



Red Clay Creek
Presbyterian Church

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WEDDING POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

General Policies and Guidelines:

Wedding services held at Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church ("RCCPC") are to be performed consistent with the theology and practices contained in PCUSA Directory for the Worship of God [W-4.06]:

In Baptism, each Christian is claimed in the covenant of God's faithful love. 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. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

If they meet the requirements of the civil jurisdiction in which they intend to marry, a couple may request that a service of Christian marriage be conducted by a minister of the Word and Sacrament[†] in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is authorized, though not required, to act as an agent of the civil jurisdiction in recording the marriage contract. A couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the minister of the Word and Sacrament[†], who may agree to the couple's request only if, in the judgment of the minister of the Word and Sacrament[†], the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values. In making this decision, the minister of the Word and Sacrament[†] may seek the counsel of the session, which has authority to permit or deny the use of church property for a marriage service.

The marriage service shall be conducted in a manner appropriate to this covenant and to the forms of Reformed worship, under the direction of the minister of the Word and Sacrament[†] and the supervision of the session. In a service of marriage, the couple marry each other by exchanging mutual promises. The minister of the Word and Sacrament[†] witnesses the couple's

promises and pronounces God's blessing upon their union. The community of faith pledges to support the couple in upholding their promises; prayers may be offered for the couple, for the communities that support them, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness.

A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the statements made shall reflect the fact that the couple is already married to one another according to the laws of the civil jurisdiction.

Nothing herein shall compel a minister of the Word and Sacrament[†] to perform nor compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that the minister of the Word and Sacrament[†] or the session believes is contrary to the minister of the Word and Sacrament's[†] or the session's discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God.

In our tradition, a typical marriage service takes the following form:

- The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose.
- Those who are being married shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness.
- The service includes appropriate passages of scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation.
- Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities that support them in the new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness.
- In the name of the triune God, the Officiating Minister shall declare publicly that the two people now joined in marriage.
- A charge may be given.
- Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage.
- The service concludes with a benediction.

In our tradition,

- Music suitable for the marriage service will direct attention to God and express the faith of the Church. The congregation may join in hymns and other musical forms of praise and prayer.
- Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshippers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life.

Specific Guidelines

Wedding services at Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church will be performed in accordance with PCUSA theology and traditions and in accordance with RCCPC's specific policies and procedures.

A. Scheduling

1. Couples desiring a marriage service at RCCPC shall complete a Wedding Information Sheet to indicate their intent and begin the scheduling process.
2. The date and time of both the wedding and the rehearsal (if needed) must be set in consultation with the Officiating Minister.
3. It is expected that clergy on the staff of RCCPC will perform all marriage ceremonies.
4. We welcome the participation of other clergy; however, this must be cleared with the Officiating Minister prior to the invitation being extended to clergy outside the congregation.
5. Because weddings are services of worship performed by the Church, our facilities are not "rented" for weddings of non-members performed by clergy not associated with RCCPC.

B. Counseling

1. Pre-marital counseling must be arranged with the Officiating Minister performing the ceremony. Ordinarily, this counseling shall include at least three meetings with the couple. Therefore, arrangements should be made at least three months prior to the day of the wedding.
2. The counseling provides an opportunity for the Officiating Minister and the couple to become better acquainted. It is also an important time for the couple to discuss with the Officiating Minister many of the issues and concerns facing married couples in our day, and the role of religion and faith in marriage.
3. It is the couple's responsibility to make themselves available for the counseling.

C. Music

1. All music arrangements must be made through RCCPC's Director of Music. The couple is responsible for contacting the Director of Music as soon as possible after the wedding date has been set with the Officiating Minister in order to assure the services of the Director of Music and to set a time for a consultation on the selection of the music for the wedding.
2. Ordinarily, RCCPC's Director of Music will provide organ music for weddings. If other musicians are desired, they must be approved by the Director of Music, in conjunction with the approval of Red Clay Session's (governing body) Rejoice Committee. Other musicians shall not be invited until the Director of Music has been consulted.
3. The use of vocal soloists or other instruments must be arranged and coordinated with RCCPC's Director of Music. Soloists and instrumentalists shall not be invited until the Director of Music has been consulted. The Director of Music will coordinate rehearsal times with the vocalists or instrumentalists.
4. In selecting music (organ, vocal, etc.) it should be kept in mind that the wedding is a service of worship. All musical selections must be approved by both the Director of Music and the Officiating Pastor.

D. Photography

1. Flash photography is not permitted during the wedding service. Non-flash photographs during the service may be permitted, if arranged previously with the Officiating Minister.
2. If there is an "official" photographer (professional or volunteer) for the wedding, she/he must remain at the rear of the Sanctuary (behind the last person in the congregation) or in the balcony at all times. It is requested that the photographer meet with the Officiating Minister briefly before the ceremony to review the ground rules.
3. If videotaping is desired, the camera and other equipment must be placed in the balcony or at the rear of the Sanctuary. A hand-held camera may be used at the rear of the Sanctuary or behind the last person in the congregation. Additional lighting is not permitted.

4. Photographers and persons video-taping must stay out of the aisles and behind the congregation at all times.

E. Flowers

1. Simplicity is encouraged. The use of elaborate or excessive decoration is strongly discouraged.
2. Flowers may not be placed on the Communion Table in the Sanctuary. Ordinarily arrangements are placed on the two side flower stands in the Sanctuary.
3. If the wedding flowers are to be offered for the regular Worship of the congregation of RCCPC, the Church office should be notified so that acknowledgement can be given in the worship bulletin for that Sunday.

F. Candles

1. Aisle and window candles are available for use at weddings. Pew candles are also available for use on the center aisle.
2. All candles will be provided by the Church. (See appropriate fees.)

G. Miscellaneous

1. The marriage license and checks for the various fees shall be brought to the Church Office at least one week prior to the wedding date. No rehearsal or wedding shall be conducted until all fees have been paid.
2. The throwing of rice, birdseed, rose petals, confetti, or other items is not permitted inside or outside of the Church building. Smoking is prohibited anywhere inside the building and allowed only at designated places outside the building.
3. For safety reasons, aisle runners are not permitted.
4. RCCPC is not responsible for any articles left in our facilities after a wedding.

5. Alcoholic beverages may be served at receptions in Fellowship or Founders Hall; however the Church's alcohol policies must be followed and there may be an additional fee for use of the space in that event.
6. All persons in the wedding party must be at the Church 45 minutes prior to the ceremony.
7. Paraments will be white for weddings, and all posters and items related to the church will remain in place.
8. Special requests will be decided upon by the Officiating Minister in accordance with Church policies.
9. Weddings will normally not be scheduled on the following dates:
 - ❖ New Year's Eve and Day
 - ❖ Holy Week or the Saturday preceding Easter
 - ❖ Memorial Day
 - ❖ July 4 Weekend
 - ❖ Labor Day Weekend
 - ❖ Thanksgiving Day or the following weekend
 - ❖ Christmas and the week prior to Christmas.
10. Wedding programs are an option--not a requirement. All wedding programs are to be reviewed and approved by the Officiating Pastor and Music Director prior to final printing.

H. Facilities for Reception

1. Fellowship Hall (the Church's hall located beneath the Sanctuary) may be reserved for wedding receptions. This room has a capacity of 100 persons. Founders Hall may also be used for a reception; the room has a capacity of 240 persons.
2. The Church's kitchen may be used by caterers for the preparation of food for the reception. In such a case, the caterer must provide all kitchenware needed and must leave the facility as it was found.
3. The custodian will open the building two hours prior to the wedding time. Arrangements for more time prior to the wedding must be agreed to by the custodian, and the couple will need to pay an additional fee to the church to cover the costs of the additional custodial time.

I. The Rehearsal

The rehearsal is intended to assist in assuring that the members of the wedding party understand the flow of the ceremony, have clarified any questions regarding individual roles and responsibilities in the service, that the procession and recession are properly ordered, and that the ushers understand their responsibilities. The Board of Deacons of RCCPC provides wedding coordinator assistance for all church logistics during the rehearsal and ceremony. The Officiating Minister will direct the rehearsal. Professional Wedding Consultants/Directors are not permitted to direct the rehearsal or ceremony.

J. Payment of the balance of fees

1. A check for candles, the Church Wedding Coordinator, use of the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, Founders Hall and/or the Kitchen shall be made payable to "Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church".
2. Checks for the Officiating Minister, Organist, and Soloist(s) shall be made payable directly to those individuals.
3. Fees can be negotiated when there is financial limitation. Such discussion should take place with the Officiating Minister.