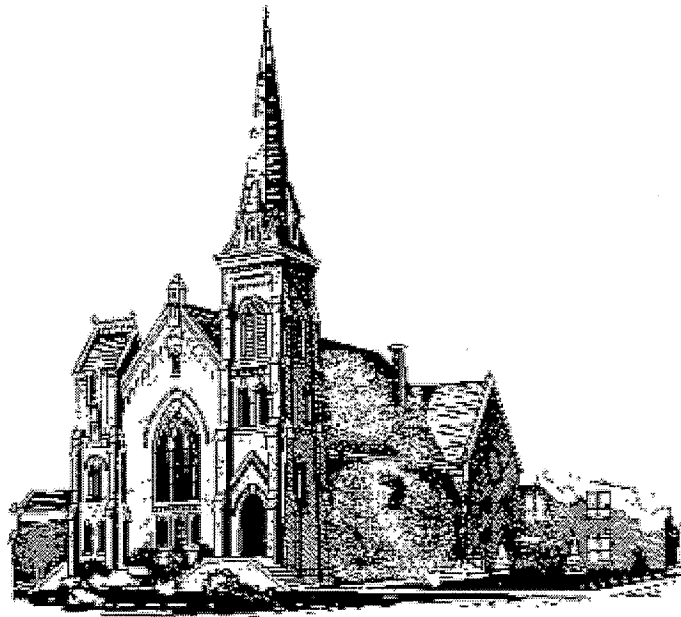


The United Presbyterian Church
of Blairsville
Wedding Manual



Revised: 3/2005

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Christian marriage is a divine institution, between a man and a woman, established by God, for the welfare and happiness of humankind. We therefore solemnize marriage in a worship ceremony, with prayer and blessings, bearing witness to its importance, and requiring vows of the bride and groom concerning their obligation to God. Christian marriage is above all things a commitment, whereby wife and husband work together to be a blessing to one another and strive to make their relationship the best and strongest it possibly can be. It is the deepest commitment one human being can make to another; and in terms of its importance, it is second only to the commitments we make to God and the church.

Because the institution of marriage is such a serious commitment, it must never be entered into without great thought, prayer and preparation. It is the responsibility of God's church and the pastor officiating at the ceremony to help in this preparation. Therefore, the Session of this congregation has adopted these guidelines for use in the preparation for your Christian wedding.

General

It will be the responsibility of the pastor of this church to conduct weddings for the church. Use of another pastor will be by invitation of the pastor of this church and approval of Session. The pastor will consider marrying couples who are not church members, but all use of church facilities will be subject to the approval of the church board (the Session).

Any wedding performed at The United Presbyterian Church of Blairsville will follow an order of Christian worship acceptable to the minister and church Session, through its Worship Committee.

As marriage is not to be entered into hastily or ill advisedly, the officiating pastor will establish with each couple a schedule of premarital counseling sessions. Couples should make arrangements at least three months prior to the proposed wedding date to meet with the pastor.

A marriage license from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must be presented to the officiating pastor no later than the day before the ceremony. Application for marriage license should be made at any county courthouse in the Commonwealth.

No rice or confetti may be used in or on any part of church grounds or church buildings. No balloons may be released from church grounds. Bells, bubbles and birdseed are permitted.

No smoking or use of alcoholic beverages is permitted inside the church building or on church property.

If any member of the wedding party, be it bride, groom, attendants or parents, appears to be under the influence of alcohol, the pastor may consider it inappropriate to perform the ceremony at that time.

Use of Building

No tape or tacks may be used to attach decorations onto the pews. During special seasons of the year, such as Christmas or Easter, any seasonal decorations that the Church may be using will not be removed to make room for wedding decorations.

The sexton of the congregation will be responsible for the following:

- removal of unnecessary books and pads from church pews
- removal of unnecessary items from the tables in the narthex and other areas of the sanctuary
- placement of the candelabra (if necessary)
- opening and closing of building for rehearsal and wedding
- clean-up of sanctuary and building following rehearsal and wedding

The Property and Maintenance Committee will be responsible for the following:

- removal of furniture, as necessary
- rearrangement of furniture, as necessary

The communion table shall remain central to the worship area.

The piano shall not be moved.

Photography

No flash pictures are permitted during the actual ceremony. Taking flash pictures during the processional and recessional is permitted.

All videotaping of the ceremony must be discussed and approved by the officiating clergy at the time the ceremony is planned.

All pre-ceremony photography must be completed at least 15 minutes prior to the ceremony.

Photographer(s) and videographer(s) must make final arrangements with officiating clergy no later than one hour prior to the start of the wedding, unless previous arrangements have been made with the pastor.

At the conclusion of the photography session following the ceremony, it is the responsibility of the wedding party to extinguish (snuff) all candles.

Music

A church wedding is a worship service, and music used should be appropriate for the church sanctuary. The pastor or church organist will be glad to discuss with you and guide you in the use of music that reflects both the dignity and joyfulness of such an occasion.

Requests to use prerecorded musical accompaniments should be discussed with the pastor and Sound System Technician.

The organist of this church may be available to play for weddings. Arrangements should be made with the organist well in advance (at least two months) of the wedding date.

If a couple wishes a guest organist, permission must be received from the Worship Committee in consultation with the organist at least two months prior to the wedding. There will be a consultation fee assessed (see fees below.)

Additional musicians may be involved in the service, subject to the approval of the officiating minister. Arrangements and financial obligations for musicians involved in the ceremony should be made directly with those persons. Guest soloists are welcomed.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are usually held the day before the wedding; the date should be reserved the same time the wedding date is reserved. The officiating minister will conduct the rehearsal.

All parties participating in the ceremony, including the organist, must be present for the rehearsal. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to see that all parties are present.

Soloists, photographers and videographers should be present, whenever possible, at the rehearsal. If the soloist requires rehearsal with sound system, prior arrangements must be made with the sound system technician through the church office.

Candles Available

The following candles and candleholders are available for use: two candles for Communion Table; two chancel candelabra; and Unity candleholder. If you choose to use the candelabra, appropriate (slow burning, drip less) candles should be purchased from the church at cost.

Fees and Expenses

Every effort is made in keeping the cost of a wedding to a minimum. However, there are some costs that the church is not able to assume.

REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT (non members)\$250.00

The refundable deposit is required to cover the expense of repairing any damage (accidental or not) that may occur during your use of the facilities.

SEXTON\$100.00

There is no sexton fee for active church members however, if you wish to give an honorarium to the sexton, please do so directly.

ORGANIST\$100.00

SOUND SYSTEM TECHNICIAN.....\$50.00

Our trained technician, or designee, will provide this service.

ORGANIST CONSULTATION (as needed)\$40.00

When another organist plays

(The church does not produce or print bulletins for weddings.)

While there is no fee for using the church building, donations are welcomed.

Payments for services of the organist, sexton and sound system technician should be made directly to the persons providing each of those services at the rehearsal, or if there is no rehearsal, prior to the ceremony. The refundable deposit for non-members (made payable to The United Presbyterian Church) must be forwarded to the church within two weeks after Session approval has been given for the wedding. This secures your use of the church building.

The Session will determine whether applicants qualify for member status.

Receptions

The church kitchen and fellowship hall are available for receptions for additional fees. If you are interested, please contact the church office at 724-459-7991. Fees will be established on a case-by-case basis.

Wedding Suggestions

Following is a list of suggestions to facilitate matters:

- Wedding ceremonies are to begin on time. This means the wedding party should arrive at church no later than a half-hour before the wedding.
- Please be sure when choosing attendants that they are willing to fulfill their obligations.
- All small children should have an adult supervising them, especially if they are part of the wedding party. Please be considerate of the bride and groom on their special day by giving a lot of thought to your responsibilities as a member of the wedding party. We ask that you do not carry or walk a child who is not part of the wedding party down the aisle with you or have them stand there at the front of the sanctuary. This is a distraction from the very special service. An adult may take the child to the church's nursery if you feel the child is uncomfortable staying in a pew. The adult must stay with the child in the nursery.
- Women may use the Fellowship Hall to dress. Due to space limitations, men should arrive at church dressed for the ceremony.
- Purses or valuables should not be left unattended during the service.
- If a guest book is to be used at the church, the person responsible for having it signed should be at the church with the book at least one hour before the scheduled start of the service.
- Aisle runners are furnished by the wedding party.
- Flowers *may* be left in the church sanctuary for Sunday Worship to mark the occasion of the wedding. Please inform the church if you plan on donating any of your flowers.
- Please bear in mind where you are and respect the church and grounds at all times.
- Ushers' duties:
 - Be present one hour before service.
 - Usher guests before and after service.
 - Seat parents and grandparents.
 - Light and extinguish candles.
 - Lay aisle runners.
 - Hand out bulletins.
 - Reserve parking spaces for limousine and wedding party alongside the church.

Congratulations on your engagement. We are honored that you are considering The United Presbyterian Church for your wedding. May God smile on your wedding and life together. If you are not a member of a church, we invite you to join The United Presbyterian Church of Blairsville; but please remember to keep Christ in your marriage, wherever you go.