

First Evangelical & Reformed Church

320 W. Wayne Street / Lima, Ohio 45801
(419) 222-6700

We are a Bible based Church with traditional worship, that presents God's relevant word of caring and sharing for all people.

Sunday School: 9:00 A.M. / Worship: 10:15 A.M.
(Child Care Available)

Wedding Information Booklet



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- Revised June 2016 -

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FORWARD

Lack of information often kindles the fires of apprehension that grow in the hours, days, and weeks before a marriage ceremony. Christian marriage is a major step in life, but in no way is it to be an unnerving experience.

The contents of this manual have thus been assembled in the spirit of helpfulness. Considerable assistance was gained in writing this manual from the bridal couples of weddings past.

We hope that you find the information, suggestions, and policies contained in this booklet to be helpful as you complete the plans for your wedding.

The Pastor of First Church shall attend and will participate in all ceremonies & related activities held in the Sanctuary of First Church. The only exception to this rule can be granted by a majority vote of the Elders upon request by the Pastor of First Church. Only the Pastor of First Church can make this request. (*Church Constitution / Section II / Article 2*)

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320 West Wayne Street

Lima, Ohio 45801

Pastor's Study: (419) 222-6200

Church Office: (419) 222-6700

INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to help persons plan their wedding. It is hoped that many of the questions that surface in anticipation of a wedding will be answered in the following pages.

Part I features a checklist. Perhaps not all of the suggestions that are noted in this section will apply to the ceremony you are planning.

Part II lists the policies and fees that have been established by the Consistory of First E & R Church and the Music Staff.

Part III addresses the subject of receptions and rehearsal dinners held in the Church .

Part IV deals with the music policies for the ceremony.

Part V focuses on the ceremony itself.

Part VI acquaints you with “**Do’s**” and “**Don’ts**” in planning your ceremony.

Part VII offers tips on ushering.

May your marriage ceremony be beautiful, and may yours be a rich, meaningful life, hallowed and blessed by our Lord, Jesus Christ.



PART I

Below is a checklist of basic considerations for weddings, receptions and rehearsal dinners. You may wish to add concerns of your own to the list:

- Call the pastor and set the date early (six months prior to service date). A \$50.00 non-refundable deposit, payable to “First Evangelical and Reformed Church”, is due with signed Wedding Contract to make wedding official.
- Contact the florist early.
- If you plan to use a professional photographer, schedule his/her services early (three months prior to service date).
- Obtain your marriage license from the Probate Court.
(No more than 90 days and no less than 30 days prior to the wedding date.)
- Appoint someone to be in charge of gifts before, during, and after the ceremony. *Reports of theft during a service have surfaced in various locations across the nation. First E & R Church will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items.*
- Contact musicians: pianist, organist, vocalists, etc.
- If you are planning a reception at the Church, it will be necessary to contact the Church Maintenance Staff. The Pastor will provide you with the appropriate names. If the reception is not held in the Church, contact the hall you plan to use and familiarize yourself with their policies.
- If planning to have a meal or reception, contact the caterers and/or bakery to make arrangements for the food.
- If you are planning a formal wedding, visit the dress shops and tuxedo rental stores well in advance of the wedding date.
- Contact all persons you wish to have participate in your wedding:
 - Maid/Matron of Honor
 - Bridesmaids
 - Flower Girl
 - Servers
 - Recorder of Gifts
 - Vocalists/Musicians

- Best Man
- Groomsmen
- Ring Bearer
- Ushers
- Guest Book Attendant
- Organist

If there is to be a rehearsal dinner, plan it with the groom and his parents.

OTHER ARRANGEMENTS:

POLICIES OF FIRST E & R CHURCH

- 1) Flash photography is prohibited during the wedding ceremony. Pictures may be posed either before or after the service.
- 2) Petals, balloons and bubbles are to be used outside the building only. Rice, bird seed and confetti will not be permitted.
- 3) All flowers and other decorations shall be carefully placed to not obscure the altar. The altar shall be the central point to the service. Candles, bows, live and artificial floral decorations are permitted in the sanctuary. Reserve “untraditional” decorations (balloons, crepe paper streamers, paper decorations) for the reception hall. No arches or arbors will be permitted in the sanctuary. No decorations are to be placed on the altar other than the regular altar ornaments, candles, and flowers in the altar vases.
- 4) Please be prompt and come at the appointed hour for the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. All participants are to attend the wedding rehearsal.
- 5) The marriage license shall be given to the Pastor at the wedding rehearsal.
- 6) The wedding party may elect to dress for the ceremony in the air-conditioned Nursery and Lounge.
- 7) Be certain to secure your personal property during the ceremony. First E & R Church shall not be liable for lost, stolen or broken items.

***NOTE:** See last page of the Wedding Booklet for First E & R Church’s Emergency Policies.*

PART II

The Church provides the kneeling bench, a piano and the organ. Two seven-candle candelabras are available. There shall be no pew candles permitted in the sanctuary.

Sound enhancement equipment, other than that owned and operated by First Church, shall not be used in the service.

If a commercial florist is contracted, he/she will provide the floral arrangements, bows, and unity candles. Decorating materials other than those stated are more properly used at the reception hall. Never lose sight of the fact that our purpose and function at the Church is worship. Do not use tape in the sanctuary. The adhesive attracts dirt and is difficult to remove.

MEMBERS

“Members” are communicant members of First Church. Their fees, payable to “First Evangelical and Reformed Church”, shall be forwarded to the Church Secretary two weeks prior to the wedding date. The amount is determined by the bridal couple’s stated needs within the Wedding Contract:

- \$ 75.00 Pastor’s Fee
- \$125.00 Organist’s Fee
- \$125.00 Custodian’s Fee
- \$ 75.00 Reception Fee
- .25/Each Wedding Programs Developed Within Church Office (*Covers Provided By Couple*)
- \$ 50.00 Refundable Deposit (*Extraordinary Cleanup*)
- \$ 50.00 Non-Refundable Deposit
- \$ 10.00/Session Vocalist Lesson with Organist

NOTE: There is no candelabra charge for members. Pastor’s & Organist’s Fee are to be paid separately to their respective recipients at the conclusion of the wedding service.

NON-MEMBERS

“Non-Members” are persons who are not communicant members of First Church. Their fees, payable to “First Evangelical & Reformed Church”, shall be forwarded to the Church Secretary two weeks prior to the wedding date. The amount is as determined by the couple’s stated needs within the Wedding Contract.

- \$ 100.00 Pastor’s Fee
- \$ 800.00 Service Only (*Includes \$125 Custodial Fee*)
- \$1000.00 Service & Reception (*Includes \$175 Custodial Fee*)
- \$ 14.00 2 Candelabras (*Cost of 14 Candles*)
- \$ 125.00 Organist’s Fee (*Add \$25 If Having Vocalist*)
- \$ 100.00 Rehearsal Dinner (*Hall Rental*)
- \$ 50.00 Non-Refundable Deposit (*Due at the time of scheduling. This Deposit will be deducted from the total fees due.*)
- \$ 50.00 Refundable Deposit (*Extraordinary Cleanup*)
- \$.50/Each Wedding Programs Developed Within Church Office (*Covers Provided By Couple*)
- \$10.00/Session Vocalist Lesson with Organist



***The following policies are in effect for both
Members and Non-Members...***

- *Absolutely* no smoking is allowed anywhere on the Church property or building.
- The use of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs is not permitted.
- Any music must be approved by the Elders or Pastor of First Church. Social dancing is not permitted.
- Use of the organ by others must be approved by the Head Organist of First Church.
- Food, beverages, and related paper supplies are not permitted in the sanctuary *at any time*.
- Personal belongings and wedding decorations shall be removed from the Church immediately following the service. First Church will not be responsible for the breakage of commercial items left in the Church after services.
- The Church will be available 1-1/2 hours before the service begins and 1-1/2 hours after the service is completed.

Please inform your wedding party and guests of all of the above policies.

PART III



The Church Fellowship Hall is available for wedding Rehearsal dinners and receptions. The hall will seat approximately 100 persons. Caterers for your event may make use of the kitchen area, however, cleanup is the ultimate responsibility of the wedding party. The wedding couple's family is responsible for any food not consumed.

Decorations may be used, but *no holes* shall be made or materials used that might damage the paint, paneling, etc. If such damage does occur, the family shall be responsible for the cost of repairs. It is the responsibility of the couple (*or their family*) for putting up and removing all decorations.

The bride must provide the knife for cutting the cake, candles, napkins, punch, coffee, cream, sugar, punch, mints, nuts and all other rehearsal or reception refreshments.

The Church reserves the right to refuse the use of our facilities to any couple that has not been married in the Church.

PART IV

MUSIC POLICIES

When the wedding date is established, it is the responsibility of the bride to contact the organist and make arrangements for the music. The wedding ceremony is Divine Worship. Hence, it is important that the music be appropriate for the occasion.

The organist shall advise the bridal couple if a particular selection is not suitable for a Christian wedding. If no particular selections are requested, the organist will suggest suitable arrangements, and

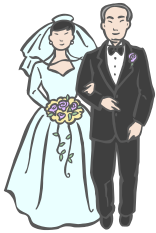
together the selections will be made. The thirty-minute organ prelude usually precedes the ceremony, however, a shorter prelude would also be appropriate.



The Skinner Pipe Organ at First Church offers twenty-two ranks and sixteen hundred pipes. It is an imposing instrument. For the organ and the service to receive justice, it is imperative that the organist be capable of playing the organ. For that reason, we recommend use of the First Church Organist. Outside organists may play for weddings only with approval from the First Church Organist.

If a vocalist is to be included in the service, it is desirable that a minimum of two practice sessions be held with the organist. Any soloist chosen should be experienced before being asked to sing wedding music. It is unfair for an organist to be asked to accompany a vocalist who is inexperienced. If the vocalist must be taught to sing, an additional charge will be applied to your organist fee. Hence, we ask you to be considerate in requests you make of organists and potential soloists.

PART V



Marriage is an important and pleasurable step in life. Your friends and family are pleased that you have chosen to make your marriage vows in the Church.

Your preparations for marriage began years ago. They began before you knew what the word “marriage” meant. The manner by which you love and respect other persons, yourself, and God has been in the process of development for years. The personality and disposition you have developed is one of the “credentials” you are bringing to your marriage.

Formal preparations for the marriage ceremony should begin well in advance of the wedding date. It is recommended that you consult with the pastor at least three months before the service. Earlier consultations than that are also in order.

Feel free to share your hopes, dreams, suggestions and questions with the pastor. You may have innovative ideas concerning your ceremony that you will want to discuss with the pastor. This is appropriate conversation. Remember, however, that some fads on the market are not appropriate in the church. Our primary purpose at the church is to bless your union within the context of Christian worship.

When you reach this stage in courtship, you will be receiving much “free advice”. Some will be good, honest and well intentioned. Some can border on that which is best categorized as thoughtless, careless, and even questionable. Hence, we recommend that well in advance of the service you talk through major policy decisions with the organist and pastor.

Below are items for your consideration as a part of your ceremony:

- Would you like to have congregational singing?
- Do you have a favorite passage of scripture you would like to have incorporated into the service?
- Do you wish to have a brief meditation to be part of the service?

If you are involving children in the service as ring bearer or flower girl, do not make a novelty of their participation. Treat them with dignity, respect, and compassion. If you are expecting them to wear new and unfamiliar clothing for the service, especially shoes, allow them to become familiar with them before the service. Have them wear and “break-in” the shoes, for example, before hand. This may eliminate problems during the ceremony.

A minimum of three meetings with the pastor are required before the wedding date. At that time, you will discuss the ceremony, goals, expectation, etc. A final meeting, the wedding rehearsal itself, is required for all church weddings.

Wedding rehearsals may be scheduled at any time, providing they do not conflict with regular church activities. When setting the time for rehearsal, be certain all participants can attend ON TIME. Rehearsals should last no longer than 1 hour. Those to be at the rehearsal are:

- Bride
- Groom
- Parents (Both Sets)
- Best Man
- All Musicians
- Bridesmaids
- Ring Bearer
- Flower Girls
- Ushers
- Vocalists
- Maid/Matron of Honor
- Groomsmen

Often, females of the wedding party dress at the church. If this is planned, arrive at the church at least *1 1/2 hours* before the service begins.

Ushers will receive specific instructions at the rehearsal. They should arrive forty-five minutes before the service begins.

When participants are dressed, pin the flowers in place and take necessary pictures (Note: it is improper for a minister to wear a boutonniere on his robe). Approximately five minutes before the service begins, move to your proper location for the beginning of the ceremony. Two minutes before the ceremony begins, the parents of the groom and mother of the bride should be in the narthex and ready to be ushered to their seats.

A marriage ceremony is an experience of worship of Almighty God. Central attention is to be focused upon God. We come to the marriage ceremony in joy and gratitude. Our primary purpose is to worship God through the Rite of Holy Matrimony.

The photographer may not take flash pictures during the ceremony. Video footage may be taken from the balcony, however, caution is to be taken so as not to distract from the service or to endanger those worshipping in the pews below. First Evangelical and Reformed Church assumes no liability for damage and injuries caused by falling photo equipment.

After the service is ended, participants may re-enter the sanctuary and pose for pictures as long as photographers wish (*you must keep within the 1-1/2 hour time frame*).

Marriage is a major step in life. A proper and meaningful ceremony can be a deeply significant step in launching your life together into a joyous experience. *Think and Prepare Together* for the opportunities and responsibilities that lie ahead.



PART VI

Some **Do's** in planning a Marriage Ceremony:

- **DO** set the date and make arrangements early!
(See Checklist)
- **DO** confer with parents and keep them informed of your plans.
- **DO** keep the minister informed of wishes, plans and changes in plans.
- **DO** contact the minister, musicians, vocalists, wedding party, and persons involved in the reception early so they can make appropriate plans.
- **DO** feel free to call the minister if you have questions.
- **DO** keep the wedding costs within bounds.
- **DO** get your marriage license early *(valid for 60 days)* so you do not need to rush at the last minute.
- **DO** clear all music with the organist.
- **DO** a solid job of organization. Even informal weddings require planning.
- **DO** inform persons of the policies of the church regarding smoking, pictures, alcohol, etc.
- **DO** reach an understanding with the Custodian regarding housekeeping and setup details that are your responsibility.
- **DO** note that the sanctuary comfortably seats 200 persons.

Some **Don'ts** in planning a Marriage Ceremony:

- **DON'T** wait until the last minute to do things.
- **DON'T** assume people will know something without your having told them. Some of your wedding party may be totally unfamiliar with this type of church. The same may apply to guests.
- **DON'T** make arrangements without the minister, parents, and/or bride and groom's knowledge of them.
- **DON'T** overspend! All bills must be paid, no matter how intense the romance may be.
- **DON'T** let others do your thinking for you. Listen to the "free advice" and accept it for what it is. Listen to those whom you know are knowledgeable and trustworthy.
- **DON'T** be late for appointments, the wedding rehearsal, or wedding.
- **DON'T** forget to make the payments to the church at the time of your last pre-marital session. Payment is made to: **First Evangelical & Reformed Church** *(Check is to be given to the Church Secretary)*
- **DON'T** forget to have someone in charge of gifts before and during the ceremony. You are wise to have someone caring for gifts at all times.

PART VII

TIPS ON USHERING

Ushering methods vary from one locale to another. Here are some general procedures to follow:

A center aisle divides the pews in the First Church sanctuary. Relatives and friends of the groom are usually seated to the left of the minister as he faces the congregation (*east side*), and relatives and friends of the bride are seated on the right side (*west side*). The parents of the bride and groom are seated in the first or second pew. Please reserve space in the front half of each side for relatives of the bride and groom. The first pew on each side is usually not used, so ample space can be provided for the wedding party. The two rear pews are to be saved for the convenience of late guests.

Prior to the ceremony, ushers should seat relatives and guests by asking if they are “friends or relatives of the bride or groom”, so they can be seated in the proper section of the sanctuary. It may be noted, however, that some couples prefer simply to have their guests seated as they wish, with no other particular demarcation. *The usher should extend his right arm to the lady and take her to an appropriate pew.* The husband and children are to follow. Once at the proper pew, the usher should direct the people to be seated.

One minute before the ceremony begins, the designated usher seats the parents of the groom by offering the groom’s mother his right arm. The groom’s father follows as the usher escorts the groom’s mother to her seat. Following this, the designated usher escorts the bride’s mother to her seat.

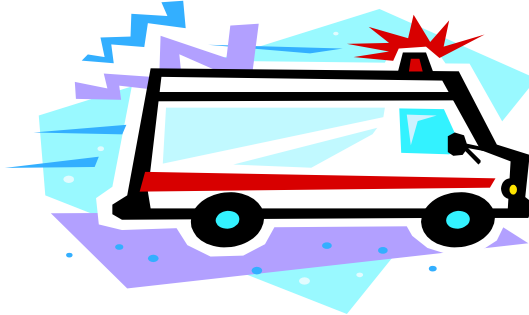
Late guests are asked to wait outside as the bridal party forms in the narthex. After the wedding party has processed, the waiting guests are seated in the rear pews.

Following the ceremony, when the bride and groom have formed a receiving line along with the remainder of the wedding party, the ushers escort the parents of the couple out of the sanctuary. Grandmothers are also escorted out. Following this, the remainder of the guests are dismissed one row at a time, from front to the rear of the sanctuary. A common practice is to dismiss a row from the right and then a corresponding row from the left. Continue the process until the sanctuary is emptied. It is helpful if the ushers keep the line of guests and well-wishers to about ten. Those waiting there can remain comfortably seated in the pews.

Ushers should attend the rehearsal for other instructions and to ask appropriate questions. Your task is important for a smooth service. Be certain the lights are on, if needed. Be familiar with the location of all restrooms. Restrooms are located in the basement of the Church Fellowship Hall and on the main floor of the same. Be prepared for *any emergency!* A wedding ceremony is a time for high emotions – *ANYTHING* can happen. There is a phone in the narthex, one in the Church Office, one in the Pastor’s Study and one in the Church Fellowship Hall. Ushers should be ready to help forty-five minutes before the ceremony begins and should be familiar with the First Church’s Emergency Policies. Candles should be lit at least thirty-minutes before the service begins. You should acquaint yourself with their location at the time of the rehearsal.



FIRST E & R CHURCH EMERGENCY POLICIES



In the event of an Accident or Emergency, the following procedures should be implemented:

- 1) **CALL 911** and **DO NOT MOVE** the victim.
- 2) Get the victim's name.
- 3) If the victim refuses the **EMERGENCY 911 CALL**, it becomes the responsibility of a family member to remove the individual from the Church premises. If the **EMERGENCY 911 CALL** is refused, **it is important to retain names of individuals who heard the victim refuse the EMERGENCY INTERVENTION.**
- 4) If these guidelines are not followed and **you move the victim, YOU BECOME LIABLE AND ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY** for anything (i.e., expenses, etc.) that may come out of the accident or emergency.

The Insurance Company has suggested the above posted guidelines and the Trustees of First Church believe they should be followed. If there are any questions about the Emergency Policies of First Church, please contact a Church Trustee.