

## **Community Presbyterian Church Wedding Policy**

**Welcome!** The Pastor, Session, and Members of Community Presbyterian Church welcome your interest in and inquiries about having your Christian wedding ceremony in our sanctuary. We want you to know that as you prepare to begin your new life together as a Christian couple that God will use us to make your wedding service one which honors Jesus Christ, the great and only head of the Church and of all Christian families everywhere.

Community Presbyterian Church is part of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America [PC (U.S.A.)]. Like all other churches in that denomination it is governed by a session made up of elders elected and ordained from among the congregation's members. All wedding services are under the direction of the pastor and the supervision of the Session (Book of Order W-4.9003). When planning a service of worship celebrating marriage- the couples, the pastor, and the session will look for guidance first and foremost from Holy Scripture and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., which consists of the Book of Confessions and the Book of Order. The Directory for Worship contained within the Book of Order gives general guidelines for ordering and planning not only the marriage service but also the period of preparation which precedes it. This policy is in no way written to supersede that document, but to clarify and give more detail which couples will find helpful as they go through their wedding planning process.

### **Biblical and Theological Foundations of Marriage**

Genesis 1:27-28, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves over the face of the earth.""

Genesis 2:24-25, "Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and the woman were both naked, and were not ashamed."

Matthew 18:4-7, "Jesus answered, "Have you not read that one who made them at the beginning made the male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.""

Ephesians 5:21-33, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to you husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so their wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the

church, because we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two will become one flesh.”

“God created us male and female, and gave us marriage so that the husband and wife may help and comfort each other, living faithfully together in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, throughout all of their days. God gave us marriage for the full expression of the love between a man and a woman. In marriage a woman and a man belong to each other, and with affection and tenderness freely give themselves to each other. God gave us marriage for the well-being of human society, for the ordering of family life, and for the birth and nurture of children. God gave us marriage as a holy mystery in which a man and a woman are joined together, and become one, just as Christ is one with the Church. In marriage, husband and wife are called to a new way of life, created, ordered, and blessed by God. This way of life must not be entered into carelessly, or from selfish motives, but responsibly, and prayerfully. We rejoice that marriage is given by God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let marriage be held in honor by all.” (From the Statement on the Gift of Marriage, marriage Service, Book of Common Worship, PC (U.S.A.), 1993.)

**At The Community Presbyterian Church in Lawton, Iowa we believe that:**

“The sanctity of marriage is between a man and a woman. Christian marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage, a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.”

**Preparation for Marriage**

**Setting the Date:** Couples wishing to have their marriage service in the Community Presbyterian Church’s sanctuary are strongly encouraged to make their date request know to the church office as early as possible (preferably one year in advance but no later than 6 months prior to wedding date) in order to insure that the building is available and not being used for any previously scheduled church activity. Use of the facility for their ceremony will be subject to approval by the Session. The couple must fill out the Wedding Application and turn it into the church office or to the pastor as soon as possible, well in advance of the wedding date. After the application request is filled out and turned in to the church office or the pastor, it will then be taken to the next regular session meeting and notice of approval/disapproval will be given to the couple within one week following that meeting. **Couples need to contact the Pastor at Community Presbyterian Church to see if the Pastor is available and willing to do the wedding service on the chosen date as well. The Pastor has the right to do or not to do any Weddings he or she chooses. Installed Pastors of the church also must approve of any other officiants (and what they will preach or present) that the couple may wish to use in the church for the wedding. The Installed Pastor also has the right to refuse to invite another officiant to participate for any reason.**

**Premarital Counseling:** Couples should contact the Pastor to set up premarital counseling sessions at least four to six weeks prior to the date of the service. All couples wishing to be married at

Community Presbyterian Church, whether never previously married, previously married and divorced, or previously married and widowed, will need to attend some form of premarital counseling. Current options available for such counseling include either several sessions of informal conversations with the pastor on such subjects as conflict management, family relationships, child rearing, marital sexuality, financial issues, communication skills, the Biblical/theological background of Christian marriage, legal requirements for marriage in the state of Iowa, both the man's and woman's Christian commitment, and what resources are available through Community Presbyterian Church to strengthen their marriage; or if the couple so desires, a more formal regimen of counseling using one of the Prepare and Enrich premarital surveys and subsequent counseling sessions based on the results of that survey. The Pastor also has the option on what subjects to use for the premarital sessions. It is also requested that couples desiring to be married in the Community Presbyterian Church have one of them be a member of the church or parents or grandparents be members of the church. If not members or membership has been inactive, it is required that the couple attend Community Presbyterian church in worship regularly from the time their request is known to be accepted until the date of the wedding and show a desire to be a part of the work and worship of the church in the future. This includes participating in the work of the church Fairstand during the Woodbury County Fair.

**Planning the Service:** In addition to the premarital counseling sessions covered above, all couples will have at least two meetings with the pastor, devoted to planning the wedding service. (See additional guidelines on following pages)

**Fees:** For church members, there will be no fees charged for use of the sanctuary or rooms used by the wedding party to change clothes either before or after the ceremony. For non-members, there will be a \$500.00 fee for use of the sanctuary and rooms used by the wedding party to change clothes either before or after the ceremony. Fees for use of the Fellowship Hall and Kitchen for the wedding reception or rehearsal dinner will be the standard fees approved by the Session for use of those rooms for non-church functions.

• **CHURCH USE FEES – Payment due 1 week in advance**

- **Inactive & Non-members:** Kitchen, Fellowship Hall, and Restrooms, \$100.00 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fellowship Hall and Restrooms only, \$80.00 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Plus Required Refundable Deposit \$100.00 \_\_\_\_\_

- **Active Members:** There is no charge for active members but there will be a \$50.00 Required Refundable Deposit (\$50.00) \_\_\_\_\_

❖ **You are expected to set up and take down tables and chairs and clean areas used. If you do not choose to clean up afterwards, you must contact the custodian and pay the custodian a fee of \$200 for cleaning services: Cindy Jorgensen 712- 873-3014.**

- ❖ **Parents or wedding party are asked to provide supervision for the children at all times within the church building.**
- ❖ **(Session has the right to waive any part or all fees for use of the sanctuary and rooms for changing and/or fees for kitchen and fellowship hall rental, under certain circumstances;[ie: undue financial hardship]).**
- ❖ **Fees for both members and non-members for the musicians (pianist/organist) from Community Presbyterian Church are \$100 for the rehearsal and \$100 for the wedding service. There may be additional fees for practice sessions above and beyond the rehearsal. Couples are welcome to use someone other than Community Presbyterian Church's musicians, but must arrange fees with them and obtain permission of session to use church organ and/or piano.**
- ❖ **Suggested fee for church members for the Pastor are \$150 for the rehearsal and \$150 for the wedding service. For non-members the fee is \$500 for the Pastor.**
- ❖ **If the couple chooses to use the Prepare and Enrich Premarital Curriculum, there is a fee to cover scoring of the test and materials. If not used, see Installed Pastor's policy for Wedding Counseling fee.**
- ❖ **All fees must be paid before the day of the rehearsal takes place, non-members must pay with cash or money order one week in advance of wedding.**

**Christian Commitment:** While neither party of the couple must be a member of Community Presbyterian Church, at least one must be a baptized, professed Christian. (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Book of Order W-4.9002). We do encourage non-member couples to attend regularly for one year prior to the wedding and consider becoming members of the congregation.

### **Planning the Service**

**Additional Officiants:** The current Pastor of Community Presbyterian Church *shall* normally be the officiant at the wedding service. If the couple desires another pastor, either Presbyterian or a pastor of another denomination which is in communion with PC(USA) to co-officiate or to be the sole officiant, then such a request will be subject to the approval of the session with the prior consent of the Installed Pastor.

**Musicians:** The couple may choose to use the current church pianist for the marriage service, or one of their own choosing. They may also use other musicians in addition to a pianist or organist, either instrumental or vocal, but are responsible for seeing that all musicians get together to rehearse before the service and they must provide their own equipment both instruments and sound systems. They must contract with the Church Musician as to their fees, music to be played, etc. and discuss

with the Pastor what music is to be used, and where each piece will be used in the service per the guidelines of this policy. All weddings in the church are a service of worship to God, therefore, **all music must be fitting of a worship service that would glorify God.**

**Music:** Music used in the wedding service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church (Book of Order, W-4.9005). There are many options for Christian wedding music that the couple may consider in their planning: traditional or contemporary Christian choir anthems, solos, and instrumental pieces, congregational hymns, Christian praise choruses, Psalms, canticles, or spirituals. Secular music may be used but must be subject to the approval of the Pastor and be fitting of a service of worship to God. The Pastor and Church Musician would be happy to give additional suggestions for music for the wedding worship service.

**Communion:** The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated during the wedding service, subject to approval by the Session of Community Presbyterian Church. If celebrated, both elements must be distributed to the entire congregation, not just to the wedding party. The couple would be responsible for providing the grape juice and bread for Communion, and only the Session would be responsible for preparing and serving the sacrament and only the Installed Pastor can officiate at the Lord's Supper. (There will be an extra fee of \$100.00 for the Session's service at the wedding, this money to go to the missions of the church).

**Order of Worship:** The wedding service to be used normally shall be the Service for Christian Marriage in the Book of Common Worship of the PC (U.S.A.), 1993 edition. Other wedding services, either former Presbyterian orders or from another denomination may be used, subject to approval of the Pastor, as long as they do not conflict with the guidelines in the Book of Order, or Biblical/theological standards for Reformed Christian marriage in PC(USA). If the couple desires to write their own vows, they may do so, but these must be submitted to the Pastor for approval. The Pastor may supply the couple with guidelines for writing their vows.

**Worship Bulletins:** The couple may choose for the Pastor to obtain suitable bulletin covers (at the cost of the couple) and prepare a worship bulletin for the service, or they may choose to provide and prepare their own. If the Pastor will be preparing the bulletin, bulletin copy must be given to the Pastor at least one week before the service and there will be a copier fee of \$50.00 per 100 bulletins plus the cost of the bulletin covers. **However, bulletins are a choice and not a necessity.**

**Wedding Service Equipment:** Community Presbyterian Church has on hand extra chairs for overflow seating in the fellowship and flower stands. (The sanctuary normally seats approximately 188-200 people comfortably, if all pews are filled to capacity.) Any other equipment desired by the couple, such as candelabras, wedding kneelers, flower arches, unity candles, and white wedding aisle runners, must be supplied by the couple from a local dealer. The couple are also responsible for returning these items to the dealer or arranging with the church and the dealer to have it picked up after the wedding. If using candles other than those owned by Community Presbyterian Church, candles must be dripless and protective plastic, runners, or containers must be placed under the

candles or candleabras. If the wedding is on a Saturday, all decorations and rental items must be completely removed from the church building by the couple or people designated by the couple before leaving the church after the ceremony. Any items left behind will be disposed of before Sunday morning worship and Sunday school in the church building. If wedding is on a day other than Saturday, all items must be removed within 24 hours following the wedding ceremony.

**Photographs:** The couple needs to inform their photographer, as well as family members who will be taking photographs at the wedding, that there will be **no flash photography during the service**. Flash photographs may be taken as the wedding party is processing and recessing down the aisle. If the couple so chooses, the Pastor will redo parts of the service after the service so that photographs may be taken. Care should be exercised by those taking pictures that the flow and worshipful spirit of the service is not disrupted.

**Wedding Video:** There is a video room available above the back of the sanctuary for video cameras. If those taking videos decide to use the sanctuary instead, they may consult with the Pastor regarding where to stand so as to give the clearest view with the least disruption of the ceremony itself.

**Flowers:** The couple is responsible for arranging with their florist when flowers are to be delivered before the ceremony, and for cleaning up any leftover flower packaging, ribbons, etc. immediately after the service. If real (living) flower petals or leaves will be used by a flower girl or boy, it is preferable that an aisle runner be used to protect the church carpet in the sanctuary.

**Sanctuary Furnishings:** Any sanctuary furnishings moved for the wedding shall be put back in their former place after the service by the couple or a person or persons designated by the couple.

**Sound and Tech System:** The couple will be responsible for consulting with the Church Sound Technician regarding the use of the sound system. No other persons may operate the sound system without permission or approval of the Church Sound Technician or the Installed Pastor. If the couple wants to use the overhead screen and computer images, they must provide their own computer, projector, and tech operator. Tech operator must consult with Installed Pastor on where to set up.

**Decorations:** The couple may use ribbons, bows, flowers, netting, etc. to decorate the ends of the pews as long as nothing is used in those decorations that would damage the pews, pew cushions, or carpeting.

**Scripture Passages:** As with any other Presbyterian worship service, Scripture is a vital and necessary part of the service. The couple may choose what Scripture or Scriptures are to be read. If they have not chosen one, the pastor will be happy to suggest a suitable passage or passages to be read and preached. The couple may choose to have their Scriptures read by a family member or

another member of the wedding party other than the Pastor, but this also must be approved by the Installed Pastor.

**Wedding Sermon:** The Pastor will preach a brief sermon or homily on the Scripture text or texts the couple has chosen. The wedding party may choose to stand or sit during this time.

**Blessing of a Civil Ceremony:** If a couple has been previously married in a civil ceremony and desires subsequently to have a worship service in the church which will bless this union, such a service may be performed subject to approval by the Session and the Installed Pastor. All points of the Wedding Policy, excluding pre-wedding counseling, are the same as for any Wedding ceremony.

**The Service of Christian Marriage During Sunday Morning Worship:** Couples who desire that their wedding be held on Sunday morning during Morning Worship may do so, pending approval by the Session and the Installed Pastor (who will officiate) and the couple must be active members of the congregation.

**The Wedding Rehearsal:** The rehearsal for the marriage service is held a day or two prior to the ceremony, usually the evening before the service. The couple and the Pastor will make arrangements for the rehearsal during the preparation process, taking care to schedule the rehearsal so that there will be no conflicts with previously scheduled church activities. This may be scheduled at the same time the date for the wedding itself is set. If a wedding planner is involved, they must consult with the Pastor who is in charge of the rehearsal, giving direction to the proceedings according to the plans made with the couple during the preparation process. The couple shall let the rest of the bridal party and family members know of the time and place for the rehearsal so that everyone may arrive on time and the rehearsal proceed in a timely manner. Once everyone has arrived, the pastor will welcome them and go over the service, answering any questions that those in the wedding party may have. The Pastor and wedding party will then rehearse the service itself, paying particular attention to the logistics of the wedding party entering and leaving the sanctuary, when everyone will sit and stand, check of sound system quality, etc. If at all possible, the musicians and soloists should be present so music may be coordinated with the service. If the musicians or other members of the wedding party cannot be present for the rehearsal, then the couple should inform them of what was discussed during the rehearsal so there will be no confusion on the day of the service itself. The couple must bring with them to the rehearsal the marriage license and paperwork and give it to the Installed Pastor or officiant, so that it may be properly signed and witnessed after the wedding service the following day.

If the groom's family would like to use the Fellowship Hall and kitchen for the rehearsal dinner, they are welcome to do so, but are responsible for rental and custodial fees. The cost for renting the hall and kitchen shall be the usual fee set by the Session for use of those facilities. As with any other use of the hall, those using it shall be sure and leave it clean and ready for the next usage.

**The Wedding Day:** All members of the wedding party should be at the church at least an hour prior to the service, longer if pictures are to be taken before the service. If the wedding party would like to change into their wedding clothes at the church, they may make arrangements to use the Sunday school rooms and restrooms for this purpose by consulting the Pastor in advance of the day of the wedding. The wedding party must arrive well in advance of the wedding on that day, making sure to allow time for this preparation. Seating of guests may begin as soon as they begin to arrive, with the ushers being responsible for this. All members of the wedding party need to assemble in their respective places at least 10-15 minutes before the beginning of the service. The last persons to be seated prior to the entry of the wedding party should be in this order: grandparents of the groom, grandparents of the bride, mother of the groom and mother of the bride. Ushers should also see that the candles are lit and the wedding aisle runner (if used) is in place before the service begins. After the service, when the wedding party has left the sanctuary, they may choose to set up a receiving line in the fellowship hall and greet their guests there. If they do so, the pastor will proceed to greet the guests and following the exit of the grandparents and parents of the bride and groom, the ushers will dismiss the guests seated then, row by row so that they line up to greet the wedding party. Or the couple may re-enter the sanctuary after recessing, greet the guests, and dismiss them row by row themselves. Immediately after the guests have been dismissed or while being dismissed, the couple, the Pastor, and two witnesses to the ceremony will meet in the Pastor's office or another suitable location to sign the license, which shall then be given to the Pastor to be mailed or taken to the County Clerk's office in Sioux City. Before leaving the church, the couple should see to it that all their personal belongings are gathered up and taken with them, or arrangements made to pick them up at a later date. **In the case of a Saturday afternoon or evening wedding, all belongings of the wedding party, decorations, flowers, etc. must be removed from the church by the wedding party or designated people, and the sanctuary and all rooms and restrooms must be left ready for Sunday Morning Worship and Sunday School the next day, unless arrangements have been made with the custodian to clean following the wedding service.**

**\*\*\*Additional Comments\*\*\***

**There shall under no circumstances be any alcohol or tobacco products inside the church or outside on any church property including the parking areas, lot east of church, and manse grounds across the street from the church. This includes inside personal cars, trucks, RV's or other vehicles parked on church grounds. Any person or persons exhibiting intoxication or acting inappropriately for worship in the church at anytime will be asked to leave and authorities will be called if they do not comply. The Pastor has the right to refuse to continue any wedding pre-empt, rehearsal, or ceremony if any members of the wedding party or congregation becomes belligerent or aggressive and there is a need to call authorities to intercede.**

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**Installed Pastor's policy for Weddings at Community Presbyterian Church in Lawton, Iowa**

**1) Either the prospective Bride or Groom, one of which must be a member of the church. Or, one of their parents or grandparents must be a member. Or, they must prove they have a history with the congregation through a past membership or a relative. If not members or membership has been inactive, it is required that the couple attend Community Presbyterian church in worship regularly from the time their request is known to be accepted until the date of the wedding and show a desire to be a part of the work and worship of the church in the future. This means they must be active in the life of the church, including the work of the church Fair stand and show a strong desire to become an active member of the congregation prior to the wedding ceremony, especially if they plan to reside in or near Lawton. And either the Bride or the Groom must be baptized to be married in the church as marriage in the church is considered to be a Christian marriage.**

**2) The Couple desiring to be married (both) must attend no less than four pre-marital counseling sessions to prepare for the wedding (preferably six sessions and preferably beginning no later than 6 months prior to the wedding ceremony) unless other arrangements have been made with the Installed Pastor. There will be a charge of \$20.00 for each session (due at time of session) after the first initial meeting with the Pastor to go over the Wedding Policy.**

**3) Couple desiring to be married by the Pastor of Community Presbyterian Church must clear the date with the Installed Pastor no later than six months prior to the desired date of the ceremony. The Installed Pastor has the right to waive length of time in extenuating circumstances.**

**4) The Installed Pastor has the right to refuse to marry any couple that the Pastor feels does not show maturity and a true commitment to the marriage or to the wedding process up to the time of the rehearsal date. The Installed Pastor has the right to refuse to marry on certain days or seasons of the year due to Pastor's vacation time, busyness of the season, and days conflicting with regular church activities.**

**5) Any Couple desiring to be married in the Community Presbyterian Church by a pastor other than the Installed Pastor, must first get permission from the Installed Pastor. The pastor performing the ceremony must then be invited by the Installed Pastor to perform the wedding ceremony in the Community Presbyterian Church in Lawton. The Installed Pastor has the right to refuse to extend invitations to other pastors or people the wedding couple would like to be part of the liturgical part of the service for any reason. In all cases, the Installed Pastor will perform the actual wedding vows.**



**We have read the wedding policies of Community Presbyterian Church and agree to abide by them:**

**Bride's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**We agree to work at the church Fair Stand for one full shift.**

**Bride's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**If required as part of pre-wedding consultation.**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return these completed pages to the church at your earliest convenience. Session of Community Presbyterian Church must approve each wedding request for church use. The Session meets the second Wednesday of each month with the exception of July and August. Within one week following the next Session meeting, you will be contacted by the Pastor or the Session either in person or by letter stating whether your application has been approved or not approved at this time.**

**Date Application Received** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Approved** \_\_\_\_\_ **Not Approved** \_\_\_\_\_

**If not Approved – reason:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Clerk of Session** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Session Moderator** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Installed Pastor** \_\_\_\_\_