

I. Accommodations and Reservations

A wedding in The Church of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is intended to be an act of worship, a religious covenant whereby the union of a couple is affirmed within the context of their covenantal relationship with God. When a man and a woman express their desire for their marriage to be solemnized by a church wedding, the church immediately becomes a party to the wedding and a participant in the formulation of plans affecting the wedding.

The church sanctuary, which seats 850, is available for the wedding ceremony and the rehearsal. A smaller Chapel, consisting of the partitioned middle section of the former sanctuary, can seat around 200 and is also available for weddings.

The date for the wedding should be announced only *after* arrangements (i.e., signed Facility Use Agreement with the Reservation Fee and the Security Deposit) have been made with the Office Manager for use of the appropriate church facilities. Church members may reserve the church up to a year in advance of the ceremony and CGS will guarantee the availability of the reserved spaces to the best of its ability, pending essential repairs or other events beyond the control of the staff to predict or prepare for. The bride and groom will confirm the availability of the minister for the desired wedding date and will secure his services for the rehearsal and ceremony. (It is not necessary to extend wedding invitations to members of the church staff and their families unless they would otherwise be invited as personal acquaintances.)

CGS will host a wedding for a non-member or regular attender, so long as at least one person in the couple is a member of a church within the Presbyterian Church of America. This couple will be responsible for securing their own officiating minister and pre-marital counseling and will be charged all contractual fees based on the non-member rate.

During the month of December, the sanctuary will be decorated for Christmas, and these decorations cannot be moved or removed. Because of extra programs and activities during the Christmas season, CGS can accommodate only two weddings in December. Weddings between December 24 and January 1 are contingent on the availability of a wedding director and a sound technician.

It is assumed that a minister on the CGS staff will perform the ceremony. If a couple desires that a minister of another church assist in the wedding, the request is made to the Office Manager at the time of the reservation. The Office Manager, in turn, will notify our church's officiating minister, who extends the invitation.

All weddings, rehearsals, and receptions hosted at CGS must be coordinated through a CGS-approved Wedding Director.

A non-refundable reservation fee of \$500 must be paid at time of the facility reservation to hold the date. An additional fee of \$500 will be set aside as a security deposit. Both fees are due at the point of reserving of the facility.

The security deposit will be refunded at the conclusion of the wedding provided all policies were followed and there is no damage to the church facility. The Wedding Director will assess the building condition immediately following the wedding events and will report the condition to the Office

Manager as well as any failure to follow policies. Allow 4-6 weeks following the ceremony for the Facility Manager to inspect the facility and assess the building. If no damages occurred, the full security deposit will be refunded. Any cost to repair damage will be taken from the security deposit.

After the completed "Wedding Request Form" is returned to the church office, the Wedding Director will secure one of her staff who will contact the bride. The bride will meet with the assigned wedding director at least twice prior to the wedding, and the director will be the liaison between the bride and the church.

The Wedding Director will communicate scheduled/confirmed weddings to the CGS Office Staff (Receptionist, Office Manager, Facility Manager, and Worship Director). The Facility Manager will communicate directly with the church cleaning company. The cleaning company only handles furniture and property owned by the church. Rented items are the responsibility of the rental vendor.

Please keep in mind that 1) Smoking is not permitted in any part of the building. 2) No alcoholic beverages are permitted on the church premises at any time. 3) Church equipment, musical instruments, or furniture will be moved, as needed, by church staff or approved contractors.

II. Premarital Counseling

As soon as the wedding date has been announced, the couple should arrange for counseling with our church's officiating minister. Premarital counseling with a couple prior to the wedding ceremony is considered a requirement by the minister; his major concern is that the couple is prepared to take their vows meaningfully and with a sense of genuine commitment to each other and to God. As the officiating minister, he also must be ever mindful of his obligations to the church that has ordained him, and he will emphasize the religious significance of the marriage ceremony and the importance of marriage within God's will for mankind.

III. Music

As an integral part of the wedding ceremony, appropriate musical selections can help to place the wedding in the proper context of worship and give meaningful expression to God's place in this event. The program of wedding music is usually scheduled during the 20 to 30-minute period prior to the appointed hour for the wedding. The processional will begin at the appointed hour.

All music should be planned in consultation with the officiating minister. Live music (not pre-recorded) of sacred or classical style is generally preferred; however, deviations from this preference can be discussed with the CGS Worship Director. The sanctuary piano is available for use during the rehearsal and ceremony. If musicians desire additional rehearsal time in our facility, they should schedule use of our building through the Office Manager. It is best to practice music before the wedding rehearsal rather than after it. The wedding rehearsal will include only the music selections that are a part of the wedding processional, ceremony and recessional. We regret that we do not have staffing on Friday evening to allow for additional music practice after the official wedding rehearsal concludes.

IV. Lights/Audio Support

Only the CGS-approved Sound Operator is allowed to operate the sanctuary lights and sound system. Arrangements for additional audio recording services must be agreed to and approved in advance of the ceremony by the Sound Operator.

V. Photography/Videography

Only the professional photographer is allowed to take photos during the processional, the ceremony, and the recessional. The photographer must remain at the back of the sanctuary and is not allowed to stand at the front of the sanctuary, in the center aisle, or side aisles to take photos. It is the responsibility of the bridal party to see that no photographs are made by the wedding guests during this time. Unobtrusive video tapings, without flash equipment and conducted by qualified videographers, are permitted. The video cameras must be stationary -- either on a tripod or hand-held. The videographer may not move around to take videos. Photographers are permitted to take candid shots during the rehearsal, but only so long as their presence does not interfere with or delay the progress of the rehearsal.

Photographs may be taken in the sanctuary following the ceremony. But, in the interest of expediency, the bride is requested to predetermine, through consultation with the photographer, the desired groupings for photographs to follow the ceremony.

VI. Decorations

The sanctuary of the Church of the Good Shepherd is a space devoted to the worship of God. To maintain the atmosphere of sanctity and to safeguard the chancel and the furnishings, decorative treatment should be limited.

The following rules apply to the use of the Church of the Good Shepherd facilities for a wedding:

1. Because the center aisle of the sanctuary is carpeted, only artificial flowers can be “thrown” by the flower girl(s). Rice is forbidden indoors and around entrances at any time. Rice on the floors and steps can be extremely hazardous, and it is the bride’s responsibility to ensure that members of her wedding party are properly advised of this important policy. If rice is to be thrown outside, it must be thrown well away from all entrances to the church buildings. Birdseed is an acceptable substitute.
2. Arrangements for floral decorations will be made with a florist by the wedding party.
3. If the bride desires that her center floral arrangement be left for use in the following Sunday worship service, this request is made by the bride to the church’s wedding director as early as possible after the church is reserved.
4. Everything brought into the building for the wedding and/or reception must be removed the day of the wedding except for donated flowers in the sanctuary.

VII. Wedding Receptions

The church may be used for wedding receptions only when the wedding ceremony is held at the church. Everything brought into the building for the wedding and reception must be removed the day of the wedding. This includes rental tables, chairs, food, decorations, etc. Since every room in the church is used on Sundays, nothing can be left over the weekend.

Outside catering is allowed once the company has provided the Office Manager with proof of insurance. The proof of insurance must include the name of our church (Church of the Good Shepherd) and list the church as “additionally insured” on this document.

If the church’s tablecloths are used during the reception, the Wedding Director will be responsible for having them cleaned. Refer to the Wedding Expenses and Fees spreadsheet to review current expenses and fees.

In acknowledgement of the extra time and effort involved, an additional fee will be added to the Wedding Director’s fee when the reception is held at the church. Refer to the Wedding Expenses and Fees spreadsheet.

VIII. The Rehearsal

If there are to be any attendants, it is necessary to schedule a rehearsal; even the simplest wedding ceremony requires planning and preparation. The rehearsal time should be arranged when facilities for the wedding are initially reserved so that the various members of the wedding party can structure their schedules accordingly. In fairness to the minister and all those involved, the rehearsal must begin promptly as scheduled and should proceed without unnecessary delay.

At the rehearsal, the time schedule for members of the wedding party to arrive for the ceremony will be given. Dressing areas for the bride and her attendants will also be assigned at this time.

Any musicians who will be performing music for the wedding ceremony must be present at the rehearsal.

The officiating Minister and the Wedding Director will coordinate the wedding rehearsal.

The sound system operator will be present at the rehearsal and the wedding. In consultation with the bride’s family, the operator can provide the bride with a link to an audio recording of the wedding.

Acknowledgement of Receipt/Agreement

Signatures (Bride, Groom)

Date

Signature (CGS Wedding Director)

Date

Review Cycle:

This Wedding Policy will be reviewed annually by the Deacons.

Fee Schedule Version: 1.0

Effective Date: 2026-06-12

Next Review Date: 2027-06-12

Approved by: Deacon Vote