

Weddings at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church

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Congratulations on your upcoming wedding. We know this is an exciting and happy time for you as you prepare for your life together under God. The officers, staff and congregation of Spring Valley Presbyterian Church are delighted when the church and its staff are requested for the wedding service that will mark the happy occasion. This booklet should answer many of your questions about getting married at Spring Valley, but please contact our office or wedding director if you have issues that are not addressed here, or which need further explanation of all wedding related fees. This booklet provides information from each of those areas.

Spring Valley Presbyterian Church (SVPC) takes marriage seriously, especially the worship that marks marriage. The Session (governing body) of the church is responsible for weddings, but since they cannot review plans for every wedding service held at SVPC, oversight is assigned to Worship and Congregation Ministry. These Ministries are solely responsible for the worship service, and to the administrative and finance departments, which handle the use of the church facilities and the billing and receipt of all wedding-related fees. This booklet provides information from each of those areas.

You will see several references in this booklet to The Book of Order, which is the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It either governs all we do as Presbyterian Christians, or it tells us who is responsible for answering questions it does not address.

Let us begin then with the constitution's opening statement on marriage:

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community. The Book of Order (W-4.9001)

Your Wedding

“Marriage is instituted by God, regulated by his Commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and so to be held in honor among all people.” So states the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship. It serves as a reminder that although marriage has its civil and social implications, the wedding itself is essentially an experience of worship.

Your Wedding will be one of those very special events in your life. It comes as a culmination of dreams and a commencement of hopes. It is our desire that your wedding in its preparation, its conduct, and its memories will remain with you as a beautiful and significant occasion in your life together.

Weddings need not be elaborate to be beautiful. The special beauty of your wedding service comes from the sincerity that you bring to it, the affection you share in it and the commitment you freely express in it.

A wedding is brief. A marriage lasts a lifetime. The beauty of your wedding comes through many hands. The beauty of your wedding comes through many hands. The beauty of your marriage lies in your hands... and in God's.

We pray God's blessings upon you in your marriage.



Church Staff

Wedding Director

SVPC has a Wedding Director who has been trained in the logistics of the wedding service. All weddings at SVPC must use the services of the Wedding Director. The Director meets with the bride and groom once at the church for an hour to go over procedures and important info for the rehearsal and wedding.

The Wedding Director is not involved with flowers, photography, decorations, invitations or the reception. They are available to help with the direction of the service.

What Staff Is Involved

Please note that reserving church facilities does not automatically reserve church staff. They must be reserved separately, and the church office will handle that, depending on each staff member's availability. You can expect the specific services of one of the pastors, the church organist, a sexton, sound technician, and the wedding director.

Premarital Counseling

The Book of Order is helpful:

- In preparation for the marriage service, the Pastor asked to lead the service shall provide for a discussion with the man and woman concerning:
 - The nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
 - The legal requirements of the state,
 - The privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
 - The nature and form of the marriage service,
 - The vow and commitments they will be asked to make,
 - The relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
 - The resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments. (W-4.9002)

To meet this requirement and because the Session believes it is important, at SVPC the couple is asked to meet with the officiating pastor several times before the ceremony. The pastor may suggest or require further meetings.

Please note that is also the prerogative of the pastor to decline to perform the wedding if, after consultation with the couple, it is judged that the marriage is unwise. (Book of Order W-4.9002)

Liturgy for Weddings as Worship

The only requirement of the Presbyterian Church (USA) regarding liturgy for weddings is that the service be conducted as an act of worship. Therefore, the denomination does not have a prescribed ceremony that must be used. SVPC is happy with that requirement as well as with that freedom. As with all worship services, the focal point of the wedding ceremony will always be the God who has called us to worship and on whom the community of faith is calling to bless your marriage.

Marriage License

The Pastor can provide you with suggested liturgies and other liturgical resources, from the traditional to the contemporary, and will assist you in creating a worship service that is uniquely your own.

The church can help with the printing of your programs for an additional fee.

Guest Pastors

The Session has assigned responsibility for worship at weddings to the pastors of this church. However, if an outside minister is to conduct your service, prior approval from the SVPC Session and Senior Pastor is needed.

Weddings are one place where church and state cooperate quite nicely. Marriage is both a covenant relationship between a woman and a man recognized by the church as well as a contract recognized by the state. Therefore, you are required to have a license issued by the appropriate officer of the court. In South Carolina you can obtain a marriage license in any county seat by the state. South Carolina does not require a blood test but does have a 24 hour waiting period between the time you apply for a license and when the license is actually issued and is generally \$40.00.

An important note:

The state marriage license bureau considers the 24 hour waiting period as the FULL DAY between the day you apply for the license and the day you pick it up. If you apply for the license anytime on Monday, the 24 hour waiting period is Tuesday, so you cannot pick up the license until Wednesday. Those under age 18 must have parental consent.

The license is issued in three copies; each must be signed at the wedding service. You may take your copy, considered a certified copy, with you after the wedding, or it can be mailed to you. SVPC will send the other copies to the court to be recorded. All three copies of the license should be brought to the Wedding Director at the rehearsal.

If You Have Been Divorced

In the Presbyterian Church (USA) the matter of remarrying divorced persons is left to each pastor's discretion. Under most circumstances, our pastors have agreed to perform the ceremony for divorced men and women and to make church facilities available for that purpose.

This does not mean that the pastors of SVPC take marriage vows less seriously than do others, but rather that our pastors take the matter of forgiveness very seriously indeed.

Music for Weddings

The sanctuary is equipped with an Allen Custom Heritage 3-Manual, 58-Stop Organ and a grand piano. Every wedding is required to be conducted as an act of worship, so the expectation is that all wedding music, both instrumental and vocal, will be sacred music. Our organist can work with you to select appropriate music for your wedding and advise you on the suitability of your requests. Every effort will be made to insure that you are pleased with the final selections.

Guest Musicians

The Book of Order guides the selection of music for weddings:

Music may serve as presentation and interpretation of Scripture, as response to the gospel, and as prayer, through psalms and canticles, hymns and anthems, spirituals and spiritual song.

If the couple wishes someone other than the church organist to accompany worship at the wedding, guest musicians may be invited to do so. The church organist must approve anyone else to play the organ. They must make arrangements to meet with the church organist at his/ her convenience. Guest soloists and other instrumentalists may also be invited to participate in the service. In all events, SVPC has the responsibility for final approval of all music selections.

Rehearsals

If there are more than two attendants for the bride and groom, a rehearsal is advised. Usually this is held the evening before the wedding. All those in the wedding party, plus as many of the honored guests as practical, should attend the rehearsal. It is a good idea to allow 90 minutes for the run through, especially if there is a party afterward that is set to begin at a specific time. Please be prompt to the rehearsal.

Photographers

The Session and Worship Committee understand the significance of photographing what will surely be one of the most important days of your life. At the same time, both groups understand it is important to protect the dignity and reverence of worship at SVPC.

Still photographs can be taken before the worship service begins and after the worship service ends.

If photos are taken in the Sanctuary before the service, the photographer understands that all equipment and photos are completed one hour before the service.

Flash photography and artificial lighting will not be permitted during the service, with the exception of photographing the processional and recessional from the rear center aisle only. Video recording is restricted to the balcony. Videographers must provide their own equipment. Videographers & Photographers should plan to meet with the Wedding Director prior to the worship service so there will be no misunderstanding of this regulation.

Decorations

Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshiper's consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life. (Book of Order W- 4.9005)

One attraction to the SVPC Sanctuary as a setting for weddings is its simple beauty. Most people agree that our Sanctuary is most lovely when it is least decorated.

Reputable florists will respect and protect our Sanctuary and its furnishings from fire or marring. They must take proper precautions to protect the furniture, carpet and floor when candles, potted plants and flowers are used.

The florist must contact our Wedding Director least two weeks prior to the wedding to be sure that they fully understand our decorating policy. The florist must confirm with the Wedding Director as to the best time to set up and remove decorations so as to avoid conflict with the church programs. It is the florist's responsibility to remove all decorations from the church immediately after the ceremony. If any items are not removed prior to lock-up on the evening of the wedding, there will be an additional charge and the church will not be responsible for the safekeeping of these items.

The chancel flowers may remain for the Sunday service. If you wish to leave your flowers, discuss this with the Wedding Director to have the information put in the church bulletin.

Your florist will need to know several things:

- Only drip-less, mechanical candles may be used.
- SVPC owns candle lighters but not candelabra. Unity candle, if used, will be provided by the family.
- No decorations may be hung from the light fixtures or attached to the walls. No nails, tacks or screws may be driven into the walls, ceilings, floors or furniture. No floral arrangements on the communion table.
- There is a standard setup for furniture on the chancel area that we use. Should one wish to deviate from this, approval must be obtained from the Wedding Director.

- Arrangements shall be made with the SVPC Wedding Director to have the church opened prior to the ceremony so that flower arrangements may be brought in.
- Any damages incurred are the responsibility of the wedding party.
- Only fake rose petals are to be used by flower girls.
- Those scheduling a wedding after the church is decorated for the Advent/Christmas season will not be permitted to alter, add or remove existing decorations.

Receptions

Crossroads or Potts Fellowship Hall may be used for receptions with Session approval. Such space should be made as early as possible through the church office.

Separate fees will be charged for these facilities.

The Bride's family is responsible for securing their own catering service, if used. Caterer's should contact the SVPC Kitchen Committee to discuss specific plans for direction and use policies. A SVPC representative must be present when in use. The church staff will set up tables and chairs in a desired layout for the reception. The church staff will also take down tables and chairs after the reception.

- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the church building or on the church property.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere inside the church building.
- Throwing of rice, confetti or bird seed in the building or on the church property is prohibited.

Additional Information

Dressing Rooms

The Bride and her attendants are allowed to dress at the church in the Bride's Room located in the Narthex of the church. The Groom and his attendants are to be dressed before arriving.

Cleaning the Church

The couple is responsible for leaving the church facilities clean, orderly and arranged for the next function (typically Sunday morning worship services). It is mandatory to employ the church sexton, scheduled separately by the church office, to provide cleaning services. If you reserve Potts Fellowship Hall, the sexton will empty garbage and trash containers only; he/she does not clean the kitchen.

Wedding Bulletins

The Administrative Assistant is available to format and print your wedding bulletin for an extra fee. Bulletin styles are limited. All information must be provided to the Administrative Assistance no less than 21 days prior to the wedding.

Fees

We require one year of membership to SVPC prior to the wedding date.

A non-refundable deposit of 50% is required after your wedding application is approved and before the date can be reserved on our church calendar, the remaining balance is due 30 days before the wedding.

Pastors are compensated by the church family, weddings involve many extra hours outside of the wedding itself. Thus the recommended honorarium to be paid directly to the pastor assisting you in preparing for your marriage and conducting the service is as follows:

Pre-Marital Counseling (during church hours), Rehearsal and Wedding.....	\$250.00
Pre-Marital Counseling (outside of church hours), Rehearsal and Wedding.....	\$500.00
Pre-Marital Counseling, Rehearsal and Wedding (all during church hours)	\$100.00
Ceremony: Wedding Consultant (planning, rehearsal & wedding), Organist/Pianist (rehearsal & wedding), Sexton (rehearsal & wedding), Sound Technician (rehearsal & wedding), standard candles	\$750.00
Wedding Bulletins (per hundred)	\$50.00

Steps for Planning a Wedding at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church

When planning your service, several steps and policies must be adhered to:

- The Bride or Groom or immediate family member (parents, grandparents or children) must be members at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church.
- All weddings at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church will be conducted by the minister on staff unless otherwise approved by the Pastor & Session. The minister on staff shall approve the order of service in accordance with the Presbyterian Book of Order.
- The master calendar and minister’s calendars must be checked to be sure the requested date is available and should be at least 6 months in advance.
- An initial meeting with the minister must be completed before the request for approval of the wedding can be presented to the staff and Session for approval.
- Complete a “Facility Use” form and submit to the Office Administrator to start the approval process. Requests for the Sanctuary and Potts Fellowship Hall are independent of each other and both must be requested.
- Approval from the staff and Session will be on the 3rd Monday of each month. Only after approval, it will be safe to order invitations, sign contracts with other services and contacting a wedding consultant and organist/pianist.
- Weddings may not be scheduled on holiday weekends, specifically Good Friday, Easter weekend, the weekend after Thanksgiving, the week between Christmas & New Year’s or a weekend that conflicts with a church activity.
- Those scheduling a wedding after the church is decorated for the Advent/Christmas season will not be permitted to alter, add or remove existing decorations.

Note that no contract with the church exists until all forms are returned, approvals are secured, deposits are paid and you received written confirmation from the church.

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