

Wedding Guidelines



205 E. Kirkwood Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47408

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
205 East Kirkwood Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47408

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding a wedding at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This booklet has been designed to clarify our role and to answer your questions regarding your wedding. Please read it carefully.

At First Christian Church, we understand Christian marriage as a sacrament of the church—"an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." Thus, along with baptism and the Lord's Supper, a marriage is an event through which the love of God becomes apparent.

As you plan your wedding, you will want to carefully consider the aspects of preparation highlighted in the following pages. Because we take weddings very seriously, you should not expect the policies outlined in this booklet to be set aside.

If, ***after reading the materials***, you wish to schedule a wedding at First Christian Church, e-mail our minister of weddings at fcc@fccbloom.org to confirm a tentative date and schedule an appointment to meet. We will be pleased to work with you to help ensure that your wedding reflects your love for each other and for God from whom all blessings flow.

Sincerely,

The Staff of First Christian Church

Phone: (812) 332-4459

Fax: (812) 961-0227

fcc@fccbloom.org
www.fccbloom.org

Weddings at First Christian Church

Christian Marriage

God has ordained that a couple may enter into marriage, pledging their love and promising faithfulness to each other, as long as both shall live. Thus, a wedding ceremony, when conducted in the church, is not just a civil or social occasion that takes place within the walls of a religious building. It is a service of worship, an act which celebrates God's love for humanity through the union of two people.

Like all worship services of the church, a wedding service is designed to glorify God, who divinely ordains marriage, and to seek the blessing of God as the couple pledges their love. Because it is a religious service, anything that adds to the reverence is proper, and anything that obscures or detracts from the religious nature of the service is to be discouraged.

Scheduling Your Wedding

Setting the Date

It is very important that all arrangements for the service and rehearsal be scheduled as far in advance as possible, up to one year in advance. All dates are subject to the church calendar and staff schedules. Due to use of facilities and staff schedules, we do not schedule weddings after 6 pm and between Christmas and New Year's Day, or the weekends of Palm/Passion Sunday, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving, and July 4.

The date of the wedding is set in consultation with the minister of weddings, who will coordinate the date with the church calendar and the organist. The date will be held for up to two weeks from the time of the initial inquiry. In order to "lock in" the date, you must schedule an initial meeting with the Wedding Minister, after which, a \$200.00 deposit is required.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal is customarily held the evening before the wedding between 4:30 and 6:30 pm. The wedding rehearsal should begin promptly at the scheduled time and will last approximately one hour.

Because the rehearsal is an integral part of the wedding preparation, all members of the wedding party need to be present. We request that children not attend the rehearsal unless they are in the wedding party. The minister of weddings directs the rehearsal.

IMPORTANT: Please bring the marriage license, wedding certificate and all fees to the rehearsal.

The bride is asked to designate a friend or family member to help coordinate the ceremony. At the rehearsal, the minister of weddings will provide training for the designee.

Parking

There are a limited number of parking spaces directly in front of the church and on the west side of the church that will be designated for use by the wedding party. The parking meters are enforced.

Guests attending the wedding will need to park on the street or in available parking lots around the church (check signs for permit usage). A large parking garage is located at Fourth and Walnut Streets. We recommend checking the community calendar at the Visitor's Center for activities, such as ballgames, that may cause parking problems downtown before setting the date of your wedding.

Conference with the Minister

Ordained or licensed ministers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or the United Church of Christ will officiate at all wedding ceremonies. Upon the invitation and under the direction of the minister of weddings, a guest minister may participate in the ceremony by giving the meditation and officiating during the covenant service (see page 7)).

The vows made at a wedding signify a commitment and a responsibility to God, to one another, to the families, and to the church. They are never to be entered into lightly. Each couple will meet with the minister of weddings for a minimum of three pre-marriage conferences. These must be scheduled at least three months prior to the wedding date. These meetings will focus on personal relationships, the marriage covenant, and family dynamics. The details of the wedding service will be discussed at one or more of the meetings. ***Responsibility for scheduling these conferences rests with the bride and groom.*** If scheduling does not take place at least three months prior to the wedding date, the date will be cancelled and your deposit returned.

Pre-marriage conferences are not optional. They are an important part of preparing for a lifetime commitment. If time or geography interferes with this work, arrangements can be made with a Disciples of Christ or United Church of Christ pastor in another location. (Please expect to discuss counseling fees.) This can be handled creatively, but again, these sessions are not optional.

The Ceremony

The wedding service is not a private affair or a personal rite. It is a celebration of faith. The overall effect and theological implications of the words and the music is an extremely important part of the premarital plans and discussions. This is an outline of a typical wedding service in the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Prelude

Processional

Greeting

Opening Prayer

Declaration of Intentions & Family Blessings

Scripture Readings

Special Music (if desired)

Meditation

Covenant Service

Vows

Symbol of Vows (rings)

Declaration

Blessing

Benediction

Recessional

Please include a line in your wedding bulletin that states "No photography (even non-flash) is to be taken during the ceremony." Also, we suggest you give strong consideration to not including children under the age of 4 in the wedding party. Wedding parties should be reasonable in size to accommodate the limited space at the front of the church. Pets are not allowed to participate in the ceremony.

Music

The music for the wedding serves to enhance a worshipful atmosphere, express the faith of the church, and offer glory to God. The organist/pianist at First Christian Church oversees and approves the music for the service. She (or her designee) plays for all weddings.

Any music provided by the couple for use at the wedding must not be copied, since it is illegal to reproduce copyrighted materials. All music will be returned after the wedding.

Organ/Piano Music

Wedding music should be celebrative and uplifting and reflect the joy of the occasion. At least 6 weeks before the wedding, the bride and groom will meet with the organist/pianist to select the music. ***Responsibility for scheduling this meeting rests with the couple.*** The organist/pianist will offer a variety of suggestions and play through music considered appropriate for the prelude, processional, and recessional.

Instrumental Music

It is appropriate to include orchestral instruments as part of the wedding. Trumpet, flute, harp, and string ensembles are most commonly used. The use of electrified/amplified instruments or pre-recorded music is not permitted. All instrumental music options must be approved by the organist/pianist. The organist will suggest competent instrumentalists. Any instrumentalist must be approved by the organist. *It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to secure instrumentalists and pay any related fees.* The organist will meet with any instrumentalist for rehearsal for an additional fee. (See Fee Schedule)

Vocal Music

Vocal solos and ensembles need to reflect the spirit of worship and should be songs that offer praise to God, are songs of prayer, or blessings. Popular songs and traditional "love songs" are more appropriately used at receptions and will not be permitted. *It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to secure the vocalist(s) and pay any related fees.*

Facilities

Available facilities include use of the sanctuary/narthex, dressing areas, and restrooms.

First Christian Church is a smoke/alcohol/drug-free environment. This policy is strictly enforced.

- Use of these substances or evidence of use such as empty cans or bottles will result in the forfeiture of the entire deposit.

Food and drinks are to be restricted to the dressing rooms or Great Hall.

Birdseed, rice, and confetti are among those items that are not permitted inside or outside the church. We appreciate your assistance in keeping the facility as clean as possible. Please talk to the minister of weddings regarding the celebration as the bride and groom leave the church building.

Sanctuary/Narthex

The sanctuary has capacity for 250 guests. It will be available from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. on the night of the rehearsal. On your wedding day, the facility will be available up to four hours before the service.

The narthex is the small gathering area just outside the sanctuary doors. It contains a stand for the guest book (guest book not provided).

Immediately following the wedding ceremony, all decorations must be removed from the building by a designee of the bride and groom.

Dressing Room

A dressing room for the bridal party is available four hours before the ceremony. It contains a full-length mirror, a clothing rack, tables, and electric outlets. Immediately following the ceremony, the room should be cleaned out and left in the order in which it was found. If needed, there is a dressing area

available for the groom's party.

- Dressing rooms that are not cleaned and left in their original condition will result in the forfeiture of one half of the deposit.

Professional Photography

The wedding service is one of the worship services of the church; therefore, noise, lights, and flashes are not permitted during the service. The worship service is understood to begin with the music for the prelude. Please mail your photographer the following guidelines:

1. Pre-wedding photography must take place in the sanctuary and should be completed 45 minutes before the service.
2. FLASH photography may only be used during the processional and the recessional and must be taken from the back of the church.
3. NON-FLASH pictures may be taken from the back balcony during the actual ceremony.
4. The minister of weddings will be happy to participate, upon request, in restaging any portion of the wedding.
5. Cameras and equipment should not be left in exposed areas. The church cannot be held responsible for lost or stolen equipment.
6. Under no circumstances should the photographer or members of the wedding party or guest stand on the pews.

We recommend that the photographer attend the rehearsal and consult with the organist at that time about the use of the balcony space for taking pictures during the ceremony.

Video Recording

Video recording using an outside person is allowed provided the following policies are followed:

1. The videographer must communicate with the minister of weddings before setting up any equipment. No recordings will be permitted without clearance from the minister.
2. All video will be shot from a stationary camera in a designated area in the back balcony.
3. Under no circumstances may the videographer be in the front of the sanctuary, the front balcony, or in the aisles.
4. No additional lighting is to be used.
5. All microphones, stands, cords, etc. must be carefully concealed and not placed in the aisles.
6. Care must be taken to ensure that there is no noise or other distraction.

Flowers and Decorations

1. Florists should contact the minister of weddings to make arrangements for access to the church.
2. All flowers and decorations should be placed in the church no earlier than four hours before the wedding. Flowers and decorations should be completed at least two hours before the wedding ceremony.
3. Flowers or bows may be hung on the ends of the pews with elastic bands or special hangers provided by the florist or wedding party. They may not be glued, pinned, nailed, tacked, taped, or stuck with tacky putty.

4. The church does **not** provide candles, candelabras, candle lighters, unity candles, flower stands, or plastic protection for the floor.
5. The church allows for the use of two brass candleholders on the communion table. The church also has a kneeling bench which is available on request.
6. If candles are used, they must be of the dripless variety. Candelabras must be placed on the wooden area of the chancel or on the communion table. The floor and communion table must be protected with sheets of plastic.
7. Aisle runners are a liability and are not permitted.
8. Because the center aisle is narrow, hurricane lanterns are not permitted.

Immediately following the wedding ceremony, all decorations must be removed from the building by the bridal party. There is no place to store candelabras or any other decorations.

9. Furnishings in the church, including banners and seasonal decorations, may not be moved or removed under any circumstance.
10. Bridal bouquets should be delivered to the dressing room. Other flowers for individuals (corsages, boutonnieres, etc.) should be left in the narthex or chapel/gathering space.
11. The wedding party will be held responsible for any damage, including but not limited to wax damage, water damage, damage or removal of church property caused by workers and/or the wedding party/guests. Damage expenses that exceed the deposit are the responsibility of the wedding party.

12. If it is the desire of the family, flowers may be left in the sanctuary for the upcoming worship service.

Florist _____ **Phone** _____

License

When applying for the license, both the prospective bride and groom must personally present his/her own birth certificate, passport, or driver's license as proof of age. Anyone 18 years of age or older will be granted a license at their own request. If either the woman or the man is 17 years of age or under they must have the consent of the parent or legal guardian.

The license may be obtained from office of the Clerk of the Court in the home county of either the bride or the groom. Out-of-state couples apply in the Indiana county in which the wedding is to be performed.

The couple is to bring wedding fees, the unsigned license and the marriage certificate to the rehearsal.

The minister of weddings will keep the license and certificate until after the ceremony. Immediately following the ceremony, the minister, bride, groom and two witnesses sign the license and certificate. The minister will mail the license to the county courthouse. The marriage certificate is for the bride and groom to keep. Following its signing, the minister of weddings will give it to the mother of the bride or a designated party for safekeeping.

NOTES

This booklet was revised
July 20, 2014