

Planning Your Wedding

The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown appreciates the importance of your wedding day and wants it to be a meaningful experience for you, your family and your friends. We have found it helpful to develop suggestions and policies to assist you as you plan your wedding. Therefore we suggest you read through this booklet carefully.

It is most important that you realize your wedding is a worship service. As with any other worship service, we acknowledge our dependency upon God through Jesus Christ and seek His blessing on your marriage.

The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown is a member congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and is governed by the Book of Order. Therefore a wedding at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown follows the guidelines found in the Book of Order, which state:

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.

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.

Planning Your Wedding

If you wish to be married at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown you must first speak with one of the ministers. You will then be asked to contact the Church Secretary to check the availability of the sanctuary or Jennings Room on the date you desire for your wedding. A Wedding Information Form will be mailed to you to be completed and returned to the church.

No wedding date will be confirmed without a completed Wedding Information Form and deposit check. A deposit (see page listing fees) is required in order to confirm any date (all checks must be made out to The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown). Additionally, the balance is required 10 days prior to the wedding.

Counseling

When the date of your wedding has been confirmed, you should call the officiating minister to arrange for an initial conference. At this first meeting, the minister will review the Wedding Information Form with you and gather any other necessary information. Subsequent meetings (two to three) with the minister will be arranged to discuss the wedding service itself and to counsel you on various aspects of married life.

Music

The church Director of Music is in charge of all music used in your wedding service. The Director will assist you in selecting appropriate music for your wedding and, should you so desire, provide soloists or additional instrumentalists, at an additional cost. If the church Director of Music is not available for the wedding date, he will secure another organist. Use of soloists and instrumentalists chosen by the couple is possible but will require permission from the Director of Music. The Director of Music makes all final decisions concerning the appropriateness of musical selections, types of music selected, and musicians and soloists.

You will need to contact the Director of Music to discuss your music needs. The Director will be present for your wedding rehearsal.

Church Facilities

The sanctuary of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown seats approximately 400 guests with easy viewing of the Wedding Party, with additional seating for approximately 150 guests in the side transepts. Aisle runners can be obtained from florists. The center aisle in the sanctuary is 42 feet long.

If you are planning a small wedding (100 or fewer guests) and/or a less formal service, you may wish to use the Jennings' Room. This room provides a lovely setting and does not require excessive decoration. The walls of this room are adorned with murals by the well respected artist Violet Oakley. Music for a wedding held in the Jennings room can be played using the piano, electric keyboard, other instrument(s), tape or compact disc.

The church will provide a kneeler, candelabra, and candles if requested.

Clergy

It is assumed that a minister of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown will be officiating at the wedding. Other clergy may participate at the invitation of the officiating minister.

The Wedding Ceremony

Because a wedding at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown is considered to be an act of worship, the wedding service will be conducted according to the liturgy found in the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship* or a similar liturgy provided by the officiating minister. If a minister from another church is officiating at your service, the liturgy to be used must be approved by the minister of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown.

It is appropriate but not essential for the service to include special music, hymns, and Scripture readings. A brief meditation by the minister can also be included if requested by the couple. The officiating minister will assist in planning the service. The couple will have an opportunity to write their own vows and will be guided by the officiating minister in doing so.

License

A Philadelphia County marriage license is required for your wedding to be conducted. It is the responsibility of the couple to receive such a license prior to the day of their wedding. Please bring the license with you at the time of the rehearsal. The officiating minister will sign the license following the wedding service. The church is responsible for returning the signed license to the Bureau of Statistics. Be sure to record the license number in your personal records and take note of how you may acquire a duplicate copy. A wedding cannot take place at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown without a license.

Photography

In keeping with the atmosphere of worship, only the professional photographer hired for the wedding may take photographs during the service. During the service, the professional photographer may only photograph from the rear of the sanctuary (or Jennings' Room) using existing light. No photographs can be taken during the prayers. Only the professional photographer may take flash photographs, and these are limited to the escorting of the grandmothers and mothers, the procession of the bridesmaids, the bridal procession, and the time after the benediction at the end of the service.

When taking pictures (during the processional, recessional and ceremony) the photographer must remain behind the body of the congregation, not obstructing views. The ushers are to inform the guests that photographs and videos may not be taken once the guests have entered the church.

The service may be videotaped with the following restrictions: the taping must be done from a side or back of the sanctuary (or Jennings' Room). No auxiliary lighting equipment may be used and the taping must be done from one fixed point during the service.

Please ask your photographer and/or videographer to confer with the officiating minister before making preparations for photography and/or videotaping.

Flowers

Your florist will have access to the worship space no earlier than two hours before the wedding. The florist must be finished with preparing the church 45 minutes prior to the wedding. Ribbons and flowers may be used to decorate pews but should not be secured with tape, thumb tacks, pins or anything else that may damage the church furniture. Please be sure that the florist is aware of the need to have personal flowers (bouquets, boutonniere, corsages, etc.) available for pre-service photographs. If the flowers in the church are to be used at the reception, the florist should not remove them until all of the guests have departed and pictures have been taken.

Bulletin

It is not necessary to have a bulletin for your wedding. When a bulletin is requested, however, it can be produced by The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown's Church Secretary. Information for the bulletin, such as names of participants, music titles, Scripture reading(s), must be submitted to the Church Secretary no later than two weeks before the wedding.

Rehearsal

Rehearsals are scheduled for Friday evenings at 6:00 p.m. Typically, rehearsals last for 45 to 60 minutes. Rehearsals are to start promptly and are intended to ensure a smooth ceremony, therefore all who have a role in the wedding are expected to be present. Please see that all participants are prompt. The officiating minister will delay the start of the rehearsal for a maximum of 10 minutes. Anyone not present after that time will have to work their way through the proceedings when they arrive. The rehearsal will include music, but soloists and special instrumentalists need not be present.

Wedding Day

The ushers should arrive at the church at least 45 minutes before the beginning of the service. This is to be sure that they are ready and prepared for when the guests begin to arrive.

The groom and his best man should arrive at the church at least 30 minutes before the beginning of the service. They will be able to wait comfortably in a room behind the sanctuary.

Unfortunately, the church does not have a convenient dressing room for the bride and her attendants. It is recommended that the bride, her attendants and parents should plan to arrive at the church dressed for the wedding no later than 10 minutes prior to the beginning of the service. If it is necessary for the bride and her attendants to have a dressing room, the church will provide one, however it will be in a location that requires the bride to walk in areas of the building where she may be seen by guests prior to the service.

If a wedding does not begin on time all fees will be doubled for each 30 minutes delayed. There will be a 15 minute grace period. If the wedding is delayed more than one hour, the officiating minister will cancel the ceremony.

The ushers will be instructed to inform all guests to refrain from the use of cellular phones, pagers, and/or flash photography during the ceremony. We ask your courtesy in refraining from the throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, rose petals, or potpourri (either inside or outside the buildings) or the use of balloons. Bubbles are permitted.

Sometimes the bride and groom choose to greet people at the church after the service. The Narthex (rear of the sanctuary) is a narrow area but can be used for this purpose or a receiving line may be set up outside the front sanctuary doors, weather permitting.

The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown is a smoke-free environment, and drugs and alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the church premises at any time. Anyone who, in the opinion of the officiating minister, appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted to participate in the wedding service.

Parking

The church has two parking lots located on both sides of the building. These lots can accommodate approximately 100 vehicles.

Fees

The following fees have been approved by the Session of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown. Total fees are due one week prior to the wedding date. The deposit will be returned within ten days following the service. If a wedding does not begin within 15 minutes of the scheduled time there is an additional charge of \$200 for each 15 minutes delayed.

	Members	Immediate Family of Member
Deposit	\$300	\$1500
Facilities		
Rehearsal and Wedding		
Sanctuary	\$ 0	\$1500
Jennings Room	\$ 0	\$ 750
Reception		
Longstreth Auditorium	\$ 0	\$1500
Jennings Room	\$ 0	\$ 750
Minister		
Counseling, Rehearsal and Wedding	\$ 0	\$ 500
Organist		
Rehearsal and Wedding	\$225	\$ 300
Soloist	\$150	\$ 175
Special Instrumentalist (each)	\$150	\$ 175
Sexton		
Rehearsal and Wedding	\$ 75	\$ 125
Reception	\$ 75	\$ 125
Bulletin/Program	\$ 50	\$ 100

The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
35 West Cheltenham Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144
(215) 843-8811
(215) 844-8141 - fax
www.fpcgermantown.org