

## Wedding Guidelines for Knox Presbyterian Church

3400 Michigan Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45208

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. May you find them helpful in the many preparations before you as you plan this joyous event. All weddings at Knox Church are conducted in accordance with these guidelines.

### THE CHRISTIAN NATURE OF MARRIAGE

As stated in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, USA (Book of Order, W-4.06), we affirm:

*Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.*

*The Christian marriage is a service of worship before God. Those who pledge 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. The proclamation of the gospel of peace in Jesus Christ during the marriage service is a promise of blessing to the marriage. Reverence shall be expected on the part of all present, and the service shall be under the sole discretion of the presiding minister.*

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.

### TIME FRAME AND ALLOWABLE DATES FOR WEDDINGS

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 10:30am or after 7:00pm. On your wedding day, you may arrive to the church up to 1 hour prior to the start of your ceremony, and you may remain at the church for up to 1 hour after the end of your ceremony. If you arrange for a reception at the church, more time will be allowed.

### SANCTUARY SEATING CAPACITY

The Sanctuary will comfortably seat 328 guests. An additional 54 guests can be seated in the transepts, for a grand total of 382 guests.

### SETTING THE DATE and INITIAL STEPS

Because of the number of weddings and other events scheduled at Knox Church, we advise you to consult with a Knox pastor at least six months in advance of your intended wedding date. For non-members, we are unable to schedule weddings sooner than one year before the proposed wedding date.

In the process of securing a date and time for your wedding, after reading these Wedding Guidelines, your next step is to consult with one of the pastors. After receiving a pastor's initial consent to officiate your wedding and if both pastor and church are available on your proposed wedding date, the next step in confirming your wedding is to submit a completed, signed Wedding Application along with a non-refundable deposit of \$200 to the church office. By signing

the application, you confirm that you have read and agree to abide by the Knox Church Wedding Guidelines. A wedding date is not confirmed until the deposit and signed application have been received and accepted. The pastor will be in touch with you as soon as possible upon receiving these items to confirm your wedding date.

### **MARRIAGE PREPARATION SESSIONS**

Once the wedding date and time have been confirmed by the officiating pastor, it will be your responsibility to make an appointment with the pastor to begin marriage preparation sessions. The pastor who will officiate your wedding is required by Presbyterian law to meet with both of you prior to the wedding.

Together you will discuss the nature of and the privileges and obligations you will assume in Christian marriage, as well as the details of the rehearsal and ceremony. The pastor may require one or several consultations. These sessions provide an informal atmosphere in which to plan your wedding and support you in this important time in your lives. Anything shared with the pastor in these consultations will be held in the strictest confidence. Our pastors also stand ready to assist you after your wedding in any way possible.

### **WEDDING CEREMONY PARTICIPANTS**

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

A Knox Church pastor will participate in all weddings held at Knox. However, if you desire the participation of an additional clergy person or other individual at your wedding, permission may be granted by the Knox pastor who would then also invite the desired individual to assist in the ceremony. Therefore, no person should be invited to participate until you have discussed this matter with the officiating pastor.

Children are welcome to participate in the ceremony but experience leads us to discourage the participation of children under four years of age.

### **WEDDING MUSIC**

The marriage service is a joyful and reverent worship celebration. Music used for the ceremony should be meaningful to the couple, but care should be taken that it also reflects an appropriate sentiment.

The Knox Church organist plays for all wedding ceremonies when an organist is desired. (A decision by the couple to go against this policy will not reduce wedding fees.)

After the wedding is confirmed and wedding conferences with the pastor have begun, but before music plans are made, the couple should contact Knox organist Dr. Christina Haan, [damehaan@cinci.rr.com](mailto:damehaan@cinci.rr.com) for a planning/advising conference. Until this conference is held, guest singers and instrumentalists should not be invited to participate. If desired, the Knox organist can suggest professional musicians for your wedding. Final approval of guest musician(s) rests with the Knox organist.

### **WEDDING REHEARSAL**

Your wedding rehearsal will be directed by the officiating pastor, assisted by the Knox wedding coordinator. The purpose of a rehearsal is to prepare for the service of worship. All participants should observe this in 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 6:30 PM. Because

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 AND VIDEOGRAPHERS**

Please convey these guidelines to the photographer and/or videographer at the time you are securing their services. Your photographer should be asked to report to the wedding coordinator upon arriving at the church for a review of these guidelines.

No photos may be taken during the service, except for available-light photographs taken from the side aisles. Flash pictures may be taken at the back of the church only as the wedding party enters. However, flash pictures are absolutely forbidden during the service by either your photographer or guests.

You may video your ceremony. However, like still photographs, no special lighting may be used, and the camera must remain in a stationary position in the balcony. Video cables may not be run across the church floor.

Photographers and videographers may not move around in view of the guests.

The church is normally open one hour before the ceremony. Many couples utilize this time for photographs of the families and wedding party. The church will then remain open for photographs up to one hour following the service for additional pictures. However, please keep this time to a minimum out of respect for church staff and volunteers.

It is expected that the photographer and/or videographer will consult with the Knox wedding coordinator prior to the wedding. A visit to the church before the wedding is strongly encouraged to become familiar with the space and discover any questions or concerns to inquire about before the wedding day.

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

PHOTOGRAPHERS should please carefully observe the following guidelines:

### General:

- Photographer should report to the Knox wedding coordinator as soon as possible upon arrival to the church.
- During the ceremony:
  - Photographer must remain quiet and inconspicuous, not moving around in view of guests.
  - Flash photography is not permitted during the ceremony.
  - Non-flash (available light) photos may be taken only from the balcony or through the windows of narthex at the back from the church.

### Processional:

- Photos may be taken of each person as they process down the aisle
- The photographer may stand no more than 8 pews inside the sanctuary, from the narthex. It is best and preferred to stand in a pew unoccupied by wedding guests.

### Recessional:

- Photos (flash or available light) of the recessional may be taken, but the photographer needs to stand in the narthex while doing so.

VIDEOGRAPHERS should please carefully observe the following guidelines:

### General:

- Videographer should report to the Knox wedding coordinator as soon as possible upon arrival at the church.
- Care should be taken not to run video cords/cables across the church floor in the path of foot traffic.
- Arrangements for wireless microphones must be made with the officiating pastor before the wedding ceremony.
- Videographer must remain quiet and inconspicuous, not moving around in view of guests.
- No special lighting may be used, only available light.
- Video cameras will be permitted only in the balcony of the sanctuary, the transepts, or the narthex (not in the center aisles, side aisles, or chancel area).

Processional:

- Video may be taken of each person as they process down the aisle
- The videographer may stand no more than 8 pews inside the sanctuary, from the narthex. It is best and preferred to stand in a pew unoccupied by wedding guests.

Recessional:

- Video of the recessional may be taken, but the videographer needs to stand in the narthex while doing so.

## **WEDDING DECORATIONS AND EFFECTS**

We encourage minimal decorations and they should be carefully planned. The couple should connect the florist with the Knox Church wedding coordinator regarding plans for the delivery of decorations. We recommend that flowers be placed only on the sanctuary reredos or the chancel floor. It is also possible to use ribbon or simple arrangements of flowers on the pews in the center aisle. Please do not use tape, glue, tacks, staples, or nails to secure decorations to the pews. Should you desire to keep the floral decorations from your wedding, please make arrangements to have them removed immediately following the ceremony.

For aesthetic and safety reasons, we ask that no aisle runners be used. We also ask that nothing be thrown as the couple departs the church following the wedding, i.e. flower petals, rice, bird seed, etc. (Blowing soap bubbles is permissible outside the church.)

## **PARKING**

Knox Church has two parking lots available for guests. You can find more information regarding parking in Hyde Park at [knox.org](http://knox.org).

## **ALCOHOL USE AND SMOKING**

Alcoholic beverages, smoking and vaping are not permitted on Knox Church property.

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

1. Contact one of the Knox Church pastors for an initial consultation and to inquire about pastor and church availability.
2. Complete and sign the Wedding Application and return it to the church office with the \$200, non-refundable deposit.
3. Once a pastor has confirmed your wedding, contact the pastor to make an appointment to begin marriage preparation sessions.
4. After the initial marriage preparation session, arrange an appointment with the church organist.

5. Meet with your florist and photographer and/or videographer; advise them of the church's guidelines spelled out in this document.
6. Be certain that all church fees are paid in full at least one-month week prior to the wedding. The check should be payable to Knox Presbyterian Church and should note the last names of the couple in the memo portion. For questions on balances due, please contact the Knox Church office manager.
7. Bring your marriage license to the church office within one week prior to your wedding, or to the rehearsal to give to the pastor.
8. Remind all members of your wedding party to be on time for the rehearsal.
9. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the officiating pastor or the assigned wedding coordinator. Our goal is to help make your wedding a wonderful and blessed beginning of a long and happy marriage.

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