

*Memorial Presbyterian Church
127 E. Willow St.
Cherokee, IA 51012
712-225-2637
memorialpres@msn.com*

A Guide For Your Wedding

Our church rejoices with you in your decision to be married, and is eager to work with you as you prepare for one of the most important moments in your lives. This booklet is designed to help you understand the meaning of a Christian marriage service and to plan for your wedding. We look forward to celebrating your wedding with you.

The Meaning of the Marriage Service

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians, marriage is an opportunity to live their lives as disciples in a covenanted relationship before God. 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.

Christian Marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the session (the governing body of the church). All the elements of the service (decorations, attire, music) should be appropriate for a service of worship as well as consistent with Christian values. Since each wedding is unique, the minister will discuss with you your ideas and the different services that can be used.

Scheduling and Planning your Wedding

Those who would like to have their wedding at the Memorial Presbyterian should contact the church office. Wedding dates cannot be secured until six (6) months prior to the desired date. Preference will be given to members of Memorial Presbyterian up to the

6-month deadline.

All events pertaining to the use of church facilities (e.g., rehearsals, weddings, receptions, etc.) must be scheduled through the church office. No weddings will be scheduled on weekends around the following religious holidays: Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, the first Sunday of Advent, or the first Sunday of January. A non-refundable deposit of \$100 is required to reserve a date. However, this sum will be applied to the overall wedding fee. A wedding at Memorial Presbyterian must be conducted or co-officiated by the pastor. All weddings are subject to the approval of the pastor and the session. The wedding service itself and its vows are to be coordinated with the officiating pastor.

Payments owed to all participants for all services are due at, or prior to, the wedding rehearsal.

If the P.A. system is required, a qualified audio technician must be supplied by the church.

Premarital Consultation

In preparation for the marriage service, the pastor requires at least three counseling sessions with the couple prior to the wedding. These sessions will provide an opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the commitment, responsibility, and meaning of a Christian marriage, as well as allow the pastor to help you shape your wedding service so that it will be personally meaningful. These discussions are equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse, and a marriage following divorce.

If the minister is convinced after discussion with the couple that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the minister shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. Out of concern for the integrity of the Church's witness to the Christian life and the sanctity of marriage, we reserve the right to not conduct the marriage service for those couples who are presently living together, to those pursuing same-gender unions. In making this decision the minister may seek the counsel of the session.

The Marriage Service

Time

The marriage ordinarily takes place in a special service which focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life. Celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the marriage service requires the approval of the session, and care shall be taken that the invitation to the Table is extended to all baptized present. The marriage service may take place during the Service for the Lord's Day (Sunday Morning Worship) upon authorization by the session.

Order

The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The man and the woman shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture (see below), which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation (sermon, etc.). Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the woman and the man are now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.

Scripture Readings

The following are some readings from Scripture appropriate for use in a Christian marriage. You are invited to choose one or two readings for your service.

Readings from the Old Testament

Genesis 1:26-31

Song of Solomon 8:6-7

Isaiah 54:5-8

Psalm 8

Genesis 2:18-24

Proverbs 3:3-6

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm 67, 95:1-7

Psalm 100
Psalm 117
Psalm 128
Psalm 148

Psalm 103:1-5,15-18
Psalm 121
Psalm 135:1-9,26
Psalm 150

Readings from the New Testament

Romans 12:1-2,9-18
Colossians 3:12-17
Revelation 19:1,5-9
Matthew 5:13-16
Mark 10:6-9
John 15:1-17

1 Corinthians 13:1-13
1 John 4:7-12
Matthew 5:1-10
Matthew 19:3-6
John 2:1-11

Music

Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. Appropriate music should be chosen to reflect the significance of entering into the covenant of marriage in the presence of God and in the community of faith. When deciding on what music will be played, it is advisable that you first consult the minister and the church organist (if required). Some of the most common wedding Preludes, Processionals, and Recessionals are:

Arioso in A - Bach
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring – Bach
In Thee is Gladness – Bach
Sleepers Awake – Bach
Zion hears her watchmen's voices - Bach
Sinfonia to Wedding Cantata - Bach
St. Anthony's Chorale – Brahms
Fireworks Music – Handel
Water Music Suite - Handel
Wedding March – Mendelssohn*
Selected Sonata Movements – Mendelssohn
Canon in D – Pachelbel
Trumpet Voluntary – Purcell*
Trumpet Tune – Purcell
Toccata – Widor

* Indicate more familiar pieces used today.

Flowers/Decorations

Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshiper's consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life.

Decorations should not be nailed, pinned, stapled or taped to the pews. Only dripless candles may be used. The church has 2 tiered candelabras which are available for use. No candle stands are to be placed near or beside the front pews. No floral arrangements may be placed on the communion table, or in the 2 floral display planters located on either side of the chancel. Protective coverings must be used under ALL floral arrangements that are not on a stand. No real flower petals, confetti, rice, birdseed, etc. are to be thrown inside or outside the church. The bridal party is responsible for any and all damage to the facilities or property.

If you are planning to have the wedding flowers used for the Sunday morning church service, please let the church secretary know at least a week in advance. The Sunday bulletin will read: "The chancel flowers are presented to the glory of God to honor the marriage of..."

Photographs

No photographs will be permitted during a wedding. A picture of the bride and groom leaving the church may be made (with flash if desired) if the photographer does not enter the sanctuary. This picture may be made from the narthex through the double doors. The wedding party may have pictures taken in the sanctuary either before or after the service.

While this may sound restrictive to your photographer, we ask this be done to preserve the spirit of worship in the service. Having photographers move up and down the aisle and position themselves in the chancel disrupts the worship service, the wedding party, and the families and guests. In addition, special attention should be given to the placement of video cameras in the sanctuary, so that they do not distract from the focus of the service.

Video cameras may be used to record the service if the following guidelines are observed:

1. The equipment shall not be placed in the chancel area.
2. The equipment shall not obstruct the view of the worshipers.
3. No lights may be used.

The Rehearsal

The pastor will be responsible for directing the wedding rehearsal. The bride and groom will have filled out a “Rehearsal Information” form prior to the time of the rehearsal. This information will be used by the pastor in directing an orderly and expedient rehearsal. If all members of the wedding party are punctual, a rehearsal will take no longer than 45 minutes.

Care and Responsibility

Please inform your wedding party, family, and guests that no alcoholic beverages are permitted anywhere on church property, and no smoking is allowed in the building.

Fees for use of the Church

	Member*	Non-Member	Explanation
Deposit	\$50	\$100	A deposit is required to reserve the church. It will be applied to the overall wedding fee.
Pastor	\$150	\$250	Includes a minimum of 3 counseling sessions, plus the rehearsal and wedding.
Counseling Assessment	\$30	\$30	An online assessment to be used in counseling.
Use of Church	No Charge	\$150	
Sexton	\$50	\$50	
P.A. Operator	\$25	\$25	
Organist	\$75	\$75	If provided by church.
Wedding Coordinator	\$50	\$75	The coordinator will help finalize wedding plans with the couple, as well as oversee details on the wedding day.
Kitchen Service	None	\$150/ guests to 150 \$50/ additional 50 guests	Will serve cake, mints, nuts, coffee, and punch. If additional food is to be served, there will be an extra charge of \$25.00. The wedding party will provide dining room hosts, servers, cake cutters; and will furnish all food.

* Membership is defined as those who are, or whose parents are, on the rolls as active members of Memorial Presbyterian Church, or have an active relationship, though not formally a church member.

Marriage License

All you need to know about getting a marriage license in Iowa:

Q: Where do I apply for a license?

A: Those intending to marry in the state of Iowa should apply for their marriage license at any County Recorder's office in Iowa. Marriage applications are accepted in Cherokee County between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. If you intend to marry outside of Iowa, you must apply for your license in that state.

Q: When should I apply?

A: There is a 3 day waiting period after you apply for your marriage license. The bride, groom, and one witness (over 18) must appear in person with photo ID. There is also a license fee of \$35.00, due when you pick up your license. The marriage license is valid for 6 months after it is issued.

Q: Do I have to show identification?

A: Yes. You must both provide identification to verify your name, place of residence, date of birth, and social security number.

Q: Do I need a blood test?

A: No. The state of Iowa does not require a blood test for you to get a marriage license.

Q: What do I do with the license after the wedding?

A: You should bring your license to the minister before the wedding service. After the service, the minister will have it signed by you and the witnesses and will file it with the District Court within five days of the wedding.

Memorial Presbyterian Church
Cherokee, IA
Rev. Ethan D. Sayler, Pastor
Joni De Vos, Church Secretary/Treasurer