

Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church

Wedding Guidelines

Preface on Marriage- Excerpts from the Directory for Worship Presbyterian Church (USA)

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 Officiating Minister asked to lead the service shall provide for a discussion with the man and woman concerning:

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

This discussion is equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after death of a spouse, and a marriage following divorce.

If the Officiating Minister is convinced, after discussion with the couple, that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the Officiating Minister shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision, the Officiating Minister may seek the counsel of the session (the governing body of the local congregation).

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 Officiating Minister and the supervision of the session. 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.

The service begins with 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 that support them in the new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God, the Officiating 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.

Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the Church. 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 worshippers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

A. Scheduling

1. The date and time of both the wedding and the rehearsal (if needed) must be set in consultation with the Officiating Minister.
2. It is expected that clergy on the staff of Red Clay Church will perform all marriage ceremonies.
3. We welcome the participation of other clergy. However, this must be cleared with the Officiating Minister prior to the invitation being extended to clergy outside the congregation.
4. Because weddings are services of worship performed by the Church, our facilities are not "rented" for weddings of non-members performed by clergy not associated with Red Clay Church.

B. Counseling

1. Pre-marital counseling must be arranged with the Officiating Minister performing the ceremony. Ordinarily, this counseling shall include at least three meetings with the couple. Therefore, arrangements should be made at least three months prior to the day of the wedding. Couples will also secure the services of a professional counselor approved by the Officiating Minister in addition to the meetings with the Officiating Minister. Red Clay recommends Brandywine Pastoral Counseling, 302-651-0223.
2. The counseling provides an opportunity for the Officiating Minister and the couple to become better acquainted. It is also an important time for the couple to discuss with the Officiating Minister many of the issues and concerns facing married couples in our day, and the role of religion and faith in marriage.
3. It is the couple's responsibility to make themselves available for the counseling.

C. Music

1. All music arrangements must be made through Red Clay Church's Director of Music. The couple is responsible for contacting the Director of Music as soon as possible after the wedding date has been set with the Officiating Minister in order to assure the services of the Director of Music and to set a time for a consultation on the selection of the music for the wedding.
2. Ordinarily, Red Clay Church's Director of Music will provide organ music for weddings. If other musicians are desired, they must be approved by the Director of Music, in conjunction with the approval of Red Clay Session's (governing body) Worship & Music Committee. Other musicians shall not be invited until the Director of Music has been consulted.
3. The use of vocal soloists or other instruments must be arranged and coordinated with Red Clay Church's Director of Music. Soloists and instrumentalists shall not be invited until the Director of Music has been consulted. The Director of Music will coordinate rehearsal times with the vocalists or instrumentalists.
4. In selecting music (organ, vocal, etc.) it should be kept in mind that the wedding is a service of worship. (Refer to the Preface Statement.)

D. Photography

1. Flash photography is not permitted during the wedding service. Non-flash photographs during the service may be permitted, if arranged previously with the Officiating Minister.
2. If there is an "official" photographer (professional or volunteer) for the wedding, she/he must remain at the rear of the Sanctuary (behind the last person in the congregation) or in the balcony at all times. It is requested that the photographer meet with the Officiating Minister briefly before the ceremony to review the ground rules.
3. If videotaping is desired, the camera and other equipment must be placed in the balcony at the rear of the Sanctuary. A hand-held camera may be used at the rear of the Sanctuary or (behind the last person in the congregation). Additional lighting is not permitted.
4. Photographers and persons video-taping must stay out of the aisles and behind the congregation at all times.

E. Flowers

1. Simplicity is encouraged. The use of elaborate or excessive decoration is strongly discouraged. (refer to Preface Statement.)
2. Flowers may not be placed on the Communion Table in the Sanctuary. Ordinarily arrangements are placed on the two side flower stands in the Sanctuary.
3. If the wedding flowers are to be offered for the regular Worship of the congregation of Red Clay Church, the Church office should be notified so that acknowledgement can be given in the worship bulletin for that Sunday.

F. Candles

1. Candelabra are available for use at weddings. Pew candles are also available for use on the center aisle.
2. All candles will be provided by the Church. (See appropriate fees.)

G. Miscellaneous

1. The marriage license and checks for the various fees shall be brought to the Church Office at least one week prior to the wedding date. No rehearsal or wedding shall be conducted until all fees have been paid.
2. The throwing of rice, birdseed, rose petals, confetti, or others items is not permitted inside or outside of the Church building.
3. For safety reasons, aisle runners are not permitted.
4. Red Clay Church is not responsible for any articles left in our facilities after a wedding.
5. No alcoholic beverages or smoking are permitted anywhere on Church property.
6. All persons in the wedding party (including the bride and groom) must be at the Church 45 minutes prior to the ceremony.
7. Paraments will remain the color for the church year, and all posters and items related to the church will remain in place.

8. Special requests will be decided upon by the Officiating Minister in accordance with Church policies.
9. Weddings will normally not be scheduled on the following dates:
 - New Year's Day
 - Holy Week or the Saturday preceding Easter
 - Memorial Day
 - July 4 Weekend
 - Labor Day Weekend
 - Thanksgiving Day or the following weekend
 - The Month of December

H. Facilities for Reception

1. Fellowship Hall (the Church's fellowship hall located beneath the Sanctuary) may be reserved for wedding receptions. This room has a capacity of 100 persons.
2. The Church's kitchen may be used by caterers for the preparation of food for the reception. In such a case, the caterer must provide all kitchenware needed and must leave the facility as it was found.
3. The custodian will open the building two hours prior to your wedding time. Arrangements for more time prior to the wedding must be agreed to by the custodian, and the couple will pay an additional fee to the custodian of \$15 for up to 1 extra hour, \$30 for up to 2 extra hours, etc...

I. The Rehearsal

The rehearsal is intended to assist in assuring that the members of the wedding party understand the flow of the ceremony, have clarified any questions regarding individual roles and responsibilities in the service, that the procession and recession are properly ordered, and that the ushers understand their responsibilities. The Board of Deacons of Red Clay provides wedding coordinator assistance for all church logistics during the rehearsal and ceremony. The Officiating Minister will direct the rehearsal. Professional Wedding Consultants/Directors are not permitted to direct the rehearsal or ceremony.

J. Payment of the balance of fees

1. A check for candles, the use of the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, and/or the Kitchen shall be made payable to "Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church".
2. Checks for the Officiating Minister, Organist, Soloist, and Custodian shall be made payable directly to those individuals.
3. Fees can be negotiated when there is financial limitation. Such discussion should take place with the Officiating Minister.