



WEDDINGS GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

Blessings on your upcoming marriage!

At Freemason Street Baptist Church, we celebrate your upcoming wedding – and more importantly, we celebrate the covenant and the beautiful journey that you are beginning together. We believe that the union of two people in marriage was created by God for those who love each other and who are ready to commit their lives to one another. Marriage is intended by God for the couple's mutual joy, for providing help and comfort in every circumstance of life, and, in the providence and timing of God unique to each couple, providing for children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. As a Christian congregation, we approach planning and participating in a wedding an opportunity to worship God. We gather to thank God and to commit ourselves before God our hope and desire that God's love will enter and shape every part of our lives and especially this most significant and meaningful of life's commitments and relationships.

If you wish to consider getting married at Freemason Street Baptist Church, we will be glad to explore the possibility with you. Please contact the Church Office by email (office@freemasonstreet.org) or phone (757-625-7579).

Before you do, though, please read these guidelines and policies to help you prepare before you call.

THE BASICS

Freemason Street Baptist Church expects that a couple married in the Church believes in God. The very language of the ceremony reflects this fundamental life commitment and affirms that Christian marriage is a covenant relationship in which the bride and groom make promises not only to each other but to God. As we plan together the wedding ceremony, we will work with you to ensure every aspect reflects the theology of the wedding and its significant relationship to God.

THE MINISTER

A licensed minister of the Christian faith will officiate at all weddings. The use of Freemason Street ministers is preferred; however, we are happy to work with you if you have an existing relationship with another Christian minister.

If you have established a relationship with your own pastor minister, we assume he or she will meet with you for premarital consultations and will be conducting the service. *Your pastor or minister is responsible for contacting our minister* for details regarding the liturgy to be used for the service. If circumstances keep your pastor from conducting the wedding, after all, and a minister from our church can step into becoming the minister of record, all couples will be required to have an initial interview and consultations with our minister.

WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

When the decision has been made to have your wedding ceremony in Freemason Street Baptist Church, *the first step in planning is to contact the church office can reserve the date and establish it on the church calendar*. If a minister on our staff will officiate your wedding, you will meet with them for an initial interview and to confirm the date.

Weddings will not be scheduled to begin later than 4:00 p.m. and will not be scheduled to take place on a Sunday. Weddings are also not scheduled during the month of December, during Holy Week, Easter, or holiday weekends. *Your completed "Application for Wedding" form, along with a \$100.00 deposit, must be returned to the church secretary at the time the wedding is confirmed*.

For your information and convenience, the capacity of the sanctuary is a maximum of 350 on the lower level. The Fellowship Hall will seat 100. The church parking lot has space for 85 vehicles, including handicapped spaces. Additional parking is available across the street in the MacArthur Center garage. In your wedding publicity and on the invitations, the proper name of the church shall be used:

Freemason Street Baptist Church 400 East Freemason Street Norfolk, Virginia 23510

No alcoholic beverages may be served or consumed on church premises. No drugs shall be brought on church premises. Smoking must be confined to outside the church building

We anticipate the following time frame for weddings in the church: 1 hour for rehearsal, 4 hours for weddings (we open 2 hours prior to the wedding), 3 hours for receptions.

All rehearsals should start by 5:00 p.m. and the latest we start a wedding is 4:00 p.m.

A wedding coordinator is essential to a successful wedding ceremony. If you do not have a wedding coordinator, we can offer suggestions.

MUSIC

The organist of Freemason Street Baptist Church is available to play for church weddings, in most cases.

Because the wedding is a service of Christian worship, neither secular music nor pre-recorded music will be used. The minister and church organist have the final authority concerning the wedding music used. If a soloist or instrumentalist is used, she or he must provide the organist with the proper musical score(s) no less than thirty (30) days prior to the ceremony.

As part of setting the date for your wedding, the minister and the church secretary will help the bride make contact and set the initial date for meeting with the organist to discuss music. After this initial meeting, it is the bride's responsibility to stay in touch with the organist in a thoughtful and professional manner. Our Minister of Music must approve other organists.

FLORIST AND DECORATIONS

Please instruct your florist that the church will open *two hours prior* to the wedding for decorating. Be sure to plan to ensure that all decorations are removed immediately following the ceremony.

No nails or tacks may be used in the furniture or woodwork. No lighted candles may be used on pew ends or windowsills – only in the chancel area. Only floral tape may be used on the brass urn. The policy in this paragraph also applies to the Fellowship Hall and all other areas in the church.

No aisle runners are to be used in the sanctuary. Silk flower petals may be scattered, but not live petals. Rice, confetti, birdseed, and the like may **not** be used on church grounds.

For candlelight, the church has candelabras that must be used. The candle inserts must be purchased from the church. Contact the church secretary to make those arrangements.

PHOTOGRAPHY

No flash photographs may be taken during the wedding ceremony. Videorecording of your wedding should be done in a way that honors the sacredness of the ceremony. Videorecording of the service may be done from the balcony using available lighting. Guidelines for photographers are included within your wedding packet, and your photographer must sign and return the form (included).

DRESSING AREA

The church will designate dressing areas for the bridal party and groomsmen. *These areas must be cleared by the members of the wedding party or their personal designees* before participants leave the church at the conclusion of the service.

The church is not responsible for personal items, i.e., wedding dresses, wraps, coats, cell phones, purses, which are brought to church in preparation for the wedding and left behind. The church is not liable for items lost or stolen.

All church facilities must be left in the condition as found, and care must be taken by the wedding party to protect furnishings in these rooms.

RECEPTIONS IN THE CHURCH

The Fellowship Hall of the church is available for your use as the place for your wedding reception for a fee. The custodian will assist the caterer in preparing the hall and cleaning it following the reception. *The custodian's services take place before and after the reception and should not be confused with the services a caterer may render.* The custodian will be present to assist your caterer.

The planning of your reception and decorating of the Fellowship Hall are your responsibility. Only professional caterers may be used, unless other arrangements are made in advance with the Church Secretary and Food Services Manager. All items must be furnished by the caterer.

The actual number of those attending will determine if you need your caterer to provide additional tables and chairs. There is a specific form the caterer must sign which outlines the guidelines. It is included in your wedding packet.

No alcoholic beverages or drugs may be served or consumed on church premises, and dancing is not permitted. Smoking must be confined to outside the church building. We anticipate that receptions will last no longer than three hours after the wedding *and must conclude no later than 9:00 p.m.* *You must schedule your reception when you schedule your wedding.*

FEE SCHEDULE

The cost of having your wedding at Freemason Street Baptist Church is determined by what services you will use. The Church Secretary will work with you to determine what your cost will be.

The cost to use the Fellowship Hall for a reception is \$400.00. This fee covers janitor fees and room usage fee.

If you are using your own minister and/or musicians, please complete that information on your application form.

THE DEPOSIT MUST BE PAID AT TIME WEDDING DATE IS CONFIRMED.

ALL FEES MUST BE PAID 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE REHEARSAL DATE

The deposit will be refunded within 30 days if no additional costs were required on the day of your wedding.

** Please note, if you are using your own minister, it is your responsibility to provide the minister with an honorarium, typically given on the night of the rehearsal.*

All payments must be by check or money order, only, and made payable to:
Freemason Street Baptist Church.

If you are mailing your payment, please send it to:

Freemason St. Baptist Church
400 East Freemason Street
Norfolk, VA 23510

PHOTOGRAPHY LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Freemason Street Baptist Church 400 East
Freemason Street Norfolk, Virginia 23510
(757) 625-7579



We understand that you and/or your firm has been retained by _____ and _____ in order to take photographs/videotape their wedding which will take place at Freemason Street Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia on (Day) _____, (Date) _____ at (Time) _____.

Photography and videotaping of weddings at Freemason Street Baptist Church are subject to the following guidelines:

- The church will be available for photographs or videotaping 45 minutes before and after the wedding ceremony.
- Photography during the wedding is permitted up until the time that the processional music ends, and the bride is at the front of the church.
- Photography may resume once the concluding music begins and the bride and the groom turn to process out of the church.
- Video or photographic documentation of your wedding should be done in accordance with the sacredness of the ceremony.

All aspects of this policy will be strictly enforced.

This Letter of Agreement, properly executed by you, must be returned to Freemason Street Baptist Church 30 days prior to the date of the wedding.

Photographer's Name _____

Firm Name (if applicable) _____

Photographer's Signature _____ **Date** _____

CATERING GUIDELINES

1. **The caterer(s) must identify themselves** to the church secretary with **Name, Address, Telephone number, and contact person (a business card will do)**. **A signed copy of these guidelines must be in the church office thirty (30) days prior to the wedding.**
2. **Caterer must furnish** tablecloths, candelabra, table decorations and any cookware, which is required.
3. **Caterer may use kitchen facilities** for the serving of **non-alcoholic** beverages and refrigeration of refreshments prepared elsewhere.
4. **Smoking is prohibited** in all Church buildings.
5. **Caterer must provide** flatware, dishes, bowls, sugar & creamer servers, plates, bowls, glasses, cups and saucers, serving bowls, etc.
6. **Caterer may use Fellowship Hall tables and chairs**, provided we are advised 30 days in advance. They may need to provide tables and chairs, depending on number of attendees.
7. **Caterer is responsible for clean-up** after use of kitchen facilities and Fellowship Hall.
8. **Caterer is responsible for making sure that all appliances are turned off** before leaving.
9. **Caterer is responsible for any damage** to church property during its use.
10. **Caterer should consult with the Church Secretary** to schedule a date and time to view the facilities and meet with the Food Services Manager.
11. **Our building and grounds are special to us.** The above rules and guidelines are given so you might treat our building as we do. We thank you in advance.
12. We anticipate that receptions will last no longer than three hours after the wedding and must conclude no later than 9:00 p.m.



Caterer's Signature _____ Date _____

Bride's Signature _____ Date _____



Attn: Susan Keane, Secretary
P. O. Box 1739
Norfolk, VA 23501

Today's Date _____

Wedding Date _____

Wedding Time _____

WEDDING APPLICATION & PAYMENT AGREEMENT

The fees for weddings at Freemason Street Baptist Church as listed on the fee schedule must be paid 30 days prior to the rehearsal. A refundable deposit of \$100.00 (Returned 30 days after your wedding) is due when your wedding is scheduled with our church. Please complete this form and return along with your deposit.

BRIDE

Name _____ Date of Birth ____/____/____

Address _____

Daytime phone number _____ E-mail _____

Religious Affiliation _____ Occupation _____

Is this your first marriage? _____

GROOM

Name _____ Date of Birth ____/____/____

Address _____

Daytime phone number _____ E-mail _____

Religious Affiliation _____ Occupation _____

Is this your first marriage? _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS FOLLOWING WEDDING (where deposit will be sent)

Address _____

THE MINISTER

Will you be using a minister from our church to officiate your wedding? YES____NO____

If using our Minister, you must arrange an initial interview as well as additional consultations.

If you are using another Minister, complete the following information.

Minister's Name & Title _____

Church he/she is serving _____

If Minister is not from Virginia, are they licensed to perform weddings in VA? _____

Daytime phone number _____ E-mail _____

THE ORGANIST

Will you be using the church organist? YES____NO____

Will the bride be dressing at the church? YES____NO____

Will you be using candelabras? YES____NO____

Florist: _____ Phone _____

Photographer: _____ Phone _____

e-mail _____

THE REHEARSAL

Date _____ Time _____

Please note: the latest a rehearsal may begin is 5:00 p.m.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

Name _____

Daytime phone number _____ E-Mail _____

She/he will work with the minister as he/she directs the rehearsal and wedding.

THE RECEPTION

Location of Reception _____

If your reception is at Freemason Street Baptist Church, name of caterer:

Please note that the caterer is to sign and return the catering policy to the church 30 days prior to the event.

SOUND TECHNICIAN

If you will need a sound technician, there is an additional fee of \$100.

Will you need someone to run the soundboard of the church (this is for if you have any extra soloists/musicians other than the organ)? _____

NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF WEDDING GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

We have received a copy of the Wedding Guidelines and Policies of Freemason St. Baptist Church. We will review these with our wedding party, florist, caterer and photographer so there will not be any misunderstandings or deviation from them.

We understand the Schedule of Fees as outlined in the Wedding Guidelines and Policies and agree to pay these fees. We understand that my wedding date is not confirmed until the deposit of \$100.00 has been paid. We also understand that the final payment of the remaining balance is due (1) month prior to the wedding date.

Total amount of payment due to the church, 30 days prior to the wedding is \$_____.

Bride's Signature and Date _____

Groom's Signature and Date _____