

# WEDDINGS AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



photo by Dana G

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989-892-1591

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# W E L C O M E

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Hello! Congratulations on your engagement! We are so happy that you are considering holding your wedding at First Pres.

During this momentous time of your life we are happy to come alongside you to make your wedding planning as easy as possible.

The information in this planning guide is meant to help you through all of your questions so you can relax and get excited for your big day.

If you still have questions, don't hesitate to give us a ring or send over an email! We are here for you every step of the way.

In Christ,  
Rev. Brenna Overland

A FEW THINGS TO KNOW  
ABOUT PLANNING A WEDDING  
AT FIRST PRES

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Your wedding is a service with deep spiritual significance. We will do everything possible to make the planning and celebration meaningful and memorable for such a sacred and special occasion.

Keeping in mind the spiritual significance of the ceremony we have created some guidelines to help you in your planning process. By agreeing holding you wedding here, you are committing to follow these guidelines.

Your decision to be married in the church is a sign that you wish your vows to be witnessed before God, and that you desire to make a public promise of faithfulness to each other before your family and friends.

Therefore, it is hoped that a couple seeking marriage at First Presbyterian Church share a common Christian faith and that either the bride or groom is a professing Christian.

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# WHO CAN GET MARRIED AT FIRST PRES?

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A couple seeking to be married at First Pres Bay City should meet at least one of the following criteria:

- One or both are active members of First Presbyterian Church, or
- One or both are children of parents who are active members of First Presbyterian Church.

Non-members are welcome to inquire about a wedding ceremony at our church. The decision to perform any marriage rests finally and entirely with the pastor and in concert with the agreement of the Session.



## YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

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**Q: How do we set a date?**

A: Because of the careful planning which is necessary for all weddings, we recommend that you consult with the church office as early as possible in advance of your intended wedding date. To schedule the tentative date and time for your wedding, your first step is to phone the church office. The administrative assistant will obtain from you and provide you with basic information and inform the ministerial staff. You will need to pick up the Wedding Guidelines Packet. After completing and returning the Wedding Reservation Form and a \$100 deposit to the church office, the wedding date and time will be reserved on the church calendar.

No weddings are scheduled on Christmas Day or Good Friday through Easter. The church will be available to you for a total of three (3) hours on the day of your wedding. The building will be open for you 1 ½ hours prior to the wedding ceremony and 1 ½ hours from the time the wedding service begins. Please plan preparations and photos accordingly.

**Q:How many people can the church hold?**

A: The wedding may be held in the sanctuary, which seats 825 guests, 500 on the main floor and 325 in the balcony, or in the Chapel which seats 80 guests and can be expanded with seating in the Chapel narthex.

**Q:When are rehearsals held?**

A: Rehearsals are typically held Thursday or Friday before the wedding subject to the availability of the officiating pastor.

## I HAVE ANSWERS

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**Q: Who will officiate the ceremony?**

A: The officiating pastor at all weddings performed at the First Presbyterian Church shall be a member of the pastoral staff. In special instances, the church is pleased to welcome clergy of other churches or faith traditions to assist the staff pastor if the wedding couple requests this arrangement. However, the wedding couple should discuss the issue of visiting clergy with the officiating pastor well in advance, so that the necessary credentials may be submitted to the Session for approval and the courtesy of an invitation to the visitor may be extended.

**Q: Do we have to have premarital counseling?**

A: First Presbyterian Church takes seriously that the wedding is a Service of Worship before God and under the power of the State of Michigan; therefore; pre-marital counseling is an essential part of preparation for marriage. The couple being married is expected to meet with the pastor or a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, for 3 to 4 sessions prior to the wedding. Proof of completed counseling must be submitted no later than 1 week before the ceremony.

**Q: What do we do about our marriage license?**

A: The marriage license, which is valid for thirty (30) days, must be obtained from the state of Michigan. Three (3) copies of the license are issued. The officiating pastor will sign all three, giving one to the couple after the marriage and filing the other two (2) with the County Clerk's office.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### 01.

No food or drink is allowed in the sanctuary or chapel. No smoking is allowed in any part of the church building. Alcoholic beverages and/or drugs are not permitted within the church building or on the grounds at any time. Please inform wedding attendants and family members of this ahead of time.

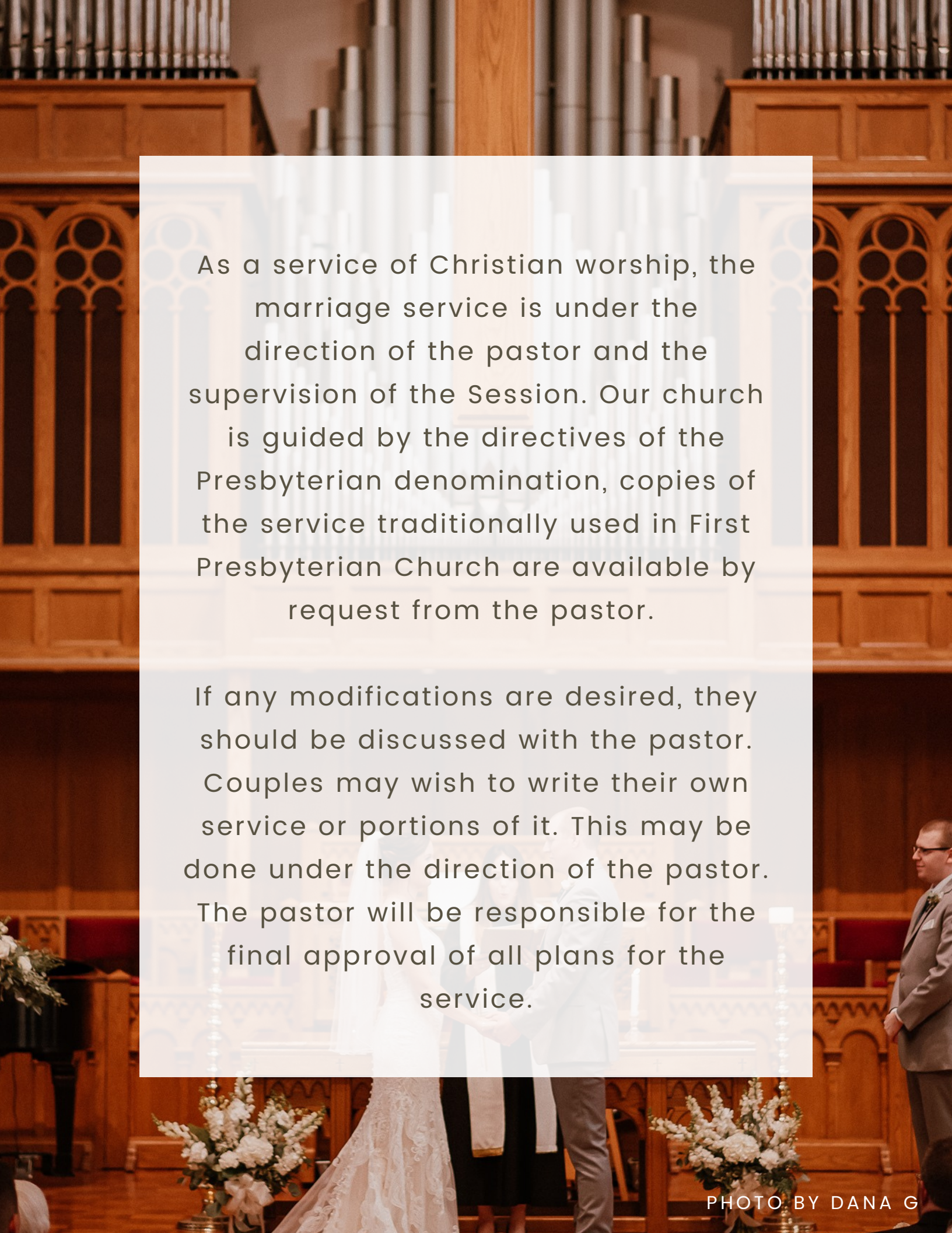
### 02.

**Day of Coordinator:**  
We highly suggest that you hire a wedding coordinator or day-of coordinator to help organize your wedding day. Occasionally we can recruit volunteers from our congregation to act in that capacity but arrangements must be made far in advance.

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If you have any questions,  
feel free to send us a message!

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A photograph of a wedding ceremony in a church. The scene is set on a wooden stage with a large organ in the background. A bride in a white lace dress and a groom in a grey suit are holding hands. A woman in a black dress and white shawl stands between them. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box in the center of the image.

As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the pastor and the supervision of the Session. Our church is guided by the directives of the Presbyterian denomination, copies of the service traditionally used in First Presbyterian Church are available by request from the pastor.

If any modifications are desired, they should be discussed with the pastor. Couples may wish to write their own service or portions of it. This may be done under the direction of the pastor. The pastor will be responsible for the final approval of all plans for the service.



# THE CEREMONY

## Music

The Director of Music, or the pastor, must approve the music, musicians, and soloists for the service. The selection of music for your wedding service should be made in consultation with him/her and be appropriate for the place and occasion of the worship service. Secular music will be approved on a case by case basis.

Playing of the organ or piano for all church weddings is the responsibility of the church organist. Special requests from a wedding party for an organist/pianist other than the church organist will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Special requests should be submitted to the Director of Music. Day and time of access shall be at the discretion of the church organist and the Director of Music.

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## Pre- Wedding Facilities

A lounge area with restroom facilities and full length mirror will be available for the bride and her attendants.

The groom and groomsmen will have access to a waiting area near the sanctuary. The pastor and the wedding hostess will offer the groomsmen guidelines for ushering and other responsibilities at the rehearsal.

The church cannot accept responsibility for any clothing or personal items left in the dressing areas. All personal articles must be removed from the facility the day/evening of the ceremony within the time designated for your wedding ceremony.

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# THE CEREMONY

## Decorations

All decorations intended for the sanctuary must be pre-approved by the pastoral staff. Care must be taken so that furnishings of the church are not damaged. No decorations are to be fastened with tacks, wires, or tape. Nothing damaging to the building or the furniture will be permitted. If planning bows to indicate reserved pews, we suggest that ribbons or plastic floral clips be used to attach them.

Except for the unity candle, nothing may be placed on the Communion Table. A pair of seven-candle candelabra is available for which candles may be purchased for the church. Any additional candles must be approved in advance. Candles must be drip-less and precaution taken to prevent wax from dripping on the candelabra and floor.

An aisle runner (52 feet in length), can be supplied by a florist, rental agency, or other source. A kneeling bench is available if desired.

## Photos/Video

Since the wedding ceremony is a worship service, photography and video should not disrupt any portion of the service. **NO** flash photography is permitted during the worship service proper. This includes the professional photographer and guests. Flash photography may only be taken as the wedding party enters the sanctuary and during the recessional..

If taking pictures in the sanctuary following the service, keep in mind the three-hour time period reserved for the wedding includes the time for photographs to be taken.

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# THE CEREMONY

## Bulletins/Programs

Are the responsibility of the couple to provide. First Pres does not print paper goods for weddings. If you need advice on a local printer we are happy to help.

## Receiving Line

Receiving lines may be formed in several areas. Please work with the pastor and etiquette guidelines for proper order of participants in a receiving line. If you prefer to dismiss your guests from their pews in the sanctuary, this can also be done. Rice, confetti, or similar items are not permitted to be thrown in the church building or on the grounds.

Birdseed and bubbles are allowed outside.

## Reception

Rooms and spaces of varying size are available if you wish to have your wedding reception at the church. Fellowship Hall, Memorial Parlor, the Courtyard, and the Commons are areas to consider. Please refer to the building use policy, available from the administrative assistant, and the reception fee schedule. Keep in mind that previously scheduled functions will take priority and, therefore, it is suggested that reception arrangements be made at the same time you reserve the church for your wedding.

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# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND CHURCH POLICIES

## Honorarium

The pastor's honorarium acknowledges the pastor's extra duties, guidance, counseling, leadership, and supervision of the entire wedding process. The Session recommends a minimum honorarium of \$300 be paid for these services of the pastor.

## Parking

There are two parking lots on the north side of the building. The sanctuary has handicap accessibility from the main entrance on Fifth Street. Additional parking is available on the side streets and at nearby businesses (if not open for business).

## Administrative Assistant

At least one week prior to the wedding, the administrative assistant should be notified in writing through the church office concerning any needs as arrangement of chairs, tables, or public address system for the reception.



# WEDDING FEE SCHEDULE

A \$100 deposit is required to confirm your wedding date. The check should be made payable to First Presbyterian Church, noting that payment is the wedding deposit, and send to the church with the completed Wedding Reservation Form. Tentative dates will be held for a maximum of one month. The reservation is not regarded as complete until this deposit has been received and ceremony time established.

Remaining fees are due and payable one week prior to the wedding date. Individual checks will be made out to First Presbyterian Church and the pastor. On the memo line, please note the bride's last name and date of wedding.

## Facility Fee: Active Member:

- Sanctuary wedding      \$200
- Chapel wedding      \$150
- Courtyard wedding      \$120

## Facility Fee: Non-member

- Sanctuary wedding      \$600
  - Chapel wedding      \$395
  - Courtyard wedding      \$370
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# W E D D I N G F E E S C H E D U L E

Organist/Pianist \$200

## Candles

Unity Candle (if provided by the church) \$25

Pair of Candelabra (14 candles) \$35

Member Reception (basic facility fee - add. costs found in building rental guidelines)

◦ Fewer than 100 people \$200

◦ More than 100 person \$250

Non-member Reception (basic facility fee - add. costs found in building rental guidelines)

◦ Fewer than 100 people \$275

◦ More than 100 persons \$350

Honorarium for Pastor \$300

Pre-Marital Counseling

◦ Active member No Cost

◦ Non- Member \$50 per session

TOTAL \$

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# C O N T A C T

[www.firstpresbaycity.org](http://www.firstpresbaycity.org)

989.892.1591

805 Center Ave, Bay City, MI 48708

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Pastor: [Brenna@firstpresbaycity.org](mailto:Brenna@firstpresbaycity.org)

Admin Asst: [office@firstpresbaycity.org](mailto:office@firstpresbaycity.org)

Director of Music: [Music@firstpresbaycity.org](mailto:Music@firstpresbaycity.org)

Facilities Director: [Facilities@firstpresbaycity.org](mailto:Facilities@firstpresbaycity.org)