

Holy Union Policy

First Presbyterian Church
Elizabethton, Tennessee

I would like to have a Holy Union Ceremony in your church. What should I do first?

Congratulations! Contact the minister, John Shuck, and set up a time for him to meet with you. It is important to meet with the minister as soon as possible, even before you solidify a date so you are not disappointed if he or the church is unavailable.

Are there rules?

We are a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation and follow the *PCUSA Book of Order*. While there is no specific direction for Holy Unions, we treat them as Care in the Transitions of Life (W-6.3010). [See appendix 1B](#). Ask the minister for clarification.

Do I have to be a member or a Presbyterian?

No.

Do you marry same-sex couples?

No. Both Tennessee and the Presbyterian Church restrict marriage to one man and one woman. However, we do celebrate Holy Union ceremonies for same-sex couples and for opposite-sex couples who do not wish to be married.

Is counseling required?

Yes. But it's fun and helpful. The minimum is four hours of counseling which includes the planning of the service. The minister is a certified Prepare/Enrich counselor and the counseling involves assisting the couple with communication, conflict management, and other issues that couples face.

Can we have Holy Union Ceremony in your church building with our own minister?

No. The minister of First Presbyterian is part of the package. However, the minister will be glad to work with your minister in celebrating the service.

Do we need an organist?

No. But if you wish to use an organist, David Arney is the person you need to contact first. If he is unable to play for the service, he will recommend someone.

Are there costs?

Yes. Here is the breakdown:

	Members	Non-members
Building Use Fee:	\$0	\$100
Pastor	\$0	\$ 50
Organist	\$50	\$ 50
Coordinator	\$25	\$ 25
Custodian	\$40	\$ 40
Counseling materials	\$35	\$ 35
Total	\$150	\$300

What does the coordinator do? Is this person required?

The coordinator helps with all of the details. Yes. This person is required. The only exception would be a very small ceremony. The minister will help you determine that.

Is the custodian required? We clean up well.

Yes. The custodian is required. Again, the only exception is a very small ceremony. The minister will help you determine that.

Can we have a reception at the church?

Yes. We have a very nice facility for that. [See appendix 3.](#)

What is the contact information?

John Shuck, Pastor	423-543-7737	johnashuck@earthlink.net
Beth Hodges, Secretary	423-543-7737	1stpres-eliz@earthlink.net
David Arney, Organist	423-543-4263	
Aubrie Abernethy, Coordinator	423-926-4184	

**Church address: First Presbyterian Church
119 West F Street
Elizabethton, TN 37643
423-543-7737
www-1stpres-eliz.org**