

Wedding Guidelines

The Federated Church of Masonville

PO Box 279, Masonville, NY 13804

www.masonvillechurch.org

607-265-3774

Requirements for Weddings

A wedding at the Federated Church is a service of worship. It signifies the importance of making a public declaration of the faith and love that binds a couple and witnesses to the reality that God has always intended for a man and woman to be united together. Unlike a civil wedding performed by the justice of the peace, a Christian wedding requires that at least one person be a professing Christian and an understanding that marriage is intended to be a lifelong commitment.

The pastor is required to meet with the couple to discover the extent of their understanding of the nature of marriage. The pastor will offer some instruction on the meaning of a Christian marriage, and some suggestions as to how a couple can sustain a lifelong marriage.

To this end, at least six (6) hours of premarital counseling sessions with the pastor are required. It is strongly urged that the couple contact the pastor at least six months before their intended wedding date in order that these premarital counseling sessions can be scheduled.

The couple will also be required to meet all of the State of New York's legal requirements. They should check with the Town Clerk or other official to complete the appropriate paperwork and be aware of deadlines.

The pastor will make every effort to ensure that you have every opportunity to make your wedding day unique and special. You will even have the opportunity to assist the pastor in the selection of appropriate Scripture readings. But it is the sole responsibility of the pastor to prepare and preach the sermon.

In planning your wedding, you may decide to include special music in addition to the traditional organ pieces. While this is indeed possible, these selections must be made in consultation with the pastor and are subject to his/her approval. Please be aware that some secular songs and music are not appropriate in the context of a service of worship to God (which is what your wedding is). Soloists and/or additional musicians are expected to be present at the wedding rehearsal. If not, they must be sure to contact the pastor PRIOR TO the wedding rehearsal.

The rehearsal is typically scheduled the evening before the wedding. It should be scheduled so that all participants can be present. This includes best man, maid/matron of honor, all ushers and bridesmaids, parents, musicians, ring bearers, flower girls/boys, bell-ringers, etc. The purpose of the rehearsal is to help everyone feel comfortable about the actual service, especially if there is to be a large gathering.

Since a wedding is an act of worship, it will normally be celebrated in the context of a worshipping congregation. Smaller, more intimate settings are also possible, but they are still to be considered acts of worship, where God is to be kept foremost in the minds of all participants. Because the wedding is a service of worship, the use of flash photography is not permitted. A time will be set aside after the service to pose pictures until all are satisfied.

Please make sure to completely discuss all plans concerning your wedding service with the pastor. He/she has the responsibility for ensuring that your wedding service is appropriate to the beliefs and standards of our church. Therefore, every aspect of this service needs to meet with his/her approval. Also, be aware that there are certain requests that require approval by the Church Council and/or its Commissions. The pastor needs to know these requests early enough to ensure that you receive approval.

Fees and Costs

Organist: It is customary to pay for the organist's services. It is understood that the organist will spend time in practice and preparation, play at your rehearsal, play approximately one-half hour prior to the wedding as well as afterwards. If you wish another organist, please be sure to inform the pastor as soon as possible. Approval of another organist requires permission from the Worship & Stewardship Commission.

Custodian: He/she is responsible for making sure that the church clean prior to and following your rehearsal and wedding service.

Minister: It is appropriate to pay for the pastor's time and effort. It is his/her responsibility to make sure that you are provided with 6 hours of appropriate premarital counseling, to prepare (with your assistance) your wedding service, to spend time in prayer and study to compose a sermon, to conduct your wedding rehearsal, to officiate at your wedding service, to be available following the service to take any pictures that you may desire, and to mail your signed wedding license back to the appropriate town clerk.

Civil Weddings

The Federated Church facilities are designed for the purpose of corporate worship and fellowship of its members and community. We gather in the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, our church shall not be used for civil weddings (those involving a judge, town clerk, justice of the peace, etc.).