

**WEDDING SERVICE MANUAL**  
**OF**  
**CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**Christian Marriage**

Marriage is established by God. In marriage a couple willingly bind themselves together in love and become one, even as Christ is one with the church. We are delighted you wish to celebrate this time of great joy in your lives through your wedding ceremony at Central Presbyterian Church.

The Christian marriage ceremony is a **service of worship**. The minister will work with you to assure its worshipful nature.

### **Counseling with the Pastor**

We believe that Christian marriage is a covenant in which a woman and a man establish a relationship together so that they may grow in love for each other and for God. The minister will counsel with you to help them prepare for the responsibilities of this covenant.

### **Use of the Church Facilities and Scheduling**

The wedding date, as well as the rehearsal time, should be established as early as possible in consultation with one of the pastors. After the appropriate church fees have been paid (see center fee schedule) the wedding will be entered onto the church calendar, thus guaranteeing the use of the church's facilities for your wedding. Marriages may be held in the sanctuary, the Cownie Chapel or the courtyard.

### **The Marriage License**

You will need to make your own arrangements to secure a marriage license from the Clerk of the District Court in any county in Iowa. The license should be given to the pastor or church office before the service with the appropriate information provided at that time. The pastor will see that it is properly signed, entered in the church records, and returned to the court.

### **The Wedding Ceremony**

#### **A. Officiating Clergy**

Normally the ceremony will be performed by one of the ministers of Central Church. Other ministers may perform weddings here, or assist in ceremonies with the approval of Central's Session. Such invitation will ordinarily be gladly extended if the bride or groom has a relative or close friend who is an ordained minister. Normally, one of Central's pastors will also participate in the service and rehearsal.

#### **B. The Order of Worship**

The marriage ceremony is a service of worship performed in the presence of God. It is assumed that weddings at Central Church will conform to general Christian tradition and proper standards of good taste. Within these guidelines, there is flexibility to accommodate your wishes.

#### **C. Music for the Marriage Service**

Music for the wedding service should contribute to Christian worship. Central Church is known for high standards of music, and it is expected that selections will conform to these standards. Music that is high in sentimentality and low in religious content is more appropriate for the wedding reception than for the wedding ceremony.

It is no favor to a soloist or to the wedding guests if an inexperienced soloist is asked to sing before a congregation that is accustomed to superior soloists. The Director of Music will be happy to recommend both soloists and music. The final decision relating to appropriateness of music selection will be done by the Director of Music or Associate Organist with the guidance of the Worship Committee. You should make an appointment with the Director of Music to discuss the music for your wedding.

Hymn singing in the ceremony is both highly desirable and appropriate. Because of copyright laws, photocopying of music is absolutely unacceptable and illegal. Taped music is not permitted.

#### **D. The Organist**

One of the staff organists of Central Church shall play for the service. (Other organists may play only at his/her invitation.)

#### **E. Courtesy**

The church staff wishes to be helpful in arranging the details of your wedding, and we promise to do our best with this. By being on time for the rehearsal and other appointments, paying fees in a timely manner, and avoiding unusual last minute requests, you show respect for the busy schedules of church staff members.

#### **F. Photographs**

Only non-flash pictures and videotape with existing light may be taken during the service, only from the balcony and only if no disturbance is caused. This is to preserve the dignity, beauty and worship atmosphere of the wedding service. Flash pictures may be taken during the processional and the recessional, but not during the ceremony itself. Please inform your photographer of this policy and ask the ushers to inform guests with cameras.

Posed pictures may be taken either before or after the ceremony at your discretion. If photographs are taken prior to the wedding, they should be completed at least 45 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony as guests will be arriving.

## **G. Rehearsal**

The purpose of a rehearsal is to practice entrances, exits and other elements of the wedding so that on the day of the wedding everyone's mind will be free from worry and will be able to focus upon the beauty and meaning of the ceremony. Only those participating in the wedding ceremony may attend the rehearsal.

The rehearsal may be held at any convenient time but is customarily the evening before the day of the wedding. Once everyone is present, an hour and a half is usually more than sufficient to accomplish what needs to be done. All the details of the rehearsal and service are ultimately at the discretion of the pastor representative of Central Presbyterian Church. The church cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items.

## **Physical Arrangements**

### **A. Wedding Coordinator**

As soon as your wedding is on the church calendar, you will need to consult with our wedding coordinator. Even a small wedding is complicated and involves many more details than you may realize at the outset. Omission or inept handling of any one of these details can create an awkward or even embarrassing situation on the day of the wedding. The wedding coordinator is familiar with the church and has a checklist of details which she will go over with you. She will meet with you at any early stage of your planning and will be present at the rehearsal and the wedding to give assistance.

### **B. Flowers and Other Decorations**

1. If you would like to donate the wedding flowers to be used in church on Sunday, arrangements should be made in advance with the church office. If memorial flowers have not been scheduled for that Sunday, the gift will be gratefully received and will be so acknowledged in the Sunday worship bulletin.
2. The use of an aisle runner is prohibited because of the potential hazard caused by the marble floor.
3. Balloon releases, rice and bird seed and other thrown projectiles are dangerous to the environment and people and are therefore prohibited.
4. The church has candlesticks and two candelabra which may be used.
5. Visual arts displays such as special altar decorations, banners, and chancel area hangings, may be on display in the sanctuary during the time of your wedding and will not be removed. Since the majority of pictures are taken in the chancel area, the Central hangings may appear in pictures.
6. A grand piano may be positioned at the front of the sanctuary during your wedding. The presence of the grand piano in the sanctuary requires removing a number of pews which results in an imbalance of rows. The piano and pew arrangement will remain as is.

### **C. Dressing Rooms for the Wedding Party**

There are rooms in which the bride and her attendants, and the groom and his attendants, may dress. Restrooms are located nearby.

### **D. Alcoholic Beverages/Smoking**

Church policy forbids the use of alcoholic beverages on church property. Smoking is prohibited in the building at all times.

### **E. The Reception in the Church**

The Presbyterian Women are in charge of all wedding receptions held in Central Presbyterian Church. If the reception is to be held in the church, you should contact the Wedding Chairperson of the Presbyterian Women as soon as the wedding date has been entered on the church calendar. The details of the reception will be discussed and your wishes will be observed to the extent possible. The center pullout page of this booklet details fees.

It is expected that you will furnish all refreshments, floral decorations, candles if desired, napkins. The Presbyterian Women will provide silver, linen and dishes. They will also set the table, make the coffee and/or punch, and supervise all arrangements for serving. After the reception, they will wash the dishes and see that everything is in order.

In the event the Presbyterian Women cannot serve a reception, and the wedding is for a member of Central Presbyterian Church, the member's family may use the Fellowship Hall and kitchen facilities for a reception, providing their own help. It is assumed that the member bride or groom is responsible for clean-up and any breakage or damage.

**Adopted by the Worship Committee of Central Presbyterian Church**

**November 2, 1987**

**Revisions Adopted by the Worship Committee and approved by the Session, June 2005**