

**Sycamore Presbyterian Church
11800 Mason Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45249
(513) 683-0254**

Wedding Guide

2008

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Introduction

Congratulations on your engagement and your intentions to be married at Sycamore Presbyterian Church. Christian marriage is the life-long union of one man and one woman based upon sacred vows made before God, in the presence of His people. It is only proper that a Christian marriage be solemnized in the Lord's house, as an indication of your joint commitment to Jesus Christ.

Normally weddings are performed for couples where at least one is a church member in our congregation. There may be times and circumstances when the church will schedule a wedding when neither person is a church member.

We will try to be of assistance in any way possible to assure that one of the most important days of your life is everything you dream it will be. Experience has shown that without effective communication it is virtually impossible to have results that are satisfying to you and pleasing to our Lord. For this reason, certain procedures and regulations have been established by appropriate Boards and Committees of the Church in order to facilitate communication between the bride and the church.

In addition to the pastor who will perform the wedding, we have several wedding Hostesses, one of whom will contact you after you have paid your deposit. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the church office at 683-0254, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Pastor:

Dr. Lawrence W. Kent

Wedding Hostesses:

Lenore Henninger, 683-7373

Betty Robinson, 984-6345

Joyce Kent, 398-6236

Elizabeth Kent, 254-4108

Your Wedding - and Pre- Marital Sessions

The pastoral staff of Sycamore Presbyterian Church believes strongly that time should be spent in preparing for a life together as husband and wife during the engagement period. Because of this conviction, we consider it essential to meet with each couple prior to the wedding date. Pre-marital preparation is a good way for our pastors to encourage healthy marital relationships and honest communication between the engaged couple. Because we believe that the wedding service is a service of worship of God, Christian attitudes, expectations and commitments are a part of the pre-marital process.

If, for reasons of distance, you are unable to meet with our pastoral staff for the necessary pre-marital sessions, we are willing for another Christian Professional in your area to offer the pre-marital counseling. In these cases, the pastor reserves the right to contact the Christian Professional during or after the counseling sessions. However, each couple must commit to at least one meeting, prior to the wedding, with the officiating pastor.

Once your wedding date has been confirmed, it is your responsibility to contact the officiating pastor to set up the pre-marital sessions. It is recommended that the couple contact the pastor at least four months prior to the wedding date.

Your Wedding - Reserving the Church

Members* of Sycamore Presbyterian Church may reserve the church for their wedding as soon as their plans have been finalized.

Non-members may not reserve the church more than 12 months prior to their wedding day. The date is confirmed for members and non-members when the \$150 deposit is received (see Costs, covered on Page 12).

To check available dates, call the church office at 683-0254. Weddings, like all uses of church buildings, are subject to the ultimate approval of the Session, with the Pastor primarily responsible for scheduling and arrangements.

The church cannot be reserved for weddings on dates that have been set aside for annual church events such as the spring concert, Lawn Fete (and the week after) and the Christmas concert. Weddings cannot be scheduled on New Years Day, Easter, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Weddings at Sycamore will be under the direction of our pastor. Any wedding at the church will involve a member of the pastoral staff. If an organist other than our church organist is desired, refer to the "Your Wedding - and Music Policies" section of this manual (page 7).

Please note that the church is a "No Smoking Facility" and alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the premises.

**Member: One who has completed the New Members class and has been received into membership or who is actively enrolled in the New Members class. This pertains to the bride, groom and/or parent of the bride or groom.*

Marriage Licenses in Ohio

Varying rules apply to wedding licenses. We hope this information will be helpful.

Ohio residents obtain their marriage license from the county in which they reside.

Out-of-state residents obtain their license from Hamilton County (the county in which the church is located), Court of Probate, 230 East 9th Street, 10th floor. Telephone: 946-3600. Both bride and groom must appear, with government-issued photo I.D.'s, \$45.00 in cash, and proof of any divorces. The office is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Allow one hour for processing. There is no waiting period, and no blood test is required. The license is valid for 60 days. The bottom of the application will be mailed to the Court by the minister immediately after the wedding takes place.

Sample Order of Ceremony

Wedding ceremonies at Sycamore Presbyterian Church vary in format in keeping with the preferences of the officiating pastor or the bride and groom. Bear in mind that the officiating pastor has the final say in any and all matters regarding the wedding service.

A possible order for the marriage ceremony is as follows:

Prelude

Seating of the Mothers

Processional

Opening Welcome

Prayer

Declarations of Intentions

Presentation of the Bride

Exchange of Vows

Exchange of Rings

Scripture Reading

Meditation

Lighting of the Unity Candle

Wedding Prayer

Declaration of Marriage

Benediction

Presentation of the couple

Recessional

Within this flexible outline a couple can include lighting of the unity candle, congregational hymns, unison prayers and responsive Scripture readings. In addition, special music, readings and symbols, can be incorporated. Be sure to speak with the officiating pastor about all of this.

Your Wedding - Rehearsal

Whenever possible, the rehearsal for a wedding should be held on the day prior to the wedding itself. However, it is possible that particular circumstances surrounding the bridal party's or the pastor's schedules may require an alternate from this schedule. The date and time of the rehearsal will be designated at the time the wedding is scheduled.

In consideration of the time and other responsibilities of the wedding party as well as the church staff, it is important that the rehearsal begin promptly! A well-run rehearsal should take no longer than an hour.

All members of the wedding party, as well as parents of the bride and groom, need to be in attendance at the rehearsal. In addition, the organist/pianist will be at the rehearsal. Soloists must make arrangements for a rehearsal with the organist and readers should allow enough time prior to the wedding to become familiar with the podium and for microphone levels to be checked. Grandparents and other honored guests are welcome to attend, but their presence is not necessary.

At the rehearsal all aspects of the ceremony will be covered. The Pastor and Wedding Hostess will instruct the wedding party regarding their placement and movement during seating of guests, the processional, the ceremony and the recessional. In the event that the pastor cannot attend the rehearsal, it will be conducted by the Wedding Hostess.

Ushers will also be instructed in their duties at the rehearsal.

Items to bring to the rehearsal

**Printed programs
Unity candle and family candles**

Items not to bring to the rehearsal

**Any fees (they should have already been paid)
Marriage license (this should be delivered to the office no later than the
Wednesday before the wedding)**

Your Wedding - and Music Policies

The Christian marriage ceremony at Sycamore Presbyterian Church is considered a religious service, not a secular ceremony. The mood, manner and content of the service should reflect the sacredness of marriage, glorifying God for the gift of love. The service shall be under the direction of the officiating minister and your wedding Hostess.

Any music, which accompanies the ceremony, should be appropriate for the church setting as well as for the ceremony itself. Therefore, the Director of Music Ministry (Mr. Joe Dilley) reserves the right to approve any and all music to be used in the wedding service. **Pre-recorded music is not used in services at Sycamore.**

We anticipate that our regular church organist/pianist, Mr. Joe Dilley, will play for your wedding. It is necessary for you to contact him for the following:

1. His availability to play for your wedding.
2. His recommendation of a substitute organist, should one be required.
3. Music selections
4. Names of soloists, both vocal and instrumental
5. Establishing his fee.

You may phone Mr. Dilley at 225-1153.

Outside organist/pianists must be approved by Director of Music, Mr. Joe Dilley. When Mr. Dilley plays for the wedding, he must approve all music. If Mr. Dilley does not play for the wedding, copies of all music to be used must be submitted in advance to him for approval.

Only trained church personnel may operate the sound system. If you wish to hire someone to run the soundboard, provide extra microphones, or record the wedding, ask your Hostess to arrange this. There would be an additional fee.

Your Wedding, the Photographer and Videographer

Your wedding is certainly one of the most important days of your life, and accordingly, you will no doubt want photographs to be taken. However, in order to maintain the worshipful nature of the event, flash pictures may NOT be taken during the ceremony. The wedding photographer may take available-light (non-flash) pictures from the balcony. To maintain a worshipful atmosphere, and to not distract the bridal party, **we request that guests not take flash pictures during the ceremony.**

In advance of the wedding day, please review with the photographer the poses you will wish taken in the Sanctuary following the ceremony. This advance planning will help the photographer organize you and the wedding party as promptly as possible, enabling you and the party to proceed to the reception to be with your guests without a lengthy wait on their part. Normally it would be expected that photographs in the Sanctuary would be completed within 30-40 minutes. The church asks that the wedding ceremony, receiving line and photography be completed within two hours to allow for building clean up or additional ministry use. Each wedding is allotted a total four hour window of time. Also, members of the bridal party and the photographer are encouraged to arrive at the church not more than two hours prior to the wedding.

If you have pictures made before the wedding, your photographer must be finished in the sanctuary one half-hour before the wedding so that sound and other set-ups can be taken care of before your guests arrive.

Videography

Video cameras are permitted in the balcony and an unmanned camera may be placed in the chancel in consultation with the Wedding Hostess. Video cameras are **not permitted** in the choir loft.

Your Wedding - and the Florist

The bride-to-be is responsible for making arrangements with a florist for the decorating of the Sanctuary. The two family candles (placed on each side of the Unity candle) should be 12" tall and dripless. Aisle runners are not permitted.

The following guidelines have been established in order to clarify what types of arrangements are permissible in the respective locations:

1. A central floral arrangement may be placed on the Communion table. Flowers may be attached to the candelabra with pipe cleaners. No flower petals may be dropped in the sanctuary.
2. Decorations on the ends of the pews at the center aisle can be quite effective. However, in order to avoid scratching the pews they should be fastened with protective devices. A wide rubber band or ribbon is quite effective. (No wire, tape, nails or hooks.)
3. In addition to your floral decorations, two candles in the brass holders belonging to the church are used on the Communion table as part of the service. The Church supplies these candles.
4. The florist may deliver the flowers two hours prior to the wedding.
5. If equipment, plants, etc., are rented for your wedding, arrangements must be made for them to be picked up immediately after the wedding. Because of the many uses of the sanctuary, the church does not expect to store these items.
6. Permission must be obtained from the minister or Wedding Hostess to move the pulpit, communion table, baptismal font, piano, or organ.

Your Wedding - Day

Arrival Times

Because of the multiple uses of the sanctuary on any given day, members of the bridal party should plan to arrive no earlier than two hours prior to the wedding.

Last Minute Details

The Wedding Hostess will be at the church to give ushers their final instructions one hour before the ceremony.

The bride and her attendants should proceed to the Narthex approximately five minutes before the ceremony. They will be met there by the bride's father and the Wedding Hostess, who will handle details of the processional.

After the Ceremony

If the bride and groom would like a receiving line at the Church following the ceremony, please discuss this with the Wedding Hostess prior to the wedding. She can instruct you as to the best location for your party to stand while greeting your guests. Another option is for the bride and groom to dismiss the pews.

Rice, birdseed and streamers are not permitted at the church. "Wishing Bubbles" can only be used outside of the church.

Note: Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church premises.

Your Wedding Reception at Church

Harper Hall is available for wedding receptions that do not exceed 200 for a sit-down meal. Several guidelines for its use follow:

1. Please reserve the hall through the church office. Since Harper Hall is heavily scheduled, you are encouraged to reserve it at the earliest possible date. Note: You will need to block time for decorating, also. Friday evening may be blocked (if room is available) if your reception is a Saturday morning or afternoon event. If it is a Saturday evening event, you may block the hall Saturday morning.
2. The seating capacity for Harper Hall is 200 for a sit-down meal. This is the absolute maximum which can be accommodated.
3. We maintain no regular weekend custodial service. Since this is above and beyond normal duties, there is a charge of \$25.00 per hour for our custodian for set up, tear down and clean up time. After the reception a portion of your custodial retainer will be refunded or an additional bill rendered based on the custodian's actual charge.
4. Furniture in the Parlor, which includes couches, cushioned chairs and tables, is to remain in place.
5. Sycamore Presbyterian Church is a No Smoking Facility. Please see that your guests comply with this.
6. The use of alcoholic beverages in any form is not permitted on the church premises.
7. Caterers are asked to furnish their own equipment. The church kitchen is available for the caterer's use if arrangements have been made with the chairman of the church kitchen committee. Contact the church office for the name and phone number of Kitchen Committee chairman.
8. Members of the church do not do food preparation, serving, dishes, or clean up.
9. Non-members: when non-members use our facility for any reason, we require one from the church (either member or staff) to be present during the entire event and to be the last person to leave. Consult with your Wedding Hostess on this for specifics about additional charges and coordination.

If you have any questions about your reception at our church, please ask the Wedding Hostess.

Your Wedding and Reception - Costs

It is not our policy to look upon your wedding as a source of revenue. However, we believe that those participating in the wedding should pay for the costs entailed by the occasion. Your Wedding Hostess will assist you and answer your questions.

Fees

The following are the fees for non-members and suggested honorariums for members and non-members for a wedding service at Sycamore Presbyterian Church:

Basic Wedding Fee:

Church Member \$150.00 (Sanctuary or Chapel)
The deposit covers the Wedding Hostess and custodian fees. The check should be made out to Sycamore Presbyterian Church, noting on your check "Wedding Payment".

Non-Members \$300.00 (Sanctuary) or \$200.00 (Chapel)
A \$150 deposit is required from non-members in order to confirm your wedding date. This is refundable up to six months prior to the wedding date. All remaining fees must be paid by one week prior to the rehearsal.

Pastor

The fee for non-members is \$200.00 and the church suggests an honorarium for members, at their discretion. Payment is made to the church one week prior to the rehearsal. Please make the check payable to the officiating minister.

Organist

\$200.00

This includes consulting with the couple regarding music choices and preparation. The actual fee is negotiated with the organist and is based upon the time spent, the number of solos, etc. Refer to the "Wedding - and Music Policies" section for more information.

Church Choirs

Occasionally, Church vocal or bell choirs are asked to provide music for a wedding. In such cases a \$150.00 fee is required by non-members and an honorarium for the same amount is suggested for members. Also a fee of \$100.00 is required for non-members and an honorarium for the same amount is suggested for the director of the choir.

Unity Candle

When a unity candle is used during the service, you or the florist, are required to provide your unity candle and two 12-inch family candles.

Basic Fees (Harper Hall)

Rehearsal Dinner \$200.00

Plus an additional set-up and clean-up fee

Reception

Church Member \$150.00

Non-Member \$500.00

This covers rental of Harper Hall, plus a \$50.00 custodial service retainer. The custodian's compensation is \$25.00 per hour. As outlined on Page 11, after the reception a portion of your custodial retainer will be refunded or an additional bill rendered based on the custodian's actual charge. Receptions must be catered.

The Role of the Wedding Hostess

On behalf of the church, the Wedding Hostess will extend a warm Christian welcome to all members of the bridal party and assist them at the rehearsal and on the wedding day.

Duties:

1. Meet with bride and bride's mother to tour the church and answer questions about the facility. This will be done at the bride's convenience, as many months ahead as requested.
2. Become thoroughly familiar with the specific plans for the florist, photographer, organist, soloist, etc.
3. Establish a timetable for the arrival of the bridal party.
4. Attend the rehearsal and become acquainted with the ushers and bridesmaids.
5. Assist with arrangements, if asked. (Out of sight, but close at hand, there will be ample supplies of tissues, hair spray, masking tape, bobby pins, safety pins, extra corsage pins.)
6. Open the church before the rehearsal and the wedding.
7. Greet the bridal party upon arrival. Make sure that full-length mirrors are placed in a convenient location for the use of the bride and bridesmaids.
8. See that corsages are given to designated family members.
9. Escort bride and bridesmaids to the narthex at the proper time.
10. Start the Processional down the aisle.
11. Arrange bride's train just before she starts down the aisle.
12. After the ceremony, guide the bridal party to area for receiving line.
13. Make sure that a family member or friend transports the flowers and guest book to the reception.

The Hostess will be courteous, caring, discreet, ubiquitous and almost invisible. It is her job to assure that the bride and groom's experience at Sycamore Presbyterian Church will be memorable and meaningful.

Your Wedding Program

It is a courtesy to your guests to provide them with a wedding program. This guides them through the ceremony and becomes a lovely keepsake of your special day. The Wedding Hostess can supply you with some samples.

It should include:

- 1) Order of ceremony (as you have planned it with the minister)
- 2) Complete listing of wedding party (including parents, readers, soloists, guest book attendants)
- 3) A note of thanks to parents and friends, optional
- 4) Please include the statement: **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY IS ALLOWED DURING THE WEDDING CEREMONY.**
- 5) For the consideration of others please turn off your cell phones and pagers.

Attractive program covers may be purchased from Christian book/stationery stores and then printed by a printing company or by a computer.

It is strongly recommended that a draft copy of the program be sent to the officiating pastor for approval prior to the final printing.

Frequently, the printing of the program is left to the last minute, which can cause some stress. We suggest that this be done at least one week prior to the wedding.

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