

A TIMELINE

Application and Confirmation

All discussion about reserving the church facility and pastors is preliminary and non-binding until the church receives your wedding application and payment for facility use and is able to act upon them. Once this is done you will receive a confirmation letter with times and dates for the rehearsal and wedding and the name of the officiating pastor.

Contact the Officiating Pastor

Call the officiating pastor at the church office no later than three months before the wedding date to arrange an initial meeting with the bride and the groom. It would be preferable to make this contact six to nine months before the wedding.

Our church requires premarital counseling for all who are married in our facility or by our pastors. Details may be found at the end of this booklet in Appendix 8.

Contact the Director of Music Ministries

Call the Director of Music Ministries three months before the wedding to arrange a time to discuss music. You are not calling to secure the services of an organist from the church. That is already assured when the reservation is confirmed.

Make Contact With the Wedding Consultant

A few weeks before the wedding a wedding consultant, a volunteer from the church, will contact you to discuss practical arrangements for the wedding. If the wedding consultant is delayed in calling, simply contact the church office to get her name and number so you can initiate the call. Use the "Wedding Planning Worksheet" (Appendix 2) for your work with the wedding consultant and pastor in planning the wedding service.

The Rehearsal

A rehearsal is needed for all but the simplest weddings and is normally held the evening before the wedding service. Rehearsals are held at 5:00 p.m. The purpose of the rehearsal is to ensure the wedding itself is as free as possible from stress so we may concentrate on the real meaning of the event rather than being worried or distracted. It is important, in so far as possible, for all members of the wedding party to be present at the rehearsal along with all musicians, ushers, parents, readers, and other worship leaders.

The rehearsal normally lasts about an hour and it is vital you make clear to all involved that punctuality is critical. The pastor and musician frequently have other commitments to which they must attend beyond the hour.

Bring the marriage license to the rehearsal and give it to the minister. It is best to distribute honoraria at the rehearsal rather than during the confusion of the wedding day.

The Day of the Wedding

The church building is available to you for four hours on the day of the service—for two hours before the wedding begins and for two hours after that point. For example, if the wedding is at 2:00 p.m. the church will be open at noon for the wedding party to prepare. Weddings in a Presbyterian church normally last 30-60 minutes and so that would leave at least an hour after the service for guests and wedding party to depart for the reception.

The wedding party should arrive at the church no later than an hour before the wedding.

Twenty to thirty minutes before worship begins the organist will start the prelude.

The ushers will be stationed in the Narthex to light candles, distribute worship bulletins, and assist members of the congregation to their seats. The wedding consultant will direct their activities.

The best man and the groom will wait in the Library. Ten minutes before worship the pastor will go with them to the Sacristy to await the time for their entry.

The bride, maid or matron of honor, and bridesmaids will be in the Bride's Room. Approximately ten minutes before the service the wedding consultant will bring them upstairs to the Chapel to await the start of the service.

About five minutes before worship the wedding consultant will gather ushers, grandparents and parents in the Narthex to begin the processional. All in the wedding party enter the Sanctuary from the Narthex except the groom and best man who enter with the pastor from the Sacristy. The processional proceeds as follows:

The groom's paternal grandparents
The groom's maternal grandparents
The bride's paternal grandparents
The bride's maternal grandparents
The father and mother of the groom
The mother of the bride
Aisle runner extended by two ushers
The pastor, groom, and best man
Ushers (groomsmen) enter singly or in pairs
Bridesmaids enter singly
Ring bearer and flower girl
Maid or matron of honor
The bride and her escort

The bride always brings up the rear, walking on her father's right. This position puts her on the proper side to join her groom, and it is in the honorary position, as well as being traditional and correct.