



*Congratulations  
on your upcoming  
wedding!*

A Guide for Getting Married at  
Geneva Presbyterian Church



Your decision to be married in the church is a sign that you wish your vows to be witnessed before God, and that you desire to make a public promise of faithfulness to each other before your family and friends.

Because the ceremony itself is a special worship service and a sacred occasion, weddings are ordinarily celebrated in the space where the community gathers for worship. (You are welcome to contact our minister if you'd like her to officiate at a wedding at another location.) Each element of the service—including music, flowers, and other adornments—should be appropriate to the worship space, should direct worship toward God, and should reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life. The service is conducted under the sole direction of the officiating minister, who will guide you in planning the ceremony. Another clergy person may share in the worship duties, but only after consultation with and by invitation of the current pastor may another pastor be invited to participate or officiate.



We do not schedule wedding ceremonies on Sundays, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, or during the week before Easter. The church is typically closed on national holidays, so these dates may not be available. In selecting the date for your wedding service, remember that at various times of the year major seasonal decorations are in place in our sanctuary that may remain in place during any wedding. Among these are Advent (late November and most of December), Christmastide (December 24 through January 6), and the festival of Pentecost (May or June). Our Church Secretary maintains the official church calendar to properly coordinate events and building use.



# Pre-Marital Counseling

If you wish to be married at Geneva Presbyterian Church, you will be expected to meet with the pastor for several pre-marriage counseling conversations. Approximately two to four months before your planned wedding date, the pastor will begin a series of four to six sessions with both of you. The number and length of sessions may vary depending on the topics being discussed and available schedules. Only a part of this time will be spent planning your wedding service; the remaining time will be spent preparing you for your marriage.



# The Rehearsal

A rehearsal normally occurs the evening prior to the wedding. It is crucial that all members of the wedding party be present at the rehearsal; this includes both members of the couple being married, all attendants, ushers, and the parents of the wedding couple, as well as any soloists. Out of consideration for staff members and wedding participants, it is imperative that the rehearsal begin promptly at the set time. The length of the rehearsal will depend on how long it takes for everyone to be comfortable in what they are expected to do for the service. Though it may not take one hour, the couple should plan on it lasting an hour when making their rehearsal dinner plans.



# What to Expect: The Marriage Ceremony

The Christian wedding is foremost an act of worship. God is the focus as the couple places themselves before the Eternal One to make their covenant and to seek God's help. Ordinarily the wedding service will follow one of the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Marriage Rite I, Rite II, or Rite III found in the *Book of Common Worship*. The first of these is a brief, simple liturgy for any couple being married. The second rite is a more elaborate service that follows the pattern of a typical Sunday worship service. The third rite is intended for couples who have been married in a civil ceremony and who now wish to make their vows in a Christian context. The order of worship will be planned by the pastor and couple during one of their pre-marriage counseling meetings.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper can take place during the wedding ceremony but does require the approval of the Session. In our church, the invitation to the table is extended to all believers present (and not limited to the couple marrying). Geneva Church can provide a pianist, upon request, and recommend other musicians who may contribute to the service. The music selected in consultation with the music director must reflect the beauty, dignity, and integrity of a Christian worship service.

Prior to the rehearsal and the wedding, it is expected that members of the wedding party will refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages. If either member of the wedding couple is intoxicated, the wedding cannot take place.





# Guidelines for Flowers and Decor

Florists may be hired to decorate the sanctuary. Please remember, however, that decorations should be planned in accordance with church furnishings and equipment. Decorations must not interfere with the movement of the wedding ceremony and care must be taken to see that floors and furnishings are not damaged. Tacks, nails, pins, or screws are not to be used to fasten decorations to the walls. Florists or decorators will be held responsible for damage caused by their work.

- All decorating and arranging must be completed 2 hours prior to the start time of the service.
- Placement of special equipment for the service must be approved by the pastor one month prior to the ceremony. The church is not obligated to make available or to furnish equipment not owned by the church at the time of the wedding.
- All decorations are to be removed immediately following the end of the service or immediately following all photos.
- None of the following items may be dropped or thrown or used inside or outside the building: rose petals, confetti, rice, bird seed, or any similar item.

While it is thoughtful of you to want to give the pastor a boutonniere/corsage, please know that flowers are considered inappropriate to wear on a clerical robe or stole.





# Guidelines for Photography

The following guidelines allow photographs and videos to be made without distracting from the sacredness of the occasion. Guests as well as hired photographers are expected to abide by these rules.

- If pictures are to be taken before the service, they must be completed and the sanctuary vacated 1 hour before the wedding is scheduled to begin so guests may be seated as they arrive.
- The photographer may capture the wedding procession but should not delay or otherwise interfere with its progress.
- To avoid distraction and preserve the dignity of the ceremony, no flash pictures are permitted during the wedding service. The only pictures permitted during the service are those taken using the available lighting.
- The photographer may not move freely about in the sanctuary during the service. Photos may be taken from the back of the sanctuary. Pictures are permitted as the wedding party recesses down the center aisle at the conclusion of the service, but these must be taken from the rear of the center aisle.
- Videotaping of the service is permitted, but all equipment to do so must be confined to the Media Booth or an other location that does not detract from the service or block the view of guests.





# *Wedding Consultants and Caterers*

You are responsible for making the necessary arrangements with others who might assist you on your wedding day; however, it should be clear that all persons and functions are subject to the direction of the pastor and the guidelines established by the church. If a wedding consultant is employed, understand that this will be for aspects not related directly to the wedding ceremony. The wedding ceremony and rehearsal are under the direction of the pastor.

The church does not provide catering services. If a caterer is employed, the caterer will be responsible for all the equipment used and for a thorough cleaning and organization of the kitchen. Any damage or loss of equipment will be billed to the caterer. Please also note that the use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited within the church building and on the grounds of the church.

# *Invitations to your Rehearsal Dinner and/or Reception*

Geneva Church's pastor and pianist/music director do not assume they are invited, and you have no obligation to invite them. However, if you would like them to be present, it is appropriate that you send them a written invitation well in advance that also indicates whether a guest is also invited. If you desire the pastor to pray at either the rehearsal dinner or the reception, advance notice is always appreciated.





## *Marriage License and Fees*

The marriage license, along with all required fees, must be brought to the church office three days before the wedding. Weddings will not be performed without the marriage license “in hand.”

There is no fee to church members for use of the sanctuary or chapel for wedding ceremonies. Fee payment is due to the church office at least one week before the ceremony. Checks for building use should be made out to Geneva Presbyterian Church, whereas checks for church staff and musicians should be made payable to the individuals.

Facility Use (for non-church members) .....	\$600
Suggested Honorarium for Officiating Minister .....	\$400
Pianist Fee for Consultation and Ceremony .....	\$300
Custodial Fee.....	\$200

