

Your Wedding
at
Knox Presbyterian Church



3400 Michigan Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio

WEDDING GUIDELINES

Knox Presbyterian Church is delighted to share with you in the joy of Christian marriage. We will attempt to make the planning and celebration of your wedding meaningful and memorable, as fitting for such a sacred occasion. These guidelines reflect our accumulated experience over many years of conducting wedding services as well as the directives of our denomination. You will find them workable and helpful in the many preparations which are before you and your families as you plan this joyous event. All weddings at Knox Church are conducted in accordance with these guidelines.

THE CHRISTIAN NATURE OF MARRIAGE

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 both shall live.

As Jesus Christ has blessed this relationship, and it has been declared holy throughout the life of the Church, those who pledged themselves each to the other in the sight of God are promised God's help as they enter in joys and duties of life together.

Humanly speaking, marriage is a civil contract among a man, a woman and the state. When marriage is performed in the context of Christian worship, the proclamation of the gospel of reconciliation in Jesus Christ is a promise of blessing to the marriage. As the man and woman respond affirmatively to this proclamation, their marriage is in the Lord. This applies equally to first marriage, to marriage after the death of a spouse, and to marriage after being divorced.

The Christian marriage is a service of worship before God, normally conducted in the house of God. Reverence shall be expected on the part of all present, and the service shall be under the sole discretion of the minister.

- from the **Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA**

The purpose of Christian marriage is to acknowledge marriage and the family as gracious gifts from God and to celebrate with joy and gratitude your acceptance of these gifts. Christian marriage also affirms your life together as a couple as well as your responsible participation in the wider structures of family and human society. Thus, it is appropriate that family and friends be invited to share in your celebration and happiness.

The ceremony itself, in all aspects including music and decoration, is an act of worship. Primary focus is to be on God's blessing of the marriage. You and your guests should keep this uppermost in the planning and conduct of the entire service.

We consider it a sacred obligation to provide you with the means and setting for your marriage. We will try to serve you with the highest standards of spiritual and professional integrity.

SETTING THE DATE

Because of the careful planning which is necessary for all weddings and because of the many weddings which are scheduled in our Sanctuary and Chapel, we strongly advise that you consult with the Church Administrator at least six months in advance of your intended wedding date.

To secure a date and time for your wedding, your first step is to submit the Wedding Application to the church. The Church Administrator will then provide the basic information to you and

will inform the ministerial staff. If at all possible, the minister of your choice will be assigned to your wedding. If that minister is not available, another minister on the Knox staff will be assigned. As soon as the date of your wedding is confirmed and a minister is assigned, it will be your responsibility to make an appointment with the minister for a marriage conference. Wedding invitations should not be ordered or printed until you have met with your minister.

To confirm your wedding date you must agree to abide by all wedding guidelines by signing the Wedding Application form and returning it to the church office, along with a non-refundable \$50 deposit. A wedding date is not confirmed or held until the deposit and signed form have been received and accepted. Confirmation of your wedding date and time, along with the name of the minister assigned to your wedding, will be mailed to you within a few days.

No weddings are scheduled on Sundays or legal holidays. Weddings are not performed in the building during Holy Week. No wedding will be scheduled to begin before 10:30 am or after 7:30 pm. Three hours will be allowed for your wedding (2 hours prior, 1/2 for the ceremony and 1/2 hour after) which is to include the use of the dressing rooms, photography session, receiving line, etc. If you arrange for a reception at the church, more time will be allowed.

MARRIAGE CONFERENCE

The minister who will be officiating at your service is required by Presbyterian law to meet with both of you prior to the wedding.

Any minister asked to marry a man and woman shall participate with them in instruction and discussion of the privileges and obligations they will assume in Christian marriage.

The church bears responsibility for providing education and counsel in preparation for marriage.

It is fitting that the minister remind the couple of the meaning of Christian Baptism, for themselves and their families. It will be expected that at least one of the partners is a professing Christian, and that ordinarily both of them will share a common faith. The minister may take this opportunity to instruct the man and the woman on the relationship between Christian faith and marriage. The state has the authority to dissolve marriage. Recognizing the action of the state as an accomplished fact, the church's responsibility for education and counsel before marriage also extends to any special problems involved in marriage after divorce. Such problems include the competence of persons to enter and to meet the obligations to persons involved in a former marriage.

- from the **Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA**

When a minister is assigned to you, the bride and groom should arrange an early marriage conference. The minister will discuss with you the nature of Christian marriage and all the details of the ceremony. Should either the bride or groom be recently divorced, your minister may want to discuss circumstances surrounding this.

The minister may require one or several consultations. These sessions provide an informal atmosphere in which to plan your wedding and give you support in this vital moment in your lives. Anything shared with your minister in these consultations will be held in the strictest confidence. Our ministers also stand ready to assist you after your wedding in any way possible.

An important part of the conference is the discussion of details relating to the wedding rehearsal and ceremony.

PARTICIPANTS

The wedding ceremony and rehearsal are under the direction

of your minister and a wedding coordinator who will be assigned by the church. Our wedding coordinators are trained to assist the minister with the rehearsal, to instruct the bridal attendants and ushers, and to facilitate the actual wedding ceremony. Should you retain a bridal consultant, his or her services at the church are to be limited solely to arrangements of gown and apparel.

If you desire the participation of an additional minister, priest, rabbi or other individual at your wedding, such can be arranged. An individual assisting in the ceremony must be invited to participate by a minister from Knox Church. Therefore, no person should be invited to participate until you have discussed this matter with the officiating minister.

Experience suggests that children under four should not be included as participants in the service.

WEDDING MUSIC

All music in worship should serve the purposes of worship and should represent the best that Christians have to offer God.

Such music as accompanies the ceremony should direct attention to God, who sanctifies the marriage, and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent.

- from the **Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA**

The position of the Presbyterian Church on the marriage service is clearly set forth as a joyful, reverent and dignified celebration of worship. Therefore, the music used should enhance this joy, reverence and dignity, and possess a level of musical integrity consistent with that of the regular church music program. Popular or favorite songs of a sentimental character or secular connotation are inappropriate for the wedding ceremony, and are

more appropriately reserved for the wedding reception.

The Knox Church organist or his/her designate will play the organ for all weddings. When the wedding is confirmed, and before any plans for music are made, a conference with the organist should be arranged to seek suggestions and advice. Until this conference has been held, guest soloists or other musicians should not be invited to participate in the wedding service, nor should wedding music be selected. Knox Church has professional soloists from the choir available to sing at weddings if this is desired.

To maintain appropriate standards, final approval of any guest soloist or other musician will be the sole discretion of the organist who, with the officiating minister, is also the final authority in the selection of music used in the service.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

Your wedding rehearsal will be directed by your minister who will be assisted by a wedding coordinator and the organist. The purpose of a rehearsal is to prepare for the service of worship. All participants should observe this in both dress and decorum. The rehearsal is normally 30-45 minutes in length on the day preceding your wedding day, and should not be scheduled to begin later than 7:00 pm. In that there may be other events scheduled in the church on the same evening, it is extremely important that all members of your party arrive on time.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Your photographer must carefully observe the following guidelines:

- 1) Your photographer must remain quiet and inconspicuous during the ceremony:

Flash photography is not permitted during the ceremony. Non-flash (available light) may be taken only from the balcony or narthex during the service.

2) One picture each may be taken of the bride and bridesmaids as they process down the aisle. The photographer must be no more than 8 pews inside the sanctuary to do so.

3) Photographs of the recessional may be taken, but the photographer must remain in the narthex while doing so.

To assist you in communicating these guidelines to your photographer, we have prepared a printed list of guidelines which you should deliver to your photographer when making your arrangements. Also, your photographer should be asked to report to the minister upon arriving at the church for a review of these guidelines.

Picture-taking by guests during the ceremony is discouraged. Your wedding ceremony is a worship service and we ask that you and your families help see that these guidelines are observed by all.

VIDEOGRAPHERS

Wedding services may be videotaped only under the following conditions:

1) Video cameras will be permitted only in the balcony of the Sanctuary or in the transepts; they may not be placed in the center aisle or in the chancel area.

2) Arrangements for wireless microphones must be made with the minister before the wedding ceremony.

3) Video photography will be done with available light only — no additional lighting is permitted.

4) Permission to videotape the wedding must be arranged through the officiating minister at least one week prior to the service.

WEDDING DECORATIONS

Flowers, decorations and other appointments should not be unduly elaborate. In all activities surrounding the ceremony, excessive expense and ostentation should be avoided.

- from the **Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA**

Because of the beauty of our Sanctuary, only minimal decorations are necessary and they should be carefully planned. Flowers, decorations and other appointments should not be unduly elaborate. It is the responsibility of the florist to check with the Church Administrator regarding plans for the delivery of decorations. We recommend that flowers be placed only on the Sanctuary redos, the Chancel floor or the Chapel communion table. Flowers may not be placed on the Sanctuary communion table. It is also possible to use ribbon or simple arrangements of flowers on the pews in the center aisle. Should you desire to keep the floral decorations from your wedding, please make arrangements to have them removed immediately following the ceremony.

Available for your use are two free-standing candelabra for the chancel area. We plan to use those candles at all weddings which begin at 6:00 pm or later unless we are requested to do otherwise.

For aesthetic and safety reasons, we recommend that no aisle runners be used. If a runner is desired, prior arrangements must be made through the Church Administrator.

WEDDING RECEPTIONS

Wedding receptions may be arranged on the church premises for church members only. In that this is an extensive subject in itself, parties desiring such services should consult with the Church Administrator and the minister when making reservations for the date and time. Receptions may be catered by the church kitchen staff or by an approved caterer. Advance notification is essential. The use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted.

***SUMMARY AND TIMELINE FOR
SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING AT
KNOX CHURCH***

- 1) Complete and sign the wedding application form and return it to the church office with the \$50 non-refundable deposit.
- 2) When a minister has been assigned to your wedding, make an appointment for your wedding conference as soon as possible.
- 3) After your wedding conference, arrange an appointment with the church organist.
- 4) Meet with your florist and photographer, advise them of the church's guidelines and give them the appropriate insert (included herein).
- 5) Be certain that all church fees are paid in full at least one week prior to the wedding. The check should be payable to Knox Presbyterian Church and should note the bride's last name in the memo portion. For questions on balances due, please contact the office of the Church Administrator.
- 6) Bring your marriage license to the church office one week before your wedding.
- 7) Remind all members of your wedding party to be on time for the rehearsal.
- 8) If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact your minister or the Church Administrator. Our goal is to make your wedding the perfect beginning of a long and happy marriage.



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