

Wedding Guidelines



205 E. Kirkwood Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47408

This booklet was revised
February 15, 2022

License

When applying for the license, both of the prospective couple must personally present his/her own birth certificate, passport, or driver's license as proof of age. Anyone 18 years of age or older will be granted a license at their own request. Those 17 years of age or under must have the consent of the parent or legal guardian.

The license may be obtained from office of the Clerk of the Court in the home county (Indiana) of either of the couple. Out-of-state couples apply in the Indiana county in which the wedding is to be performed.

The couple is to bring wedding fees, the unsigned license and the marriage certificate to the rehearsal.

The officiating minister will keep the license and certificate until after the ceremony. Immediately following the ceremony, the officiating minister, wedding couple, and two witnesses sign the license and certificate. The minister will mail the license to the county courthouse. The marriage certificate is for the couple to keep. Following its signing, the officiating minister will give it to the a designated party for safekeeping.

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
205 East Kirkwood Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47408

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding a wedding at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This booklet will help answer your questions regarding your wedding. Please read it carefully.

At First Christian Church, we understand Christian marriage as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." Thus, along with baptism and the Lord's Supper, a marriage is an event through which the love of God becomes apparent.

As you plan your wedding, you will want to carefully consider the aspects of preparation highlighted in the following pages. Because we take weddings very seriously, you should not expect the policies outlined in this booklet to be set aside.

If, after reading the materials, you wish to schedule a wedding at First Christian Church, e-mail us at fcc@fccbloomington.org to set a tentative date and schedule an appointment to meet. Our staff will be pleased to work with you to help ensure that your wedding reflects your love for each other and for God from whom all blessings flow.

Sincerely,

The Staff of First Christian Church

Phone: (812) 332-4459

fcc@fccbloomington.org
www.fccbloomington.org

Weddings at First Christian Church

Christian Marriage

A wedding ceremony, when conducted in the church, is not just a civil or social occasion that takes place within the walls of a religious building. It is a service of worship, an act which celebrates God's love for humanity through the union of two people.

Like all worship services of the church, a wedding service seeks the blessing of God as the couple pledges their love. Because it is a religious service, anything that adds reverence is proper, and anything that obscures or detracts from the religious nature of the service is discouraged.

Scheduling Your Wedding

Setting the Date

It is very important that all arrangements for the service and rehearsal be scheduled as far in advance as possible, up to one year in advance. All dates are subject to the church calendar and staff schedules. Due to use of facilities and staff schedules, we do not schedule weddings after 6 pm on Saturdays, between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day, or the weekends of Palm/Passion Sunday, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving, and July 4.

Weddings at First Christian Church are normally officiated by the designated "Wedding Minister". Other ministers of the church may officiate at times. Clergy from a couple's "home" church is welcome to participate. The date of the wedding is set in consultation with the church staff and officiant who will coordinate the date with the church calendar and the organist. The date will be held for up to two weeks from the time of the initial inquiry. In order to "lock in" the date, you must schedule an initial meeting with the minister officiating your wedding, after which, a \$200.00 deposit is required.

10. If it is the desire of the family, flowers may be left in the sanctuary for the upcoming worship service.

Immediately following the wedding ceremony, all decorations must be removed from the building by the wedding party. The church cannot provide storage for decorations.

Flowers and Decorations

1. Florists should contact the church office or officiating minister to make arrangements for access to the church.
2. All flowers and decorations should be placed in the church no earlier than four hours before the wedding. Flowers and decorations should be completed at least two hours before the wedding ceremony.
3. Flowers or bows may be hung on the ends of the pews with elastic bands or hangers provided by the florist or wedding party. They may not be glued, pinned, nailed, tacked, taped, or stuck with tacky putty.
4. The church does **not** provide candles, candelabras, candle lighters, unity candles, flower stands, or plastic protection for the floor. The church allows for the use of the two brass candleholders on the communion table.
5. If other candles are used, they must be of the dripless variety.
6. Aisle runners are a tripping hazard and liability and are not permitted.
7. Because the center aisle is narrow, hurricane lanterns are not permitted.
8. Furnishings in the church, including banners and seasonal decorations, may not be moved or removed without permission of the officiating minister.
9. The wedding party will be held responsible for any damage, including but not limited to wax or water damage, water, damage or removal of church property caused by workers and/or the wedding party/guests. Damage expenses that exceed the deposit are the responsibility of the wedding party.

Rehearsal

A rehearsal is customarily held the evening before the wedding, usually between 4:30 and 6:30 pm. The wedding rehearsal should begin promptly at the scheduled time and will last approximately one hour.

Because the rehearsal is an integral part of wedding preparation, all members of the wedding party need to be present. We request that children not attend the rehearsal unless they are in the wedding party. The minister directs the rehearsal.

IMPORTANT: Please bring the marriage license, wedding certificate and all fees to the rehearsal.

The couple is asked to designate a friend or family member, who is not in the wedding party, to help coordinate the ceremony. At the rehearsal, the officiating minister will provide guidance.

Parking

There are a limited number of parking spaces directly in front of the church and on the west side of the church that will be designated for use by the wedding party. The parking meters are enforced.

Guests attending the wedding will need to park on the street or in available parking lots around the church (check signs for permit usage). A large parking garage is located at Fourth and Walnut Streets. We recommend checking the community calendar at the Visitor's Center for activities, such as ballgames, which may cause parking problems downtown before setting the date of your wedding.

Conference with the Minister

Ordained or licensed ministers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or clergy from recognized ministry partners will officiate at all wedding ceremonies. Upon the invitation and under the direction of the officiating minister, a guest minister may participate in the ceremony by giving the meditation and officiating during the covenant service (see page 7).

The vows made at a wedding signify a commitment and a responsibility to God, to one another, to the families, and to the church. They are never to be entered into lightly. Each couple will meet with the officiating minister for a minimum of three pre-marriage conferences. These must be scheduled at least three months prior to the wedding date. These meetings will focus on personal relationships, the marriage covenant, and family dynamics. The details of the wedding service will be discussed at one or more of the meetings. ***Responsibility for scheduling these conferences rests with the couple.*** If scheduling does not take place at least three months prior to the wedding date, the date will be cancelled, and your deposit returned.

Pre-marriage conferences are not optional. They are an important part of preparing for a lifetime commitment. If time or geography interferes with this work, virtual sessions are possible, or arrangements can be made with a recognized pastor in another location. (Please expect to discuss counseling fees.) This can be handled creatively, but again, these sessions are not optional.

Video Recording

Video recording is allowed provided the following policies are followed:

1. The videographer must communicate with the officiant before setting up any equipment.
2. All video will be from a stationary camera in a designated area in the back balcony or floor level behind the congregation. A discrete, unattended camera may be set up in other areas at the discretion of the officiating minister.
3. Under no circumstances may the videographer be in the front of the sanctuary or the front balconies.
4. No additional lighting is to be used.
5. All microphones, stands, cords, etc. must be carefully concealed and not placed in the aisles.
6. Care must be taken to ensure that there is no noise or other distraction.

Professional Photography

The wedding service is one of the worship services of the church; therefore noise, lights, and flash photography are not permitted during the service. The worship service is understood to begin with the music for the prelude. Please communicate the following guidelines with your photographer:

1. Pre-wedding photography in the sanctuary should be completed 45 minutes before the service.
2. FLASH photography may only be used during the processional and the recessional.
3. NON-FLASH pictures may be taken from the back balcony or floor level behind the congregation during the ceremony. The photographer(s) should avoid areas where they may be seen by or disturb the congregation or wedding party.
4. The minister of weddings will be happy to participate, upon request, in restaging any portion of the wedding.
5. Cameras and equipment should not be left unattended. The church is not responsible for lost or stolen equipment.
6. Under no circumstances should the photographer, members of the wedding party, or guests stand on the pews.

We recommend that the photographer attend the rehearsal and consult with the officiating minister at that time about the guidelines for photography during the ceremony.

The Ceremony

The wedding service is not a private affair or a personal rite. It is a celebration of faith. The overall effect and theological implications of the words and the music is an extremely important part of the premarital plans and discussions. This is an outline of a typical wedding service in First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Prelude

Processional

Greeting

Opening Prayer

Declaration of Intentions & Family Blessings

Scripture Readings

Special Music (if desired)

Meditation

Covenant Service

Vows

Symbol of Vows (rings)

Declaration

Blessing

Benediction

Recessional

Please include a line in your wedding bulletin that states "No photography (even non-flash) is to be taken during the ceremony." Also, we suggest you give strong consideration to not including children under the age of 4 in the wedding party. Wedding parties should be reasonable in size to accommodate the limited space at the front of the church. Pets are not allowed to participate in the ceremony.

Music

The music for the wedding serves to enhance a worshipful atmosphere, express the faith of the church, and offer glory to God. The organist/pianist at First Christian Church oversees and approves the music for the service. The FCC organist (or their designee) plays for all weddings.

At least 6 weeks before the wedding the couple should reach out to the organist to select the music and finalize the music selection one month before the wedding day. ***Responsibility for scheduling this meeting rests with the couple.***

Any music provided by the couple for use at the wedding must not be copied since it is illegal to reproduce copyrighted materials. All music will be returned after the wedding.

Organ, Piano & Instrumental Music

Wedding music should be celebrative and uplifting and reflect the joy of the occasion. The organist/pianist will offer a variety of suggestions and play through music considered appropriate for the prelude, processional, and recessional.

It is appropriate to include orchestral instruments as part of the wedding. Trumpet, flute, harp, and string ensembles are commonly used. The use of electrified/amplified instruments or pre-recorded music is discouraged. All instrumental music options must be approved by the organist/pianist. The organist can suggest competent instrumentalists. Any instrumentalist must be approved by the organist. *It is the responsibility of the couple to secure instrumentalists and pay any related fees.* The organist will meet with any instrumentalist for rehearsal for an additional fee. (See Fee Schedule)

Vocal Music

Vocal solos and ensembles need to reflect the spirit of worship and should be songs that offer praise to God, are songs of prayer, or blessings. Popular songs and traditional "love songs" are more appropriately used at receptions and will not be permitted. *It is the responsibility of the couple to secure the vocalist(s) and pay any related fees.*

Facilities

Available facilities include use of the sanctuary/narthex, dressing areas, and restrooms.

First Christian Church is a smoke/alcohol/drug-free environment. This policy is strictly enforced. Use of these substances or evidence of use such as empty cans or bottles will result in the forfeiture of the entire deposit.

Food and drinks are to be restricted to the dressing rooms, the Gathering Space, or Great Hall.

Birdseed, rice, and confetti are not permitted inside or outside the church. We appreciate your assistance in keeping the facility as clean as possible. Please talk to the officiant regarding the celebration as the couple leave the church building.

Sanctuary/Narthex

The sanctuary has capacity for 250 guests. On your wedding day, the facility will be available up to four hours before the service.

The narthex is the small gathering area just outside the sanctuary doors. It contains a stand for the guest book (guest book not provided).

Dressing Room

Dressing rooms for the wedding party are available up to four hours before the ceremony. A full-length mirror, clothing rack, tables, and electric outlets are available. Immediately following the ceremony, dressing rooms should be cleaned out and left in the order in which they were found.

Dressing rooms that are not cleaned and left in their original condition will result in the forfeiture of one half of the deposit.