



**First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)**

(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Wedding Policy of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Wheeling, West Virginia

A Service of Christian Marriage

A Christian wedding is a service of worship, proclaiming Christian marriage as a sacred covenant. The partners give themselves to each other by solemn vows in the presence of God, supported by the presence and prayers of their loved ones. Whether the service is traditional or newly created, it expresses both the seriousness of the couple's commitment and the joy of their love for each other. The church has long believed that love between marriage partners reflects God's love for humankind and Christ's self-giving love for the Church. God created us with a longing for relationship and blesses our efforts to live in lifelong covenant. In turn, human love can help us receive God's love more deeply.

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Wheeling is happy to be part of your marriage celebration. We also encourage you to participate in our congregation or another church of your choice. A deep and lasting marriage needs prayers not only at the beginning, but also throughout its life. The church can help you grow spiritually as individuals and as a couple, providing a community of friendship, grace, and support. You are welcome here.

Scheduling Your Wedding

Scheduling of the wedding should be completed no later than ninety (90) days prior to the ceremony (special considerations can be given). Scheduling priority is given to the ministries of the First Christian Church.

Reservations for a wedding must be made through the church office (office@wheelingdisciples.org). General details of the wedding, including premarital counseling, the rehearsal and reception should be discussed with the pastor before the date and time are confirmed with the church calendar. Please note that the final confirmation of the wedding with the date reserved occurs **only after the Wedding Information Sheet** is completed and returned along with the appropriate deposit. No announcements or commitments for services should be made until a letter of confirmation has been received from the church.

Fees

Attached is a fee schedule. After the Wedding Reservation and Information Form is completed and filed with the church, the pastor will review with the couple all appropriate charges for the wedding. By signing the fee contract, the wedding party agree to all fees and payment scheduled as outlined in this policy.



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Premarital Counseling

If the pastor of First Christian Church, Wheeling is officiating at the ceremony, he/she will require the couple to schedule at least two (2) one-hour sessions with the pastor, to be completed 45 days before the wedding ceremony.

Officiating Minister

Weddings scheduled at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) should be presided over by the current First Christian Church pastor. The current pastor of First Christian Church must approve any outside pastors who wish to officiate at any wedding held at First Christian.

Times for Rehearsal and Wedding

Weddings must be arranged at times which do not conflict with regularly scheduled services or other previously scheduled ministries of the church.

Someone from the church will be available to open the church two (2) hours before the wedding and one half (1/2) hour before the rehearsal. The church can be opened earlier if arrangements are made ahead of time, subject to availability.

Audio/Video System

Only authorized persons may operate the church's audio/video systems. Part of the fees for your wedding include a sound operator who will handle all microphones, amplification, and recordings. We can provide wired and wireless microphones, as well as both wired and Bluetooth enabled music playback. Use of our screens for photo sharing is available, given ample time (at least two weeks) to set up.

Video Livestreaming/Recording

The church currently has the capabilities to record and/or livestream the ceremony, subject to availability of personnel. This includes a single camera that is fixed on the center of the balcony. A thumb drive can be made available for the couple after the ceremony. Livestreaming options (public or private) must be made in advance with the pastor.

Church Musicians

The Church Organist/Pianist shall be used unless special permission is given for another musician to use our instruments. The fees for the Church Musician (see fee schedule) should be paid directly to the musician. A conference should be scheduled *at least sixty (60) days before* the ceremony with the musician to plan music for the service (pastor or church office can help coordinate).

Additional Musicians

If you wish to use additional musicians or alternative instruments, discuss this with the pastor and church musician. Any additional amplification must be approved and arranged at least thirty (30) days prior to the ceremony.



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The Rehearsal

A good rehearsal is the key to a well-ordered wedding ceremony. Every member of the wedding party should be present unless there is an extenuating circumstance. The minister performing the ceremony oversees the rehearsal and shall direct the proceedings of the rehearsal in all its parts. A good rehearsal takes approximately one hour, if it begins on time.

Marriage License

It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain the official marriage license. Any questions regarding the marriage license should be directed to the county courthouse of residence. The marriage license must be in the hands of the officiating minister prior to the wedding ceremony. It is the responsibility of the minister to sign and return to the appropriate court in a timely manner as prescribed on the document. Upon receipt, is the responsibility of the court to issue to the couple an official recorded marriage license for their records.

Facilities and Furnishings

First Christian Church is a non-smoking, alcohol-free, drug-free facility. The use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs is not permitted on the church property.

The Sanctuary

The sanctuary seats 240 people including the very front pew. The balcony seats 32 people. The sanctuary of First Christian Church is beautiful in its simplicity requiring a minimum of adornment. All decorations must be approved at least thirty (30) days prior to the ceremony. It is best to have decorations approved as soon as possible to avoid any last minute alterations.

Special requests (candles, holders, vases, etc.) must also be provided by the wedding party. Tables or stands must be covered by a cloth provided by the wedding party or florist. No decorations may be placed on the organ or piano. You are not permitted to unplug anything, such as the organ, or remove any of the existing furnishings. Choir chairs may be moved with special permission of the pastor.

The Communion Table

A word about our Communion Table. It is sacred for us. It marks our identity. It is the center of our worship, and the center of our lives. It represents, for us, the place where Christ meets us. It is the sign of God's love and presence among us. We want that for your marriage, as well. Because it is so central to who we are, it shall not be moved and must be treated with the utmost of respect. If you would like Holy Communion to be served as part of your wedding ceremony, that can be discussed with the minister.

Decorating Policy

Decorations are the responsibility of the wedding party. Ordering, scheduling deliveries, and placement of floral arrangements should be scheduled in coordination with the church office. Pew decorations are permissible; however, they cannot be attached using tape, tacks or anything that will harm the wood service. An aisle runner may be used—the aisle is sixty-six (66) feet long.



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The church facility may be decorated during or immediately before the wedding rehearsal. Decorating may be done on the day of the wedding. Please schedule with the church office prior. No nails, tacks, screws, or tape may be used. The attachment method for any decoration should be a method that leaves no mark when removed. Do not use any glitter. Throwing rice or birdseed after the wedding is not permitted. Blowing soap bubbles is permitted outside the building only. Releasing balloons, butterflies or birds is prohibited.

Cleanup of the Ceremony

A general maintenance cleaning (sweeping, trash collection, etc.) is provided for in the fees. Removal of the decorations is the responsibility of the wedding party and must be done immediately following the ceremony without damage to the facility. Any items found after the wedding ceremony will be held by the church office for one week, and then will be considered forfeited.

Dressing Rooms

Areas for the wedding party to dress are available. These areas are to be left clean. The church strongly suggests that a member of the wedding party, friend, or relative be designated as the "personal effects" manager for the wedding party. All items of clothing, make-up, hair-dryers, and other items belonging to the wedding party should be removed immediately following the ceremony. All rooms, including the bathrooms, must be left in the condition in which they were found. The office will work with the wedding party on appropriate locations.

Personal Items

The church is not responsible for wedding gifts or any personal effects or equipment brought to, or left in, the church building before or on the day of the wedding. Wedding parties are responsible for returning to the church within one week to pick up any items they have left. If the wedding party accidentally takes home items belonging to the church, the wedding party is responsible for returning them to the church in order to have their damage deposit refunded.

Photography

Pictures of the wedding are treasured keepsakes and couples and their families want the pictures to be beautiful. Because the wedding is a service of worship, certain standards should be observed regarding pictures and video taken at the wedding. Positioning for the professional photographer must be done in consultation with the pastor. Please advise your guests not to take flash pictures during the ceremony.

Parking

First Christian Church has approximately 75 parking spaces available. If you feel that you may need additional spaces, the wedding party will have to make special arrangements with neighboring businesses and/or churches for your guests.



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Reservation for Inclement Weather

Outdoor weddings are beautiful, when the weather cooperates. If you are planning an outdoor wedding at another venue, it is wise to reserve a backup location in case of inclement weather. You may reserve our church as a Backup Location to your outdoor wedding plans by filling out the Reservation form and returning it with the required non-refundable deposit. If you end up using our space for your wedding day, all policies and full fees apply and are due immediately.

Support Staff

It takes a team to host a wedding celebration at the church! Your reservation fees includes the services of our administrative, video/audio, and custodial team.

Additional Concerns

The church is glad be a gracious and hospitable host for your wedding ceremony. It brings us joy to see joy lived out in beloved community. We are honored that when you sought to have God be a part of your wedding, and a part of your marriage, you sought out our church to host that. If you have any additional questions, concerns, ideas or needs, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Minister to accommodate. Final decisions shall be made by our Administrative Council.