

Introduction

Your wedding is one of the most important events in your life. It can also be very complicated and stressful. We at South Side Christian Church have developed this Wedding Policy to help you plan your marriage service and make your experience here go as smoothly as possible. The policy includes procedures and requirements governing the use of the facilities and a fee schedule listing the costs for conducting the wedding.

Members and Non-Members

While member and non-member weddings are treated the same, the fee schedules for each is different based on member status at the time application to marry at South Side is submitted (see the attached fee schedule).

- Members of South Side Christian Church are those persons who have publicly affiliated themselves with the congregation by Affirmation of Faith or Letter of Transfer from another Christian congregation.
- Members and children of members shall be considered members for the purposes of wedding planning.

The Role of The Church in Your Wedding

Marriage is the sacred union between two people who have committed their lives to each other in love forever. Weddings in the Church are done in presence of and blessed by God in the name of Jesus Christ. As such, they are conducted in a worship setting with reverence and respect appropriate for the seriousness of the occasion. Normally, at least one of the couple has been baptized in the Christian Faith, and both want their marriage to be consecrated and nurtured with the presence of Jesus Christ.

South Side Christian Church is a Church, not an event venue

The church facilities exist to help the congregation carry out its ministry and mission in this community in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Part of that ministry and mission is to celebrate the union of two people in the sacred bond of marriage.

Since marriage celebrations are part of the greater faith and worship life of the congregation, the following statements apply equally to all members and non-members whose weddings are conducted at South Side Christian Church:

- **The marriage ceremony is a Service of Worship.** As such, all marriage services at South Side are conducted in the Name of Jesus Christ and include prayer, scripture readings, and music appropriate for use in worship. Services are conducted with reverence and in accordance with the traditions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the congregation at South Side, and the wider Christian community.
- **South Side Ministers preside at South Side weddings.** The minister or ministers called and appointed as pastor(s) of South Side are the spiritual leaders of the congregation and responsible for the pastoral care and worship life the congregation. While guest ministers are permitted to participate, the pastor of South Side or his/her representative will preside at all weddings performed at South Side.

- **Availability of the building for weddings is determined by the needs of the congregation** in general and the availability of the minister or ministers of the congregation. Specific guidelines for scheduling and availability are approved and enacted by the Trustees and the Church Board.
- **All couples planning to marry at South Side will meet with the minister** of the congregation to plan and prepare for their wedding. The schedule and content of the planning and preparation is at the discretion of the presiding minister.

Three Types of Weddings

1. **Traditional Service** – full service in the sanctuary, including the rehearsal and ceremony. Guidelines are below. Fees for building use, clergy honoraria, and other personnel costs are in the attached fee schedule.
2. **Chapel-Style Service** – a private wedding in the sanctuary with no rehearsal. The minister is available for Chapel Services between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM Monday – Thursday. Appointments are required. Other times may be arranged in consultation with the minister. Same day appointments will be accommodated if possible. Sanctuary decorations, music, dressing areas, etc. are not included in the Chapel Service. See the fee schedule for costs.
3. **Off Campus Wedding** – Scheduled individually with the minister as an arrangement between the minister and the couple and will depend on the availability of the minister. The general understanding or the nature of marriage as stated above still apply. The presiding minister will retain the right to judge the appropriateness of the chosen ceremony venue. Fees will be determined by the presiding minister. The honorarium should reflect the minister's time and any expense incurred due to travel, etc.

Scheduling and Planning your Wedding

The dates for Traditional weddings, whether in the sanctuary or off campus, should be set nine to twelve months in advance. The regular needs and ministry of the congregation take precedence and will determine availability of your chosen date. The scheduling process is as follows:

1. **Contact the Church office** during regular business hours (8:00 am – 4:30 pm Mon through Friday) to check availability of the sanctuary on your chosen date.
2. **Meet with the minister** to confirm initial arrangements, review the Wedding Policy and Procedures, and discuss the minister's requirements in preparation for the service.
3. **Submit your non-refundable full payment of the sanctuary use fee** to the church office to secure your date. See the attached fee schedule. ***The wedding date will not be entered on the church calendar until the first meeting with the minister has been completed and the sanctuary use fee is paid.***

Secure the Date

Once the sanctuary use fee has been received, your date will be reserved, and no other activity that would be expected to interfere with your wedding will be scheduled.

Date Changes and Cancellations

In the rare event the couple needs to change dates to meet changing circumstances, changes must be made in consultation with the minister and the church office. We cannot guarantee your new first choice date will be available, especially as the original date grows closer.

In event of cancellation, your building use fee will not be refunded.

The Funeral Exception

Funerals for members of the Church are normally held in the sanctuary. The Church will NOT schedule a funeral at the Church on the day of your wedding. Funerals MAY take place on the day of your rehearsal and will be scheduled so as not to interfere with the rehearsal. If a funeral is scheduled at the church on rehearsal day, wedding decorations cannot be placed in the sanctuary until after the funeral. Funeral dinners in the Family Life Center may take place on the day of your wedding, since the areas involved are not in conflict.

Meetings with the Minister

The minister(s) of the Church require all couples preparing for marriage to meet with him/her before the wedding. These meetings are required in preparation for the wedding. Failure to show up can result in your wedding being removed from the Church calendar.

- The number and schedule of meetings are determined by the minister in consultation with the couple.
- The first meeting with the minister must take place before your wedding date goes on the calendar. The content of this and subsequent meetings is at the discretion of the presiding minister.

Planning and Preparation

- The couple will meet with the minister as the minister requires. The meetings will cover plans for the wedding and other topics as may be appropriate.
- The music planned for use that day must be submitted to the minister 60 days before the wedding date for review and approval.
- All music used in connection with the service must be acceptable and appropriate for worship.
- Guest organists must be approved by the church organist.
- The couple must schedule music rehearsal times for musicians, sound techs, and soloist apart from the wedding rehearsal at times mutually convenient to the couple and the music provider. All music rehearsals must be scheduled with the church office to insure the church is open and church staff is present to assist you.
- THE COUPLE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTACTING ORGANISTS/MUSICIANS, IF YOU SO CHOOSE, TO SELECT YOUR MUSIC AND ARRANGE FEE PAYMENT.
- The list must be submitted to the minister as stated above for review and approval.

Marriage License Requirement

- Couples planning to legally register their marriage must get a Marriage License from the State of Ohio.
- The license is acquired from the Probate Court at any county court house in Ohio. The license is normally issued through the couple's county of residence. Ohio licenses may be acquired up to 30 or 60 days in advance, depending on the county.
- ***To acquire a license the couple must appear together and in person at the court house.*** The fee differs from county to county. Some counties may have a waiting period from the time of application until the license is actually issued, so it is wise to apply well in advance of your wedding day. *Check with your court house for fees, waiting periods, and documents required by the court for the license.*
- The license must be presented at the church office or to the minister no later than the time of the wedding rehearsal.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drugs

- Advise your guest and members of the wedding party that smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building, including restrooms and dressing areas.
- Alcoholic beverages and drugs are not permitted anywhere on church property. Those who do not honor this restriction will be asked to leave.
- ***Any member of the wedding party who comes to the wedding obviously under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted to participate in the service.***

Rehearsal and Wedding Service

Traditional weddings normally take place in the sanctuary. The rehearsal is usually held the evening before the wedding service.

Rehearsal

- The rehearsal takes place in the location where the wedding will take place. The purpose is to help members of the wedding party understand their role in the service, where they will be during the service, and how to get there. The rehearsals will take about 60 minutes.
- The church opens for the rehearsal 60 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time.
- All church visits related the wedding are by appointment only to make sure the building is open and church staff is available. Wedding parties may expect access to the sanctuary from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm the day before the wedding. If a conflict occurs, as with a funeral in the sanctuary, access for the wedding party will be arranged in consultation with the church staff.
- **The rehearsal is for members of the wedding party only. The presence of others who have no direct responsibility in the wedding service is discouraged.**
- **Musical rehearsals for soloists, sound techs and other musicians will not be included in the wedding rehearsal. These rehearsals should be scheduled for another time.**

The Wedding Day

- The **church will be open two hours prior** to your scheduled wedding time and available for your on-site preparation and decoration. The building will be available for two hours after the wedding to complete photography and other activities. At that point the custodian and wedding assistants will begin preparing the sanctuary for Sunday worship.
- **The church will be available for two hours after the service for photography.** Any photos that include the minister(s) should be taken first. See the section on photography below.
- Rooms are provided for the bridal party to dress at the church before the service. That is *dress only*. Plan to do hair and makeup before you come to the church to dress.
- If you plan a balloon release, DO NOT bring the balloons into the building beyond the outer lobby. All balloons must be kept in the outer lobby and distributed to guest as they exit the building to prevent accidental release inside the church.
- **The use of silly string, glitter, confetti and other messy substances are prohibited.** Bubbles may be used but must be kept outside the building at all times.
- **No food or drink is permitted in the sanctuary at any time.**

Decorations, Worship Furniture, and Sanctuary appointments

- The sanctuary seats 385 people. The center isle is 50 feet long with 14 pews on either side.
- The church will open two hours prior to the wedding for flower delivery and decoration of the sanctuary. Flowers may be delivered on the day of the rehearsal and stored where directed by the church staff. No refrigerated flower storage is available.
- The sanctuary will be available by appointment for decoration if it is not already scheduled for another purpose such as a funeral.
- The church is normally open from 9:00 am and 4:00 pm weekdays. Call the church office to arrange your time. All visits must be by appointment. **If you are decorating during the day the day of the rehearsal, all decorating must be completed between 9:00 and 4:00 in that office staff leaves at 4:00 and you will be asked to leave so they can lock up.**
- **Funerals will take precedence over wedding decoration the day before the wedding.**
- The choir chairs will be removed from the chancel and the communion table will be moved against the chancel wall at the foot of the cross by the custodian.
- The piano may be moved to the side if necessary by the custodian, wedding assistants, or other church staff.
- All other worship furniture, banners, candelabra, and other appointments will remain in place.
- Furniture in the Narthex will not be moved.
- A kneeling bench is available and frequently used in wedding services.
- A Unity Candle base is available. The couple must provide the candle.

- The only other candles permitted in the sanctuary are those already present: the two seven-branch candelabra in the chancel and the two candles on the Communion Table. No additional candelabra, hurricane lamps, etc. are permitted.
- Aisle runners may be used but are not provided by the church.
- Bows and flowers are permitted on the pews only if attached with clamps provided by the church.

After the Service

You as the bridal party are responsible for keeping your areas clean. You are responsible for removing everything you brought to the church with you when you leave. That includes clothing, hangers, garment bags, flower containers, boxes, papers, and all personal items and waste. All personal items left behind will be disposed of immediately following the wedding.

Church Staff at Your Wedding

In addition to the presiding minister, South Side Church requires the services of several people to assist with your wedding. They are:

- **Wedding Assistants** – Two people to assist with the “behind the scenes” management of the rehearsal and wedding. They open and close the church and are available to assist the wedding party in a variety of ways.
- **Sound Technician** – operates the sound system and coordinates pre-recorded music.
- **Custodian** – sets up and prepares the sanctuary and other areas needed before the wedding. Cleans up and resets the building for worship after the wedding.
- **Office manager** – coordinates scheduling and other administrative tasks required for the wedding.

Photography

Pictures are a large part of every wedding. Your wedding is no different, but we do ask that you follow these simple guidelines in capturing your special day. The couple will be responsible for organizing those you want to be photographed at the church and have them present in the sanctuary after the wedding to help move the process as smoothly as possible so you can get back to enjoying your special day with your guests. The photographer is invited to the rehearsal. It will help them to have a general sense of how the wedding ceremony will move.

- Pictures involving the officiating minister(s) should be taken first.
- No flash pictures may be taken once the Service starts.
- Videotaping is permitted. (See instructions.)
- Photographers are permitted to photograph the wedding party as they come down the aisle during the procession.
- No photographer or other persons taking pictures during the ceremony are permitted to move or stand in such a position as to be disruptive of the devotional atmosphere of the occasion. The official photographer may take pictures without flash from the doorways at the rear of the

sanctuary. Any closeups of the ceremony itself can be “re-staged” with the minister and bridal party after the wedding.

- Pictures in the sanctuary must be completed 30 minutes before the start of the ceremony.
- **All photography must be concluded within a maximum of two hour after the end of the wedding.**
- All pictures taken in the Sanctuary are to be tasteful.
- Please do not encourage guests to take pictures during the service but invite them to take pictures afterwards. Please also ask all guests to turn off cell phones and pagers.

All posed photographs that can be taken before the ceremony should be. The wedding party should arrive early to pose for pictures. Any special photography set-ups should be cleared with the officiating clergy prior to set-up.

Worship Bulletins

Some couples provide a worship bulletin for their guests. The bulletin typically includes the Order of Worship, list of participants, and special announcements or instructions.

South Side is not able to print wedding bulletins in house. Most of the bulletin formats and fancy papers designed for wedding bulletins are not compatible with our printers. A number of quality print shops are available in the area who can assist you with your invitations and bulletins. Ask the minister for a copy of the order of service to give to your printer.

If you are providing a bulletin, please include the following announcement:

“To preserve the spirit of reverence and worship during our wedding, we respectfully ask that you turn off your cell phones and refrain from taking pictures and videos until the conclusion of the service.”

Videography

Videotaping is permitted in designated areas. Please advise your videographer that the same rules apply to videography as are outlined for general photography. Prior to the service, the videographer may tape the procession from the center aisle in the back of the church. Please inform the minister of your video intentions prior to your rehearsal.

Wedding Receptions Using the Family Life Center

The South Side Christian Church Family Life Center (FLC) may be available for rental to host your wedding reception. Receptions are requested through the church office and arranged separately with the church trustees and kitchen committee.

No smoking or alcoholic beverages are allowed in any part of the church. To rent the FLC for a Saturday reception – the reception must begin before 4:00 PM and conclude by 9:00 PM to allow clean-up of facilities for Sunday morning classes and worship services. For a schedule of fees to rent the FLC please request the document titled “Reception/Event Schedule of Fees”. The church Trustees must approve all requests for usage of the FLC.