

Wedding Policy

First Presbyterian Church
Elizabethton, Tennessee

I would like to get married 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 set 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*. Guidelines for marriage ceremonies are found in W-4.9000. See [appendix 1A](#). Ask the minister for clarification.

Do I have to be a member or a Presbyterian?

No. At least one of the participants must be a professing Christian.

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. See our Holy Union Policy.

Do you marry people if they have been divorced?

Yes.

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. (In Tennessee, you get a discount on your marriage license if you participate in four hours of counseling).

What are the rules for getting married in Tennessee?

See [Appendix 2](#)

Can we get married 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 wedding. 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 wedding. 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@embarqmail.com |
| Beth Hodges, Secretary | 423-543-7737 | 1stpres-eliz@embarqmail.com |
| David Arney, Organist | 423-543-4263 | |
| Aubrie Abernethy, Coordinator | 423-926-4184 | |

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