

Wedding Policies

AT FPC HOUSTON

Dear Couple,

We are so glad you are considering FPC Houston to be a part of your wedding day. Our staff is here to assist you during the planning process so that your wedding day goes smoothly and you will have memories to last a lifetime.

Our goal for you is two-fold. First, we want to encourage and guide you to start your marriage on a Christian foundation. We wholeheartedly believe that Christ is our only hope in life, and a couple needs to rely on him to gain the strength and love required in a marriage relationship.

The pastors desire to get to know your story and speak into your relationship with encouragement and boldness. They view marriage as a sacred covenant, entered into with prayer and preparation. Therefore, if during the pre-marriage counseling process, they have valid concerns about the relationship, they are allowed to delay the wedding or require the couple to find another venue and pastor. Additionally, in a letter dated March 2015, the elders of FPC communicated this to our congregation: *With deep respect to brothers and sisters in Christ who may disagree with our position, we continue to hold to the conviction that Scripture conveys the principle that God created us male and female in order to complete the revelation of His image within us. In addition, we believe that this revelation is further made manifest when a husband and wife join together within the covenant of marriage.* Accordingly, First Presbyterian Church does not allow same sex weddings on our campus or to be performed by our pastoral staff.

Secondly, we desire to make your wedding day a blessing to you. We want to be helpful, and do our best to ensure your day goes smoothly. The wedding coordinator will assist you from the initial booking to the final details of the last week. Then, she or a member of the Hostess Team will direct the rehearsal on Friday night and take care of all things church related on Saturday for you. We delight in making the weekend a joyful celebration.

If at any point you need to talk with a pastor or staff member, please contact us. We are truly looking forward to being a part of your engagement and upcoming wedding!

**Sincerely,
The Pastoral Staff and
Events Team**

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 during booking and assists throughout the planning process to finalize arrangements. Her information is below, along with the organist who will oversee all things regarding music. Please be aware that both the coordinator and organist work on a part time basis, so email and phone responses will not always be answered immediately.

<i>Wedding Coordinator</i>	Ashley Morris	<i>amorris@fpchouston.org</i>	713.620.6480
<i>Organist</i>	Dr. Rhonda Furr	<i>rfurr@fpchouston.org</i>	713.620.6438

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.

REHEARSAL

Rehearsals start at 5:00 or 5:30. The Wedding Hostess will guide the wedding party through the rehearsal. The rehearsal will begin on time and last 45-60 minutes. We advise you to have your wedding party convene 15-30 minutes before the scheduled start time.

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

PASTOR

Guest clergy of like faith and approved by a FPC pastor are welcome to co-officiate with an FPC pastor. The FPC pastor in attendance is the host and primary officiate and must approve all participants' roles in the service. Any guest pastor will follow the FPC Order of Service unless a change is approved by the FPC pastor. Name and contact information of guest clergy must be submitted to coordinator FPC pastor 90 days prior to wedding date.

The FPC pastor will receive an honorarium out of your payment to FPC. If you include guest clergy, note that they will not be paid by FPC. 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 will be sure to find a suitable replacement.

COUNSELING REQUIREMENTS

It is expected that you attend our Marriage Beginnings course, a six-week series designed to be helpful and relevant to you in preparation for marriage. It is a Sunday morning class, held in the Fall and Spring. 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. If there is a scheduling issue, you must agree to enroll in an equivalent class through a faith based organization.

Additionally, the FPC 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.

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 guiding principle for any FPC wedding is that your ceremony is first and foremost a worship service. The Standard Order of Service, included in your Wedding Folder, serves as a template for your program. The Standard Order of Service is a suggested outline including all of the elements of the Presbyterian Wedding Service. Your FPC pastor will work with you to personalize your service so that it is reflective of your needs and characteristics as a couple.

MUSIC

All ceremony music must be sacred and 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, or finds a suitable approved substitute.

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.

OFF CAMPUS VENDORS

The Wedding Coordinator will need all names and contact information of any outside vendors, including offsite coordinators. 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 before the designated due date 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.

The following vendor addenda must be signed by your off-campus vendors and returned to the Wedding Coordinator no later than 30 days prior to the ceremony.

WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

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

Photographers:

- No photography is permitted in the Sanctuary once the prelude begins and the guests are being seated.
- No flash photography is permitted during the 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 photographer to be asked to leave. 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

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

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

- The Wedding Coordinator must be informed of the person's name and all contact information (commercial entity or family friend) and be in possession of the signed vendor disclaimer.
- Only First Presbyterian Church staff may move church equipment.
- Outside vendors must set equipment in areas specifically designated by FPC Media staff.
- Once the prelude begins moving about in the Sanctuary is prohibited.
- The videographer is permitted to take video 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.
- Once the bride has reached the front of the Sanctuary, all videographers must record from the Sanctuary balcony for the entirety of the wedding ceremony (Welcome—Presentation of the Couple).
- You may place UNMANNED cameras in the organ bay at the back of the Chancel or other designated video spots, if coordinator and pastor agree they are unobtrusive (i.e. GoPro), and the placement does not require moving any FPC equipment. These cameras MUST be in place 30 min prior to the start of the ceremony. Please check here if this WILL be happening so our media team can be aware. ____ (If left unchecked, unmanned cameras will NOT be allowed day of the wedding.)
- No special lighting is allowed.
- We offer an audio feed via XLR or 1/4 cable for H4n or H6 recorders. Any cables and adapters needed to get the feed to the videographer's equipment must be supplied by the videographer.

If the videographer has additional questions, he/she can 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

Candles in votives and guest table watertight floral arrangements 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 additional 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 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.

The FPC Flower Guild schedules all Sunday morning floral arrangements. 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.

MEMBERS OF THE WEDDING PARTY

FPC is a 100% smoke and alcohol free campus.

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.

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. If more time is needed, it must be scheduled in advance with the Wedding Coordinator.

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 personal items from 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.

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
Pastor	\$500	\$500
Organist	\$300	\$300
Total	\$800	\$800
Sanctuary Wedding (max. capacity = 771)	\$1,300	\$2,300
Chapel Wedding (max. capacity = 100)	\$800	\$1,300
Total		
Sanctuary	\$2,100	\$3,100
Chapel	\$1,700	\$2,100

A \$500 surcharge will apply to any wedding booked later than 6:30 pm and may apply to weddings booked during peak months, based on availability.

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, Mastercard, Visa, or American Express. Payments made via credit card or debit card 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. Click on Make a Payment and 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 you receive to amorris@fpchouston.org.**