

**WEDDING
POLICIES
AT FIRST**

WEDDING COORDINATOR/CONTACTS

The Wedding Coordinator provides assistance and advice in planning your wedding ceremony. She is your first contact to confirm rehearsal and wedding dates and times. She meets with you and those assisting in the planning process to finalize arrangements in the weeks prior to your wedding. She is an invaluable resource for you, and essential to the success of your ceremony.

The following are the names and contact information of the staff connected with your wedding. Please feel free to contact them for any questions regarding your wedding.

Wedding Coordinator	Ashley Morris	amorris@fpchouston.org	713.620.6480
Organist	Dr. Rhonda Furr	rfurr@fpchouston.org	713.620.6438
Media Coordinator	Rory James	media@fpchouston.org	713.620.6432

CEREMONY TIMES

The sanctuary and chapel are available for weddings on Saturday, with start times between 11 am and 6:30 pm. For weddings post 6:30 pm, a \$500 surcharge will be applied. No weddings are allowed to start later than 7:30 pm.

THE REHEARSAL

We offer 5:00 or 5:30 pm rehearsal times. The Pastor and/or Wedding Coordinator will guide the wedding party through the rehearsal. The rehearsal will begin on time and conclude approximately one hour later. We advise you to have your wedding party convene 15-30 minutes before the scheduled start time. The date and time for the rehearsal is determined with the Wedding Coordinator when the ceremony date is confirmed.

The wedding cannot be performed without the church being in possession of the license. Please give your marriage license to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal. She will have the Pastor(s) sign the license, and mail it back to the County Clerk. Please bring the envelope provided.

RECEPTIONS

Fellowship Hall is available for wedding receptions and/or rehearsal dinners (no alcohol is allowed). More intimate venues on the church campus are available for smaller receptions as well as bridal party luncheons, teas and bridal showers. Please contact the Wedding Coordinator at weddings@fpchouston.org or 713.620.6480 for more information.

PASTOR

It is expected a First Presbyterian Pastor will officiate and act as host at your wedding. If you desire for another minister to participate in the service, please inform the Wedding Coordinator as soon as possible. Guest Clergy's participation will be approved by the host pastor.

Please note that individual pastors generally do not commit their schedules further than six months in advance. Should the officiant of your choice not be available on your wedding date, we have several others on staff, and we will be sure to find a suitable replacement.

COUNSELING

It is expected that you schedule attendance at *Looking Toward Marriage*, a six-week series designed to be helpful and relevant to you in preparation for marriage. Pastors and laypersons with particular expertise in the topic being presented teach these classes. Claudia Stewart (astew1030@aol.com) will contact you with class details.

The Pastor officiating at your wedding will meet with you before the ceremony to conduct marital counseling and a discussion of the meaning of Christian marriage. Each Pastor may require a different number of counseling sessions. All sessions should be scheduled within 90 days of the wedding date.

PROGRAMS

Each couple is asked to submit a printer's draft of their Wedding Program to the Wedding Coordinator and Organist *no less than one month* prior to the wedding date. This is to help ensure all musical compositions and composers are listed correctly, and that your programs are an accurate reflection of current etiquette.

The Standard Order of Service, included in your Wedding Packet, serves as a template for your program. The Standard Order of Service is in no way definitive; it is merely a suggested outline including all of the elements of the Presbyterian Wedding Service. You will discuss your individual program extensively with your FPC pastor, and he will work with you to personalize your service so that it is reflective of your needs and characteristics as a couple, with the guiding principle that your ceremony is first and foremost a worship service.

MUSIC

All ceremony music must be appropriate to Christian theology and Reformed Presbyterian worship. The enclosed CD and booklet on wedding music are an official part of this policy, and will aid considerably in your ceremony planning process.

Rhonda Furr, the church Organist, performs two duties for weddings. First, she serves as your staff contact for all questions, changes and authorizations regarding music. Second, as the Organist of the church, she plays the organ for all weddings at which organ music is desired.

If you do not wish to use the organ, it is especially important to notify Dr. Furr at least 90 days prior to the ceremony. Whether Dr. Furr plays for your wedding or not, she is your sole staff contact for all music matters and should be kept informed directly of all changes.

Please contact Dr. Furr at 713.620.6438 or rfurr@fpchouston.org.

OFF CAMPUS VENDORS

As you engage the services of ceremony vendors, please provide the Wedding Coordinator with those names and contact information. In addition, vendor disclaimers are required from any persons (commercial entity or family friend) participating in that capacity on our church campus. Vendors who do not provide the appropriate disclaimers within the designated time frame will not be allowed to participate.

Off-site wedding coordinators are considered an invaluable resource for your non-church related needs, and are welcome to accompany you to any planning meetings with the church, as well as the rehearsal and ceremony. We respectfully request that any off-site coordinators allow the church Wedding Coordinator to conduct the rehearsal and ceremony.

All vendors are allowed onto the FPC campus three (3) hours prior to the ceremony start time and must be cleaned up within two (2) hours of the ceremony start time. If different arrangements are necessary, the vendor must contact the Wedding Coordinator at least one week prior to the wedding.

WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

The wedding service is a worship experience and must be treated with due reverence.

Photographers:

- No photography is permitted in the Sanctuary or Narthex once the prelude begins and the guests are being seated.
- No flash photography is permitted from the start of the prelude to the conclusion of the wedding ceremony.
- No automatic film advance is allowed, due to noise.
- The photographer is permitted to take photographs from the Narthex or very back of the Sanctuary at the beginning of the ceremony as the bridal party proceeds down the center aisle of the church, and as the bride and groom leave the altar after the ceremony is over. The Wedding Coordinator will indicate the appropriate position, based upon where guests are seated.
- During the entirety of the service, (Welcome--Presentation of Couple) all photographers must take photos from the Sanctuary balcony. Violation of this stipulation may provide cause for the officiating pastor to temporarily stop the ceremony. Segments of the service are easily recreated for pictures after the recessional and before the reception.

Photographers are welcome at FPC three hours before the start of the ceremony and must be finished within one hour of the ceremony's conclusion.

Family and Friends:

We ask that guests inform family and friends that we prefer non-flash photography and desire that they conduct themselves in a manner of respect for the worship service that is occurring.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform the photographer and guests of this policy.

WEDDING VIDEOGRAPHY

If outside professionals or family friends are to videotape the service, the following must be observed:

- The Media Coordinator must be informed of the person's name and all contact information (commercial entity or family friend). A signed vendor disclaimer must be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator at least 30 days prior to the ceremony.
- Only First Presbyterian staff may move church equipment.
- Outside vendors must set equipment in areas specifically designated by FPC Media staff.
- The camera must remain in the area the staff designates.
- The camera position is limited to the balcony unless prior arrangements have been made with the Media Coordinator.
- Once the prelude begins, moving about in the Sanctuary is prohibited.
- No special lighting may be used.
- If the videographer desires an audio feed, we offer a 1/4" out of the board. Any cables and adapters needed to get the feed to the videographer's equipment must be supplied by the videographer.
- You may place an UNMANNED camera in the organ bay at the back of the Chancel. This camera MUST be in place one hour prior to the start of the service. The videographer must let us know if this will be happening so our media team can be aware.
- When FPC Media is videotaping, we offer a DVD and/or audio/video feed to outside vendors. This feed is via L/R XLR for audio and BNC for video or a Firewire connection.

If you would like information about what FPC can offer regarding a video keepsake of your wedding, please contact our Media Coordinator at media@fpchouston.org.

FLOWERS

Each couple is responsible for making the arrangements for flowers and décor. Vendor contact information must be provided to the Wedding Coordinator.

Either the florist or a member of the wedding party is responsible for making arrangements for delivery and break-down. The Chapel and Sanctuary are rooms for worship and décor should be a reflection of that.

Chancel: For any décor beyond two freestanding floral arrangements, a plan from the florist must be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator for her approval and that of an FPC pastor.

No additional lighting may be used. No flower arrangements are allowed on the communion table nor are there to be any obstructions of the view of the cross on the communion table. No decorations are allowed on the Pulpit, Lectern, Chancel railing or pews. All candles used in the Chancel must be in votives.

Sanctuary Floor: Décor is limited to pew decorations that can be secured with non-scratch clips or ribbons. Dropping artificial rose petals in the center aisle is allowed.

No floral or swag arrangements will be allowed to block any entry to either end of the pews on the Sanctuary floor. No standing decorations or candelabras (free-standing or affixed to pews) are allowed on the floor of the Sanctuary. All flower arrangements must be watertight. Artificial rose petals may be used in the building (i.e. flower girls).

Narthex and Outdoors: Only candles in votives are allowed in the narthex. Natural rose petals or bubbles may be used outside for the couple's exit (no rice, birdseed). A plan for greenery or arrangements in narthex or outside must be submitted to and approved by the Wedding Coordinator.

Following the wedding all flowers, greenery, bows, etc. MUST be removed by the florist or the wedding party within 2 hours of the end of the ceremony. Please note, FPC is not liable for any floral arrangements or floral containers left behind or damaged. If you desire to donate the wedding flowers for the following morning's worship service, or for placement in another area of the church, contact the wedding coordinator.

Please note, First Presbyterian Church is not liable for any floral arrangements or floral containers left behind or damaged. For that reason, we require scheduling break-down within two hours after the conclusion of the ceremony.

Each addendum must be signed by your off-campus vendors and returned to the Wedding Coordinator no later than 30 days prior to the ceremony.

MEMBERS OF THE WEDDING PARTY

Please note it is the policy of the church that no alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises. Members of the wedding party are also specifically prohibited from the use of alcoholic beverages immediately prior to the rehearsal and the wedding. Under no circumstances will anyone under the influence of alcohol be permitted to take part in the wedding rehearsal or ceremony. The bride and groom should make this expectation known to all members of the wedding party.

No smoking is permitted in church buildings. Those desiring to smoke are invited to do so outside the church building only.

Normally, the Bride's Room, Family Room and Library are reserved for the use of the wedding party for three (3) hours prior to the ceremony and for two (2) hours from the ceremony start time.

Your personal possessions may be kept in the reserved rooms your time at FPC, but only at your own risk. You must be responsible for cleaning out these rooms after the ceremony. In addition, we ask that a member of the bridal party be selected to take charge of any wedding gifts brought to the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator will not accept responsibility for any gifts, articles of clothing (including the bride's dress), or any personal effects left in the church.

Although the inclusion of children as a part of the wedding party is allowed, the age and maturity of the child should be considered. Any child under the age of six (6) must be in the care of a responsible adult chaperone in the Narthex prior to taking their turn in the wedding processional. The Wedding Coordinator will not assume responsibility for care of these children. Childcare is not available at the church for any wedding or rehearsal.

WEDDING ATTIRE

As this is a ceremony to be sanctified by God, we request that all wedding party attire be appropriate to a worship service. Ladies' garments should afford the proper coverage as well as be adequately lined. Should you have any questions regarding appropriate dress, please contact the Wedding Coordinator.

FEE SCHEDULE

Description	Member Rate	Non-Member Rate
Standard Fees:		
Pastor	\$300	\$300
Organist	\$300	\$300
Prep/Counseling	\$50	\$50
Lighting/Sound	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>
Total	\$850	\$850
Sanctuary Wedding (max. capacity = 771)	\$1,000 + Standard fees	\$2,000 + Standard fees
Chapel Wedding (max. capacity = 100)	\$500 + Standard fees	\$1,000 + Standard fees
Ceremony after 6:30 pm	\$500 for maintenance, security, janitorial services overtime	

PAYMENT OF FEES AND DEPOSIT

A deposit of 50% of the total wedding fee is due upon signing the contract. The remaining balance is due 30 days prior to the wedding. ***Please note that failure to submit either amount within the prescribed timeline may result in release of the confirmed date.***

Your deposit may be refunded if you cancel the wedding more than ninety (90) days prior to the scheduled ceremony date. Cancellations must be made in writing and directed to the Wedding Coordinator who will provide written confirmation to you.

Accepted payment methods include check, money order, Mastercard, Visa, American Express, and ACH bank draft. Payments made via credit card, debit card, or ACH bank draft must be processed online. FPC staff cannot take your credit or debit card information to process these payments on your behalf.

ONLINE PAYMENT

You can pay with your credit card online by visiting our FPC weddings webpage at fpchouston.org/weddings. Sign in as a guest. You will need your reservation number, which is given to you by the Wedding Coordinator upon booking. **Please forward your confirmation email when you receive it to amorris@fpchouston.org.**