**Weddings**

“And the two shall become one…”

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**First Baptist Church**

Sumter, SC

“What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

- Matthew 19:6

**Ordained by God**

Marriage was ordained by God in the Garden of Eden when He created us in His image male and female. Our Lord Jesus Christ honored marriage by choosing to perform His first miracle at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. God’s Word teaches that marriage symbolizes the relationship between Jesus and the Church, which is called “the Bride of Christ.”

**Wedding Ceremony**

We believe the wedding ceremony should be one of the most meaningful, significant and memorable experiences of a person’s life. Since it is a religious ceremony, it is not time for frivolity. We expect all members of the wedding party and witnesses to the ceremony to participate in an attitude of reverence and Christian joy.

It is our desire to help make your wedding a beautiful and worshipful event.

We extend to you our best wishes at this exciting time. During the next few (and very busy) months, you will be making decisions regarding one of the most important events in your life. These policies are based on many years of experience of how weddings work best in our church for everyone.

**Set the date…**

Our facilities are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. We will not schedule two sanctuary weddings for the same weekend, and occasionally there are other church events that preclude weddings.

You will also need to make an appointment with the pastor early in your plans –preferably when you reserve the church –if you wish him to perform the ceremony. He can advise you by phone whether the date is available on his calendar, but he will conduct an initial conference with the bride and groom before committing to officiate the wedding. If he does, two further sessions of premarital counseling will be required.

Should you desire another ordained minister to officiate the wedding along with or instead of the pastor, please share this with the pastor in your initial contact. He may need to meet with you and/ or the minister. It is our policy that all couples married at First Baptist Church have the benefit of premarital counseling. The pastor will determine whether this may be provided by the guest minister.

**The Marriage License**

You will need to secure your marriage license from the probate judge at the Sumter County Courthouse. This may be done as far in advance as you wish. The very latest you may apply is the Thursday of your wedding week, but these do not expire, and you will be very busy that week.

Please give the license to the officiating minister at the rehearsal. Non-residents may secure the license from another county in South Carolina. Without the license the ceremony cannot be performed.

**Church Wedding Coordinator**

The church staff works in tandem with the wedding coordinator. She will set up an appointment with the bride shortly after the notification and go over the equipment list, fee schedules, and fill out the worksheets. The wedding coordinator will give copies of the worksheets to you, the minister, the church secretary, wedding custodian, sound person, musicians and other involved persons at least 30 days prior to the wedding date. In essence, this service confirms the contract with the church and those staff members who will play a role in this most important event.

As the important date gets closer, there may need to be an additional session to confirm or modify the plans as set forth in the first session. All questions and concerns should be addressed to this person. Any questions of moral or spiritual matters will be addressed to the minister.

Please note: Our **wedding coordinator** and your **wedding director** provide two separate services. The **coordinator** is the liaison between you and the church, to ensure that all facilities, equipment, and required personnel are arranged and that church property is protected and church policies are followed.

You, not First Baptist, will appoint a **wedding director** of your choice. This person supervises and directs all activities and placement of participants beginning with the rehearsal, during the wedding ceremony and reception –and ending with the departure of the bride and groom. The **wedding coordinator** is not responsible for any of these activities.

**The Wedding Director**

The choice of a wedding director is left entirely up to the bride. This choice is a very critical one as this individual can smooth out many of the rough spots that inevitably occur during the preparation stage, he/she will assist at the rehearsal, and on the day of the wedding, will coordinate all the elements that contribute to a beautiful ceremony. Although our church does not have a director on staff, we will be glad to recommend one to you. Obviously, the minister’s counsel will be an integral part of the planning and execution of the service.

**The director may want to consider the following guidelines:**

1. In consolation with the bride and her other, decide on the placement of the wedding party as well as the seating of the parents, grandparents and other family members **prior** to the rehearsal.
2. The rehearsal may follow this pattern:
	1. Placement of the wedding party in the pulpit area;
	2. Practice the seating for the others (or parents) and grandparents;
	3. Practice the processional, a brief explanation of the ceremony itself (including a discussion of handling the rings) and the recessional;
	4. A brief discussion with the ushers as to their duties and procedures;
	5. Establish a time table for the picture taking process.
3. Groomsmen should be reminded at the rehearsal that the wedding is a worship service which takes place in a house of worship. Antics such as putting chemical substances on the kneeler, or conveying messages when processing past the groom will not be tolerated, as they make a travesty of the sacredness of the time and place.

Please ask your director to start the rehearsal on time so that your rehearsal will take no longer than one hour.

Alcohol of any kind is prohibited on church property.

**Charges for Facilities**

There are no charges for the use of the building to our \*active church members (either the bride or groom must be a member). Since there are a number of people involved when the building is in use, there will be some fees required for those individuals.

*\*Active members will have been members for at least 6 months, must actively attend worship services, must be involved in an area of ministry, and contribute regularly to the church through tithing.*

**The following facilities are available:**

* Main Sanctuary (seating capacity of 630)

Lower level Pew Capacity -520

Balcony Level Pew Capacity -110

* Fellowship Hall (accommodates 500)

**Facility Hours:**

A one-hour window is available for the Rehearsal. You will have a four-hour window on your wedding day. For example, if your wedding is scheduled at 3:00 p.m. the church will be open at 1:00 p.m. This will give you an additional hour after the ceremony for photos. (i.e.; 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.) Should you require more preparation time, please make arrangements with the Wedding Coordinator. She will determine any added charges based on the need.

**Decorations**

We believe the inherent beauty and dignity of our sanctuary and chapel is such that few decorations are needed.

The church would request that the florist, or decorator, have the church decorated and all workers out of the sanctuary two (2) hours before the wedding. The church requires that chase candles be used in the candelabras. These may be purchased from the church for $1 each. If the florist is using their equipment, they will insert the filler candles when they set up their equipment.

The complete equipment sheet of the inventory belonging to First Baptist Church is included in this packet. All of our equipment is similar to the equipment most florists use.

Whoever does your church decorations (florist or individuals) should be informed that **no nails, tacks, or screws will be put in doors, walls, furniture or pews**. ***Also, no church furniture may be moved and the sanctuary is as it is for a Sunday worship service (choir risers, screen, etc…).***Please ask whoever does your decorating to leave the facilities as clean as they found them. When palms, ferns or other damp containers are used, the carpet and furniture must be fully protected. The decorator will be held responsible for any damage caused by the use of such decorations.

If a flower girl is part of the ceremony, silk petals may be used in the church, but no fresh flower petals will be allowed as they may stain or damage the carpet.

Plants and/or flowers will be removed and put in a designated location for pick up.

If a Saturday wedding is planned, please let the wedding coordinator know if you would like to have your flowers used at the Sunday morning worship service on the next day. If memorial flowers have been scheduled for the sanctuary, the wedding flowers will be placed in the narthex.

**Music**

All wedding music (vocal and instrumental) must be coordinated through our minister of music. We would suggest that all of the music used during the ceremony be of a sacred nature. The wedding ceremony is a worship service and many of the secular selections are not appropriate to use during a worship service.

**(A) Organ Music**

The church organist is usually available to play for weddings. Should another organist be used, arrangements need to be made through our organist or minister of music, as they are responsible for the use of the instrument. The organist needs to be present at the rehearsal.

**(B) Vocal Music**

If your wedding will include vocal music, you may enlist our minister of music to sing or you may enlist another vocalist.

If you enlist an organist or vocalist other than our staff organist or minister of music, he/she should submit a list of their selections to our minister of music four (4) weeks prior to the ceremony. He may make suggestions for changes and this will allow time to make any necessary adjustments. His suggestions are not arbitrary ones, but they are based on principles which seek to preserve for your church wedding an atmosphere of worship and joy. It is requested that the organist and vocalist(s) practice at a time other than the rehearsal. These times may be arranged by contacting the minister of music or wedding coordinator.

**Photographer**

Pictures may be taken in the church parlor, choir room, and the bride’s room prior to the wedding. If the minister is to be included in the wedding pictures, it is requested that they be made early in the post service photography.

During the ceremony, the photographer may stand at the back of the sanctuary or use the balcony for photos, but there should be no flash photography during the ceremony. Exchanging your vows, after all, is a sacred event, one you will remember because of its incredible importance not because you have a snapshot of it.

The ceremony belongs to the bride and groom, not the photographer who should be discreet and appropriately dressed showing reverence and respect.

Videotaping is permitted. The guidelines for that service can be discussed with the wedding coordinator.

**Lighting, Sound and Recording**

A lighting and sound technician will be assigned for a wedding in the main sanctuary. If special lighting is required, the technician must be notified in advance. The technician’s fee of $150 is payable 10 days prior to the event. This may include a short meeting if needed to discuss the music, format, musicians and vocalists involved in the ceremony. The technician will be at the rehearsal and the ceremony. Unexpected and unusual requests may result in additional charges; i.e. video, un-planned microphones, etc.

**Dressing Facilities**

The bride’s room is provided for the bride and her attendants. It is located at the front of the main sanctuary and can be locked during the ceremony.

The choir room dressing facilities are available for the groom and his attendants.

**Caterer**

*If the reception or the rehearsal dinner is held here:*

If the services of a professional caterer are used for the reception, their name, address, etc., must be registered with the wedding coordinator. It will be the responsibility of the caterer to call the church for an appointment to meet with our kitchen supervisor at least a week before the wedding. At this appointment the kitchen supervisor will explain what equipment/supplies are available. They will agree upon which equipment/supplies will be used and each will sign the agreement. Other equipment/supplies will be locked away. The caterer will be responsible for the return of and condition of all items. A caterer’s deposit of $250 and fee of $50 (separate checks made to First Baptist Church) will be given in advance to the church office. The first business day after the wedding (or another time agreed upon by the caterer and the kitchen supervisor) they will again meet and take inventory. If everything is in order, the caterer’s $250 deposit check will be returned at that time. If any damage or missing equipment/supplies are noted that amount will be deducted from the deposit. The $50 fee will be retained by the church.

If family members, or friends, assume the catering responsibilities, it is permissible to prepare the food in the kitchen but very limited space is available in the refrigerator and freezer for storage. The same criteria will apply as for the professional caterer. The bride’s family will be the responsible party for the checks or they may designate another person to transact business with the kitchen supervisor.

The church does have an ice maker available for use.

**NO LINENS are available for use at the reception or rehearsal dinner.** You will need to rent those items, or contract with your caterer for table covers.

**Wedding Custodian Service**

The wedding custodian, contracted by the wedding coordinator, will be responsible for preparing the desired facilities according to instructions from the bride and as conveyed to the wedding coordinator. The sanctuary and the fellowship hall will be set-up the day before the wedding if possible. The custodian will open the buildings, take care of the air conditioning or heating needs, and restore the facilities to their original state.

If permission is granted for a rehearsal dinner or party in the fellowship hall, special arrangements should be made through the coordinator. Honoraria for custodial services is listed on the Fee Sheet given to you by the Wedding Coordinator. Please note that the custodian service fee does not include kitchen clean up so whether you use a professional or friends and relatives, the kitchen must be returned to its proper state before leaving the church the day of the wedding.

Should any damage occur, the wedding coordinator will make a written report to the property committee as soon as possible stating the extent of the damage and the name of the individual(s) or company involved. The property committee will be empowered to arrange with the decorator for such restitution as shall protect the church’s interest.

**A Medley of Suggestions**

1. It would probably be a good idea to take a number of containers with you to the reception to transport any leftover food home.
2. It is a very nice gesture to prepare a basket or box of food for the bride and groom to take with them when they leave for their honeymoon.
3. May we suggest that you enlist someone close to your family (perhaps a family member) to be in charge of clean-up and checking the building for any items that may be left. There are always a few details to take care of after all of the guests have departed – please coordinate with wedding coordinator.
4. All too often the groom’s family are “the forgotten people” in all of these festivities. Remember to include them in as much of the planning and preparation as is feasible.
5. Take comfortable shoes (and additional comfortable clothing) to the reception. The bride’s family as hosts of the occasion, are the last to leave –and only when everything is accounted for and cleaned up. This is especially true if the reception is at the church.

**General Instructions**

1. There will be no smoking in any of the church buildings and no alcoholic beverages may be served at any function.
2. Bird seed is the only acceptable item that may be showered on the bride and groom; this may be used only outside the building. As a safety factor NOTHING can be used in the building; even if it is dropped inadvertently on the floor, it will be slick and hazardous.
3. Because of the carpet in the fellowship hall, NO PUNCH THAT CONTAINS KOOL AID MAY BE USED. The chemical formula in that product takes the color out of carpet.
4. The church assumes no liability or responsibility for the security of personal items on church premises. The wedding party may wish to assign an individual to hold the valuables or to safeguard them in a designated place.
5. The individual scheduling the church facility (generally the bride or her family) assumes financial responsibility for any church property which is removed or damaged while the church facilities are used.
6. The wedding coordinator will arrange to have the church opened for advanced preparations.

**A Note from First Baptist Church**

*The day is fast approaching when you will be surrounded by friends and family, all of whom will be gathered together to witness your marriage and to share in the joy of the occasion which should be one of the most memorable and happy days of your life.*

*The family of First Baptist Church of Sumter wishes for you a love that makes both of you better people, that continues to give you joy and zest for living, and that provides you with energy to face the responsibilities of life. If we can assist you in any way, please feel free to contact us.*

WEDDING EXPENSES

First Baptist Church, Sumter, South Carolina

*(Revised: July 2019)*

Formal weddings in our society have evolved into a very expensive proposition. In addition to social pressure to have a wedding as big and fancy as someone else’s, there is the snowball effect; the initial idea of a small, simple service snowballs throughout the planning process into a big elaborate event. Should you sincerely desire a simple ceremony without the trappings and expense of a formal wedding, our pastors will help you toward this end. Those who begin the arduous task of planning a formal wedding need to realize up front the costs involved. While many of these will be contracted by you with the business community (printer, formal wear, florist, photographer, caterer, etc.) we can clarify the church-related expenses. These expenses are categorized as ***usage fees*** which members pay as an honoraria to individuals for their services.

HONORARIA

(Paid by wedding parties here)

Each honorarium check should be written payable to the individual performing that particular service. None of these checks should be made out to First Baptist Church.

Our WEDDING COORDINATOR will provide the names of each individual enlisted by the church. The honoraria checks should be placed in ONE envelope and given to the wedding coordinator who will then dispense to individuals ten days prior to the wedding.

Should you enlist any minister, organist or soloist from outside the church, those financial arrangements are between you and them and should not go through the wedding coordinator. You should enlist the wedding director of your choice, to whom you would pay directly whatever honorarium you have mutually agreed as appropriate.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

The church appointed WEDDING COORDINATOR is your contact for all wedding events. She will

want to meet with the bride and her parent or director at the earliest possible time after setting the date on the church calendar.

***WEDDING COORDINATOR:***

***Crissy Delecki***

***803-968-2216***

***Crissy.delecki@yahoo.com***