

STATE COLLEGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

132 West Beaver Avenue
State College, Pennsylvania 16801
814-238-2422

WEDDING POLICY

I. THE MARRIAGE SERVICE:

A. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage ceremony is under the direction of the pastor and the supervision of the Session. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is a covenant in which God has an active part and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

B. The marriage ceremony is a service of worship and dedication in which two persons enter the presence of God, praying that by grace, God will unite their lives in a spiritual union. It has real significance only as both are willing to enter a continuing relationship with God throughout the rest of their lives. The first condition for marriage in the Church is a willingness to enter into this relationship and to seek the guidance and presence of God in both the marriage service and the years of life ahead.

C. Eligibility: All weddings must be approved by a pastor of the congregation and the Session. The couple must be members at the State College Presbyterian Church unless granted special permission by both a pastor and the Session of the church.

II. **PREMARITAL COUNSELING:** The Directory for Worship requires that all couples married by a pastor of this congregation fulfill a program of premarital counseling conferences with the pastor (preferably at least one 2-3 months in advance of the wedding date) that includes the meaning of marriage, interpersonal communication, as well as preparations for the wedding service.

III. WORSHIP SERVICE:

A. Ministers: Wedding services will be performed by one of the Church pastors and accompanied by the Director of Music Ministry. If the couple wish to request an exception for a different celebrant or accompanist, this request must be made and approved before the wedding is confirmed on the Church calendar. In exceptional circumstances, the pastor may grant permission for an outside celebrant or the Director of Music Ministry may grant permission for an outside organist. Guest ministers are welcome to assist upon the invitation of one of the pastors.

B. Worship: The marriage service shall be conducted in a manner appropriate to the faith covenant and to the forms of Reformed worship under the direction of the pastor and the supervision of the Session. In the service, the minister witnesses the couple's promises and pronounces God's blessing upon their union.

C. Order of Service: Sample orders of service and vows will be provided by the pastoral staff. Options are available within the standard order of service for additional Scripture selections, a meditation/sermon by the pastor, other appropriate readings, etc. The couple speak their promises, facing each other in the presence of the congregation, which witnesses their covenant.

D. Music: As the purpose of Christian worship is to glorify the God who is present and active among us, music which is appropriate for a Christian wedding is music that would also be appropriate for use during a church worship service. Final authority over inclusion of particular musical selections is shared by the presiding pastor and the musical staff for the wedding.

E. Musician: It is assumed that the SCPC Director of Music Ministry will provide the music, organ and/or piano, to be used in the wedding service.

1. It is important that the Director of Music Ministry be contacted as soon as the wedding date is confirmed and an appointment set up to arrange for the music for the wedding.
2. Should the service be scheduled at a time when the Director of Music Ministry cannot be present, the Director of Music Ministry will secure the services of another musician. If the couple wish to provide their own organist, they must request permission from the Director of Music Ministry, who must approve the guest musician. The couple must pay a bench fee of \$150.00. The guest organist must meet with our Director of Music Ministry to discuss use of our organ.
3. Unless otherwise instructed, the Director of Music Ministry will provide a fifteen- minute prelude for the wedding service. These selections are usually chosen by the Director of Music Ministry and include a wide variety of styles and moods. If certain familiar pieces are desired, the Director of Music Ministry should be advised during the planning session.
4. Taped/recorded music may NOT be used in place of an organist.
5. If either a vocal or instrumental soloist is desired as part of the service, the Director of Music Ministry can make the arrangements. If there is a preference of a soloist, that person is responsible for making rehearsal arrangements with the Director of Music Ministry prior to the wedding day. The Director of Music Ministry will not be responsible for teaching a guest soloist music that the couple have selected. Soloists should be advised that they may not perform using illegally copied music. The couple are responsible for payment of any fees charged by the soloists.

F. Music Fees:

1. The current fee of our Director of Music Ministry is \$200.
2. Soloists/instrumentalists: \$25 for each instrumentalist or vocal soloist. Fees for vocal soloists and/or instrumentalists are negotiated independently. Soloists may have their own fee schedules.

IV. USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES FOR WEDDINGS: The State College Presbyterian Church is pleased to make available the facilities of the Church for those weddings which are approved by the pastors and the Session.

A. Building Manager: In order to maintain the facilities of the Church in accordance with the standards and purposes to which they have been dedicated, the Building Manager must be engaged for all weddings. The Building Manager is to be contacted by the couple so that the required facilities will be in order. The fee for a wedding and rehearsal is \$175.

B. The sanctuary will be available for three hours prior to the marriage ceremony for decorating and other preparations, and for one hour from the end of the ceremony or receiving line for removal of decorations, clean-up and photographs.

C. Dressing Rooms: Classroom 103 across from the Martin Room and the Fireside Room on the lower floor are available for the couple's use as dressing rooms.

V. SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUPLE BEING MARRIED: The couple are responsible for the following items:

A. Reserve the Church through the Church office as early as possible, designating specific rooms, facilities and equipment desired. When the request to be married at the State College Presbyterian Church is confirmed by the Church office, the date will be reserved on two calendars: those of the Church and one of the pastors.

B. Contact the Director of Music Ministries to reserve the date on his calendar and discuss musical selections.

C. Contact pastor to arrange times for premarital counseling.

D. Arrange a meeting with the Building Manager to plan the service set-up in the sanctuary. This meeting should be scheduled for 2-3 months prior to the wedding.

E. Wedding Consultant: The services of a wedding consultant, if one is engaged, shall be limited to preparations prior to the marriage ceremony, and shall not involve the ceremony itself. Furniture in the sanctuary will not be moved.

F. Rehearsal: A rehearsal is essential for all but the smallest weddings. Set the date and time of the rehearsal in consultation with the pastor. The couple shall advise all members of the wedding party that it is important for them to attend the rehearsal.

G. Marriage License: It is essential that the Marriage License be given to the officiating pastor no later than the date of the rehearsal.

H. Arrange for the removal of the decorations from the sanctuary after the wedding prior to Sunday. If the flowers are to be offered for use in the Church on the following Sunday, make prior arrangements with the Church office

I. All personal belongings should be removed from the dressing rooms, sanctuary and all other areas within one hour following the ceremony/receiving line. It becomes difficult to locate any items left for an extended period after weddings and the church will not take responsibility for their safety.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS REGULATIONS:

A. Scheduling: Ordinarily no more than one wedding will be scheduled at SCPC on any calendar date.

B. All weddings performed must be recorded with the Church office. Information required: full names, birth dates, birth places, previous marital status, place of residence, names of the minister(s) performing the ceremony, license date and license number.

C. Fees: All fees are due in the Church office one week before the date of the rehearsal.

D. Pictures: No flash pictures may be taken during the service - from the end of the processional to the beginning of the recessional. Available light photos may be taken from the rear balcony of the sanctuary. No artificial light may be used for photography during the service. The service may be videotaped, provided the taping does not interfere with the ceremony. Pictures may be taken before and/or after the ceremony (there is a one-hour time limit after the ceremony/receiving line for photos and clearing the building).

E. Candles: The Church will provide candles in the candelabras for wedding ceremonies at a cost of \$25 (2 candelabras with 7 candles each). Couples must use candles provided by the Church to minimize wax drippage. If a Unity Candle is to be used, this candle and holder shall be furnished by the couple. Pew torches are available for a rental fee of \$25.

F. Flowers/Aisle Runner: A florist may be engaged by the couple. Flowers and decorations should not be unduly elaborate. Should the wedding party desire an aisle runner, it must be secured through the florist. Runner needs to be 60 feet in length.

G. Other Decorations: All decorations (including flowers) should point to the glory of God and be appropriate for a worship service setting. Any decorations (including banners, signs, etc.) placed on church property must be approved by the pastor and Session of the State College Presbyterian Church.

H. Alcoholic beverages: Alcoholic beverages may not be served at any function held in the State College Presbyterian Church and are NOT permitted in the Church building. Furthermore, it shall be the responsibility of the couple and their families to assure that there is no indulgence of alcoholic beverages immediately before the rehearsal or wedding by any of those taking part. If there is any evidence of this, the pastor reserves the right to cancel the wedding at any time and the \$200 deposit fee will not be refunded.

I. Smoking: No smoking in the church buildings.

J. Bird Seed: Bird seed is permitted to be thrown outside, but only if the wedding party is not reentering the Church building for pictures. No other materials (e.g. rice, rose petals) are permitted inside or outside the church.

VII. FEE SCHEDULE SUMMARY:

A. Pastor: If the couple or their parents are members of the State College Presbyterian Church, there is no pastor's fee, as performance of weddings is an integral part of the Church's pastoral ministry

B. Building Use: There is no Building Use fee for church members (a member is one who has been a participating member of the congregation for at least one year prior to scheduling the wedding).

C. Organist: The current fee of our Director of Music Ministry is \$200 plus fees for each instrumentalist or vocal soloist. Fees for vocal soloist and/or instrumentalists are negotiated independently. If an organist other than our Director of Music Ministry is used, there is a bench fee of \$150.

D. Building Manager: Wedding and rehearsal \$175. Check with the Church office to obtain the name of the Building Manager working, as your check should be made payable directly to him.

E. Candles, pew torches: Candles provided by the Church \$25. Pew torches provided are \$25.

F. Security Deposit: A Security Deposit of \$200.00 for all weddings is due in the Church Office one week prior to the wedding rehearsal. This is separate from Building Use fee, if any. If no damage occurs (which includes alcohol in the church), the Security Deposit will be refunded. Any violation to the church's wedding policy will result in the forfeiture of the security deposit.

**ALL FEES ARE DUE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE ONE WEEK BEFORE
THE REHEARSAL DATE.**

Approved by Building and Property Ministry Unit

November 2001
Rev. July 2004
Rev. April 2007
Rev. August 2007
Rev. May 2010
Rev. May 2014
Rev. May 2018

Approved by Session