

The First Presbyterian Church in Pitman
10 Wildwood Avenue Pitman, NJ 856-589-1050
Policy for Weddings and Blessing of Civil Union Ceremonies

Approved by Session – 6-5-2023

A wedding and a blessing of a civil union are joyous and sacred events. In the Presbyterian tradition, we choose to celebrate God's joining of a couple as an act of worship, whether the ceremony is held in the Sanctuary or on the grounds of First Presbyterian Church. The following guidelines are designed to ensure that your service is reverent and appropriate.

Please contact the church office to determine the availability of the date of your service and the availability of the Pastor for pre-service counseling meetings.

Pre-Ceremony Counseling

Four, one-hour counseling meetings with the pastor are required. During the first meeting, theology and the order of worship are discussed. Partners are given a list of choices to customize their service. Partners will complete a Pre-wedding or Pre-Union Awareness Inventory that will be used to develop the ceremony and to identify opportunities for enriching their relationship.

Music

Marilyn Rabbai serves as the Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church. Marilyn must be contacted (856-589-3901) ahead of time if you intend to reserve the Sanctuary for the wedding or blessing and intend to incorporate music. She, or a substitute approved by her, will play the organ or piano for all services in the Sanctuary. The organist's fee includes a consultation for the purpose of selecting appropriate music and the rehearsal. All music, including selections to be performed by any vocalist or instrumentalist, must be approved in advance by the Director of Music. Partners, in consultation with the pastor, are required to secure and confirm dates and times for meetings, rehearsals, and the ceremony. This includes any changes to the ceremony and rehearsal times with the Director of Music.

Decorations

Flowers and plants may be used as part of the service. No flowers or plants may be placed on the Lord's Table (communion table). A white runner for the center aisle is welcome but must be provided by the florist or other agency contracted by the partners. All arrangements with the florist are the responsibility of the partners and/or their families.

Photography

Flash photography by guests during the service is *strictly prohibited*. Professional photographers and videographers are a welcome part of your service and arrangements for posed photographs using a flash before or after the service is allowed.

Livestreaming and AV Support

Requests for the church to livestream events on YouTube or Facebook should be made through the church office. The fee for livestreaming a service event is \$100 per hour and is subject to the availability of personnel. Any requests for special use of the sound system should be made through the pastor.

Programs/Bulletins

Bulletins or programs used as part of your service are the sole responsibility of the partners.

Interfaith Services

Ecumenical and Interfaith services are welcome and can be arranged with the partners and the pastor.

Intoxicating Substance Use

No alcoholic beverages or recreational marijuana may be consumed on church property, including parking areas. Use of tobacco products is not permitted in the building or within 30 feet of any entrance. If individuals smoke outside the building, please be sure that the entrance doors are completely closed.

Confetti/Rice

As an Earth Care Congregation, please use only *birdseed or celebratory soap bubbles* outside, as partners exit the church as a customary post-service celebration. Rice and confetti are prohibited. Rice may not be used because it is harmful to birds. Do not allow guests to discard/litter bubble containers or use rice on the property.

Rehearsal Dinner/Reception

Please do not feel obligated to invite the Pastor and the Organist to the rehearsal dinner or reception. Upon request, the pastor will gladly compose celebratory toasts and prayers for the reception for attendants or family members to read or recite.

Licenses

Marriage and Civil Union licenses are obtained, in advance of the service, from the Municipal Registrar of Vital Statistics of the New Jersey municipality in which either partner (applicant) is a legal resident. If neither partner is a New Jersey resident, the license is obtained in the municipality where the service will be performed. Licenses are not issued until *72 hours AFTER the application* is made so partners must plan accordingly. The service cannot be performed without the license presented.

The Marriage or Civil Union License must be presented at the *ceremony rehearsal* for signatures. All fees are due at the time of the rehearsal.

Fee Schedule

Custodian	\$150
AV Support	\$100/hr.
Organist	\$250
Pastor	\$250*

Additional fees for travel and other arrangements are negotiated in advance, with the pastor

*\$300 if the ceremony is not at the church.