

Wedding Policies and Procedures

REVISED 10/31/2016

**INTRODUCTION**

The wedding ceremony is one of the most sacred duties a pastor performs under the ordination and authority of the church. It is a service of worship which mirrors the Sunday morning worship service and thus requires thorough preparation, both spiritual and temporal. The marriage service is not a dramatic production. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) says the following about marriage and weddings in the church: “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.” “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.”

The pastor and Session of Lemoore Presbyterian Church are eager to help make your wedding a meaningful, faithful and joyous experience, and ask your careful attention to the following guidelines. Careful judgment and study have gone into the church’s preparation of wedding policies and regulations. These policies were formulated by the pastor and staff and approved by the Session.

**RESERVING A WEDDING DATE**

Inquiries about having your wedding at Lemoore Presbyterian Church should be directed to the Office Secretary, who will check date availability and connect you with a pastor. Unless specifically requested, the pastor with whom you will work is subject to their availability. The bride and groom must personally confer with the pastor before the date can be confirmed and announced and the church reserved.

Weddings may not be scheduled when in conflict with use of any of the Church’s facilities. Furthermore, weddings, wedding rehearsals and wedding receptions shall generally not be scheduled on Sundays, New Year’s Day, Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday (or during the days of Holy Week), Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

**PASTOR**

The pastor of Lemoore Presbyterian Church may agree to perform a wedding only after a conference with the bride and groom. All couples are urged to make their appointments with the pastor a minimum of three months prior to the wedding. Session must be informed of all upcoming weddings.

The pastor of Lemoore Presbyterian Church has primary responsibility for the order and conduct of the wedding service. If you wish to include an assisting pastor who is not on the staff of Lemoore Presbyterian Church, please make your request to the officiating pastor.

**PRE-MARITAL CONVERSATIONS**

Couples will participate with the pastor in a series of conversations about marriage prior to the wedding service. It is the responsibility of the couple to initiate contact with the pastor to set up these meetings. If these conversations do not take place, the pastor has the right to withdraw from participating in your wedding, and remove the wedding date from Lemoore Presbyterian Church’s master calendar.

The pastor also has the right to withdraw from participating in the wedding and/or remove the wedding from Lemoore Presbyterian Church if s/he, in her/his sole discretion, determines that the couple should not be married based on the pre-marital conversations and/or any other information that becomes known to her/him. In the event of such an occurrence, any deposits paid to use the church facilities shall be refunded.

**THE SERVICE**

A wedding service at Lemoore Presbyterian Church is an act of worship. Thus, the wedding service will be conducted according to the liturgy found in the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship and the guidelines established by the Session. It is appropriate for the service to include special music, hymns, Scripture readings, and a brief homily by the pastor. The officiating pastor will review the order of service and appropriate options with the couple.

**MUSIC**

Because the wedding service is an act of worship, music included in the service must be appropriate for worship. The pastor and organist of Lemoore Presbyterian Church will assist the couple in choosing appropriate music for their service. Arrangements for special musicians such as vocal soloists and instrumentalists will be approved by the pastor. An additional fee may be charged for soloists and instrumentalists provided by the church. If you would like to include a guest musician in your service, please talk to the presiding pastor and the organist.

**RECEPTION AT CHURCH**

Members of Lemoore Presbyterian Church can request a post-wedding reception at the church. The ability to have the church clean and set up for worship and other activities on Sunday morning is the primary factor in determining whether a reception can be held. A fee schedule covering room usage and custodial fees can be obtained through the church office.

**MARRIAGE LICENSE**

The State of California requires that all couples married in the state have a valid marriage license. The couple is responsible for obtaining the license prior to the wedding date, and shall bring it to the pastor no later than the time of the wedding rehearsal. The pastor will not perform the wedding ceremony without a valid marriage license.

**COUPLE’S RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to read this wedding policy carefully and to see that its provisions are kept by all members of the wedding party. The couple will also need to sign and return the statement page at the back of the policy confirming that it has been read and understood. This is to ensure that there will be no misunderstanding or deviation from the established guidelines and policies.

**SUMMARY**

These guidelines and procedures are an effort on the part of the church to strengthen the witness of a Christian marriage and to make it a more meaningful experience for the couple concerned. All members of the wedding party are expected to assist the church in preserving the dignity and sanctity of the occasion.

**General Information for Brides and Grooms**

Like you, the members and staff of Lemoore Presbyterian Church want to ensure that your wedding day is as memorable as possible. The promises you will be making to each other and the environment of the service of worship that surrounds them should be the focus of the wedding. This is best accomplished through good planning. For that reason, we want to be sure you have necessary information about church policies and practices so that you can incorporate this information into your planning well in advance.

A wedding coordinator from the church will be assigned to assist the pastor at your ceremony. They will act in a coordinating role to ensure that assigned responsibilities are carried out and that the worship ceremony goes as planned. This person will attend both the rehearsal and ceremony.

**Alcohol and Tobacco Products**

Because we care about you and your health, Lemoore Presbyterian Church is a smoke-free facility. In addition, no alcohol is allowed on church premises. We ask that all members of your wedding party refrain from alcohol consumption for at least 24 hours before the service (including the night before, if the wedding is in the morning). All are expected to comply with this policy. Please ask them to do so.

**Candles**

During the ceremony, special candles may be used to signify the joining of families into a new one. These family candles are yours to provide, and yours to keep after the ceremony. If you plan to use family and unity candles, please bring them with you to the rehearsal. Other symbols may also be used with the pastor’s approval.

**Dressing at the Church**

There are areas available for the bridal party to dress at the church. However, if the bride and groom wish to remain out of sight from each other until the ceremony, care should be taken to coordinate use of dressing rooms and restrooms, as the only way between the two is through Fellowship Hall. If you plan to dress at the church, we recommend that you designate a friend to be responsible for getting personal items such as purses, electronic equipment and clothes of everyone to your cars prior to the ceremony.

**Guest Books**

The narthex (southwest corner of sanctuary) is the best location for your guest book. A guest book podium is available for use. Guest book attendants should plan to be in place 45 minutes prior to the time of the ceremony, and should close their books when notified by the wedding coordinator. Please provide your guest book attendants with this information.

**Photography**

The wedding ceremony is a worship service and, as with other worship, there are some restrictions on photography. They will not prevent your photographer from obtaining excellent pictures of your wedding, but these restrictions will preserve the solemn mood of the ceremony, and ensure that your own pleasure and concentration on each other is not compromised.

Please inform your photographer of these restrictions in advance. If your photographer has not worked at Lemoore Presbyterian Church in the past, please ask that they call the Church office for information, and talk to the pastor prior to the service.

The restrictions:

1) Flash may not be used at any time during the ceremony.

2) All filming and photographs during the ceremony must be done from the balcony using available light. An exception will be made only for a professional photographer using a silent camera from the back of the sanctuary.

Please discourage guests from bringing cameras to the ceremony. It is advised that a note be included in the ceremony bulletin advising guests that photography during the ceremony is restricted to the balcony and no flash may be used at any time. If you wish, this note can state that no photography is allowed (except for your official photographer).

**Video Equipment**

You are welcome to employ a videographer for your service. There are, however, several conditions which the videographer must meet. Please speak to the pastor about this well in advance of the wedding. Video equipment will only be allowed in the front of the sanctuary if it is out of the way and out of sight, and it must be remotely controlled.

**Rice, Birdseed, Flower Petals, Confetti, etc.**

We ask your courtesy in helping to keep the church buildings and grounds clean and litter-free. No rice, birdseed, flower petals or confetti may be thrown in or around church premises as these items are difficult for us to clean off carpets and sidewalks (and they will likely be trapped in your dresses, veils, cummerbunds, only to appear for the rest of the day or evening!). The release of balloons is also prohibited.

**Sanctuary Set-Up**

You are welcome to add to the beauty of our sanctuary with flowers in the chancel and decorations on the end of the pews (to be attached in a way that doesn’t damage the finish –

please see the wedding coordinator for help). Chancel furniture (e.g., the communion table) is intentionally placed in the sanctuary and may not be moved.

**Security**

The church is a public building, and requires the same attention to personal safety, the care of children, and safeguarding of possessions that you would exercise in any public space. Therefore, you must keep any valuables with you at all times, or put them in possession of a responsible person with your family or wedding party.

**Ushering**

If you plan to have guests, parents, grandparents, etc. ushered to their seats, please instruct your ushers to be ready to begin ushering 45 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony. They will light the candles/candelabra (other than family/unity candles) prior to the start of guest seating, seat guests, and do any necessary ushering after the ceremony. The wedding coordinator assigned to your wedding will help the ushers learn their duties at the rehearsal.

**Wedding Consultants**

Preferences and circumstances sometimes make the services of a wedding consultant desirable for a couple. Once you enter the church, the consultant becomes a guest and the pastor and LPC wedding coordinator are in charge. (Consultants may assist the bride in the dressing room, if desired).

**Questions?**

If you have questions not answered by this information sheet, please direct them to the pastor who will officiate at your wedding through the church office at 559-924-5658, or via email at davedack@gmail.com.

**Wedding Fee Schedule**

The Session of Lemoore Presbyterian Church in consultation with the professional staff has established the following fees. If there are any questions concerning any part of this information, you may consult with the pastor who will be officiating at your wedding. These fees are subject to change and have been established for church members, who are active participants in the life of the congregation.

**All fees are due and payable by personal check or cash at the wedding rehearsal or the day prior to the wedding.** An invoice for all building use and custodial fees may be mailed to the couple from the church office approximately two weeks before the wedding. In the event of additional charges (such as more than five hours of work by the wedding custodian or unusual cleanup needs) another invoice will be sent to the wedding couple following the wedding.

**FEES**

When the bride and/or groom, or a parent of the bride and/or groom, is a member:

1. Refundable Deposit: $100.00
2. Wedding Coordinator: $100.00
3. Organist: $100.00
4. Other musicians: $50.00 each
5. A/V & Recording: $50.00
6. Pastor: $300.00 (includes premarital counseling)

**TOTAL Up to $700**

When the bride, groom, and parents are not members:

1. Refundable Deposit: $100.00
2. Wedding Coordinator: $100.00
3. Facilities Use: Sanctuary: $100.00 Fellowship Hall: $200.00
4. Organist: $150.00
5. Other musicians: $50.00 each
6. A/V & Recording: $50.00
7. Pastor: $300.00 (includes premarital counseling)

**TOTAL Up to $1,050**

**Wedding Policy Declaration Of Understanding**

The undersigned hereby acknowledge that they have read and understand the terms of the foregoing wedding policy.

Bride\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Groom\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please return this signed declaration to the church to secure your wedding date. Your request for a specific date is considered incomplete without this declaration.