

WEDDING GUIDELINES*

From the beginning of time God has ordained that a man and a woman may enter together into the estate of marriage, pledging their love and promising fidelity to each other, as long as both shall live. Marriage is more than just two people publicly coming together. In the church it is an act of God. When a couple express their desire for their union to be solemnized by a church wedding, the church immediately becomes a party to the wedding and a participant in the planning process. In the Presbyterian Church, the Session is responsible for the policy relating to weddings. The Southminster Presbyterian Church Session has adopted the following as the policies for Christian weddings and marriage services in this church.

1. The Presbyterian Church views the wedding ceremony as a sacred rite to be conducted with dignity in the House of God. It is an act of worship performed "in the presence of God."
2. The Marriage Service will maintain the standards set forth in the Directory of Worship of the Book of Order of our denomination.
3. Such music as accompanies the ceremony must be in keeping with God's sanctification of marriage, and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent. The Worship Ministry Unit will provide a list of sacred wedding music. Any departure from that list will have to be approved. (If the use of non-sacred music is requested, it shall be the responsibility of the bride and groom to furnish the words and music in full and submit them to the Pastor.)
4. Decorations, including flowers, candles, etc., will be appropriate and not unduly elaborate. Nails, tacks, etc. cannot be used in the Sanctuary.
5. Requests for the use of the church and the services of the pastor or associate pastor, organist, sexton, etc. should be made as far in advance as possible. These duties and any specific additional ones should be reviewed by the bride and groom personally with the Church Administrator.
6. The couple must be willing to:
 - a. Complete a written premarital counseling instruction form.
 - b. Review a copy of the Christian Marriage Service.
 - c. Meet with the Pastor or Associate Pastor for instruction and counseling.
5. Other Christian ministers are welcome to assist in the service if desired and if proper arrangements are made with the Pastor's and the Session's approval.
6. A VCR may be used discreetly – from the back of the church and/or in the chancel by the piano. Cameras without flashes may be used from the back of the church during the ceremony. (Flash photographs are permitted before or after the service only.)
9. The wedding party has access to the library and the Family and Youth Ministries room.
10. The rehearsal will be held at a time agreeable to the Pastor or Associate Pastor and the wedding party. The couple is responsible to see that all of the participants are in attendance. The Pastor or Associate Pastor will be in charge of the rehearsal, along with the wedding director, if there is one.
11. The marriage license from the State shall be brought to the church office at least three days before the rehearsal.
12. Southminster Church has Grace Hall and the Fellowship Hall where receptions may be held. Arrangements are best made with a wedding caterer. (No alcoholic beverages are permitted.) The Church Administrator should be consulted for use of available items belonging to the church.
13. It is suggested that birdseed, bubbles, etc. be used OUTSIDE the building only. No rice, please.

* Excerpted from Southminster Presbyterian Organization Manual, revised February 2015

14. The approved schedule of fees for the church is:

	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nonmember</u>
Deposit	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
(The deposit is due at time of booking. Deposit will be applied to the Wedding fee.)		
Wedding	\$ 300.00	\$ 550.00
Reception	\$ 300.00	\$ 550.00
Organist	\$ 175.00	\$ 200.00
Minister	\$ 300.00	\$ 350.00
Wedding Director	\$ 150.00	\$ 200.00

The Church Administrator may also serve as Wedding Director if desired by wedding party. All fees are to be paid to the church in advance of the wedding.

15. The Session discourages large weddings in the Sanctuary on Saturday evenings, as it makes it difficult to be ready for Sunday mornings. Decorations for Sunday afternoon weddings will have to wait until after Sunday morning worship to be put in place.
16. For additional information and details, see *Southminster Wedding Policies and Guidelines* (revised February 2008) available from the Church Administrator.