



WEDDING GUIDELINES

The Christian Service of Marriage

At Central Presbyterian Church, weddings are occasions of both joy and reverence—joy because of the gifts of love and happiness that the 2 people have found in each other, and reverence because of the deep commitment they have made to live out their vows under the grace of God. The staff of Central Presbyterian Church is eager to help make your wedding a lovely and meaningful event and asks your careful attention to the following guidelines. Because the church receives many wedding requests, these guidelines are necessary to facilitate planning and to provide clarity both for you and for the church.

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) includes the following principals regarding marriage and weddings in the church:

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract For Christians, marriage is a covenant ...before God to live out together their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage, a lifelong commitment is made ..., publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

The Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God, normally conducted within the church. Dignity will be expected on the part of all present, and the service shall be under the sole direction of the Presiding Minister.

Wedding Date

Weddings are held on Saturdays. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, no weddings will be scheduled for that day.

Members who wish to be married at Central Presbyterian Church may reserve a wedding date after they have been on the active membership roll of Central Church for at least three months. To select the date and time for the wedding, contact the wedding coordinator by calling the church at 404.601.3126.

Non-member couples may reserve a date up to but not more than 1 year in advance, subject to the availability of dates.

Wedding Coordinator

Central Presbyterian Church provides a wedding coordinator to oversee the arrangements and details of the wedding service. Once the wedding date is confirmed, an appointment with the coordinator is required to discuss Central Church's wedding guidelines. Questions about arrangements, minister, music, fees, and use of the facilities will be discussed at this conference. The wedding coordinator is a member of the church staff and will work with the minister in charge of the wedding.

If an outside wedding consultant has been employed, it is requested that his or her involvement be limited to the reception and other nonchurch activities. The rehearsal and wedding service are the responsibility of the staff of Central Church.

Fees

Wedding Fees at Central Presbyterian are generally a flat fee for non-members. You may reserve a date up to but not more than nine (9) months in advance, subject to the availability of the pastors. A deposit of \$500.00 is required to confirm your wedding date on Central's calendar.

The prices include the following:

- Use of the facility
- Music (except for hiring of outside musicians)
- Rehearsal
- Wedding
- Security (Rehearsal and Wedding)
- Parking Garage (Rehearsal and Wedding)
- Minister's Fee
- Pre-Marital Counseling
- Wedding Coordinator's Fee

The cost for use of the Sanctuary is \$3,500.00.

The cost for the use of Rand Chapel is \$2,000.00

Premarital Counseling

Preparation for marriage at Central Presbyterian Church is required prior to the wedding. The couple is expected to make a reservation with the Presiding Minister as soon as possible after meeting with the Wedding Coordinator. The couple is also expected to attend the premarital counseling at least 3 months before the wedding, (This is not a responsibility to be postponed until the last few months or weeks before your wedding.) To find out about available dates and make a reservation, call the Wedding Coordinator at 404.601.3126.

Presiding Minister

A minister on the staff of Central Presbyterian Church will be the Presiding Minister at all weddings. The Presiding Minister from Central Presbyterian Church has primary responsibility for the order and conduct of the wedding service. Other clergy may participate at the invitation of the Presiding Minister. If you wish to include an assisting minister who is not on the staff of Central Presbyterian Church, please make your request to the Wedding Coordinator and the Presiding Minister.

Central Presbyterian Church is a faith community that holds as an essential part of its witness that God calls people to ordained ministry regardless of their age, gender, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. The assignment of ministers to perform marriages is undertaken on this basis. It is important for prospective wedding couples to understand and to accept this expression of the mission of Central Presbyterian Church when they are assigned their Presiding Minister.

The Presiding Minister designated to officiate at the service will contact the couple and set up an appointment to meet with them to counsel and to plan the service. Please know that their schedule may limit the minister's participation to the rehearsal and the service, and therefore he or she may not be able to attend the rehearsal dinner or reception.

The Service

A wedding at Central Presbyterian Church is an act of worship. Thus, the wedding service will be conducted according to the liturgy found in the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship and the guidelines established by the Worship, Music, and Arts Committee of the Session of Central Presbyterian Church. It is appropriate for the service to include special music, hymns, Scripture readings, and a brief homily by the minister. The Presiding Minister will review the order of service and appropriate options with the couple.

Readings

There are ordinarily 2-3 readings from the Bible in each wedding ceremony. A list of frequently used passages is included in your wedding packet. Central Presbyterian Church uses the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) in its worship services. Readings from outside of the Bible will need to be approved by the Presiding Minister from Central Church.

Music

Because the wedding service is an act of worship, music should be sacred and appropriate for formal liturgical worship. The couple should contact the Director of Music & Worship Arts of Central Presbyterian Church, who will assist them in choosing appropriate music for their service.

Organist

The wedding ceremony is a worship service. The music selected for the wedding should embody the same high standards applied to the music chosen for Sunday morning worship. In keeping with the seriousness

of the purpose of the occasion, yet reflecting its festive nature, the wedding music should serve to strengthen and deepen the meaning of the worship service.

Central's organist must be consulted in planning all music for the ceremony. The organist generally plays for all weddings held at Central. The organist's compensation is included in the wedding fees. The couple is responsible for arranging a conference with the organist.

Vocal Soloists and Instrumentalists

Vocal soloists are normally members of the Central Presbyterian Church Choir. The Director of Music & Worship Arts can make arrangements for such soloists and other instrumentalists if requested. An additional fee will be charged for soloists and instrumentalists. Guest instrumentalists and soloists must submit sample music to the Director of Music & Worship Arts at least one month prior to the wedding or arrange for a rehearsal.

Photography and Videotaping

We recognize that pictures and recordings of the wedding are extremely important to you. We endeavor to create maximum opportunity for pictures and recordings while maintaining the sanctity of this Christian service. Therefore, we have established the following parameters.

Wedding photographs may be taken in the courtyard, or in the Sanctuary or Rand Chapel before or after the wedding service. Once the wedding date and time is set, the Wedding Coordinator will provide a timeline for the period of time you will be at the church on your wedding day. This timeline will include opportunities and locations for photography before or after the ceremony.

In keeping with the atmosphere of worship, only the professional photographer hired for the wedding may take photographs during the service. During the service, the professional photographer may only photograph with existing light.

No photographs can be taken during the prayers. Only the professional photographer may take flash photographs, and these are limited to the procession of the honored guests, the wedding party procession, and the time after the benediction at the end of the service. The photographer must remain behind the body of the congregation at all times. At no time will "set ups" for formal photographs with screens for backdrops, etc., be permitted.

The ushers are to inform the guests that photographs and videos may not be taken once the guests have entered the church.

The service may be videotaped with the following restrictions: the taping must be done from the back of the Sanctuary or Rand Chapel or the back balcony in the Sanctuary; no auxiliary lighting equipment may be used; and the equipment may not be moved during the service.

We can provide live streaming of the wedding for an additional cost and this can be discussed with the Wedding Coordinator.

Decorations

The worship spaces are in themselves places of great beauty and do not need excessive decoration for wedding ceremonies. At certain times of the year the Sanctuary is adorned with temporary art installations (usually banners or hangings) which complement the architecture. These remain in place during weddings. Because careful and prayerful labor has made the Sanctuary and Rand Chapel places of beauty, simple decorations that enhance the atmosphere of worship but do not intrude upon it are most appropriate.

Candelabra, which must be provided by a florist if desired, are permitted in the chancel area. If potted plants are used, vinyl covering must protect the flooring from moisture and staining.

Flower arrangements are permitted on either side of the chancel area. No flower petals or aisle cloths are permitted. No nails, tacks, pins, tape, screws, or wire may be used in any part of the building or fixtures.

A kneeling bench and a wedding banner are available for the ceremony. Any decorations placed in the Sanctuary or Rand Chapel for a certain liturgical season, such as an Advent wreath or a Lenten drape, must remain.

The throwing of rice, flower petals, birdseed or confetti is prohibited anywhere in the vicinity of the church.

It is the couple's responsibility to inform the florist of these policies. Any questions regarding decorations should be directed to the Wedding Coordinator. Florists delivering flowers to the church must check in with the Wedding Coordinator.

The Wedding Coordinator should be included in the planning of the decorations. Florists will have access to the worship space no earlier than 60 minutes before the wedding. They must be finished with preparing the church 40 minutes prior to the wedding. Please be sure that the florist is aware of the need to have personal flowers (bouquets, boutonnieres, corsages, etc.) available for pre-service photographs. If the flowers in the church are to be used at the reception, the florist may not remove them until all of the guests have departed and pictures have been taken.

Bulletins

It is not necessary to have a bulletin (an order of service) for your wedding. If you wish to have a bulletin, you may arrange to have one designed in accordance with the church's guidelines and printed by an outside firm. The wedding coordinator will provide you with the church's guidelines for printed wedding bulletins. To assure accuracy and conformity with these guidelines, all bulletins must be reviewed and approved by the Presiding Minister and Wedding Coordinator. If the program has not been approved, you risk the possibility that it won't be used if it doesn't follow the Wedding Bulletin Guidelines.

Please plan to bring the printed bulletins to the church at the time of your rehearsal. The church is unable to accept early delivery of printed wedding bulletins.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are scheduled for Friday evenings at 6:30 p.m. Rehearsals start promptly and are intended to ensure a smooth ceremony, so all who have a role in the wedding are expected to be present. Please be prompt. The rehearsal does not include music. Please tell all rehearsal participants to enter at the location indicated on the wedding invitation.

Access to Church Space

Each wedding at Central Presbyterian Church has a three-hour window of time for preparations, the ceremony, and post-ceremony greetings and photographs. Wedding parties and their service providers may arrive at the church one hour before the start of the wedding ceremony. The church is unable to accommodate early arrivals.

Specific spaces, including dressing rooms and worship facilities, will be reserved for the wedding party and guests. These space reservations will be outlined in the timeline provided by the Wedding Coordinator.

Worship Facilities Available

Rand Chapel
Seating Capacity: 70

Sanctuary
Seating Capacity: 650

Dressing Facilities for the Couple

A dressing room is available for the couple's use on the day of the wedding. All other members of the wedding party are expected to arrive dressed. Facilities are provided for final grooming

Other Facility Information

Ordinarily, parking will be available through the rental of the Georgia Plaza Park facility located directly behind the church (see Wedding Reservation Form for current rates). This facility provides monitored parking for 200 cars and is accessible to the church by way of both stairs and elevator. The Wedding Coordinator will assist with arrangements

The facilities of Central Presbyterian Church are in constant use by a number of groups. Our commitment is to provide the best possible experience for all people using the church facilities. Please be considerate of those who are here for purposes other than for your wedding.

We ask your courtesy in helping to keep the church complex clean and litter-free. Please refrain from throwing rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, potpourri, or any other substance either inside or outside the buildings. The release of balloons/live animals and lighting of sparklers is prohibited. In our experience, the most effective way to greet the newly married couple is to ring the church bells as the couple leaves the Sanctuary.

There are no checkrooms or secure package storage areas in the Sanctuary or Rand Chapel. Please discourage guests from bringing gift packages to the church.

No childcare services or nursery facilities are available during weddings. Parents should make private, off-site babysitting arrangements for children whom they feel are too young to attend the wedding service.

Central Presbyterian Church is a smoke-free environment. Wine or champagne may be served in moderation if a reception is held in Tull Fellowship Hall. In the event wine or champagne are to be served at any such reception, Central Presbyterian Church should be given reasonable notification, and a written acknowledgment must be provided to the church stating the following:

"Neither Central nor any of its employees, agents or contractors is furnishing, selling, providing or serving the wine or champagne. It shall be the responsibility of the reception host to make appropriate arrangements to provide and serve the wine or champagne.

Further, the reception host agrees to exonerate, save harmless, protect and indemnify Central from and against any and all losses, damages, claims, suits or actions judgments and costs which may arise or grow out of any injury or death of persons or damages to property, including attorney's fees and court costs, arising out of and attributable to the negligence or acts, or omission of, or use by the reception host, their agents, servants, employees and guests."

Address of Church

Because the church facility has several entrances, it is important that the following be used on the wedding invitations to ensure that your guests arrive at the proper location:

Sanctuary and Rand Chapel:
The Central Presbyterian Church
201 Washington Street SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Georgia Plaza Parking Facility:
180 Central Avenue SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

License

A marriage license from the Fulton County Probate Court is required for marriage. Information regarding area locations, hours, fees, and proper means of identification needed may be obtained by calling 404.730.4692. A wedding at Central Presbyterian cannot take place without a license. Please give the license to the Wedding Coordinator at the time of the rehearsal. The presiding minister is the only person who signs the license following the wedding service. Central Presbyterian will be responsible for returning the signed license to the Fulton County Probate Court. Be sure to record the license number in your personal records and take note of how you may acquire a duplicate copy.

In Conclusion

If you have additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Wedding Coordinator, Melissa Johnson (mjohnson@cpcatlanta.org or 404.601.3126).

And remember that Central Presbyterian Church is your continuing “church home” after your marriage—a place to seek God’s Spirit and truth through worship, education, friendship, and service to others. We wish you every joy and blessing.