

# GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH FORT WORTH, TEXAS

This handbook is dedicated to Dr. L. D. Anderson, who served as Senior Minister here for almost 50 years. He celebrated the marriages of literally thousands of couples during that time. It is in honor of, and with gratitude for, his rich witness to Christian marriage, that we give this book to couples who plan to be married in our church.

The Wedding Ministry  
First Christian Church



## *Welcome and Statement of Purpose*

First Christian Church in Fort Worth, the city's first congregation, founded in 1855, welcomes you in celebrating the love of God. We hope your wedding will be an occasion for just that – a celebration of God's love and the way that love is reflected in your love for each other. It is in that spirit that we welcome you in planning a wedding in this historic building.

A wedding in this church is a service of worship. It is first and foremost about the worship of God, with God and Jesus Christ at the center of what we do. It is not merely a social occasion, but a covenant-making in which you will pledge before God to be faithful to each other and to remember that Christian marriage is a true partnership of love, respect, and mutuality. In coming to this church for your wedding, you make clear that you want your wedding to be a sacred service, symbolic of a life lived in the presence of God.

We wish you every happiness in your life together and sincerely hope that your wedding in our church will be a sacred and beautiful occasion. We urge you to make participation in a local church a vital part of your new relationship together.

Please be assured that we would welcome you as members of First Christian Church. You will find our worship services to be inspiring, strengthening for daily life, and always, to the Glory of God.

If you have any questions or special requests regarding our guidelines, please feel free to discuss them with the senior minister, or other staff members.

In order to make available to inquiring bridal parties the accepted customs of the church, the following procedures are presented.

## **1. Scheduling and Making the Reservation**

The scheduling of all arrangements for the wedding, the rehearsal, and the reception should be made as far in advance as possible with the Coordinator of Weddings. This includes all dates, exact hours, and facilities desired. The church phone number is (817) 336-7185, or you may contact by e-mail at [ftwfirst@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ftwfirst@sbcglobal.net) or on our website at [FortWorthDisciples.org](http://FortWorthDisciples.org). The office will put you in touch with the Coordinator of Weddings.

**Your reservation for the sanctuary will be confirmed and placed on the church calendar when the following conditions have been fulfilled:**

- A. The exact date and hour have been decided for the rehearsal and wedding, and approved by the Coordinator of Weddings.**
- B. The Senior Minister has agreed to perform the service, or has approved one of the church staff ministers as the officiating minister.**
- C. One thousand dollars has been placed on deposit in the church office. Checks should be made out to First Christian Church. Please indicate on the check the wedding date and the last name of the bride and groom. The balance will be due ten days before the wedding.**
- D. The contract and insurance requirements have been submitted.**

Tentative dates may be cleared by phone, but your wedding date will not be placed on the calendar until \$1000 of the total fee is paid.

The building and scheduled rooms will be open **two hours prior** to the wedding. Specific arrangements will have to be made with the church office or Coordinator of Weddings if more time is needed, and then only one hour additional time is granted. There will be an additional fee of \$200 for the custodian and utilities for this additional hour. (See fee chart on page 7.)

A total of four (4) hours are allocated for weddings in the basic fee. This includes two (2) hours for pre-wedding preparation, and the remaining time for the ceremony and photography. Any additional time before or after the wedding must be negotiated with the Coordinator of Weddings at an additional charge.

## **2. The Officiating Minister**

The Senior Minister and staff of First Christian Church consider it an honor and privilege to participate in a Christian marriage service. One of our ministers directs both the wedding and the rehearsal and performs the wedding service after a pre-marital counseling session has been held with the couple. **You will be responsible to call the church office to schedule a meeting with the officiating minister and the Coordinator of Weddings upon the confirmation of your wedding date.**

## **3. Church Member/Non Member Weddings**

The church facilities and minister's services are available without charge to members and their immediate family (parents, guardians, and children) who have actively participated in First Christian Church for at least ten months prior to the wedding. Custodial, staff, and other designated fees still need to be paid by church members.

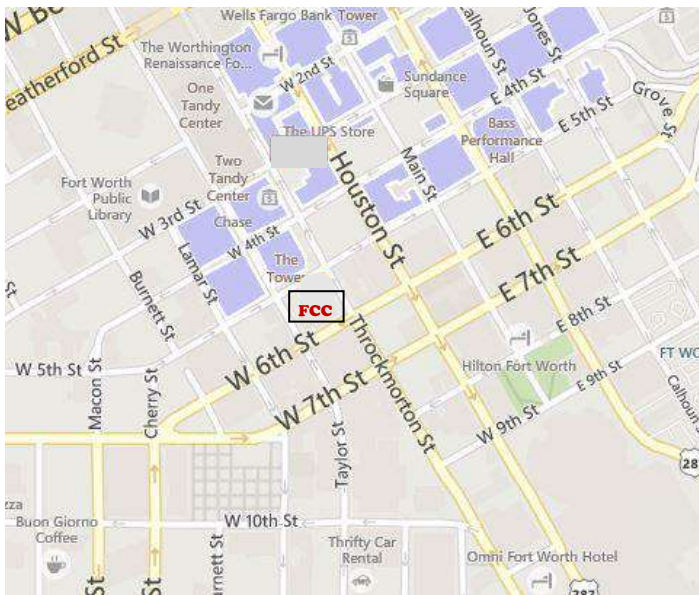
All others who wish to schedule a wedding are regarded as non-members. Anyone who wants a Christian wedding is invited to inquire about our wedding ministry. (See fee chart on page 7.)

## **4. Scheduling the Rehearsal**

The date of the rehearsal will be scheduled along with the wedding. Rehearsals for Saturday weddings are scheduled for 6:00 pm the Friday before the wedding. The rehearsal is an integral part of the wedding experience and should proceed in a manner respectful of the bride, groom, and the place of worship.

Only one hour will be set aside for the rehearsal.

The rehearsal shall begin promptly at the time scheduled. The bride and groom, therefore, should insist that all members of the wedding party be as prompt for the rehearsal as for the wedding. The building will be opened at 5:45 p.m. Directions to the church should be given to each person attending the rehearsal. The following is a map that can be copied for each member of the wedding party.



## **5. Things not permitted:**

- A. Smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages are not permitted anywhere in the church.
- B. The rehearsal will not be conducted when any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. If any of the wedding party is inebriated, that member will be excused from the service.
- C. Food and beverages are not permitted in the sanctuary or 1855 parlor.

## **6. Rehearsal suggestions:**

- A. The minister will be in charge of the rehearsal. Our wedding hostess will assist during the rehearsal and wedding. A wedding planner is not required, but may be present at the request of the bride to help her dress, etc.
- B. Everyone in the wedding party should arrive fifteen minutes prior to the rehearsal time.
- C. Both sets of parents, if participating, should be present for the rehearsal.
- D. The ushers should be present for the rehearsal.
- E. The marriage license should be given to the minister at the time of the rehearsal.

## **7. Music**

Please consult with the Minister of Music at least three weeks prior to the service regarding all musical selections and personnel. Also consult with the Minister of Music regarding use of outside instruments, musical ensemble, etc. CDs and recorded music are not permitted during the ceremony.

## **8. Photography**

Since the wedding is a worship service, all photographers (amateur or professional) are asked to hold in reverence the service and the sanctuary. The church will be open two hours prior to the start of the wedding for the purpose of taking pictures. Contact the wedding hostess for specific instructions.

### **THE PHOTOGRAPHER MUST BE FINISHED IN THE SANCTUARY 30 MINUTES PRIOR TO THE SERVICE.**

Pictures are not to be made while the service is in progress. It shall be the responsibility of the bride and groom to advise their photographer and guests of this. Please discourage your wedding guests from taking pictures as we worship. The photographer is urged to visit with the hostess regarding any special requests and questions that are relative to pictures taken of the wedding.

Limited pictures of the bride and wedding party may be made during the processional, and when the recessional is in progress. Photographers using equipment not requiring flash may take time exposures from the balcony of the sanctuary or from the rear of the sanctuary. Movement and other distractions should be kept to a minimum.

The officiating minister will be available for wedding pictures immediately following the service. These should be the first taken, so the minister is free to resume other duties.

## 9. Sound and Video Recordings

The most beautiful and sacred aspects of the wedding service have been marred for some by inexperienced recorder operators or malfunction of equipment. If recordings of the service are desired, they need to be carefully planned. Please consult with the hostess about these plans prior to the rehearsal.

If a video recording is to be made of the service, only a professional or someone skilled in the use of this equipment will be permitted to make video recordings. The equipment is best located in the back balcony or choir loft on a tripod.

## 10. Parking

The church does not provide parking, but there is a paid parking lot north of the church building. Access to the parking lot is from Taylor Street just west of the building, and from 5th Street just north of the building. The entire lot may be rented and can accommodate about 75 cars. **This is a paid lot 24 hours a day, seven days a week.** The four spots designated as “church parking” are reserved for the staff members of First Christian Church. Please call 817-334-7967 and ask for John for more information about renting the lot.

## 11. Wedding Fee

### Required Non-member Fee

**\$1,975.00**

This fee includes:

Sanctuary (seats 625)	Minister
Organist	Hostess
Coordinator	Sound technician
Custodian	Bridal room
Groom's dressing room	



### **Optional Fees**

Additional Time (following service)

½ hour \$100.00

1 hour \$200.00

Candles and Candelabra \$50.00

Unity Candle (small or large) \$50.00 or \$75.00

Church soloist (each) \$75.00

Chancel Choir \$300.00

Handbell Choir \$200.00

Nursery Attendant (each) \$55.00

(Weddings with 300 or more guests and/or more than twelve attendants will require the use of two hostesses, with an additional charge of \$100.00.)

**ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS MUST BE PAID BEFORE THE WEDDING WILL BE PLACED ON THE CHURCH CALENDAR. *THE BALANCE IS DUE 10 DAYS BEFORE THE WEDDING.***

**Confirmation of the wedding will be made when the wedding contract and \$1,000 deposit are received by the Church Secretary or Coordinator of Weddings.** Refunds will be given if the wedding is canceled 30 days or more prior to the date scheduled. If the church has incurred any expense connected with the scheduled wedding, the expense will be deducted from the fees paid, and the balance will be refunded.

### **12. Insurance Requirements**

General public liability insurance coverage is required for the times the wedding parties are in the church building, with First Christian Church listed as additional insured on the policy. The Wedding Contract, which the church will provide to you, must be signed and the insurance requirements met.

### **13. Floral/decorating guidelines**

Flower arrangements are the responsibility of the wedding party and must follow these specific instructions. This sanctuary is most beautiful when the decorations are understated; therefore excessively elaborate floral arrangements or other decorations are discouraged. The pulpit, lectern, flags and green plants may be removed from the chancel, if desired. However, the cross and candles on the communion table will remain in place, and nothing else may be placed on the communion table unless the wedding hostess approves. If pew bows are used, they must be affixed in a manner that will not damage the pews.

### **14. Reception**

Anderson Hall (capacity approximately 150) is available for receptions with certain restrictions:

- No alcoholic beverages may be served.
- Our warming table and refrigerator are available for use. All other equipment must be furnished by the caterer.
- Sound system is available

**FEES: \$500.00 for two hours  
\$200.00 for an additional hour**

Fees include use of Anderson Hall, tables and chairs, hostess and custodial services.