



## WEDDING POLICY

### *Congratulations!*

We rejoice with you in your engagement! All of us here at Peace Memorial pledge to work with you to make your wedding ceremony the day of your dreams! Planning a wedding can be very overwhelming and you may be wondering where to begin. The following policy will hopefully answer your questions and provide you guidance through the process.

### *Who Can Get Married at Peace Memorial?*

*“Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, 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.”*

- - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) Book of Order W-4.9002

Couples who are willing to approach their wedding with the understanding that marriage is an act of Christian discipleship, undergo a discernment process with the pastor, and meet the requirements of the state of Florida may apply for marriage at Peace Memorial. In order to be married in the church sanctuary or church grounds, your request - including dates and times - must be approved by the Session (governing board of the church) and the pastor.

It is not required that you be a member of the church to be married at Peace Memorial; however it is recommended that the couple be professing Christians. If you are not an active member of another congregation, we encourage you to attend Peace Memorial for a period of time before your wedding to build a relationship with the pastor and church community.

### *The Process*

- Read through the Wedding Policy and Wedding Fees
- Contact the church office and speak with Cara Ingalls, Office Administrator, to see if the date you have in mind is open on the church calendar.
- Fill out the Wedding Application and submit a deposit to hold your date. *This date is tentative and should not be publicized, nor should invitations be sent until the discernment process is complete and approval has been given.*
- Contact the pastor to arrange a meeting to discuss your plans for your wedding and arrange pre-marital counseling.
- Wait for final approval from the Session and Pastor (usually granted within a month's time).
- Contact the Wedding Coordinator.
- Contact the Director of Music.
- Finalize dates and times for the rehearsal and ceremony with the church office.

### *Pastoral Consultation*

Ministers in our tradition are required to provide pre-marital counseling with the couple (typically 3-4 meetings). The purpose of these sessions is to build a relationship between the pastor and couple, help think through the variety of issues they will face in their new life together, and to ascertain the couple's readiness for marriage. Pre-marital counseling typically takes place over a 1-2 month period. It is critical that you schedule this as soon as possible with the pastor. Final approval for the wedding service cannot be granted until the couple at least begins the counseling process with the pastor and he/she agrees to perform the ceremony.

### *Our Wedding Coordinator*

Once final approval of the wedding date is given, make an appointment with Dorris Folwell, our wedding coordinator (727 | 585.3813). The wedding coordinator's job is to help you plan the details of your service, assist you with making all the necessary arrangements, and provide logistical support so that your service proceeds smoothly.

### *The Church Musician*

Carol Alexander, Director of Music, must meet with the couple no later than one month before the ceremony (and before any order of ceremony is finalized). You may have some music in mind, and/or Carol will be glad to recommend some to you. We recommend the organ be used for most church music, but there is also a grand piano in the sanctuary. If you would like a soloist or special musicians to perform at your ceremony this should be arranged with Carol beforehand. Note: all musical selections are under the direct authority of the Director of Music and the Pastor.

### *The Rehearsal*

Almost all weddings include a rehearsal, typically held the evening prior to the wedding service. The rehearsal usually lasts an hour and it's important the entire wedding party be present so that everyone is clear and comfortable about what will happen the following day.

### *The Marriage: A Service of Worship*

*"The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The couple shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the pastor shall declare publicly that the couple are now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction."*

- - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) Book of Order W-4.0994

The following is a brief overview of items for you to think about for your wedding day:

**The Marriage Service:** A service of Christian marriage is more than a social convention. We believe the ceremony is a worship service. As such, it is appropriate for scripture, music, prayers, and proclamation to be part of the service. The pastor will provide the order of worship in consultation with the couple.

**Music:** Again, since the marriage ceremony is a worship service, the singing of hymns is always appropriate and is strongly encouraged. While there is wide latitude in the music that may be sung or performed at your wedding, ultimately all musical selections should glorify God and be suitable for a service of worship.

**Flowers and Decorations:** Peace Memorial has a variety of decorations you may wish to use such as candelabras, pew candles, kneeling bench, etc. Our Wedding Coordinator will arrange the use of these items with you. Your florist should make arrangements with the Wedding Coordinator to review the placement of floral displays. Tacks and nails may not be driven into church property and tape may not be used on painted surfaces.

**Photography:** We do not want anything to distract from the sanctity of the wedding so flash photography is not allowed during the worship service. Pictures may be taken both before and after the service and when the bridal party is entering and exiting the sanctuary. The service may be video recorded with approval of the pastor and wedding coordinator.

**Guest Pastors/Musicians:** The pastors and musicians of Peace Memorial ordinarily have the privilege and pleasure of conducting the wedding service in our sanctuary. Other ministers or musicians may be invited to take part, but only with the approval of the pastor and/or music director of the church.

**Other Information:** The church is an alcohol and smoke-free zone; neither is permitted on church grounds by Session policy. Please advise your wedding party and invited guests of this policy.

Seek approval of the wedding coordinator before arranging any rituals (i.e. sparklers, bird seed, flower petals, bubbles, cultural traditions, military practices).

Be respectful of church property and clean up before leaving the church grounds; items left may be disposed of. Vehicles should not be left in the parking lot overnight (parking is at a premium on Sunday mornings).

### *A Final Word from Rev. Scott*

*It is a pleasure and privilege to be part of your special day and know that Peace Memorial Staff and I will do everything in our power to make it so! My hope and prayer is that you will not only be married here, but that you will also consider making this your church home! If you would like to know more about what Presbyterians believe or about the programs and ministries of Peace Memorial please feel free to speak with me. Know that like the arms of God, the doors of Peace are always open to you!*

*Blessings,  
Pastor Bob*