the counseling. If the counseling is not conducted by the pastor, the couple must give permission for the counselor to provide a report to the pastor.
 3. The couple meets again with the Pastor. If the Pastor is convinced of the couple's commitment, responsibility, maturity, and Christian understanding, he/she may approve the marriage. If the Pastor deems the marriage unwise he/she shall assure the couple of the Church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. (Book of Order W-4.9002b).
 4. If the Pastor approves the marriage after the completion of the discernment process, then wedding dates/time are sent to the Session for approval. It is not until after approval of the Session that the wedding date/time is set. Only then may reliance be placed on the wedding date/time by anyone.

D. The Marriage: A Service of Worship

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. With the approval of the Session, the Lord's Supper may be celebrated during the marriage service, and the invitation to the Table will be given to all baptized Christians. With the approval of the session, the marriage service may also take place during the Service for the Lord's Day. No other weddings will occur on the Lord's Day.

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 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 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. (Book of Order W-4.9004)

E. Ministerial Leadership

The Pastor of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church will have the privilege of conducting weddings in our sanctuary. The invitation for another minister to take part in the service is at the discretion of the Pastor of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church. The Pastor of our church has the final authority over all matters of the service and church.

F. Order of Service

The Pastor will provide the order of worship in consultation with the couple. All parts of the ceremony shall be appropriate to Christian worship and acceptable offerings to God. The liturgy of the Book of Common Worship (1993) is preferred.

G. Extraneous Elements

Because it distracts from the central symbols of the joining of hands and exchanging of rings, the so-called "unity candle" will not be employed. Because of the equality of the marriage covenant, the couple will not be introduced as "Mr. and Mrs. _____."

H. Music

Such music as accompanies the service should direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage, and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent. The singing of hymns by the congregation is encouraged.

Secular love songs and music inappropriate for worship will not be permitted. All music must be approved by the Pastor and the Music Director of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church.

I. Musicians

Like the pastor, the organist of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church has the privilege and responsibility of leading worship at weddings, and shall ordinarily play for all weddings. Another organist or other musicians may be invited to take part in weddings at the discretion of the organist of Peace Memorial

Presbyterian Church. Instrumentalists and vocal soloists shall be under the direction of the organist of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church.

J. Wedding Director:

Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church has designated a Wedding Director for all services. The Wedding Director at Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church shall supervise all the logistics of the service. Outside Wedding Consultants shall not be used in connection with the service of Peace Memorial .The Wedding Director can assist you in the placement of flowers and the use of candles, recommend florists, arrange items in the chancel area etc... She will be present for the rehearsal to see that you have no problems getting in and out of the church on time.

The church has designated dressing and waiting areas. The parlor may be used by the women and the church nursery for the men if anyone in the wedding party wishes to dress at the church. The Wedding Director will show you the dressing rooms and answer any questions you may have about the church and what is available to you at the church. The day of the service the Wedding Director will meet with the florist and receive the wedding party flowers.

K. Symbols and Decorations

The baptismal font, Communion Table, Bible, paschal candle, and pulpit are symbols of the faith. They may not be moved from the plain view of the congregation or obscured by flowers, candles, or other decorations. Flowers may not be placed on the Communion Table. The placement of flowers, candles, or other decorations must be approved by the Wedding Director in coordination with the Worship Council. Decoration of the sanctuary will be at the expense of the wedding party. In keeping with the simplicity of this place of worship and to avoid conspicuous displays, decorations should not be elaborate. The following stipulations apply:

1. Tacks and nails may not be driven into church property, and tape may not be used due to the risk of damage to painted surfaces.
2. Spring Loaded candles must be used and care should be taken that candles not be allowed to drip on the furniture or carpet.
3. There are times at Easter, Christmas, some holiday weekends and other times that the Sanctuary is set up for worship service on Sunday morning. If you choose to use the Sanctuary at that time, it is understood that none of the set decorations (flowers, banners, etc.) are to be moved.
4. Flowers used for weddings must be removed immediately following the service.
5. Couples who wish to provide flowers for Sunday worship should contact the Chancel Guild.

6. Because of the serious safety hazard they pose, no rice or bird seed may be thrown in the buildings or on the steps of the buildings. Only human beings shall take part in the worship service.
7. Wedding parties will be responsible for the order of the church property for the next service. All properties of florists, caterers, or other persons employed to assist with the wedding must be removed immediately after the wedding.

L. Approval of Photographs and Video Recording and Florists

1. Flash photos may be taken in the sanctuary before or after the service only.
2. Photographs may be taken in the narthex before members of the wedding party enter the sanctuary.
3. Photographers may not enter the main floor of the sanctuary during the service. The service begins with the first note of music played and ends with the last note.
4. Photographs shall not be permitted during the marriage service. However, by prior arrangement and with the expressed permission of the pastor, time exposures not requiring flash or distracting noises may be taken from the balcony by a professional photographer.
5. Electronic equipment such as video recorders shall only be used with permission of the Pastor in consultation with the Wedding Director and then only from the Balcony. The use of this equipment must not distract from the service of worship.
6. It is the bridal couple's responsibility to make this policy known to their friends and the photographer. The pastor shall stop the service if the photographer enters the main floor of the sanctuary or if the service is being interrupted by photographic or video operation.
7. Only those florists and photographers/videographers who have agreed in writing to abide by the church's policies may provide services to weddings at Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church. The Wedding Director will meet with the couple and their photographer no later than 30 days prior to the wedding date to review these procedures and have the photographer, video recorder and/or florist sign an agreement that they understand and will adhere to this policy.

M. Rehearsals and Wedding Times

The policy of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church will be to have one wedding per Saturday at a designated time, the times to be 1:00 P.M., 3:00 P.M. or 5:00 P.M., with no variations from these set times.

1. A standard rehearsal will be held. The Pastor shall be the director. Rehearsals for Saturday weddings will take place on Friday at 5:30 p.m.
2. On the wedding date, the wedding party shall be at the church at least two hours prior to the service

3. No weddings will be conducted during the time of the Clearwater Jazz Festival (3rd weekend of October), Thanksgiving weekend, during preparation for or during Advent, Saturday before Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday; July through first week of August)
4. The couple should contact the City of Clearwater regarding local events, which are beyond the control of the church, and can be scheduled at short notice.

N. Children in the Wedding Party

The use of children under the age of six years as ring bearers or flower girls shall be discouraged.

O. Intoxicants

No one, including the bride and groom, under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicant shall be allowed to take part in the rehearsal or the marriage service. The Pastor shall cancel the rehearsal and/or wedding if this restriction is not observed.

P. Use of Roebling Hall for Reception

If available, the Roebling Hall and the kitchen may be used for receptions. No alcoholic beverages may be served on church property.

Q. Custodial Services

A member of the custodial staff shall be present during rehearsals weddings, and receptions. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to provide servers for the reception. The custodial staff of the church is not responsible for serving food, washing dishes, or other catering tasks.

R. Dressing Rooms

The Church Parlor and nursery may be used for dressing by the bridal party, but they must be reserved through the Wedding Director.

S. Parking

The church parking lot is available for use by the wedding party. Under no circumstances should any cars from the wedding be parked in either lot overnight. The church facilities manager shall have any cars towed at the owner's expense.

T. Security

Every effort is made to keep our premises secure. Purses or other valuables in the dressing rooms, etc., should not be left out. The church will not be responsible for theft or loss of valuables or any rental items.

If requested by the wedding party, the wedding director will lock dressing rooms during the service. Overnight storage on church premises of any property, including food and serving dishes, is discouraged. Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen property.

U. Fees and Honoraria

1. A refundable security deposit of \$500.00 to insure compliance with policies and procedures of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church will be made with the initial discussion with our Wedding Director.
2. The conducting of weddings for church members is an expression of the pastor's ministry to the congregation. The honorarium for church members will be \$300.00. An honorarium for non-members is \$500.00 that would be inclusive of the counseling fee. This is not a fee for services, and no couple shall be denied the services of the pastor because of inability to give an honorarium.
3. The balance of fees shall be submitted 30 days prior to the wedding.

FEEES AND HONORARIA

	MEMBERS	NON-MEMBERS
Sanctuary	\$250.00	\$2000.00
Pastor	\$300.00	\$500.00
Organist	\$150.00	\$250.00
Soloist	\$50.00	\$100.00
Wedding Director	\$200.00	\$300.00
Roebbling Hall/ Kitchen	\$150.00	\$500.00

Checks for the Pastor, organist, soloist, and the Wedding Director shall be made out separately from the check written to the church.