

THE SERVICE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE



**INFORMATION, GUIDELINES, AND POLICIES
TO ASSIST YOU IN PLANNING
YOUR WEDDING SERVICE**

The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church welcomes couples of the same-gender
to be married in our church.

The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church

One Chevy Chase Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20015

202-363-2202

Fax: 202-537-2916

www.chevychasepc.org

Greetings!

On behalf of the members and staff of our congregation, the Session congratulates you on your decision to wed. It is a most significant occasion and an exciting and joyous time in life. We rejoice with you as you prepare for your upcoming wedding.

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

A Christian wedding service is unlike a civil one. While both meet the obligations of the laws of the state, the Christian wedding is significantly different. It is a worship service, and, as is the case in all services of worship, the focus is on God. In the marriage service, we especially give thanks to God for the gifts of love and fidelity. During a marriage service, a particular couple hears again the understandings and obligations of Christian marriage. Then, by exchanging vows and ring(s), they willingly enter into a life-long commitment to fulfill them. The 'high point' of the service is not the pronouncement of marriage, but asking God to bless the marriage, and, by the wonders of God's grace, to enable the couple to fulfill their vows, thereby more fully enjoying all the blessings of life which God desires for humanity. It is a requirement that at least one of the partners must be a professing Christian.

RESERVING THE CHURCH

As you begin to settle on a particular date for your wedding, call the church office to see whether that date is available. If the date and time you desire are open, please complete the Wedding Application Information Form and deliver it to the church office.

For your information, our sanctuary seats approximately 300 persons.

THE OFFICIATING PASTOR

One of the pastors of this congregation will officiate at all weddings performed in our facilities. At the time of application, you may request that a particular minister of this congregation officiate. If s/he is available and willing, that person will officiate. Otherwise the pastor/head of staff will appoint the officiating pastor from the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church staff.

We welcome the participation of other Presbyterian ministers and clergy of other denominations and faiths in our wedding services. If you desire that another member of the clergy assist in your wedding service, please note that request on your application and discuss it with the officiating pastor.

PRE-MARITAL CONVERSATIONS AND COUNSELING

The Session affirms that pre-marital conversations and counseling are necessary prerequisites before marriages can be celebrated in our church. This counselling may be conducted by one of the pastors at this church, the pastor of another church, or a certified counsellor. When the counselling is conducted by someone other than a pastor of this congregation, a letter must be submitted by the professional confirming that the counselling has taken place.

THE WEDDING SERVICE

As noted above, the wedding service is a service of worship, and, as such, the focus is on God. What makes it special and unique is that during this service two persons recognize God's continuing presence in their lives—calling them to married life together—and they, in turn, ask God's blessing on their committed life together.

There are usual Orders of Service which the officiating pastor will share with you during your time of preparation. Your personal requests and suggestions will be seriously considered; we want this service to reflect your uniqueness. However, it must always be remembered that there are specific requirements of a wedding service. It must also be understood by all involved that the wedding service is under the sole direction of the officiating pastor.

The usual order of a wedding service would include:

- Prelude
- Entrance of the Families
- The Processional
- Greeting and Call to Worship
- Hymn (*optional*)
- Statement on the Gift of Marriage
- Prayer
- Declarations of Intent
- Affirmation of Families (*optional*)
- Affirmation of the Congregation (*optional*)
- Readings from Scripture
- Meditation
- Hymn (*optional*)
- The Exchange of Vows and Rings
- Prayer and the Lord's Prayer
- Announcement of the Marriage
- Charge and Blessing
- Recessional

Secular readings may be included in the service if they are appropriate to a worship service and approved by the officiating pastor. If there are such selections, they will be read before the reading of scripture. Friends or family members may be invited to read both the secular and scripture selections.

The following is a suggested list of scripture readings that you may wish to include in your service. It is appropriate to have a reading from both the Old and New Testament.

Old Testament

Genesis 1:26-31	<i>Humankind created in the image of God.</i>
Genesis 2:18-24	<i>Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.</i>
Song of Solomon 8:6-7	<i>Set me as a seal upon your heart.</i>
Proverbs 3:3-6	<i>Trust the Lord with all your heart.</i>
Isaiah 54:5-8	<i>Your Maker is your husband.</i>
Jeremiah 31:31-34	<i>The Lord will make a new covenant.</i>

Psalms

Psalm 8	<i>Mortals crowned with glory and honor.</i>
Psalm 67	<i>May God be gracious to us.</i>
Psalm 95:1-7	<i>O come, let us sing to the Lord.</i>
Psalm 100	<i>Make a joyful noise to the Lord.</i>
Psalm 103:1-5, 15-18	<i>Bless the Lord, O my soul.</i>
Psalm 117	<i>Great is God's steadfast love.</i>
Psalm 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills.</i>
Psalm 128	<i>Happy is everyone who fears the Lord.</i>
Psalm 136:1-9, 26	<i>O give thanks, for God is good.</i>
Psalm 145	<i>I will extol you, O God my King.</i>
Psalm 148	<i>Praise the Lord.</i>
Psalm 150	<i>Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.</i>

Epistles

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18	<i>A living sacrifice . . . let love be genuine.</i>
1 Corinthians 13:1-13	<i>Faith, hope, love . . . greatest is love.</i>
1 John 4:7-12	<i>Let us love one another . . . God is love.</i>
Revelation 19:1, 5-9	<i>Rejoicing at the marriage of the Lamb.</i>

Gospels

Matthew 5:1-10	<i>The Beatitudes.</i>
Matthew 5:13-16	<i>Salt of the earth . . . light of the world.</i>
Matthew 19:3-6	<i>No longer two, but one flesh.</i>
Matthew 22:35-40	<i>Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind.</i>
Mark 10:6-9	<i>What God has joined, let no one separate.</i>
John 2:1-11	<i>The wedding at Cana.</i>
John 15:1-17	<i>Jesus, the true vine.</i>

If you wish to have a worship service bulletin, you may do so. The officiating pastor may have samples you can review. It is the couple's responsibility to have the bulletins designed and printed. However, to avoid mistakes, the officiating pastor should review the bulletin before it is sent to the printer.

MUSIC AT YOUR SERVICE

The Director of Music is the keyboard artist (organ and/or piano music) for all weddings at the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church. S/he will be happy to arrange a music consultation with you, at the organ, at which time a number of appropriate pieces of music suitable for processional, recessional, congregational hymns, and prelude will be played, from which you may select your choices. If one or more vocalists or instrumentalists are desired, s/he will also be happy to arrange for them, drawing upon an inventory of musicians with whom s/he has worked. If the wedding does not begin on time, resulting in unanticipated additional prelude music, additional fees may apply.

FLOWERS, CANDLES, AND DECORATIONS

Flowers may be placed on top of the organ case behind the communion table, or on small tables in front of the pulpit and lectern. No flowers may be placed on or directly in front of the communion table. Any flowers that are to be attached to the pews must be fastened with devices which do not damage the wood.

Flowers may be left for the following Sunday's worship service. If you chose to do this, the church office should be notified well in advance so that acknowledgement may be made in the Sunday worship bulletin. To avoid misplaced or lost flowers, please advise your florist that no flowers may be delivered more than two hours before the scheduled time of the wedding unless specific arrangements have been made with the church.

The church has a pairs of large brass candelabra which are available for use at weddings. There is an additional charge for their use, and the church provides candles. No candles may be placed along the aisles or in the windows of the sanctuary or chapel.

Because the aisles of the sanctuary are tiled, aisle runners and flower petals present slipping hazards and are therefore prohibited. For that reason, and ecological ones as well, rice, flower petals, confetti, seed, balloons, etc, are not to be thrown anywhere on the church premises, inside or outside.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

Once the speaking part of the service has begun, we ask that professional photographers hold the taking of photographs. No photographer will be permitted in the chancel area during the service.

When previously approved by the officiating pastor, and when done without extra lighting, video taping from unobtrusive locations such as the balcony is permitted.

REHEARSAL

It is wise to have a rehearsal the day prior to the wedding service so that all involved understand what is expected of them and feel comfortable about the service. Those expected to be present at the service include the wedding party, parents, readers, and ushers. The date and time of the rehearsal will be scheduled with the officiating pastor. Ordinarily, the rehearsal should take about forty-five minutes. As a courtesy to all involved and because other activities may be scheduled in the church, it is imperative that everyone arrive promptly.

PARKING

You and your guests should be aware that parking is limited around the church. The church has a parking lot that is entered from Oliver Street (south of the sanctuary.) It has a capacity of approximately 30 cars. All other vehicles must be parked on city streets, and parking regulations must be observed.

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

You must have a license issued by the jurisdiction in which the wedding service will take place. The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church is located in the District of Columbia. Contact the District of Columbia Marriage Bureau as soon as possible for details. Please note that the church does not keep the legal copy of the wedding license after the wedding. If you need copies in the future, you must contact the Marriage Bureau.

FEES, DEPOSITS, AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

Please see the separate fee schedule. Note that a distinction is made between Active Members and Non-members. To qualify for Member Fees, one of the partners in the marriage or one of their parents must have been an Active Member (as defined in the *Presbyterian Book of Order*) of the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church for a minimum of 18 months immediately prior to the date of the marriage ceremony.

Non-members are required to provide a non-refundable Wedding Date Reservation Fee when they make a wedding reservation once the date has been approved by a pastor.

No later than one week before the rehearsal, payment is expected for all fees due. All fees to the church may be paid by a check made payable to: "The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church." Checks for the organist, vocalists, instrumentalists, and officiating pastor, may be made payable to each person individually.

FINAL WORDS

We hope this booklet is helpful to you as you plan for your wedding. Do not hesitate to contact any member of the church staff if we can be of assistance. May God's grace abound in your lives during this most exciting time.

A BLESSING

*May the grace of Christ attend you,
the love of God surround you,
the Holy Spirit keep you,
that you may live in faith, abound in hope, and grow in love,
both now and forevermore. Amen.*
(From "The Service of Christian Marriage," The Book of Common Worship)