

**First Christian Church
Huntsville, Alabama
Wedding Ceremony Policies**

Your Marriage

Marriage is a happy but serious occasion. Two people commit themselves to a life of shared love and loyalty. They present themselves before God, seeking the Lord's confirming presence through a ceremony of celebration and worship. Family and friends support the couple by their presence and prayers as vows and promises are exchanged.

Your wedding should be dignified, beautiful, and impressive. The richness and depth of the Christian faith will enable you to express your love for one another within the context of God's ever-faithful love. We are here to nurture your worship experience with God and celebrate the commitment you make to one another in having a strong marriage. We believe this begins with prayerful planning for your wedding.

The Minister

Please make an appointment to visit with the minister concerning the extent and contents of premarital conversations may be required.

Your wedding is a religious service. To help you appreciate the worshipful nature of the ceremony and the sacredness of the Sanctuary, the minister requires that you attend a worship service at First Christian or another church of your choice at least four times prior to your wedding. We are an active faith community engaged in ministry and not a wedding chapel. An honorarium to pay for the minister's additional time is appropriate. The money is placed into a fund to continue professional education or church-wide mission.

Outside clergy members are welcome to perform your ceremony services if you choose, but it is the responsibility of the bride or groom to arrange this. The \$50 reservation fee must still be paid to FCC at the time you schedule your wedding date.

The Wedding Coordinator

The Wedding Coordinator is available for one personal consultation to aid in the planning of your wedding ceremony, as well as, telephone conversations and/or e-mails. She will arrive 30 minutes prior to and be present at the rehearsal, 2-3 hours prior to the wedding, and during the wedding to assist the wedding party and the minister. She will stay up to one (1) hour after the wedding for any necessary pictures and to make sure the church is in proper order. The fee for the Wedding Coordinator is \$200 for members and \$250 for non members. There is an additional fee for the coordinator if the reception will be at FCC. A specific list of duties is available from the coordinator.

The Wedding Date

Once you have read through the Wedding policies and filled out the Wedding Application Form, please phone the Wedding Coordinator so that she may receive the application from you. The date must be approved for the church calendar. After approval, \$50 (the aforementioned pre-marital counseling fee) will secure your wedding date on the church calendar. FCC will confirm a reservation for non-members up to one year in advance. Once a non-member has a wedding scheduled, it will not be moved for a member.

Schedule of Fees

Separate fee schedules are in place for participating members and non-participating members (or non-members). A participating member is one whose name is on record as having formally joined our church, who attend services regularly and support ongoing ministry through their tithes and offerings. Non-member children or relatives of members are not considered participating members. Please note there will be a \$50 additional charge for the Pastor, Wedding Coordinator, and Custodian if a wedding is held on holiday weekends. Also, there will be a \$25 additional charge for Audio Personnel. **A holiday weekend is considered to be Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. No wedding will be scheduled on Christmas Eve/Day, Good Friday, or Easter.**

Facilities

Only one wedding can be scheduled on any given day. No wedding will be scheduled on Sundays, Christmas Eve/Day through Epiphany (Jan. 6), Good Friday or Easter, **without written permission of the Senior Pastor or Church Moderator. If a wedding is to be held between the first Sunday of Advent and January 6, the wedding party may add additional decorations, but no existing decorations may be altered or removed.**

No weddings will be scheduled to begin after six (6) o'clock in the evening. If there is to be a reception in the Joyce Jones Parlor or McMains Hall, no wedding will be scheduled to begin after four (4) o'clock in the afternoon.

The wedding party and accessories must be cleared from the facilities by nine (9) o'clock in the evening.

Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the church or anywhere on the church property. Any evidence of such will result in forfeiture of the security deposit.

Smoking is not permitted in the church building.

Throwing rice and birdseed is prohibited. Bubbles are allowed outside the church only.

Food and drinks are not allowed in the Sanctuary and are permitted only in the kitchen or tiled areas. If you choose to use the parlor or commons area for part of your reception and the carpet becomes stained or discolored, part of your security deposit will be forfeited for a carpet cleaning fee.

The communion table and pastors chairs will be moved back, and the rail extension will be added so no gap appears in the photographs. Furniture or items other than the communion table and pastors chairs may be removed with the prior approval of the Senior Pastor. It will be the responsibility of the bride and/or groom to provide the labor necessary to move said furniture or items, all to be done under the supervision of the Wedding Coordinator, or a member of the Property Committee. This may be done only on the morning of the ceremony.

All personal items must be removed from bride's room and groom's dressing area immediately following the wedding ceremony. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to have a designated person to make sure all personal items are removed immediately following the ceremony.

Rental items, including floral, must be removed from the Sanctuary immediately following the wedding ceremony.

Any pre-recorded music, such as cassettes or CD's, must be approved by the Senior Minister before the ceremony.

The florist, caterer, etc., should contact the Wedding Coordinator the week of the wedding, so that a time can be agreed upon for entry into the church for setup.

Flowers and Decorations

The Sanctuary will be available to the florist for decorating purposes the day of the wedding at a time mutually agreeable between the florist and the Wedding Coordinator. The florist must be finished decorating at least 1 1/2 hours prior to the start time of the wedding. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to make sure a designated representative is present to supervise the placement of the flowers. The Wedding Coordinator will have the church unlocked at the mutually agreed upon time. The florist must remove any rental items from the Sanctuary immediately following the ceremony. We are able to move some items in the Sanctuary but not all, and the wedding coordinator will go over these items with you.

Florist/Wedding Party MAY NOT stay to decorate after the rehearsal the night before the wedding. All decorations must be put up the day of the wedding OR at a mutually agreed upon time by the wedding coordinator/florist/wedding party.

Any wedding held between the first Sunday of Advent and January 6 may add additional items to the Sanctuary, but may not alter or remove any of the existing items in the Sanctuary.

Photographers and Videographers

Photographers and videographers are asked to respect the dignity of the wedding ceremony and the Sanctuary. Photographers and videographers are not permitted to roam freely on the nave (Sanctuary floor) or chancel (elevated platform at front of Sanctuary) during the ceremony. However, the minister and Wedding Coordinator can provide photographers and videographer's locations in those areas where stationary pictures and videos can be shot. All photographs taken prior to the wedding must be completed no later than 30 minutes before the wedding. Please advise your photographer of these guidelines.

Wedding guests and family members may not take personal pictures during the wedding ceremony.

Caterers/Use of Kitchen

If you are planning your reception at FCC and paying for the use of our kitchen, obviously we are happy to accommodate your caterer, however it will be the catering staff's job to make sure the kitchen is clean (swept, mopped, etc.) before they leave the premises. If you have friends or family members using the kitchen during the reception, the same policies apply.

You may have a concern that is not covered among the above-mentioned issues. If so, please speak with the Wedding Coordinator (Lynn Burger, 256-426-2806 or Lynn415@comcast.net) about any questions or concerns. Any action that may be considered inappropriate for our Sanctuary could mean forfeiture of your security deposit. Please make sure that your wedding party and family members are aware of our policies here at First Christian Church.