

**Congratulations!** *We share in your happiness as you formulate your wedding plans and begin the beautiful adventure of marriage. We are anxious to serve you and to do our best to make your wedding day one that is God-glorifying and the joyous occasion that you anticipate.*

*The Wedding Handbook has been created to provide information and structure to your planning process. We have tried to anticipate your questions and sincerely hope that this handbook will be a valuable resource to you as you prepare for your wedding.*

*Please feel free to contact us any time that you have a question. With great Christian joy, we are at your service.*

*The Wedding Ministry of First Christian Church of Clearwater*

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# **Eligibility & Scheduling**

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Generally, weddings are performed at First Christian Church of Clearwater for members only. However, we do allow weddings to take place for those who are not affiliated with our church. Anyone who is not a member wishing to have a wedding here must meet with one of our ministers before their request will be considered. Call the church office to make an appointment.

## **SCHEDULING**

### **A. Wedding Date**

To schedule a date for your wedding, call the church office and speak with the Facilities Coordinator or Secretary. He/She will advise you of available dates and then officially reserve the church for you when your deposit is received in the church office. (See Section III for details on the wedding fee.) The Facilities Coordinator will pass on your information to the Wedding Coordinator, who will then contact you.

### **B. Minister**

An ordained minister must perform the ceremony. A non – FCC Clearwater minister must be approved by the Senior Minister of First Christian Church.

### **C. What happens next?**

1. The wedding coordinator will contact you.
2. The bride and groom will meet with the wedding coordinator to begin outlining the details of the ceremony.
3. The bride and groom schedule premarital counseling with an approved minister.
4. The coordinator contacts you about 3-4 weeks before your wedding to settle the final details of your ceremony. **Final payment is due at this time.**
5. The bride and groom will meet with the minister presiding over the ceremony about 3-4 weeks before the wedding to discuss any final details. You should call the minister at church (799-0612) at this time to set up an appointment or you can schedule this when you have your premarital counseling session(s).

## **Fees & Time Frames**

<u>Couples</u>	<u>Members &amp; Attendees</u>	<u>Unaffiliated</u>
<b>Damage Deposit</b>	\$250	\$500
<b>Use of Chapel</b>	\$100	\$300
<b>Sound Technician</b>	\$100	\$100
<b>Wedding Coordinator</b>	\$150	\$150
<b>Custodial Fee</b>	\$100	\$100
<b>FLC Reception</b>	\$100	\$200
<b>Minister's Fee</b> (To be determined by the Minister & the couple being married)		

Additional compensation for these persons is not required. Musicians and soloists are not provided by FCC Clearwater– you must contact them on your own.

### **DEPOSIT**

The damage deposit is required when you schedule your wedding. **It is due within one month of scheduling.** Receipt of this deposit by the church office will officially reserve your wedding date. The balance of your fee is due one month prior to your wedding date. The damage deposit check will be held and returned to the wedding party after the wedding pending no damage being done to our facilities.

Make your check payable to First Christian Church of Clearwater. Mark the envelope to the attention of the Wedding Coordinator.

### **TIME FRAMES**

You are allotted 4 ½ hours for the wedding ceremony and pictures. Your rehearsal should take no more than 1 ½ hours. This can vary, but you will need to discuss it with the wedding coordinator. **Please make sure you are on time and notify the entire wedding party if times change!**

**It is very important that you stay within your time frame.**

# **Pre-Marital Counseling & Marriage License**

## **PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING**

Pre-marital counseling is required before a couple will be married at First Christian Church of Clearwater.

### **Couple Counseling**

Before the wedding, the officiating minister will meet with the couple for one or more sessions of individualized counseling. You must contact the minister at First Christian Church (799-0612) within two weeks after the wedding is scheduled.

## **LICENSE**

You must have a valid marriage license in order to be married. These are issued by court houses in Florida. If neither of the couple is a resident of Florida, a license will be issued from Pinellas County. Call the county office for details.

1. Website:  
<http://www.pinellasclerk.org/aspInclude2/ASPInclude.asp?pageName=marriage.htm>
2. The office closest to the church is:  
315 Court Street, Room 150  
Clearwater, Florida 33756  
Telephone: (727) 464-4876
3. The fee is \$61 if both people are from Florida and have had 4 hours of pre-marital counseling. If neither person is from Florida or have not taken pre-marital counseling, the fee is \$93.50. The acceptable payment types include:
  - A. Cash
  - B. Money order
  - C. Traveler's check
  - D. Personal Check
  - E. Credit Cards: Visa, MasterCard and Discover
4. A Florida marriage license is valid for 60 days.
5. To obtain a marriage license, you will need to apply at an approved court house. Both the bride and the groom need to be present. Both will need to have a picture ID, such as a driver's license, and social security cards. Valid Passports are accepted as well.

**Bring your marriage license to the rehearsal so that the appropriate signatures can be obtained.**

## **Facilities & Rules**

### **A. Chapel                      CHECK ON THIS**

Our Chapel seats approximately 200 guests. It has one aisle which is 50 feet long and 6 feet wide. There are 10 pews along either side of the aisle.

### **B. Bride's Room**

We provide a room for the Bride and her attendants to dress and relax in before the ceremony. Inside the room are a full length, wall mirror and a personal restroom.

### **C. Groom's Room**

The men may get dressed in the men's restrooms or another available room. The doors to the chapel from this part of the church lead to where the men enter for the ceremony.

### **D. General Rules for Facility Use**

1. No smoking in the building and no alcoholic beverages on the premises.
2. Rice, birdseed, or silly string is not permitted inside or outside the buildings. Bubbles may only be used outside. Please use your best judgment and contact the Wedding Coordinator with questions.
3. Food or drinks cannot be brought into the chapel.
4. For safety and security, children need to be supervised when they are in the building. *Due to liability concerns, we cannot provide a room for babysitting during the wedding ceremony.*
5. Guests should park in marked parking spaces only. A limousine can be parked at the entrance (main door to the chapel) but the driver must remain with the vehicle at all times. Please remember to let them know.

## Facilities & Rules Cont'd

### **E. Decorations**

1. You may provide your own Unity candle. We will set up a table on the platform upon which you can place your Unity candle arrangement.
2. You may add floral arrangements to the platform and Unity candle table.
3. You may use our candelabras which can be placed on the stage. (They could also be rented from your florist or Hobby Lobby.)
4. You may decorate the pews along the aisle. Tacks or tape cannot be used on the pews. You may use rubber bands or ribbons, or pew hangers to which you can attach greenery, bows, etc.
5. Candle stands are not permitted along the aisles.
6. You may use an aisle runner. If possible, please bring the aisle runner to the rehearsal.
7. Flower petals may be dropped on the aisle runner, **but they cannot be red or any color closely related to red.** If you are using silk flowers, then you can use any color.
8. Nothing can be placed on the piano or organ.
9. We can provide a small stand for a memory candle or special floral arrangement.
10. No more than an extra 15 candles can be on the stage and any candles must be elevated.
11. Decorations available from the church include: guest register stand, candelabra, ficus trees and silk greenery, Communion table (may be used for unity candle) and plant stands.
12. Any decorations left at the church after the ceremony will be discarded.

### **F. Receptions.**

1. Our facility is available for wedding receptions. We can provide table seating for up to 300. Larger groups can be accommodated, but a full meal cannot be served and most seating will be chairs only.
2. For your reception fee, we provide use of the Family Life Center and the use of our tables and chairs. We do not provide food preparation, table coverings, centerpieces, or decorations.
3. Caterers are welcome, but use of the kitchen is limited to the sink, counters, and ice machine.

## Ceremony

A. Following is an outline for a typical wedding ceremony at First Christian Church of Clearwater. Most ceremonies last around 30 minutes.

- 1. Pre-service music.**
- 2. Lighting of the platform candelabras (if you use them)**
  - a. Lighting takes place about 10 minutes before the ceremony.
  - b. Usually done by two groomsmen.
- 3. Seating of the Parents.**
  - a. This officially begins the ceremony.
  - b. Mothers escorted by their husband, son or groomsman.
  - c. Mothers each light one of the candles in the Unity arrangement.
  - d. A special song is often performed here.
- 4. Unrolling the aisle runner.**
  - a. Usually done by two groomsmen.
- 5. Bridal Processional.**
  - a. The men enter from the door behind the organ and stand on the floor near the center aisle to wait for the women.
  - b. The women enter from the back of the Chapel and walk down the center aisle. The groomsmen walk in with the bridesmaids or enter with the groom from the front of the chapel.
- 6. Welcome by the Minister.**
- 7. Declaration of Intention (first part of vows for bride and groom).**
- 8. Giving Away the Bride.**
- 9. Scripture Reading.**
- 10. Bride and Groom step up onto the platform. Minister stays on floor facing them.**
- 11. Wedding Message by the Minister.**
- 12. Exchange of Vows.**
- 13. Exchange of Rings.**
- 14. Lighting of the Unity Candle.**
  - a. A special song is often used here.
- 15. Minister leads a prayer for the couple.**
- 16. Pronouncement of Marriage.**
- 17. Presentation of the Couple.**
- 18. Recessional.**

We want your wedding ceremony to be your own. This outline is provided as a guide only. The Wedding Coordinator & Minister will work with you to determine the details for your specific ceremony.

## **Scripture Selections**

Any Scripture passages you use need to be approved by the officiating minister. Following are some typical marriage-related selections.

### 1. Old Testament.

- a. Genesis 1:26; 2:4-7, 18-22, 24
- b. Ruth 1:16-17
- c. Psalms 29:1-2; 34:3; 37:4; 63:1-4; 95:1-6; 100; 127; 128; 150
- d. Proverbs 3:4-5; 18:22; 24:3; 4; 31:10-31
- e. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
- f. Song of Solomon 2:11-13; 5:15; 6:3 8:6, 7a
- g. Isaiah 61:10; 62:5
- h. Jeremiah 33:11; 32:38; 29
- i. Hosea 2:19-20

### 2. New Testament

- a. Matthew 19:4-6 Christ's statement on marriage
- b. John 2:1-11 Christ at the marriage in Cana
- c. John 15:9-17 Christ's command to love
- d. John 17:22-23 Christ's prayer for love and unity
- e. I Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient ...
- f. Ephesians 5:21-33 Roles of husband and wife
- g. Philippians 2:5-11 Attitudes to build marriage
- h. Colossians 3:12-17 Loving attitudes
- i. Hebrews 13:4 Sex in marriage
- j. I Peter 3:1-7 Teaching for wives and husbands
- k. I John 3:16; 4:7-19 Teachings on love

## **Music & Photography/Videography**

### **MUSIC**

1. All music in the ceremony is arranged by the bride and groom and must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator in advance.
2. Music may be live instrumentation, vocalists, cassette tape or CD. Your music arrangements will be discussed at length with the Wedding Coordinator so that all necessary information can be conveyed to the Sound Technician.
3. All details concerning your music must be finalized at least two weeks before your wedding, so that the Sound Technician can review them.
4. Where possible, musicians should be present at the rehearsal for sound checks.

### **PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY**

1. The Chapel will be available 2 ½ hours before the wedding for photographs. Times earlier than that are usually possible, but not guaranteed. Photographs should be completed at least 30 minutes before the ceremony is scheduled to begin (guests begin arriving then).
2. During the ceremony, we request that a spirit of worship prevail. Therefore, the photographer should refrain from flash photography during the ceremony. A flash can be used during the bridal party processional and recessional. However, this is to the couple's discretion.
3. All positions of equipment and personnel should be unobtrusive to the ceremony.
4. The Sound Technician will be busy with the needs of your ceremony and so will be unable to operate any video cameras.
5. After the ceremony, photographs can be taken in the Chapel.



# First Christian Church

**Wedding Policy** – Last Revision 4/19/2007

## 1.1 MARRIAGE / WEDDINGS

### 1.1.1 Policy Statement to those considering marriage.

It is our desire that your marriage is the happiest relationship possible, and that it be all God intended it to be. Marriage is a gift of God; therefore, He decides to be part of your marriage and bless your lives together. This is why we share this information with you.

God created man and woman and designed the marriage relationship. It makes sense that He best knows how to build a happy marriage.

As we read His Word, we are able to discern basic principles that must be understood and applied if we hope to experience joy and fulfillment in marriage. Ignoring these principles will result in frustration and ultimate failure in any marriage relationship.

Because we are committed to building strong marriages, we want to share some very important guidelines and truths that we feel will help anyone to receive the blessings from God that He intended for all men and women to experience.

### 1.1.2 The following Scriptures concern marriage and are the basis for the decision we make regarding weddings we perform:

Matthew 5:31-32

Matthew 19:3-12

Mark 10:2-12

Luke 16:18

Romans 7:1-3

1

Corinthians 7:1-40

Ephesians 5:21-33

Colossians 3:18-19

### 1.1.3 All couples married at First Christian Church must be involved in pre-marital counseling prior to their wedding. These sessions are to take place at least one (1) month prior to the wedding. The number of sessions necessary will be at the discretion of the Minister performing the ceremony.

### 1.1.4 No weddings shall be conducted at the First Christian Church, of which the couple is “living together.” Should that be the circumstances at the time of scheduling, the couple must agree to separate until the wedding day. Please sign below to verify your acceptance of this policy:

Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ Bride: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1.1.5 No “same sex” unions shall ever be held or recognized by the First Christian Church.

- 1.1.6 For those who have experienced divorce, we believe every possible attempt must be made for reconciliation before re-marriage is considered.
- 1.1.7 We feel that it would be best not to marry a couple if either of them has been divorced within the last twelve (12) months.
- 1.1.8 No couple will be married in the First Christian Church if either of them is under the influence of drugs (with the exception of prescribed medications) or alcohol.
- 1.1.9 If a minister from another church is asked to perform the ceremony, the Board of First Christian Church must approve it. If the Minister is permitted to do the ceremony, he must insure that the above guidelines are met and submit a letter to the Minister of First Christian Church verifying the fulfillment of said guidelines. This letter needs to be received at least two (2) weeks prior to the wedding.

## **1.2 SCHEDULING**

- 1.2.1 An appointment must be made with the Minister of First Christian Church to discuss these guidelines prior to scheduling a specific date. Acceptance of above guidelines is required.
- 1.2.2 No wedding will ever be scheduled on a date that would conflict with church events.
- 1.2.3 The Senior Minister will be responsible for all dates scheduled on the calendar.
- 1.2.4 There will be no weddings scheduled on Sunday's unless approved by the Church Board.
- 1.2.5 It is requested that weddings be planned to begin no later than 7 p.m. on Saturday evening to give our custodian time to properly clean our facility for our services the next day.

## **1.3 BUILDING USAGE**

- 1.3.1 No smoking is permitted in the church building. No smoking, alcoholic beverages or drugs are allowed on the premises.
- 1.3.2 No unusual decorations or alterations to church property may be made without permission from the Church Board.
- 1.3.3 The wedding party assumes TOTAL obligation for damages to the buildings and/or other church property. The wedding party agrees to these rules and will sign a general contract.

## **1.4 SPECIAL PROVISION**

- 1.5.1 Any Minister on staff at the First Christian Church reserves the right at any time to decline the participation in a Wedding Ceremony if he feels that by participating he would be violating his conscience and most importantly, God's Word. If so, the Church Board will respect and support him in that decision. If any Minister on staff elects to decline participation in the wedding ceremony, Section 1.1.9 of this policy shall be an optional consideration for the couple.

## **Wedding Handbook Agreement**

By signing below, I am stating that I have read and agree to follow all the guidelines and rules found in the Wedding Policy of First Christian Church of Clearwater. I hereby agree to separate from my fiancé if necessary to be in compliance with policy number 1.1.4, as is stated below:

1.1.4 No weddings shall be conducted at the First Christian Church, of which the couple is “living together.” Should that be the circumstances at the time of scheduling, the couple must agree to separate until the wedding day.

Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_