

ELIZABETHTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WEDDING POLICY & GUIDELINES



YOUR MARRIAGE

We, the Elizabethtown Presbyterian Church, are delighted about your upcoming marriage. We know that this is an exciting and happy time for you. In order that your marriage will not only be a happy one, but also one with deep spiritual meaning, we are looking forward to sharing in the wedding with you. As you make your plans, please consider carefully the following suggestions approved by our session.

As Christians and Presbyterians, we believe that Christian marriage is a solemn and sacred covenant. The laws of Christ, as contrasted with a civil marriage regulated by state laws, govern a church marriage. Christ, not the bridal couple, should be the focus of the Christian wedding.

A church wedding indicates the public sanction and approval by the church.

The church pledges its loyalty, prayers, and love to the couple. The couple, asking permission to be married in the church sanctuary, promises their loyalty to Christ's church and announces their intentions to live in marriage as Christian witnesses.

THE MINISTER

The wedding service is a worship service. The minister of the Elizabethtown Presbyterian Church officiates at all weddings unless a request for a visiting minister is made to the minister who in turn will ask for session approval. The church minister will then extend the invitation.

The Book of Order states: "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 a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

In preparation for the marriage service, the minister shall provide for a discussion with the man and the woman concerning

- (1) the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
- (2) the legal requirements of the state,
- (3) the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
- (4) the nature and form of the marriage service,
- (5) the vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
- (6) the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
- (7) the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments."

After the counseling session, the minister may elect to forego participation.

In accordance with the Book of Order, the minister is required, and counts it a privilege, to counsel prior to the ceremony with those planning marriage. This counseling may be in one or two or more sessions, depending on the particular situation. This counseling should be well in advance of the day set for the ceremony.

Before placing a date on the calendar, a couple shall meet with the minister regarding the service. After the date has been placed on the church calendar, the organist should be contacted to confirm the date.

THE CHRISTIAN WEDDING

The bride has the opportunity to choose a civil ceremony or a sacred wedding. If she chooses to be married in the sanctuary, she has selected a religious ceremony of worship and consecration. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the session.

It is extremely important to keep in mind that the church has but one desire, and that is to give God the proper place in your wedding so that it might be meaningful and lovely.

THE WEDDING GUILD

The Wedding Guild is a very important and helpful part of the wedding. There are several members of the congregation who make up the Guild. Check with the minister for the names. Choose one of the members who will be the wedding administrator and will assist the minister at your rehearsal and help direct the placement of your attendants. The minister will direct the wedding service and rehearsals.

REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is preparation for a service of worship. The same guidelines which apply to the ceremony apply to the rehearsal, specifically, but not limited to the use of alcohol. The minister shall be in charge of the rehearsal; it should start on time; and it shall be limited to a reasonable time period. The wedding license must be in the hands of the minister prior to the ceremony and it is recommended that the license be given to the minister at rehearsal.

SANCTUARY

The Session of the Elizabethtown Presbyterian Church, after prayerful consideration, has adopted the articles herein contained for the protection and preservation of the property and facilities, and to insure that the sacred atmosphere of the sanctuary, and the proper care of the education building be maintained. Any request for the exception shall be addressed to the session of this church. This article may be amended or extended by the session

The purpose of the sanctuary is to provide the congregation a place for the worship of God. This purpose is central in every function which takes place within the sanctuary. The natural beauty of the sanctuary creates an atmosphere of quiet beauty which is conducive to worship. Everything in the sanctuary should contribute toward this singular purpose.

Therefore:

The communion table can be moved only to the front of the flower rail under the cross. Staging or temporary framing or furnishings beyond the regular fixtures shall not be placed in the sanctuary.

There must be no damage to the woodwork of the sanctuary by those who decorate. The use of nails, screws, wire and adhesive tape is not permitted. A kneeling rail may be appropriately placed in front of the communion table if so desired. The church may provide the kneeling rail. The church upon request to reserve any pews will furnish markers. Simple floral and greenery markers for reserved seats may be tied with ribbon **or covered wire**. Rice may not be thrown in or around the sanctuary. Birdseed may be used outside.

MUSIC

Music is a most important part of your wedding. It should be planned well in advance of the wedding. It should conform to the standards of dignity in keeping with a holy service.

Music from The Hymn Book will add to the worshipful atmosphere of the service and will proclaim the Christian faith of the couple to be married. The church organist and minister must approve the music and are ready to help you with this part of the wedding.

The church organist will play for weddings, except by special arrangement and approval by the session, at which time an invitation will be extended by the director of music so our church policies can be discussed and the music approved.

Suggested Wedding Hymns and Songs:

- 171 "The King of Love My Shepherd Is"
- 335 "Though I May Speak"
- 510 "Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts"
- 531 "Not For Tongues of Angels"
- 532 "O, God, You Give Humanity Its Name"
- 533 "O Perfect Love"
- 534 "The Grace of Life is Theirs"
- 535 "Go With Us, Lord"
- "Jesus, Joy of Man's Desiring"
- "The Lord's Prayer"
- "The Wedding Prayer"

Processionals:

- 262 "God of Our Fathers"
- 473 "For The Beauty of The Earth"
- 478 "Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven"
- 482 "Praise Ye The Lord, The Almighty"
- "Trumpet Voluntary"

Recessional:

- 262 "God Of Our Fathers"
- 376 "Love Devine, All Loves Excelling"
- 420 "God OF Grace And God Of Glory"
- 464 "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"
- 531 "Not For Tongues of Heavens Angels"
- 532 "Oh God, You Give Humanity Its Name"
- 534 "The Grace of Life is Theirs"
- 555 "Now Thank We All Our God"
- "Psalm XIII"
- "Trumpet Voluntary"

FLOWERS

Flowers and other decorations should not be unduly elaborate. If any more than regular decorum is to be used in the sanctuary, it shall not exceed

- (1) the placement of flowers on the flower rail or on the flower table,
- (2) the placement of two candelabra arrangements in the chancel---greenery such as palms or ferns may be used at the base of the candelabra.

Only non-drip candles can be used. Candle lighters and snuffers are available and should be used to extinguish candles. For candlelight services window candles, for safety reasons, must be non-drip candles or battery candles.

Only live flowers and greenery are recommended be used in the sanctuary. Wedding parties often wish to donate flowers to the church on the following Sunday. (If you desire, please consult with the church secretary at least one week in advance.)

PHOTOGRAPHER

Since the wedding service is a worship service, **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHS** should be taken during any part of the wedding ceremony. Videos may only be taken from the back of the church.

Family and friends of the bride and groom should be made aware of this prior to your wedding day.

USE OF FACILITIES

There are no fees required for the use of the sanctuary for weddings and rehearsal for members of the Elizabethtown Presbyterian Church.

Non-members are allowed to use the sanctuary with session approval. There is a fee of \$200 for non-members.

[NOTE: This should be consistent with our Building Use policy, currently under review.]

Classrooms are available for dressing prior to the wedding. The fellowship hall and kitchen may be used for receptions. A punch bowl, tablecloth, cups and plates are available for use.

(The number is limited—be sure to check ahead of time.) All items should be counted before and after the use. You will be asked to replace shortages.

Any personal property of the wedding party should be removed immediately following the service. The wedding party is responsible for seeing that all rooms used are left clean and in good order. You may wish to hire the **church's cleaning service**.

FEES AND HONORARIUMS

Weddings require special services on part of the church staff. It is necessary to indicate the financial responsibilities involved. The following fee schedule details these costs.

- There is no building use fee for church members.
- A fee for the Music Director is required. The basic fee covers a consultation with the bride, the rehearsal, and the wedding.
- An honorarium for the officiating minister(s) (given by the groom) and wedding director(s) (given by the bride) is customary and should be given directly to those individuals. A good time to handle this is at the rehearsal. (See fee schedule for suggested amounts.)

Fee Schedule:

Music Director	\$250
Childcare during Ceremony	\$20 per hour per worker
Suggested honorarium for officiating minister(s)	\$200
Suggested honorarium for Wedding Director(s)	\$200
Instrumentalist(s)	\$120-\$250

BLADEN COUNTY MARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS

from the Bladen County Register of Deeds office as of February 12, 2013

- The premarital physical is no longer required.
- Both applicants must provide their Social Security numbers and verification of the number. Applicants may present a Social Security Card or a W-2 Form or company pay stub with name and number for verification.
- An alien admitted to the United States for permanent residence or to engage in employment must be issued a Social Security number. Applicants who are not eligible for a Social Security number may obtain a marriage license by signing an affidavit attesting to this fact. The AFFIDAVIT can be printed from the web site or is available at the Register of Deeds Office.
- Under the age of 14 is unlawful to marry.
- Applicants 14 to 15 years of age must attain a Court Order by District Court Judge authorizing the marriage.
- Applicants 16 or 17 years of age must have certified copies of their birth certificate and a written parental consent by parent having full or joint legal custody of the underage party; or by a person, agency, or institution having legal custody or serving as a guardian of the underage party. Parental consent form is available at the Register of Deeds Office.
- All Applicants must present a copy of their birth certificate if under the age of 21.
- Divorced applicants must provide the month and year divorce was finalized. Applicants recently divorced (within 30 days) must present original or certified copy of divorce decree. There is no waiting period between the divorce and applying for the new license.
- The license is good immediately upon issuance and is valid for 60 days in the state of NC. It must be returned to the Register of Deeds' Office in the county in which it was issued within 10 days after the marriage celebration by the person performing the marriage or be subject to being guilty of a misdemeanor (Class 1) and a \$200.00 fine.
- The fee for the marriage license is \$60.00. Cash or checks accepted.
- Marriage licenses are issued between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.
- If you plan to be married by the magistrate, the fee will be \$20.00. Please contact their office for information regarding office hours or the ceremony.
- If you need a copy of your marriage license, you may obtain it at the office in person or you may request it by mail. Certified copies are \$10.00 each. Please be sure to sign your request if request is sent by mail.
- To speed up the processing time of your marriage license, you may print out the Work Sheet for Preparation of Marriage License Form and bring the completed form to the Register of Deeds Office with you.
- • If both applicants cannot come to the Register of Deeds Office, one may complete the Affidavit in Lieu of Personal Appearance. This form must be properly notarized and brought to our office with the second applicant. Both applicants **CANNOT** send in the form for issuance of licenses.