

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHRISTIAN SERVICE OF MARRIAGE

The following comes from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, USA:

“Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people...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. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

“A couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the minister, who may agree to the couple’s request only if, in the judgment of the minister, the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to live their lives together according to its values.”

Welcome to Clarence Presbyterian Church!

We wish you well at this exciting time and are proud to have you use our church and its facilities for your special day. You will find that the air conditioned sanctuary and country setting are particularly lovely for a wedding at any time of year.

Please remember that, while this may be the venue for your celebration, it is our church home.

This is where our community of faith comes together to celebrate and practice our lives of faith, and will maintain this nature ahead of your ceremony and celebration. We trust that you will treat the church with the dignity and special care that it deserves.

What follows are some comments to ease your planning for a smooth, “no surprises” event.

Should there be other questions don’t hesitate to contact the Pastor or the church office for clarification.

CHURCH CAPACITY:

300

DATE:

The pastor should be notified as soon as possible concerning the wedding date in order to reserve the date for himself and the church sanctuary. You are invited to refer to the church calendar to check the potential availability of any date(s) you may have in mind at www.clarencepresby.org.

PASTOR:

The pastor always reserves the right of deciding whom he will or will not marry.

The Pastor will arrange for at least two meetings with the couple before the wedding to discuss their plans for the ceremony and for their life together.

If a couple wishes to invite a minister from another church to participate in the service, they should ask the pastor of the Clarence Church to extend a professional invitation to the other clergy person. Such invitation is at the discretion of the pastor and, if from another faith tradition, the approval of Clarence Presbyterian’s governing board.

MUSIC:

“Such music as accompanies the ceremony should direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage, and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent. If desired, the congregation may be invited to join in the singing of hymns at the beginning and conclusion of the service.”

In keeping with the understanding that this is the spiritual home of our congregation, we strongly encourage the use of music that is in line with the life of faith. The wedding service is a worship service and music is chosen to reflect worship. Sacred music is preferred over popular music. Couples should contact the Director of Music Ministry, Kotoe Shimojo (716-908-8590, skotoe@verizon.net) who can assist with suggestions and selections. Organist availability should be confirmed as soon as the church date is set. Should Mrs. Shimojo not be available, she can suggest substitute organists.

Special music (solos) and hymns add a great deal to the beauty, majesty and meaning of the service. All music for the wedding ceremony needs to be approved by the organist and/or minister.

BUILDING RULES:

This is a smoke and alcohol free building. Please review and sign the attached “Agreement to Abide By Church Policies Regarding Substances”.

Cell phones should be silenced during the service.

Rice is not allowed.

RESPECT FOR TIME:

The time for the Rehearsal and the Ceremony will be determined in with the pastor in advance.

Please plan to arrive on time, or a few minutes early, out of respect for all parties involved.

Should you desire advance entry, such may be coordinated through the pastor, but availability is determined by schedule of those involved (pastor, Wedding Facilitators).

FLOWERS:

“Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should not be unduly elaborate. In all the activities surrounding the ceremony, excessive expense and ostentation should be avoided.”

Florists should call the church (716-759-8396) during business hours to coordinate delivery.

There are three movable pedestals available. The Church is particularly sensitive to the use of tape or tacks.

DECORATIONS:

Any decorations (arbor, chuppah, etc.) need to be approved by the pastor prior to the Rehearsal.

Decorations, accessories and programs should be brought to the church at the time of the rehearsal. If using bubbles, they should be brought at that time also. Please note: No rice, confetti or balloons may be used due to environmental reasons. We do not allow aisle runners due to safety concerns.

CANDLES:

Unity Candles are often used and are provided by the family. Candelabras are available from the church.

REHEARSAL:

The pastor will arrange a time with you for a rehearsal of the wedding ceremony in the sanctuary. Ordinarily, this is the evening before the wedding. Facilitators will be present to assist.

BRIDE, GROOM AND ATTENDANTS:

THE GROOM, BEST MAN, AND USHERS should be *fully prepared at least 30 minutes before the service and should wait in Lower Fellowship Hall.*

THE BRIDE AND HER ATTENDANTS should enter *the building through the side door (east/2nd set) of the church to Upper Fellowship Hall. The bridal party will proceed from there to the Sanctuary.*

The facilitators will take care of the corsages and boutonnieres at this time.

The Upper Fellowship Hall may be used as a gathering space for families.

Please make arrangements for personal items to be picked up from the Upper Fellowship Hall shortly after the ceremony.

RECEIVING LINE:

Should the couple opt to have one, discuss in advance who will be in line and any protocol involved. Usual order: parents of bride, parents of groom, bride and groom, maid/matron of honor and best man, bride's attendants, groomsmen.

The Maid of Honor and Best Man, at ceremony's end, should meet with the Pastor in his study to sign the marriage license.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Please inform your photographer and camera-laden friends that flash pictures should not be taken during your wedding ceremony. This is a once-in-a-lifetime moment for you, and it should be dignified. It is also a worship service.

Well-meaning friends can be terribly distracting for you and everyone present. The minister will be glad to provide ample opportunity both before and after the ceremony for everyone to take pictures.

COURTYARD GARDEN:

The Courtyard Garden is available for your use. It is a lovely area for photographs.

RECEPTIONS:

The Upper Fellowship Hall is available for receptions, subject to availability. See "Facility Use Policy" for details and rates.

WEDDING FACILITATORS:

This is your memorable day. We are present to facilitate your plans in order for your rehearsal and wedding to run smoothly.

FEE SCHEDULE:

Custodian.....	\$ 75
Wedding Facilitators (2).....	\$ 75 ea.
Organist.....	\$ 250
Soloist.....	determined by soloist
Live Streaming.....	\$ 75
Minister’s suggested honorarium....	\$ 300

Non-member, in addition to above—

Building Use.....	\$ 1,000
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Payment of fees is due by the end of the ceremony, either by cash or checks made out to the particular individual (the only check that should be written to the church is for the Non-Member Building Use).