

# First Corinthian Baptist Church

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**[www.firstcorinthian.org](http://www.firstcorinthian.org)**

Reverend Dennis Earl Thomas, M.Div. - Pastor

Dear Engaged Couple:

Greetings in the thrill of living for Christ Jesus!

We rejoice that you have chosen to be married at First Corinthian. After years of guiding couples through the process of preparing for marriage, we realized the need for a set of uniform guidelines. Our staff has created this booklet to help you plan your wedding at the First Corinthian Baptist Church.

People from all cultures and all religions get married. As a result, marriage is not the sole possession of the church. That you have chosen to be married in the Christian Church means your wedding at First Corinthian will be a worship service. Therefore, as is the case in all Christian worship, our primary focus is on God. We come together to praise and thank God for the good gifts that the Creator has showered upon the human family and upon the church. God gives us marriage as the foundation for human community. Marriage brings us a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come.

As you come before the altar to pledge your love and life-long faithfulness to each other, the Church offers what it has been authorized by Christ to give: God's blessing.

# Wedding Guidebook



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# FCBC Wedding Guidebook

The following arrangements should be considered before making further plans for your upcoming FCBC wedding:

## **1. INITIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Your preparation for a wedding at First Corinthian began with your initial consultation with Pastor Thomas. At that time you were given this Wedding Book and Wedding Information Sheet. You also received some verbal information regarding the nature of weddings at St. John's, expectations regarding marriage preparation and fee schedule.

## **2. MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

Couples being married at FCBC are expected to participate in premarital counseling sessions. During these sessions you may meet with other couples who are also getting ready to be married at First Corinthian and explore together the nature of Christian marriage and family life, as well as receive input into the planning of your wedding ceremony.

## **3. THE PASTOR**

Our Pastor has been called by First Corinthian Baptist Church to "preside at ceremonies of the church". That means it is the responsibility of the Pastor to see that your marriage service is performed in keeping with the policies of this congregation and within the tradition of the Christian Church.

If you would like to invite another minister to participate in your wedding service please remember that the Pastor Thomas will be the Officiant and will decide the extent of participation by the guest minister.

## **4. THE ORGANIST**

The on-staff church organist administers use of the organ at First Corinthian. Normally, the organist will play at all weddings where organ/piano music is desired. We will provide you with the name of the organist and it will be your responsibility to contact him directly to discuss the music. If our organist is not available, he will suggest a substitute.

## **5. CUSTODIAN**

While most of the activities of our church custodians take place behind the scenes, they are an essential part of the wedding team. They are responsible to make sure that the physical plant is in order for your wedding and for worship the day after your celebration.

## **6. MUSICIANS**

In addition to an organist, some couples like to incorporate a vocalist or instrumentalist (e.g. flute, violin, etc.) within the ceremony. Please discuss this with the organist in your initial phone contact. This will allow plenty of time to schedule extra music rehearsals, if needed.

## **7. THE LICENSE**

All couples must secure a license to marry from the state of Pennsylvania. The license should be presented to Pastor Thomas the evening of the wedding rehearsal. No couple will be married without a valid marriage license.

## PLANNING THE WEDDING WORSHIP SERVICE

### 1. OUTLINE OF THE MARRIAGE WORSHIP SERVICE

You may use the following outline in order to develop a bulletin for your wedding service. Pastor Thomas is the final judge as to what is appropriate.

*Musical Prelude*

*Seating of Parents*

*Procession of Attendants*

*Bridal Processional*

*Old & New Testament Scriptures (optional)*

*The Wedding Ceremony*

*Pastor Dennis E. Thomas*

*Introduction*

*Declaration of Intention*

*Giving of the Bride*

*Inspirational Words of Encouragement*

*Prayer of Dedication*

*Solo (usually, "The Lord's Prayer")*

*The Wedding Vows*

*The Ring Ceremony*

*The Pronouncement*

*Presentation of the Couple*

*Recessional*

### 2. DECORATIONS

The altar cloths are designed and used according to the church year. They are not decorations. Thus they may not be changed for your wedding in order to coordinate with colors you have chosen. Floral decorations may be used. Outdoor railing and window decorations are not permitted. Bows and/or flowers may be used on the pews; however no adhesive substances may be used to secure them and they must be removed immediately following the ceremony (by the family or florist). Any bows, flowers, decorations or any other wedding paraphernalia not immediately removed will be removed by the custodial staff of FCBC and discarded.

### 3. UNITY CANDLE

The Unity Candle is a recent innovation in the marriage service. Lighting the candle visually symbolizes the joining of two lives in marriage. Symbols make a lasting impression so it is important that we use them with care. You are invited to light a unity candle during your marriage ceremony if you desire. Pastor Thomas will discuss the most appropriate methods of lighting the candle and the messages these methods denote to the congregation. Note: You are responsible to provide your own unity candle along with two tapers (side candles and holders).

### 4. RECORDED MUSIC

Some couples ask to use recorded music. We strongly suggest that you confer with the First Corinthian Media Ministry at least 30 days prior to the ceremony to ensure that there will be a staff technician onsite for the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. Please be advised that unauthorized personnel will not be provided access to the FCBC sound room. Also note that your fee does not cover the services of the media personnel so you are welcomed/encouraged to present your assigned media technician with a love offering.

## **5. VOCAL MUSIC**

If you are wondering about whether or not a vocal selection is appropriate for your wedding, here is a tip: If you can answer "yes" to any of the following questions, the music is probably appropriate:

1. Does the music/text reflect praise and/or thanksgiving to God?
2. Is the song based on, or does it reflect a scriptural theme?
3. Is this song in the form of a prayer?

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES**

### **1. USHERS**

A minimum of two ushers (more if more than 150 guests) are necessary in order to seat and dismiss your guests. Ushers should be mature people, as the nature of their task requires confidence and decisiveness.

### **2. BULLETINS**

It is helpful, and a historic record to have printed bulletins to inform members of the congregation of the order of worship and the names of participants in the worship service. You should discuss the use of the bulletin with the Pastor. Purchase of bulletin covers and printing are the responsibility of the couple. It is not the responsibility of the the FCBC church office to print wedding bulletins. Note: The bulletin is the best place to remind the worshipers that no flash pictures should be taken during the service.

### **3. PHOTOGRAPHY**

PROFESSIONAL video taping and photography of your ceremony is permissible, but must be done in an unobtrusive manner. No flash pictures may be taken during the wedding service. Please include the following notice in your wedding bulletin: "Please refrain from using cameras with flash during the ceremony. Thank You."

### **4. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

It is not uncommon for alcoholic beverages to be consumed at the occasion of a wedding. Should you choose to have your wedding at First Corinthian, we ask you to inform your friends and family that no alcohol may be consumed on the premises, on the streets adjacent to First Corinthian. Ask your friends to take it easy with alcohol at your rehearsal dinner and to abstain completely prior to the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. While weddings are cause for celebration, they are also solemn occasions of worship, requiring a certain standard of behavior. Weddings at First Corinthian are a privilege, therefore, the Pastor may dismiss any persons in the wedding party who appear intoxicated. The only beverage allowed in the sanctuary is water.

### **5. NO SMOKING IS ALLOWED INSIDE THE CHURCH BUILDING OR ON CHURCH GROUNDS.**

### **6. NO PETS ALLOWED IN THE WEDDING SERVICE.**

### **7. THROWING RICE OR BIRD SEED**

We ask that NO rice or birdseed be thrown on First Corinthian premises. At one time rice was associated with fertility, thus throwing rice over a newly married couple was a symbol, which is no longer understood in our culture. When it was discovered that rice was fatal to the birds that cleaned up the sidewalks after weddings, people began to throw birdseed instead of rice however birdseed is extremely slippery and a potential hazard to pedestrians using the sidewalks. Therefore we ask that this custom not take place on church premises. If you feel the need to be showered with something as you leave the church, we suggest bubbles (outside the building.)

## **8. THE RECEPTION**

Arrangements for wedding receptions at the church must be made with the Church Administrator. There are additional fees for use of either of the dining areas. These fees are for room usage/rental only. There is to be no secular music, dancing, smoking, alcoholic beverages or foul language used in the dining areas or any FCBC premises. Arrangements for room set-up, decorations, paper goods, catering and basic clean-up are the responsibility of the couple. The FCBC custodial/housekeeping staff will make sure that the areas are clean and ready for your event.

**General clean-up following an event is the responsibility of the family and the caterer.** The FCBC staff is responsible for sweeping, mopping, vacuuming and waxing, as needed. All trash should be placed in provided/designated containers. The staff will dispose of the trash.

## **9. FEES**

As with other aspects of your wedding, there are fees associated with a church wedding for both members and non-FCBC members. Since many wedding dates are reserved over a year in advance the church reserves the right to change fees without prior notification. Note: Fees are based upon the couple's membership status at the time the wedding is scheduled. We would prefer that payment be made the SUNDAY before the ceremony; however if that is not possible, ALL monies/balances must be brought to the church AT THE REHEARSAL. **THE CEREMONY WILL NOT TAKE PLACE IF THE FEE HAS NOT BEEN PAID IN ADVANCE.**

## **10. INVITATIONS TO PASTORS FOR RECEPTIONS AND REHEARSAL DINNERS**

Many times it is impossible for the pastor to attend either your rehearsal dinner or your wedding reception if it is held away from the church. If you would like the Pastor and his spouse to attend such events, please invite them well in advance (at the same time you send your other invitations is customary). This will give the Pastor time to respond to your invitation and avoid surprises.

## **11. THINGS TO BRING WITH YOU TO THE REHEARSAL**

[ ... ] **License**

[ ... ] **Bulletins**

[... ] **Unity Candle and tapers**

[ ... ] **Decorations**

[ ... ] **Final Payment of all fees must be made no later than the night of the rehearsal.**

The fee quoted to you by the Pastor or Church Administrator cover the following services/servants

- ♥ Building Usage
- ♥ Pastoral Fee
- ♥ Organist
- ♥ Custodian

\*Checks/money orders are payable to **FIRST CORINTHIAN BAPTIST CHURCH**. There will be a \$30 fee for all returned checks.

# Our Wedding Information



Wedding Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Church Fee Quoted: \_\_\_\_\_

First Date of Premarital Counseling: \_\_\_\_\_

Subsequent Sessions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

# **RESOURCES**

Wedding Coordinators

Caterers

Honeymoon Arrangements

Printers