

Wilmington Island Presbyterian Church
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WELCOME

We are honored that you are considering having your Christian wedding service here at Wilmington Island Presbyterian Church. Each church has their own traditions, customs and guidelines concerning weddings, and we are no exception. We hope you will find the following information helpful in understanding our traditions and customs so that your wedding will be a wonderful expression of your love for one another and your faith in God. It is a privilege to be a part of this important chapter in your life.

MARRIAGE IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Our church constitution defines marriage in the following way: "Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. 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."

It is expected that at least one of the persons to be joined is a professing Christian, and ordinarily an active member of a particular community of faith.

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING AT WIPC

Early planning is a must. The further ahead you plan, the more smoothly your wedding should go. The pastor prefers at least six months in advance but will make exceptions under extenuating circumstances.

1. Please read over all the information provided.
2. Call the Church Office (912-897-1840) to set an initial appointment with the pastor. This initial meeting will involve discussing your wedding plans, reviewing our wedding policies, and discussing the next steps needed to secure a wedding here at WIPC.
3. Fill out the "Wedding Information Form" and mail it to the church along with a deposit check for \$100 (made out to WIPC). This will begin the process of approving your request which can take up to a month. It is highly recommended that other wedding plans not be finalized before your request is approved.
4. Once the request is approved by the Session (church's governing body), the pastor will call to set up the initial pre-marriage counseling session. If the request cannot be honored, the deposit will be returned.

The pastor will endeavor to perform weddings at the convenience of the couple. Ordinarily, weddings are not scheduled on Sundays, secular holidays, church holy days or in the event of a previously scheduled church commitment.

Weddings of non-members are conducted solely at the discretion of the pastor. A decision not to perform a non-member wedding is not always a reflection on the worthiness of the couple; it may simply mean that the routine workload of the pastor prohibits additional non-member weddings.

OFFICIATING

The pastor of the church, or a minister designated by the pastor, will officiate at all weddings. If the couple wishes another member of the clergy to participate, the invitation must be approved and extended by the pastor with the concurrence of the Session. The wedding service shall be under the sole direction of the officiating minister, and under the supervision of the Session of the church.

PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING

After the wedding form has been returned to the church and the wedding approved, the pastor will schedule the first pre-marriage conference with the couple. Ordinarily, 3 or 4 sessions are needed to complete the counseling, although the pastor reserves the right to conduct additional sessions if needed. Couples who are not able to attend these sessions together may obtain the pastoral services in their town of residence or participate in a Pre-Marriage workshop with the pastor's pre-approval.

These pre-marriage counseling sessions are designed to allow the pastor and couple to get to know one another, to provide opportunities for the couple to reflect on their relationship, their roles and their goals, and to talk through and finalize the wedding ceremony. There will be some homework assignments given to spur conversation at the next session. With few exceptions, couples have said that these sessions helped them to better understand each other and the lifelong commitment they are about to make.

THE WEDDING SERVICE

Christian marriage is ordinarily celebrated in the sanctuary, but other arrangements can be made with the pre-approval of the pastor (and sometimes the Session). As a service of Christian worship, the entire marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the session. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service (read scripture, offer a prayer, etc.). Please talk with the pastor about how this may best work. Celebration of the Lord's Supper at the marriage service is an option, but it does require the approval of the Session, and care shall be taken that the invitation to the Table is extended to all baptized present.

The service normally will follow the standard Presbyterian wedding service format (which is similar to most Protestant wedding services). Although the basic format is standard, there is a great deal of flexibility given to the couple to personalize the ceremony by choosing particular prayers, scripture readings and vows. The pastor will provide resources to help in the selection process.

MUSIC

Music is an important part of the wedding service. Because a wedding is a worship service, the music should be appropriate for worship, directing attention to God and expressing the faith of the church. Secular songs that express a couple's commitment, feelings and dreams for one

another are ordinarily better suited for the reception. It is always appropriate for the congregation gathered for the wedding service to join in hymns and other musical forms of praise and prayer. Options can be discussed with the pastor as the ceremony is finalized.

Various instruments are appropriate, but if the organ is to be used, the church organist or his designee shall play for the service. The couple should contact the organist early to discuss the music. If a soloist is desired, the church can suggest names, or the couple can secure their own. Financial arrangements are between the soloist and the couple. The soloist should furnish the organist with a copy of any music to be sung well in advance of the service. It may be necessary to schedule additional rehearsal time for the soloist and the organist, at an additional cost.

The officiating minister, in consultation with the organist, has final approval of all music for the wedding.

DECORATIONS

In decorating the sanctuary, simplicity is usually best. The church will be opened two hours before the scheduled time of the wedding, and flowers may be delivered then (under certain circumstances, arrangements can be made for earlier delivery). No nails, thumbtacks, tape or anything else that may mar any surface of the church are to be used. Florist's wire may be used to hold decorations in place. The throwing of rice, bird seed or other items is prohibited. The church does not own a candelabra or a unity candle. If these items are desired, arrangements should be made with their florist or a party rental company.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The wedding ceremony is a service of worship of God, and as such, the taking of photographs should not distract from the worship experience. Flash photography may only be taken during the Processional and Recessional. Non-flash photography may be taken during the service from the back of the sanctuary using existing light. Close-ups of events during the Wedding Service may be re-staged after the service is concluded. It is the responsibility of the photographer to replace furniture or any other items moved while taking pictures. The couple is expected to inform the photographer before the wedding ceremony of these restrictions.

Video taping of the wedding service is permitted from the back of the sanctuary, but the equipment and personnel must remain stationary throughout the service. The videographer will follow the same guidelines as those for still photographers.

REHEARSAL

Normally, a rehearsal is scheduled for all weddings the evening before the wedding day. If another date is desired, this can be arranged with the officiating minister. The entire wedding party should attend, along with parents of the bride and groom and anyone else playing a role in the service. Other friends and family are welcome to be present. Rehearsals begin on time, so please make an effort to arrive early if possible. Usually, the rehearsal takes no more than an hour.

THE DAY OF THE WEDDING

The church will be open two hours before the wedding. The church parlor is available to the bridal party, and the groomsmen may use Fellowship Hall to get dressed. Food and drink are permitted in these areas but not in the sanctuary. Pictures of the wedding party taken inside the church should be concluded 45 minutes prior to the start of the wedding ceremony. Ushers should be available at this time for early arrivals. Pre-service music usually begins 30 minutes

prior to the start of the ceremony. Following the service, the minister will remain for a short time for photographs with the couple.

RECEPTION

Fellowship Hall may be used for a reception following the wedding service for an additional cost. The wedding party is responsible for arranging the set-up and take-down of the room.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

A couple must have a valid marriage license from a county in Georgia to be married, and it should be given to the officiating minister no later than the rehearsal time.

CONDUCT

Since the wedding is a service of worship, reverence is expected on the part of all present. Smoking is not permitted inside any church facilities. Alcohol may not be served or consumed on church premises. The service may be postponed if members of the wedding party are under the influence of alcohol.

PRINTED BULLETINS

If printed bulletins for the wedding are desired, it is the responsibility of the couple to have them produced and duplicated. The officiating minister will work with the couple on the form and content of such bulletins. Please include the following notice in the bulletin: "In order not to detract from this service of worship, please refrain from using flash photography."

FEEES

Below is the schedule of fees. For non-members, the officiating minister may be paid directly. Other fees, minus the \$100 deposit, are due to the church no later than two weeks prior to the wedding.

		Member	Non-Member
Base Fees	Church Use	\$125	\$300
	Minister	*	\$300
	Organist	\$200	\$200
	Support (opening/closing)		\$150

Optional	Fellowship Hall	\$ 75	\$200

Post Clean-Up Fees: Sanctuary \$125.00 Fellowship Hall \$75
(These fees are paid directly to "Sun Burst Cleaning INC")

If WIPC's pastor is not involved, there may be an additional fee to provide for a facility attendant to open and close building.

*There is no charge for the minister's services for a member or member's family, but an honorarium may be offered.