

Your
CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE
At

Amherst Presbyterian Church

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YOUR CHRISTIAN WEDDING AT AMHERST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

This material is prepared so that we might explain to you the basic elements of Christian marriage here at Amherst Presbyterian Church. It has been prepared by the Pastor; it has been recommended by the Worship Committee and approved by the Session of this congregation. The facilities and services available at Amherst Presbyterian Church will be described herein. We hope that it will be helpful to you in the preparation of your Christian Wedding.

We often get requests for marriages and would like to accommodate the needs of the community. However, we do need some lead time, and suggest that you avoid misunderstandings by arranging to meet with the Pastor of this congregation on as early a date as possible. We would further suggest that you may wish to check with our Pastor before you schedule other facilities to make sure that the church and the Pastor's time are available.

Many people ask about fees for these extra services which are provided by the Christian Church. Therefore, we offer the enclosed suggestions for your guidance.

There are very few restrictions that we place upon weddings, but these rules and regulations are in place after many years of experience with weddings of many different varieties. We believe they are important.

Our greatest concern is that your wedding be more than "just a wedding"; that it is also be a marriage; and that it be a marriage in beauty and sincerity which will be blessed by God and held in honor by all people everywhere.

A WORD ABOUT CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AT AMHERST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We believe there are some very unique qualities of a Christian marriage over and above other marriage. We hold all marriage in very high esteem, but we believe that to have a Christian marriage has very special significance.

A THREE WAY AGREEMENT

First, we see Christian marriage as a relationship between three people: the bride, the groom and God. We also see that this blessing of marriage is something that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has asked us to constantly be aware of. We want a Christian marriage to be Christian, in that it is established for the happiness and the well being of all people who partake in it.

Our Christian faith says very clearly to us that Christian marriage is not only a contract, but it is a spiritual union as well, between one man and one woman. These two persons cherish a mutual esteem and love for each other, and for their God. In marriage we learn to bear with each others infirmities and weaknesses, we learn to comfort each other and to care for the families from which we come as well as the family which we extend. We would also commit ourselves to prayer, to active Christian worship, and to nourishing our own Christian faith; we would commit ourselves to living together for all the days of our lives, asking God to be gracious to us and to give us courage and strength.

GOD'S BLESSING

Therefore, when you ask the Pastor of this church to conduct your marriage, you are asking him to do more than simply perform a wedding ceremony. You are asking God to bless this marriage and to have the community know with clarity, of not only your love for each other, but your joint love for God. For this church, we invite you to participate in Christian marriage to demonstrate that you have a vital faith in God, and that you have a sincere desire to understand and live up to the meaning of Christian commitment to each other and to all peoples.

THE BASIS OF MARRIAGE

Our Pastor finds it one of the happiest privileges he has as a clergy-person to assist a couple and their families to enter upon the joy of Christian marriage. It is his duty to be sure that you understand the responsibilities and undertake all the cares which are necessary to make your lives together working and understanding, and truly blessed. We offer the following as a guideline for understanding of Christian marriage in accordance with our own Book of Order:

1. We ask that one of the persons requesting to be involved in a Christian marriage be an active professing Christian.

2. We insist that at least three conferences between the couple and the Pastor of this church be held before final arrangements are made for total commitment to Christian marriage.

3. That the Order of Service for Christian marriage that has been prescribed by the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America be used, unless special arrangements are made with the minister ahead of time. (A copy with "Options" will be provided to you at the time of your pastoral consultation)

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

This church require three conferences with the Pastor to help prepare the couple for the responsibility of Christian marriage. The Pastor of this church is responsible for the conduct of the service of marriage. However, upon your request, another minister may be invited by our Pastor to participate in the ceremony. You are to note this is to be arranged through the minister far enough ahead of time that preparations can be appropriately made.

MUSIC AND YOUR WEDDING

The expression of your love for God as well as your love for each other is well expressed in the historic and great Christian music of the churches. The purpose of this music is to direct our attention to God, and of course, to enhance the beauty of our ceremony. Therefore, arrangements with the Director of Music of this church must be made as early as possible, so that the time can be reserved and music prepared.

Our Organist and Choir Director will suggest compositions which will be appropriate for this religious ceremony, and we will be glad to talk with your about music and to play some demonstrations of music for you. If you are interested in engaging a vocal soloist or other instrumental soloist, our director of music will arrange that also; or if the bride wishes to invite a soloist unknown to the Director of Music, the request should be approved well in advance of the wedding.

If someone other than the Church Organist is to be asked to play, that invitation must be given by our Music Director and with her permission. Of course, this permission must also be guided by the recommendations of the minister. We recommend that these arrangements be made when the first contact is made with the church. If a substitute is invited, those substitute must observe the musical standards of this congregation.

FLOWERS FOR YOUR WEDDING

We believe the beauty of the wedding carries for itself a great symbolism as does the simple beauty of our Amherst Presbyterian Church. We find special meaning in the symbolism of the empty cross and the Communion Table. There is also the beauty of light streaming in our windows. If you would like to add floral decorations to the chancel, you may obtain recommendations for decorations through the Pastor.

THE CHURCH BUILDING IN YOUR WEDDING

We ask that you make reservations for use of the church with the minister as early as possible. Our sanctuary seats approximately 200 persons at maximum and with smaller wedding of 50 persons or less easily fitting within the confines of the building.

The nursery is made available both as a dressing room and as a gathering place for the bride and the immediate family.

Automobiles may be brought to the front door for those who are going to be in the wedding party only. All other vehicles we asked be placed in the parking lot to the rear of the building.

We ask each wedding party to provide at least one usher who can provide guidance to the services of the building, and usher people appropriately to their seats.

The church building is accessible one hour before the service of Holy Marriage. If there are other arrangements that need to be made, these will have to be arranged with the church office and the sexton.

We ask that no confetti or rice be used at the wedding, although you are welcome to use birdseed. If you wish to make a change in this

procedure, it will have to be arranged with the Pastor. We further request that even the throwing of birdseed remain outside the building only.

A WORD ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHS FOR YOUR WEDDING

Photographs may be taken in the vestibule in the narthex, and may be taken in the aisle during the procession and the recession at the beginning and the ending of the ceremony. Once the service of liturgy begins (after the bride has been delivered via the procession) there are to be no further flash pictures taken. After the benediction has been pronounced, flash pictures may begin again; between these two points, there are to be no flash pictures taken. Ushers are to ask that no pictures be taken during the liturgy. If the wedding party wish to pose for ceremony pictures after the guests have left, the Pastor is willing to pose for pictures with you.

When prior arrangements have been made with the Pastor, pictures using the natural light of the sanctuary may be taken from the gallery during the liturgy by the professional photographer. We ask the bride and groom to inform the photographer of these restrictions.

Any video pictures to be taken shall be taken from a fixed position without the photographer moving around during the service. If you know video's will be taken please discuss this with the pastor before the rehearsal date.

THE SEXTON

Be sure that the Sexton (church janitor) is well informed through the church office of your plans. Normally the Pastor will inform him, but you have an obligation to make certain that he has been informed. The Sexton has a responsibility to have the Church in order for your wedding. He also has a responsibility to return it to the usual form, so that it may be used for the worship life of this congregation. Therefore, he needs to know ahead of time when you will need him here, when flowers and other items will arrive, and when you plan to be finished.

SOME RECOMMENDED FEES

For active members of the congregation, there are few actual fees. Since the Pastor is paid a salary to provide these services to you, you have contributed to this salary by your active church membership and your regular contributions to this congregation's ministry.

If you are an inactive or non-member, however, the Pastor is providing time and extra service to you.

For active members, the building use has no fee attached to it, nor is there a clergy fee. However, there is an additional organist fee of \$75.00 plus \$25.00 if you wish her to accompany a vocalist. The custodian fee is \$35.00 for members as well as non-members.

If you wish to make a contribution to the Pastor's discretionary fund which is used for special emergencies, it will be gratefully received.

For non-members, the following fees are to be observed:

Building use	\$ 75.00
Clergy fee	75.00
Organist	75.00 plus \$ 25.00 if accompanying a
vocalist	
Sexton (janitor)	35.00

REHEARSAL

It is required that you arrange for a rehearsal time for the day before your wedding. This will need to be arranged with the Pastor, and one hour of time will be allocated for this purpose. Our experience is that a rehearsal time greatly enhances your excitement and joy in your wedding, and also helps things to go well for the wedding participants and the congregation. If you do not wish to have a rehearsal, this will have to be negotiated with the Pastor.

IN CLOSING

The church staff and the congregation are pleased to serve you, not only for this your wedding day, but also in your preparation for that wedding day and for a continued service to you in the many years of your marriage. We perform marriages rather than weddings. We are here to serve you the rest of your life, providing support to you, your loved ones, and your family. We would hope that you would consider this event not a beginning and end, but only the beginning of a long pastoral and caring relationship between bride, groom, family and congregation.

We extend to you our grateful appreciation that you respect the crowded schedule of our Pastor and be prompt in your appointments, and not delay or extend rehearsal or reception time beyond the agreed-upon time and that you make full use of the services of this congregation to the glory of God.