



POLICIES PERTAINING TO CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

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DENOMINATIONAL AND SESSION POLICIES

The First Presbyterian Church of Bismarck welcomes the opportunity to assist couples who desire Christian marriage and gladly aims to assist them to prepare for and to enter into this sacred relationship. In fulfilling their responsibilities to couples the ministers and staff of the congregation will be guided by the standards for Christian marriage as set forth in the Directory for Worship of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and specific policies established by the session.

1. Marriage

- 1.1. 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 man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.
- 1.2. 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:
 - 1.2.1. the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
 - 1.2.2. the legal requirements of the state,
 - 1.2.3. the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
 - 1.2.4. the nature and form of the marriage service,
 - 1.2.5. the vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
 - 1.2.6. the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
 - 1.2.7. the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.
- 1.3. This discussion is equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse, and a marriage following divorce.
- 1.4. If the minister is equally 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.
- 1.5. Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the session. (W-1.4004-.4006) The marriage ordinarily takes place in a special service which focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life. Celebration of the Lord's Supper at the marriage service requires the approval of the session, and care shall be taken that the invitation to the Table is extended to all baptized present. The marriage service may take place during the Service for the Lord's Day upon authorization by the session. It should be placed in the order as a response to the proclamation

of the Word. It may then be followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. (W-2.4010; W-3.3503)

- 1.6. The service begins with the scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The man and the woman shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in their new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the woman and the man are now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.
- 1.7. Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. (W-2.1004) The congregation may join in hymns and other musical forms of praise and prayer. Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshipers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life. (W-1.3034; W-1.4004-1.4005; W-5.5006)
- 1.8. A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of vows by the husband and wife, and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the woman and the man are already married to one another according to the laws of the state.
- 1.9. Under current session policy, weddings are generally conducted for church members and their families only.

2. Wedding Planning

- 2.1. In planning a wedding, it is advisable to have an initial conference with the minister as soon as possible. The date of the wedding should be cleared with the administrative assistant for program and communication and finalized with the officiating minister. Dates and times are set according to the minister's schedule and the availability of the church facilities.
- 2.2. The wedding shall be under the sole direction of the officiating minister. You may request the minister of your choice from the church staff or one of the ministers will be assigned to work with you. It is the policy of the church that marriage ceremonies in this church be performed by one of the staff ministers.
- 2.3. If you desire to ask another clergy to assist in the service, you should make your desire known to the officiating minister so that an invitation may be extended to the guest clergy.
- 2.4. At least one, but preferably three, counseling sessions will be scheduled with the officiating minister before the wedding. Please feel free to call upon the minister for advice and counsel at any time.
- 2.5. If the church is already decorated for a scheduled event such as Easter or Christmas, it is preferable to use the existing seasonal decorations in your wedding decoration theme. The paraments on the pulpit and communion table will be those of the present liturgical season. The church's candelabra may be used. The church has wedding banners that are available.

- 2.6. The communion table may not be moved. Aisle runners are discouraged.
- 2.7. The sanctuary main floor seats 300 persons with an additional 200 in the balcony. The chapel seats 60.
- 2.8. The use of any alcoholic beverage or illegal drugs is prohibited in the church building and in all adjacent parking areas. Persons under the influence will not be permitted to be a part of the wedding ceremony. The church building is also a smoke-free environment.

3. Wedding Fees

3.1. Below is a schedule of assessed fees.

3.1.1.	Building	No Charge
3.1.2.	Service Fee	\$75.00
3.1.3.	Organist	\$100.00
3.1.4.	Candle Oil	\$10.00
3.1.5.	Bulletin Photocopies	\$.25 Per Copy

3.2. There is no fee for the pastor’s services. An honorarium is appropriate.

4. Music

- 4.1. The church organist will play for all church weddings or will be consulted in the selection of a substitute. The bride and groom should consult with the organist at least one month in advance of the wedding date. Jan Candee is the church organist. She may be contacted at 701-223-1855 or 701-226-2120.
- 4.2. The choice of vocal and/or instrumentalist soloists and music must be approved by the officiating minister and/or the organist before the additional musicians are engaged.
- 4.3. Guidelines for music selection are provided in the addendum.

5. Rehearsals, Receptions, Photographs, Videotaping

- 5.1. The rehearsal is usually held on the day preceding the wedding and is conducted by the officiating minister. One hour should be reserved for the rehearsal and promptness at rehearsals is expected. Members of the wedding party shall conduct themselves, at all times, in a manner befitting the atmosphere of a place of worship, and it is the obligation of the bride and groom to make certain that this expectation is known and observed by members of the wedding party.
- 5.2. Wedding receptions may be scheduled for the church parlor or for Ramstad Hall using a caterer under church supervision.
- 5.3. A room near the parlor is reserved for the bride and her attendants. The groom and his attendants may dress downstairs and then gather in the parlor before the ceremony.
- 5.4. Finger food, such as a meat and cheese trays with crackers, is allowed. A refrigerator is available for bottled water, soft drinks, or juice.

- 5.5. Weddings are scheduled at least four hours apart. A wedding party may arrive at the church as early as four hours prior to the wedding.
- 5.6. The ushers shall arrive at least one hour before the wedding. They shall be responsible for seating the guests, lighting and extinguishing the candles, and ushering parents and guests after the recessional.

- 5.7. Photographs are permitted in the sanctuary up to forty five minutes before the ceremony and afterwards. Photographs may be taken during the procession and recession by a designated photographer. During the ceremony, photographs may be taken only by a designated photographer and only from the narthex entrance or the balcony, as quietly as possible, with existing light only. No flash photographs are permitted during the ceremony. The marriage ceremony is a service of worship, and any outside intrusion disturbs the reverence that should be a part of the service.
- 5.8. Guests shall be asked not to take pictures during the procession, ceremony, and the recession.
- 5.9. Video photographing of the ceremony is permitted, providing that the equipment and the photographer are located at the back of the sanctuary or in the balcony with the equipment on a tripod. Video taping is not permitted within the chancel area.
- 5.10 Wedding party decorations are to be removed promptly following the wedding.

6. Miscellaneous

- 6.1. Guests are requested not to use rice, bird seed, or confetti on the church premises.
- 6.2. The marriage license shall be presented to the officiating pastor at least two days before the rehearsal. The bride and groom are to contact the clerk of the county court to learn current requirements for obtaining a marriage license.
- 6.3. Weddings will not normally be scheduled on the Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Saturday before Easter, Easter Day, Memorial Weekend, Fourth of July Weekend, Labor Day Weekend, Thanksgiving Day, December 24 and 25th, or any other day when the church building is scheduled to be closed.
- 6.4. The church's wedding coordinator, Judy Lentz, will be the designated contact for couples. She may be reached at 701-255-3590.
- 6.5. Decorating may be done on the day of rehearsal or the day of the wedding. The wedding coordinator will be present to supervise.



Addendum

Suggested Scriptures for Weddings

Old Testament:

Text	Subject
Genesis 1:26-31	First Account of Creation
Genesis 2:18-25	Second Account of Creation
Genesis 24:62-67	Isaac and Rebekah
Ruth 1:16-17	The Words of Ruth to Naomi
Ruth 2:1-8, 3:1-14; 4:13-17	The Story of Ruth and Boaz
Psalms 8	Hymn of Praise
Psalms 128	The Blessings of Those Who Honor the Lord
Proverbs 3:13-23	On Wisdom
Proverbs 5:14-19	On the Joy of Faithful Love
Song of Solomon 2:8-13; 4:9-11; 8:7	Love Poems

New Testament:

Text	Subject
Matthew 5:1-10	The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:13-16	"You are the light..."
Matthew 7:21, 24-29	Building our Lives on the "Rock"
Mark 10:6-9, 13-16	"They are no longer two, but one . . ."
John 2:1-11	The Marriage at Cana
John 15:9-12	"Love one another as I have loved you."
Romans 12:9-18	The Christian Way of Life
I Corinthians 13	The Superiority of Love
Ephesians 3:14-19	"The Father in whom every family is named . . ."
Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33	Husbands and Wives
Colossians 3:12-17	The Qualities of Life in Christ
I John 4:7-16	"Let us love one another for love is of God."

Music Guidelines American Guild of Organists

The wedding is a service of worship and should therefore be planned with that in mind. The music is an integral part of the service and should be chosen with care.

The organist of the church should be given the first choice of playing for all weddings at his or her church. If for some reason the regular organist is not able to play for the wedding, it is courteous for the bridal couple to consult with the regular organist in finding a replacement.

The organist will provide appropriate music prior to the wedding service and following the recessional. The processional and recessional music is chosen in consultation with the couple.

The soloist should be capable of performing the music you choose and not require the assistance of the organist to learn the music. The organist is responsible for rehearsing with and accompanying the soloist during the wedding service. Copies of the music (not photocopies) should be provided to the organist at least two weeks before the wedding.

The organist's fee should be paid before the ceremony at the time of the rehearsal. The fee includes a consultation with the bridal couple. Accompanying the soloist is also included in the fee unless the number of songs requires extra rehearsal time. In that case the organist may ask for additional compensation. Because church music is a ministry, members of the AGO are willing to discuss the fee if financial limitations would prevent the couple from having music at their wedding.

The organists' time involves not only the wedding and rehearsal, but also the consultation time, preparation time for the music and rehearsal time with the soloist. The Missouri Valley Chapter, AGO, does not intend to recommend the fee paid to soloists; however, we believe that the compensation paid to the organist should be above that paid to soloists, because of the greater portion of the service that is the responsibility of the organist and the time required for proper preparation.

Music Suggestions

The Christian marriage ceremony is a sacred service of worship. Therefore, the music chosen for the service should be a part of the worship experience. Popular love songs or sentimental ballads can be used at the reception after the ceremony. Organ music that was written for entertainment rather than worship should not be used as a part of the service.

Solos

Title	Composer	Source
The Prayer	Sager and Foster	
The Greatest of These is Love	Roberta Bitgood	
A Ring of Gold	Donald Busarow	Concordia
By My Side	Thomas Porter	GIA
Gift of Love	Hal Hopson	Hope
In This Very Room	Harris	
Three Solos for Medium Voice	Held, Lovelace, Engel	Augsburg
Biblical Songs	Antonin Dvorak	International
O God of Love	Austin Lovelace	Augsburg
Not Two But One	Ronald Nelson	Augsburg
In His Care	Leland Sateren	Augsburg
O Perfect Love	Donald Busarow	Concordia
O Perfect Love	Healey Willan	H. W. Gray
Whither Thou Goest	Cassler	Augsburg
Whither Thou Goest	Richard Dewey	Fred Bock Music
A Wedding Blessing	Pelz	Augsburg
Wedding Hymn	Handel	BMI
Song of Ruth	Donald Regan	
Bless, O Lord, These Rings	Joseph Roff	G.I.A.
A Wedding Song	arr. Routley	Hinshaw
Love Grows Here	Besig	Glory Sound
This Is the Day	Brown	Sparrow
I Will Be Here	Steven Chapman	Sparrow
And On This Day	Tina English	Word Music
Wedding Blessings	ed. Paul Bunjes	Concordia
Seven Wedding Solos	Various Composers	Concordia
Folk Songs for Weddings	Various Composers	Hope
Time for Joy	Various Composers	Word Music
The Wedding	Various Composers	Birdwing Music
Contemporary Wedding Song Book	Various Composers	Hal Leonard

Hymns

Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty
 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
 Now Thank We All Our God
 Let All Things Now Living
 The Grace of Life Is Theirs

Prelude and Postlude

Title	Composer	Resource
Abide with Me (When thou art Near)	Bach	Johnson 1, Kimball
Adagio Cantabile	Bach	Bish
Adagio from Occasional Oratorio,	Handel	Wed I
Adagio from Sonata One	Mendelssohn	Bish, Johnson 1
Air	Bach	Kimball
Air	Grieg	Martin
Air I	Handel	Bish
Air from Water Music		Kimball
Air II		Bish
Allegretto	Handel	Bish
Allegro	Handel	Johnson 1
Allegro Moderato	Handel	Bish
Allegro from Concerto Op 7 #16,	Handel	Johnson 3
Aria	Handel	Wed I
Arioso	Bach	Johnson 1, Bish
Arioso	Corelli	Martin
Ave Maria Op 52 #6	Schubert	Kimball
Blessed Jesus We Are Here	Bach	Johnson 1
Bouree	Telemann	Kimball
Cantilena	Rheinberger	Wed I
Fantasy in A minor	Bach	Wed I
Fantasy in C Major	Bach	Wed I
Fantasia and Chromatic Fugue	Pachelbel	Wed I
Gavotte and Air	Wesley	Bish
Hail This Brightest of Days	Bach	Bish
Hornpipe	Handel	Bish
Intermezzo	Rheinberger	Martin
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	Bach	Bish
Lord of Love Unfailing	Hadyn	Martin
Lord, Thy Goodness Reigns	CPE Bach	Martin
O God, Thou Faithful God	Karg-Elert	Johnson 3, Martin
Oh Had I Jubal's Lyre	Handel	Bish
O Perfect Love		Johnson 3
Panis Angelicus (O Lord Most Holy)	Frank	Kimball
Pavanne	Elmore	Bish
Rhosymedre	R. Vaughn Williams	Three Hymns
Rondeau	Mouret	Bish
Sleepers Wake! A Voice is Calling	Bach	Kimball
Suite in D Major	Vinci	Johnson 1
Thanks Be to Thee	Handel	Johnson 3

Processional and Recessional

Title	Composer	Source
Air from Water Music	Handel	Kimball, Johnson, Wed I
Allegro Maestoso, Water Music "With Trumpets and Horns"	Handel	Bish Kimball, Martin
Bridal Chorus	Wagner	Bish
Wedding March	Wagner	Kimball
Canon in D	Pachelbel	
Festal March "Rinaldo"	Handel	Martin
In Thee is Gladness	Bach	Bish
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	Bach	Bish
La Rejouissance "Rejoicing"	Handel	Kimball
March from 3rd Organ Symphony	Widor	Martin
Now Thank We All Our God	Karg-Elert	Bish
Processional	Handel	Wed I
Promenade, Pictures	Moussorgsky	Kimball
Psalm XIX 19	Marcello	Bish, Martin, Wed I, Kimball
Psalm XX 20	Marcello	Wed I
Rondeau	Mouret	Bish
Suite Gothique	Boellmann	Wed I
Toccata	Buxtehude	Wed I
Trumpet Tune	Purcell	Bish, Martin, Wed I, Kimball
Trumpet Voluntary	Clarke	Wed I, Kimball, Bish, Martin
Wedding March Recessional	Mendelssohn	Bish, Kimball
The Sound of Music	Rodgers	