

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED ABOUT WEDDINGS AT COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1. Who may be married in Covenant Church sanctuary or in Elizabeth Bryant Thornton Chapel?

Two issues are considered in determining who may be married here. The members of the Covenant Church family hold the sincere conviction that Christian marriage and involvement in the Christian community go hand in hand; that is, it is our belief that marriage occurs in Christ as well as in Christ's church. Additionally, because we are a large congregation it is impossible to accommodate all requests for use of Covenant's worship facilities. Therefore, it is the policy of Covenant Church that at least one of the prospective marriage partners, or at least one of their parents, should be members of the congregation. Couples who are not members, but who hold ties to the Christian community may apply to the office of Covenant Church for permission to be married in the sanctuary, chapel, or other worship facilities of the Church. Office personnel will consult with the Pastor in this regard. All use of Covenant property must be approved by the office. Approval of the use agreement constitutes clearance to use facilities as requested. A non-member may not secure use of any facilities more than one year in advance. It is important to note that we are a smoke and alcohol free facility.

2. Who may officiate at weddings at Covenant?

Either the Pastor or Associate Pastor or both may officiate at weddings. All components of the service shall be under the direction of the officiating Pastor. The order of the Solemnization of Marriage is a portion of the Ritual of the Presbyterian Church. The Pastor, authorized by the Presbyterian Church to officiate at this sacred service, shall instruct the congregation in the first sentence of the ritual that the gathering is... "in the presence of God..." and the Pastor and the Organist shall make every effort to cultivate a sense of worship throughout the service. With approval of the Pastor, family members or friends who are ordained ministers of any denomination recognized by the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. may assist one of our pastors. The invitation to officiate as guest pastor shall be extended by the Pastor of Covenant.

3. Will the Pastor assist us in planning a wedding that is personally meaningful?

By its very nature the church wedding is a service of worship. All its components should in some way praise God for His great love, while on a personal level, bear witness to the love and commitment of those being united in Christ. Couples will be counseled before marriage and will receive the help of the Pastor in structuring an Order of Worship that both reflects the necessary components of a marriage service in the Presbyterian Church and includes personal touches that are meaningful to you.

The sanctuary is designed so that the communion table and the cross are the focal point. Flowers and other decorations will not be displayed in such abundance or arrangement as to compromise a holy ceremony with a secular display of excessive expense and ostentation.

4. How may we select music for our wedding?

At Covenant Presbyterian Church, it is the responsibility and privilege of the Church Organist or Music Director to assist you in the selection of appropriate music for the wedding service, whether it is held in the Chapel or the Sanctuary. The Organist or Music Director will help secure the services of various musicians who may be requested to perform. Because the selection of your wedding music may require several consultations and will necessitate rehearsal time on the part of various musicians, it is important to schedule a meeting with the Church Organist at the earliest possible date. Music requests should be submitted as soon as possible, no later than one month prior to the wedding, to the Organist and Music Director.

In accordance with the Code of Ethical Standards and Practices of the American Guild of Organists and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, Covenant Church endorses the following policy regarding music personnel:

No organist or pianist, other than the Church Organist/Pianist, shall accept a performing engagement in the institution unless the engagement has been declined by the incumbent musician. In cases where such an engagement has been requested by a third party (i.e. a bride), the incumbent organist will receive the customary fee for those specific services.

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and, in accordance with United States copyright law, may print texts or musical inserts into your wedding program. Additionally, copyrighted selections may be recorded by videography or individual sound systems while your wedding or reception is in progress. Copyright clearance does not, however, extend to the playing of pre-recorded vocal or instrumental music.

5. Are there any days when weddings may not be scheduled?

The demands of the church worship and educational schedules require that Sundays be reserved for these activities. A wedding may be held on Sunday if there is no conflict. Several other times of the church year eliminate the use of the Sanctuary due to worship-related events; for example, Christmas Eve, Holy Week, and days surrounding choir or instrumental concerts. The Chapel or garden area may be used during these times, by prior arrangement and approval of the office.

6. Are there specific guidelines for videographers and photographers?

All photographs, other than time exposures, should be taken before or after the service, not during it. This will avoid interrupting the mood of the worship in the Sanctuary. Under no circumstances will pews be used to secure additional lighting or height for photographs. Waste products from photographing may not be laid on the church furniture, window sills, or carpet. Prior permission must be received for use of any video equipment. Please check with the Pastor of Covenant or with the Wedding Director if a visiting Pastor is present.

7. Is it necessary to have a sound technician at our rehearsal and wedding?

It is if you need extra microphones for a soloist or desire a sound recording. We will secure a technician for you. There is a cost for this service, and you must use a Covenant sound technician.

8. May we have a printed order of service for our wedding?

Yes, a printed order can be of great advantage to worshippers at your wedding and the program itself is a thoughtful keepsake for your guests but a program is not necessary. The organist and pastor can assist you in drawing up such an order, and can recommend specialists who can format it at a nominal fee.

9. Are dressing facilities available at the church?

A large dressing room and bathroom are available off the Chapel for the use by brides and attendants. In cases where a large number of individuals require a dressing room, the Chapel itself may be used; but wedding parties are asked to be mindful of the sanctity of the Chapel and will be held responsible for damages incurred while it is in their use. Men may use the music room if desired. You may bring snacks and drinks into these areas, but no alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises. Please take good care of the facility.

10. May we have our reception at the church?

Yes. Covenant Fellowship Hall may be used for the reception; however, certain guidelines do apply. No alcoholic beverages may be served. No tacks, glue, or nails may be used on any of the furniture or elsewhere. Covenant Church allows members the use of certain equipment and items such as tables, cloths, etc. The Wedding Director will assist you with these needs. Any equipment supplied from outside sources, such as caterers, must be removed immediately after the reception. Garbage must be bagged and placed in the outside bin. Dish towels, dish cloths, etc. should be furnished by the caterer. The bridal party should contact the office no later than one month prior to the wedding stating the time the Church is to be opened. A detailed drawing of the reception needs to be submitted to the church office no later than one

month prior to the wedding.

11. May we leave our flowers for use in Sunday's service?

Yes; your gift will be appreciated and enjoyed by Covenant worshippers. If this is your desire, please note this on your application form. The individual in charge of the flowers will take into consideration the freshness of the flowers, as well as the particular character of the Sunday service in which they will be used, and will determine whether the flowers need rearranging and where they shall be placed. A notice in the bulletin will read as follows:

"The flowers this morning are given to the glory of God in honor of the marriage of ..."

Please contact the office one month prior to the wedding with information on the time the church is to be opened for the florist.

12. Do we have to sign any agreement?

Yes; both parties need to sign the agreement. This form sets forth responsibility for any damage incurred before, during, or after the wedding activities. This responsibility extends to the actions of all guests, photographers, videographers, caterers, consultants, guest organists, soloists or others hired for the wedding.

13. When do we have to return the application?

Returning the application form secures your desired date on the church calendar. You may call the office with some of the information later if you do not have it all immediately. It is important to get the form returned as soon as possible with the agreement form signed by both parties.

14. Is it permissible to have birdseed, rice, or streamers thrown after the reception?

Yes, it is permissible to have birdseed thrown outside after the reception. Rice is not acceptable. Streamers may be thrown inside or outside as long as they are picked up afterwards. Any other items must have prior approval from the office.

15. Do I need to use a Wedding Director?

Yes, it is necessary to use a Wedding Director from Covenant; you will be given a list from which to choose.

16. **All fees, including the refundable deposit**, must be given to Covenant no later than one month prior to the wedding. These include facility use, custodian, sound technician, and wedding director and should be made out to Covenant, and can be combined in one check. Musician's fees are handled separately.

17. If you will be using the nursery or any room for **child care**, please notify the office and you will be given a copy of our policy Guidelines for non-church sponsored events.

18. Your **deposit** may not be refunded if any of the above rules are broken.