

WEDDING GUIDELINE

SHANDON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

607 Woodrow Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29205
803-771-4408



Adopted by Session August 11, 1991
Revised November 2010

CONGRATULATIONS

We congratulate you on your forthcoming marriage and look forward to helping you make this a meaningful service of worship. We consider a wedding to be an act of worship, as marriage is "instituted of God, regulated by His commandments and blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ." It is our desire to join you in planning a service that will glorify God and be a joyous celebration of covenantal love.

"ON MARRIAGE" from the Book of Order:

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.

In preparation for the marriage service, the minister asked to lead the service shall provide for a discussion with the man and the woman concerning

- the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
- the legal requirements of the state,
- the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
- the nature and form of the marriage service,
- the vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
- the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
- 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.

If the minister is convinced after discussion with the couple

that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understandings are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the minister shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision the minister may seek the counsel of the Session.

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 minister and the supervision of the Session (W-1.4004-.4006). 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. Celebration of the Lord's Supper at the marriage service requires the approval of the Session, and care shall be taken that the invitation to the Table is extended to all baptized present. The marriage service may take place during the Service for the Lord's Day upon authorization by the Session. It should be placed in the order as a response to the Proclamation of the Word. It may then be followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (W-2.4010; W-3.3503).

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.

Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church (W-2.1004). 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 (W-1.3034; W-1.4004-.4005; W-5.5006).

A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of the vows by the husband and wife, and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the woman and man are already married to one another according to the laws of the state.

To this end, we are happy to offer the services and facilities of Shandon Presbyterian Church to all church members and to others in accordance with the policies of the Session, which is the governing body of this congregation.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Why do you want to get married?
2. What qualities/characteristics do you admire in your partner?
3. Why do you want your wedding to be held in the church?
4. What are your goals for your marriage? ... for your life?
5. Describe important characteristics of a Christian relationship and a Christian home. What will you do to develop these?
6. How will you participate in the life of the church as individuals and as a new family?
7. If you have been married before, do you feel ready to enter a new covenant of marriage? What do you feel you learned from your previous marriage and how have you grown in your understanding of God's will for your marriage?
8. Have you and your partner discussed issues in marriage such as finances, communication, dealing with conflict, balancing work and home life, family responsibilities, and children?

ARRANGEMENTS

Even the simplest weddings require forethought and preparation. Since many weddings are solemnized at Shandon, it is important to plan ahead. At least one of the parties being married, or his/her immediate family, must be a member in good standing at Shandon Presbyterian Church. For the purpose of a wedding a **member** is deemed as one who has been faithful in the life and worship of the church for at least one year. **Members** of Shandon Presbyterian Church may reserve church facilities for weddings as far in advance as they desire. Exceptions to this policy may be granted only to other clergy who make a specific request on behalf of a couple. In those exceptions, the church cannot be reserved more than three months in advance. Requests for exceptions due to extenuating circumstances must be directed to the Business Administrator.

Shandon Presbyterian Church cannot, in good conscience, provide a space for persons to be married without clear evidence of commitment to the faith community. Participation in the community of faith is essential to the support and enrichment of marriage for Christians.

Once you have selected a time and date, please contact the **Business Administrator** to make sure the church is available for the desired time and to reserve the facilities. Be sure to specify a time for the wedding and reception (if the reception is to be held at the church.) All rehearsals will be at 5:45 the day before the wedding. Once you have made a reservation, it is important to honor the date and time, because many people (Pastor, Organist, Director, and Sexton) are involved. The Business Administrator handles reservations for weddings and supervises the preparation, use and cleaning of the building. Reservation forms are available in the church office. A form must be completed and returned to the Business Administrator. The reservation will not be considered confirmed until the fees are received.

Business Administrator:

Bonnie Smith, 771-4408, bsmith@shandonpres.org).

As soon as your wedding plans take shape, you should contact the Coordinator of Shandon's **Wedding Guild**, who will review the wedding policies and guidelines with you and assign a

member of the Guild to serve as Director of your wedding. All weddings will be under the direction of a member of the Wedding Guild, who will make every effort to help your wedding be a joyous experience. The Director will give you information concerning equipment available for weddings and receptions, show you rooms that may be used for dressing, photography and receptions and plan with you for your wedding and rehearsal. The Director will be present for the rehearsal and wedding, and will assist the Pastor in coordinating the service.

Premarital counseling is considered an important factor in preparing for marriage and in establishing a Christian home. Therefore, **three months prior** to the date of the wedding, you should call the **Pastor** performing the ceremony to arrange counseling sessions. The Pastor will not perform the ceremony until the premarital counseling has been completed. If you desire to invite another Pastor to assist with the service, he or she must be invited by the Pastor or Associate Pastor of Shandon with the consent of the Session.

The form and content of the Marriage Service shall be in accord with the theology and liturgy of the Presbyterian Church. The Pastor will work with you to plan a service that reflects your personal desires and preferences and expresses the traditions of the Presbyterian Church.

If you so desire, the church will provide a **Wedding Bulletin** for the guests at a cost of \$50. In order to prepare the bulletin, the **Office Manager** must have all bulletin information at least two weeks prior to the wedding.

Prior to the date of the wedding, arrangements may be changed by calling the **Pastor**.

MUSIC

The **Church Organist** customarily plays for all weddings in the Sanctuary, since the Organist is most familiar with the organ and our form of worship. The wedding ceremony is a service of worship; therefore, only music suitable for worship may be used. The Organist has information and suggestions concerning appropriate music for the service. Please make an appointment with the Organist to discuss the music.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Our desire is to make your wedding as meaningful as possible while we continue to provide for the other activities and programs of the church. Therefore, the guidelines below have been established to provide an atmosphere of beauty, dignity and reverence for this service. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to see that these regulations are made known to everyone involved in the wedding.

1. Prior to the wedding, designated rooms are available for use of the bride, groom and their attendants. The use of these rooms will be arranged with the Director. Although every precaution is taken to assure the safety of possessions, the church cannot be responsible for clothing or personal items belonging to the wedding party. Valuables should not be left unattended during the service. All personal items should be removed immediately after the wedding to permit the building to be cleaned.
2. For reasons of safety and health, smoking is not permitted in the buildings.
3. Alcoholic beverages may **not** be used or served on church premises and no one under the influence of alcohol may take part in the wedding or rehearsal.
4. For reasons of safety, rice, birdseed, flower petals, confetti, or bubbles may not be used anywhere in the church building or on the steps leading to the church building or the yard.
5. It is strongly advised that children under the age of 4 not be selected as attendants. Experience has proven they are unaccustomed to worship, to being in front of a crowd, and can be disruptive to the bride and wedding party.
6. Davis Fellowship Hall is available for receptions. The Hall is 42' x 56' (2352 sq. ft.) and will hold approximately 200-250 people. Special arrangements need to be made with the Business Administrator for the use of the Activity Center.
7. The Church will be open for decorating, dressing and other preparations two hours prior to the appointed time of the ceremony. Any special arrangements to have the building open at other times must be made with the Business Administrator.

Decorations

The Sanctuary has been carefully designed and furnished with symbols of our Christian faith to be a place of worship with a minimum of extra decorations. Elaborate floral decorations are unnecessary and may even be out of place in the Sanctuary. **The bride** is responsible for giving florists a copy of the decorations policy and ensuring that all decorations follow these guidelines.

It is recommended that either one floral arrangement in front of the Pulpit or two floral arrangements on the platform flower stands be used. (If you desire to leave the floral arrangements for use in Sunday worship, please contact the Church Flower Coordinator as soon as possible as honorary or memorial flowers are scheduled months in advance.)

Please be certain that decorations do not damage floors, rugs, walls or furniture and that all decorations conform to city fire ordinances. No decorations may be hung or suspended from lighting fixtures. No nails, screws or tape may be used in the building; only rubber bands may be used to attach any décor to the pews or furnishings.

Sanctuary furniture (including the Pulpit, Baptismal Font, and Communion Table) may not be moved, with the exception of the chairs beside the Communion Table.

The church has four 7-branch floor brass candelabra with tube candles (\$30 a pair of candelabras, for candles) and a 15-light arched, brass candelabra (\$30) available for use. They may not be decorated in any way, as tape, wire and ribbon may damage them. If you wish to use additional candles or candelabra, only tube candles may be used. The aisle candles used on Christmas Eve may not be used for weddings. The church has a silver cross and candlesticks or a Ritual Cloth for the Communion Table and a Kneeling Bench available.

There are 29 Hurricane lamps available for the windows and are \$10 each if they have to be put out and taken up by the sexton. If they are already in place there is a \$5 charge for each for the replacement candle.

The use of any other decorations, candles or other appointments must be approved in advance by the Director.

Photography

The **bride is responsible** for giving the photographers a copy of the policy for photographing and videotaping the ceremony and ensuring that everyone involved in the ceremony follows these guidelines.

The wedding is a service of worship; therefore, no flash pictures may be taken while the service is in progress. Flash photographs may be taken before or after the service. A flash photograph may be taken during the processional and recessional provided the photographer remains in the narthex and does not enter the Sanctuary.

The photographer and videographer must be appropriately dressed for the wedding and must remain completely still and inconspicuous during the ceremony.

If you desire to make a video or audio recording of the service, you must consult with the Director and Pastor at the rehearsal concerning the inconspicuous placement of the camera or other equipment. No additional lighting for video cameras is allowed. When weddings are videotaped, the camera is placed in a position in the far right or left of the choir loft. The camera must be set up one hour before the start of the service as guests often arrive early. The church is open and the Wedding Director is present two hours before the service. The Director will be happy to assist those audio taping, photographing or video recording the service with any question or need.

Because guests arrive early for weddings, photographs taken in the Sanctuary prior to the service must be finished at least one hour prior to the start of the ceremony.

The Church Parlor may be used for photographs prior to the service provided no furniture in the Parlor is moved. [Some of the furniture is very fragile.] No food or drink is allowed in the Parlor.

It is the responsibility of **Ushers** to remind guests with cameras that taking photographs is not allowed during the ceremony.

SCHEDULE OF FEES

Members: For members of Shandon, there is a **basic wedding fee of \$900** for the use of the facilities, including the Sanctuary, Kitchen and Davis Hall, and the services of those who will be assisting with your wedding:

Organist

Includes Rehearsal and Wedding. When soloists are involved, there is an additional fee of \$60.00 for the Organist per soloist. If the bride wants an organist other than the church organist, she must consult with the church organist about the music for the ceremony. The church organist will receive a \$60 consultation fee.

Sexton

Includes Rehearsal and Wedding. When a Reception is held at the church, there is an additional fee of \$75.00 for preparation and clean up of Davis Fellowship Hall.

Directors (One or Two Guild Members)

This provides for the services of a member of the Wedding Guild and her assistant who will meet with the Bride to review wedding policies, assist in the planning of the service, provide necessary information about church equipment and resources, direct the rehearsal and assist the Pastor in coordinating the service. If after meeting with the bride, the directors assigned to the wedding feel it will be an especially large or complicated wedding, they may use their discretion in requiring the bride to pay for a third director at an additional cost of \$100.

Security Guard

Pastor

The Pastors make no charge for their services, but an honorarium is acceptable. The amount of the honorarium is at the discretion of the couple. The suggested amount is between \$200 and \$300.

Optional Additional Fees:

Organist when there is a soloist: \$60

Additional Coordinator(s): \$100 each

Reception – Activity Center: \$200 (plus custodian)

Custodian for Reception in Activity Center: \$225

Security Guard for reception in Activity Center: \$40

Soloist: No fee for Shandon. This expense is as agreed upon between the Bride and the soloist.

Candles see page 7