

**RULES FOR CHURCH WEDDINGS  
CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
2901 Rogers Avenue  
Fort Smith, Arkansas**

This church is governed by the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Of the solemnization of marriage the Directory of Worship properly states at the outset:

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

- a. In preparation for the marriage service, the minister asked to lead the service shall provide for a discussion with the man and the woman concerning
  - (1) the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
  - (2) the legal requirements of the state,
  - (3) the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
  - (4) the nature and form of the marriage service,
  - (5) the vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
  - (6) the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
  - (7) the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.

This discussion is equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse, and a marriage following a divorce.

- b. If the minister is convinced after discussion with the couple that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the minister shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision the minister may seek the counsel of the session.”

## REGULATIONS

The use of the Central Presbyterian Church for weddings is governed by the Session which has drawn up the following rules:

1. Weddings may be conducted in any place where the arrangements may conform to such practices as are in accord with Christian custom.
2. Central Presbyterian Church currently has co-pastors, one of whom will officiate at all weddings. If a family desires to ask other clergy to participate in the service, such a desire will be made known to one of the ministers so that he or she may extend the invitation to the clergy designated.
3. Members of Central Presbyterian Church would naturally have priority of dates over non-members. The exact date and place for weddings should be set as early as possible, **but at least two months in advance of the wedding**. Once approved by Session, the date for a non-member wedding becomes set on the calendar and is not subject to displacement.
4. The ministers, with endorsement by the Session, require counseling with the prospective bride and groom in order that the Christian meaning of marriage may be discussed.
5. If organ music is desired, the church organist will be engaged, if available. A substitute organist may be secured only if the church organist is unavailable, and with her/his approval.
6. If vocal music is desired, the family may make its own arrangements for a soloist. **The vocal music must be approved by the church organist at least two weeks before the rehearsal date.**
  - The texts of many popular/love songs are inappropriate for use in the sanctuary but might possibly be appropriate for the wedding reception. A simple test, in this regard, would be: would this song be appropriate for a regular Sunday worship service?
  - Soloist must use piano or organ accompaniment and may not use accompaniment tapes. The organist will be available to consult with the prospective bride and groom concerning appropriate musical selections. When decided upon, a planning conference with the organist is required, to review the musical sequence of the service.
7. For decorating the sanctuary, chapel or parlor, the florist selected will be required to observe the limitations and restrictions which follow:
  - a. The use of nails, screws, and wire in decorating is strictly forbidden.
  - b. No decorations of any kind may be placed on the Communion Table, pulpit, lectern, organ console, piano, baptismal font, or the choir pews. Neither the communion table nor baptismal font may be moved.
  - c. No candles or candelabra may be used in the church except in the chancel area or on the floor of the nave immediately in front of the chancel screen. The carpet must

be completely protected from all candle drippings. No candles or candelabra may be used on the Communion Table.

- If the service of a professional florist is not desired, arrangements may be made with the church for limited floral arrangements in the chancel. Wedding service groups, i.e. florists, photographers, caterers (if involved) need to be in contact with the church office to coordinate scheduling of deliveries, etc.

#### OTHER PRACTICES

1. Because of the active Sunday program of the church, there will be no Sunday weddings.
2. The rehearsal and the wedding will be conducted in the Christian spirit and with dignity. It is expected that members of the wedding party will refrain from alcoholic beverages before the rehearsal and before the wedding service. The bride and groom shall be under obligation to make this rule known to all other members of the party. No alcoholic beverages shall be served at the reception if held at the church. Central Presbyterian Church's buildings are smoke-free zones.
3. Flash equipment for pictures is not permitted during the ceremony, which includes the processional and recessional. In the case of the latter, the professional photographer alone may take photos. Her/his position and actions shall be unobtrusive.
4. The ceremony may be videotaped, but no artificial lights are permitted. No cameras will be allowed facing the wedding party or closer than the last row of seats in the sanctuary, chapel, or parlor. Aisles will not be blocked with equipment.
5. Rice and/or confetti will not be thrown in the church buildings or on the porches.
6. The appointments must be completed with the church secretary as soon as possible in order to assure dates on the calendar.
7. The wedding license shall be given the officiating minister prior to the rehearsal, or, if not possible, then at the rehearsal itself.
8. Any questions concerning the arrangements for weddings should be discussed with the church secretary.

## FEES AND CHARGES

**FEES AND CHARGES FOR WEDDINGS AND RECEPTIONS SHOULD BE PAID AT THE CHURCH OFFICE TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE OF THE WEDDING DATE.**

For families where either one or both hold membership in the church, these are the charges:

	<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>ORGANIST</b>	<b>SEXTON</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Sanctuary Wedding and Rehearsal	No charge	\$150.00	\$100.00	<b>\$250.00</b>
Chapel Wedding or Parlor	No charge	\$150.00	\$75.00	<b>\$225.00</b>
Reception Fellowship Hall	No charge	N/A	\$100.00	<b>\$100.00</b>

For non-members, the following are the charges:

Sanctuary Wedding and Rehearsal	\$600.00	\$150.00	\$100.00	<b>\$850.00</b>
Chapel Wedding or Parlor	\$200.00	\$150.00	\$75.00	<b>\$425.00</b>
Fellowship Hall	\$350.00	N/A	\$100.00	<b>\$450.00</b>
Honorarium for minister – Non-members: (Includes counseling, rehearsal, wedding)				<b>\$250.00</b>

**We have read and agreed to abide by the wedding policies and guidelines of Central Presbyterian Church.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)