

AVONDALE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

POLICIES ESTABLISHED BY THE SESSION

FOR

WEDDINGS AND RECEPTIONS

AVONDALE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2821 Park Road

Charlotte, NC 28209

704-333-6194

FAX 704-333-5901

WEDDINGS IN AVONDALE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God, normally conducted within the house of God. Reverence shall be expected on the part of all present, and the service shall be under the sole direction of the minister.

Book of Order

A wedding is one of the happiest moments in life. The celebration of Christian marriages is the occasion of a service of worship of great significance. It is a service in which Christians, particularly you as Bride and Groom, come together to offer special thanks and praise and to ask God's blessing upon your life together as husband and wife. It is for this reason that at least one of you must be a professing Christian. A Christian wedding is also the corporate, or congregational, worship of all those gathered. They are not spectators, but worshipers. In a Christian wedding service, God comes first. It is God who is being worshiped and whose blessing is being sought.

The Christian wedding, therefore, is different from many other wedding ceremonies. Avondale Presbyterian Church is not a facility to be rented, but seeks to provide the place and setting for a Christian wedding service. We wish to provide the type of environment conducive to the genuine celebration of your marriage, but your sincerity and Christian commitment are primary. The beauty of a wedding lies not in elaborateness, but in the attitude of those who take part.

SESSION POLICIES

PRE-WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

You must confer with the Church Clerical Receptionist as soon as you begin making plans to reserve the facilities you will need for your wedding. These tentative arrangements may be made by telephone 704-333-6194 or email, but can only be confirmed after a conference with the minister.

A non-member's wedding that has been scheduled cannot be displaced by a member's wedding within six months of the fixed date.

We discourage weddings on the following days: Sundays, the days of Holy Week, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. It is very difficult to gather the people required to coordinate a wedding on these days.

CLERGY

The policy of Avondale Presbyterian Church is that the Minister will officiate at all weddings. Exception to this policy will be made only at the discretion of the Minister and the Session. A visiting minister must receive a formal invitation from the Minister of Avondale Presbyterian Church to assist in or to perform the ceremony.

A premarital conference is required between the Minister and the bride and groom. The appointment must be made as soon as the wedding date is fixed with the Church Clerical Receptionist on the church calendar. The wedding date is confirmed only after this conference.

MUSIC

Guidelines to assist in the selection of music: The music that is appropriate for an act of public Christian worship is appropriate at your wedding. Praise, joy, and thanksgiving to the God who is worshiped are characteristic themes of wedding music, celebrating God's love for his people rather than emphasizing the love of the couple for each other. Some popular commercial themes of romantic love and such music as the Wedding March from Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream are not appropriate. The settings of these make it plain that they are not intended for use in a Christian marriage service; therefore, these selections are not approved.

The singing of hymns enhances the participation of the congregation. Hymns enable them to be active worshipers, not mere spectators. Hymn singing has a rightful place in the actual service of Christian marriage and is to be encouraged.

There are opportunities for the use of creative music within the marriage service. From the diverse styles of selections from all periods of the church's musical heritage, to the use of music from varied musical idioms (such as folk, ethnic, or avant-garde) are recommended, provided the music itself is of worth. Also the possibility of instrumental music is to be considered: handbell choirs, violin, viola, cello, harp, trumpet, flute, for example.

The Organist, in conjunction with the Minister and the Spiritual Growth Ministry Team, will make final approval of all music.

ORGANIST

The Organist of Avondale Presbyterian Church is expected to play for weddings in the sanctuary. She should be consulted as soon as possible after your wedding date is set. She has prepared a list of appropriate music for weddings – organ selections, as well as solos. She will be glad to discuss this with you and play the various approved selections for you at the pre-wedding conference that you will schedule with her.

If a member requests that a guest organist play for the wedding, the Minister will invite this person after consulting with the Organist of Avondale and the Spiritual Growth Ministry Team. The Organist of Avondale will retain final control of what is played by the guest organist.

Non-members will be required to use the services of the Avondale Church Organist. If unavailable for a wedding service, the Avondale Organist will be responsible for getting a substitute organist.

If the Bride or Groom requests a particular singer or instrumentalist to participate in the service, the Organist must give approval. The singer/instrumentalist is requested to meet with the Organist prior to the day of the wedding rehearsal. It is preferred that the meeting take place several days before the rehearsal, but in no case later than one day prior to the rehearsal. Soloists are requested to wear a vestment of the Church in the chancel.

WEDDING CONSULTANT/DIRECTOR

A Wedding Consultant is at your service. The Consultant will perform the services of a wedding director – planning with you, directing the rehearsal and wedding in close co-operation with the Minister, instructing ushers and bridesmaids, and timing entrances. It is essential to schedule a conference with the Consultant two weeks before the wedding.

In the case of non-members who seek to be married at Avondale, it is required that the church Consultant be used. Members who wish to use an outside consultant must obtain the approval of the Minister to use that consultant.

It is important to remember that the responsibilities of the Consultant are limited to the rehearsal and wedding and do not extend to catering or organizing receptions.

REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal should be scheduled when the wedding date is fixed. Usually the rehearsal is held late in the afternoon or early evening of the day before the wedding. It is usual to allow an hour. It is important that all principals of the wedding party arrive promptly. Soloists and parents should be present.

RECEPTION

The MacLean Fellowship Hall or The Avondale Family Life Center, each having an adjoining kitchen, are available for receptions. Their use should be scheduled at the time the wedding date is fixed with the Church Clerical Receptionist.

It is suggested that the reception be so planned and arranged that guests be promptly received.

There must be no use of alcohol during the rehearsal, wedding or reception held at the church. The Minister has complete authority to cancel the wedding at the last moment if these policies are not respected.

USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES

The Sanctuary, the Lounge, the MacLean Fellowship Hall, the Family Life Center, and adjacent kitchens, and The Sacred Garden are available for weddings and receptions.

HOSTESS

Your wedding will involve opening and setting up the church for the rehearsal and wedding, and cleaning up afterwards and closing the church. A church member serves in this capacity and is on an

on-call basis. She will come early the day of the wedding to open the church for florists to decorate and will remain to receive corsages, boutonnieres, and bouquets. She will be in charge of the final inspection of the facility following the reception. Non-members are required to use the services of the church hostess.

DRESSING ROOMS

Facilities are such that the bride and her party may dress at the church. A like courtesy will also be extended the groom and his attendants upon request.

USE OF THE KITCHEN

If you desire to use the kitchen in either the MacLean Fellowship Hall or the Family Life Center, you must contact the Congregational Life Ministry Team Leader(s). It will be pointed out to you what is available and indicate the use which may be made of various equipment.

The person in charge of the reception must clean the kitchen immediately following the reception and be responsible for any damages incurred.

All garbage must be put in plastic bags, tied and placed in the dumpster. All boxes must be full if put in the dumpster, if empty, must be mashed flat. Loose boxes or bags must not be left in garbage area outside of the dumpster.

In the kitchen area, all containers, sinks, coffee pots, silver, dishes, glasses and stoves must be cleaned after each use. The kitchen floor must be swept after each use.

The Congregational Life Ministry Team Leader(s) will inspect the kitchen following the reception.

RICE, CONFETTI, BIRDSEED

Avondale requests that no rice, confetti, nor birdseed be thrown in the sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, Family Life Center, nor steps and sidewalks outside buildings because of personal safety hazards. The church recommends that only birdseed, thrown in grassed areas, be used in this wedding tradition.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SAFEKEEPING PERSONAL ITEMS

The church will make every effort to protect all personal and wedding-related items which are brought to the church. This also applies to receptions. However, it cannot be liable for such items if lost, stolen, or damaged.

ACCESSORIES, DECORATIONS, FLOWERS

Our sanctuary is a place of dignified beauty. It does not require "decorations" to make it a place perfectly suitable for a beautiful service such as a wedding. The following policies are thus given to preserve the proper atmosphere and to safeguard the furnishings.

1. The decorations should enhance the appearance of the church.
2. None of the symbols in the chancel will be obscured from view or encompassed with decorations to the extent that they lose their significance.
3. Flowers may be placed on the urn stands or either side of the chancel, on the communion table, or beneath the cross at the rear of the chancel.
4. No candles are to be used within the chancel area except the two which are always at worship services and which speak of Jesus Christ as the Light of the World. Candles may be used in the windows of the sanctuary and in the Pole Lamps.
5. Furniture may not be moved to accommodate decorations.
6. No tacks, pins, nails, tape, nor glue may be used to fasten any decorations on furniture or the building.
7. Furniture and floor must be fully protected at all times from moisture and candle wax. Persons responsible for decorations will be held responsible for any damage done to the building and furniture. They are also responsible for removing wax from same.
8. All decorations shall be removed from the building the same day of the wedding. Many brides and their families choose to leave the flowers in the sanctuary following the wedding. This must be indicated to the church Clerical Receptionist.
9. Kneeling Bench: A kneeling bench may be provided by the florist.
10. Aisle cloth: Because of the hazard it incurs and the fact that we have no satisfactory way of installing it, the use of an aisle cloth is discouraged.
11. Decorations, flowers, corsages, and boutonnieres from the florist should arrive at the church well in advance of the ceremony, at least two hours. The church hostess will be present to receive them and to see that they are placed in the proper places.

PHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEO TAPES, RECORDINGS

Photographs by flash exposure are not allowed in the sanctuary during the wedding. Avondale requests that no pictures be taken during the ceremony. Photographs by time exposure may be made from the narthex, but not beyond the entrance into the sanctuary.

Prior to the wedding service, pictures may be taken in the church lounge. Picture taking of the groomsmen must be completed 45 minutes before the service. Pictures of the groom and best man may be taken in the Minister's study or in the choir room.

It would be most helpful if photographers would refrain from taking pictures in the narthex as the wedding party is preparing to enter the sanctuary. However, a picture of the bride and groom may be made from the narthex door during the recessional. The wedding party may return to the chancel for pictures following the service.

A tape recorder may be used to record the service. This recording may be made only if the machine is located where it is not seen by the congregation and where it will not interfere with the wedding proceedings. It must be used independently of the church amplifying system.

Video recording may be made from one stationary position. At no time are floodlights permitted. The Minister must approve any plans for video recording well in advance of the service.

Photographers should check with the Wedding Consultant or Minister prior to the ceremony.

A WORD CONCERNING PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING

Within the Reformed Tradition we recognize marriage as a "gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family." For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which two are called to live out together their lives of discipleship before God. In preparation for the marriage service, one of the pastors will provide time for discussion in regards to:

1. the nature of their Christian commitment, assuming that at least one is a professing Christian,
2. the legal requirements of the state,
3. the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage
4. the nature and form of the marriage service,
5. the vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
6. the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
7. the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.

Under normal circumstances, time shared with the couple and pastor is to be planned by both parties sufficiently prior to the wedding date and usually involves no less than two sessions. (BCO. W-4.9002)

Couples should plan an additional session with the church organist or musician planning service music.

Bulletins – Printing charges may be obtained by calling the Administrative Communications Coordinator. She is available to print the bulletin for you provided all information is in her hands no later than two weeks prior to the wedding. The charge for her service is \$50 for members and \$100 for non-members – this does not include the cost to print the bulletins.

Marriage License

It is requested that the marriage license be placed in the hands of the pastor on the evening of the wedding rehearsal.

Marriage Register

For Avondale Presbyterian Church records, a marriage register is kept. The bride and groom and one witness are asked to report to the choir room immediately following the ceremony to sign these records.

Member

A Member of Avondale is defined as one who is actively involved and participating in this faith community.

Final Note

Since the marriage service is under the sole direction of the Minister, he, in conjunction with the Organist and the Spiritual Growth Ministry Team, has final approval of all wedding plans involving the church. Please note that Avondale Presbyterian Church is not in the "wedding business." We are not obligated to perform weddings. However, the number of weddings performed within our sanctuary allow us to affirm some necessary truths.

When neither of the two parties is a member of the congregation, it is required that you use the Avondale Wedding Director and Wedding Hostess.

During the rehearsal, parents of the bride and groom and all soloists must be present.

Above all, photographs taken during the wedding are not permitted.

Please see attachment for a list of Fees.

**AVONDLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2821 Park Road
Charlotte, NC 28209
704-333-6194 FAX 704-333-5901**

**Minister and Counselling: Dr. John B. Earl 704-333-6194
Clerical Receptionist: Ms. Sande Darby 704-333-6194
Administrative Communications Coordinator: Mrs. Caroline Starnes 704-333-6194
Organist: Mrs. Regina Graham Love 704-523-5663
Wedding Director: Mrs. Caroline White 704-333-3257
Wedding Hostess: Mrs. Pat Gribble 704-377-6216
Kitchen - Congregational Life Ministry Team Leader(s) - call church office for contact**

The bride and groom do well to remember that it is their shared responsibility to contact the necessary staff persons mentioned above in sufficient time prior to establishing any particular rehearsal date.

**The Church Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30am - 5:00pm.
Facilities are open on Saturday only by prior arrangement.**

**WEDDING POLICY
FEE SCHEDULE**

Facilities

Lounge	\$150
Sanctuary	\$800
MacLean Fellowship Hall*	\$800
Family Life Center*	\$1,000
Sacred Garden*	\$800

Organist

1 consultation, 1 rehearsal and wedding	\$300
Practice with Instrumentalist or Soloist	\$350
Wedding with less than 50 – with no rehearsal	\$150

Wedding Consultant/Director (required)

Consultation, rehearsal and wedding	\$150
Consultation, rehearsal and wedding in Sacred Garden (less than 50 people in attendance – no consultant needed)	\$150

Hostess (required)

Wedding without rehearsal	\$100
Wedding with rehearsal	\$150
Wedding, rehearsal and reception	\$175
Wedding and rehearsal in Sacred Garden	\$150

Administrative Coordinator

Wedding Bulletin Preparation	\$100
Paper and printing separate charge depending on paper and number of bulletins	

Pre-Marital Counseling Fees \$200

Clergy \$250

Pole Lamps in Sanctuary \$50