



MILLS RIVER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WEDDING POLICY and PROCEDURES
MILLS RIVER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
10 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ROAD
MILLS RIVER, NC 28759
(828) 891-7101
MRPC10@ATT.NET

Pastor: Rev. Megan McMillan
Director of Music Ministries: Gary Mitchell
Administrative Assistant: Erin Shope
Wedding Coordinator: Beth Lindsey



Congratulations on your engagement! We want to help make your ceremony a memorable celebration. A wedding at Mills River Presbyterian Church is a celebratory Christian worship service under the direction of a Christian minister. It is a sacred ritual of the church that requires thoughtful preparation. These wedding policies have been carefully designed to ensure that your wedding is a sacred and memorable occasion. Please read them carefully.

MARRIAGE

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Order* (W-4.9001) states, "Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges."

The celebration of Christian marriage in a church wedding is an occasion of great joy and excitement and, at the same time, of great significance and reverence. A wedding in a church is a service of Christian worship. When a couple marries in a church, they are affirming that marriage is more than a civil contract recognized by the state; it is also a covenant which involves not only the couple, but also God and the Christian community. Therefore, the decision to have a church wedding rather than a secular ceremony means that the couple affirms the religious nature of the occasion. Our church considers the wedding ceremony to be a deeply spiritual and sacred experience blessed by God. It is our desire to join with you in making your wedding a rich experience for you—a worship experience that will be meaningful and that will live always in your memory. Dietrich Bonhoeffer has said, "It is not your love that sustains the marriage, but from now on, the marriage sustains your love." When you choose our church for the place of your wedding, you then plan your wedding within the policies of Mills River Presbyterian Church.

ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Mills River Presbyterian Church welcomes the use of its facility for weddings of members, who have been active for a minimum of six months prior to the wedding date. The child of an active member may also schedule a wedding. The minister, in consultation with the Session, may approve a wedding for non-members.

SCHEDULE A WEDDING DATE

All weddings are scheduled through the church office. It is important that the date be entered on the church calendar as early as possible so that both your plans and the church schedule can work together. The date must be cleared with the minister, and it is necessary to meet with the minister before the reservation is finalized. A wedding will not be scheduled at any time when it will conflict with regular church activities or programs. We do not schedule Sunday ceremonies for non-members. Ceremonies are not held on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day (or the Saturday nearest if Christmas falls on a Friday, Sunday or Monday), or during Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday). If the ceremony is on a holiday weekend such as Thanksgiving, Memorial Day, or Labor Day (and New Years), please schedule the date at least 6 months in advance and confirm the pastor at least 4 months in advance.

THE MINISTER

“A couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the minister of the Word and Sacrament, who may agree to the couple’s request only if, in the judgment of the minister of the Word and Sacrament, the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values.” – From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Order*

Weddings for members in the church sanctuary are officiated by the minister at Mills River Presbyterian Church. However, the couple may request another minister to assist in officiating. They should consult with the minister in order that they may issue an invitation. Assisting ministers must be a seminary educated, fully ordained clergy of a recognized religious body or denomination. Visiting clergy should not be invited to participate until the matter has been discussed with the minister from

Mills River Presbyterian, since they are the only person who may extend the invitation.

Non-member couples may choose to invite a minister/officiant for their wedding who is not a minister of Mills River Presbyterian Church. Ministers/officiants who are not affiliated with MRPC or who do not have standing in the PCUSA may only preside over weddings by invitation and consultation with the Pastor of the congregation. Should a couple choose to do this, their minister/officiant must make arrangements with the Pastor of the congregation and adhere to the following policies:

- A. The program must indicate that the minister/officiant is not affiliated with or an employee of Mills River Presbyterian Church.
- B. The order of worship must be approved by the minister of Mills River Presbyterian Church.
- C. If communion is to be shared, the invitation must be to everyone gathered, not just the couple, wedding party, or family.
- D. Rhetoric indicating that marriage is solely between a man and a woman may not be used.
- E. Rhetoric that implies women are to be submissive to their husbands may not be used.

Visiting ministers are expected to abide fully with the wedding policies of the church. It is also possible for lay readers to read scripture passages and/or other literature approved by the officiating minister. Please note: an internet or mail-order ordination is not acceptable to officiate a wedding at Mills River Presbyterian Church.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING

All couples seeking to be married at Mills River Presbyterian Church must coordinate appropriate counseling sessions with the Mills River Presbyterian Church pastor. Ordinarily, the minister who is officiating the wedding will also do the counseling. However, it is acceptable for the counseling to be done by another minister or by a pastoral counselor of the couple's choice. A signed letter, on

letterhead stationery, verifying completed counseling sessions by the minister or the counselor service, must be provided prior to the wedding date.

WEDDING FEES

For members and non-members a deposit of \$250 must be submitted with the Wedding Information Form/Application (completed as much as possible) at the time the wedding is requested to be scheduled. The deposit is refunded if event is not approved or is canceled sixty (60) days prior to the reserved date. The deposit is refunded following the wedding provided there is no damage to building or furnishings and all guidelines have been followed as specified in this policy.

The fees are divided into four parts:

1. A security deposit of \$250 is due to accompany the application. This is 100% refundable following the service, if there are no damages noted by the Wedding Coordinator;
2. A professional services charge;
 - For weddings in the Sanctuary for members: \$250.
 - For weddings in the Sanctuary for non-members: \$500. Includes the custodian, cleaning company, and various administrative costs.
3. Minister, Organist, MRPC Wedding Coordinator.
 - Minister: The minister has no fee for members. However, it is customary for the couple to present the minister with an honorarium. A recommended amount is \$200-\$350 for each minister participating in the service. For non-members the minister's fee is \$500 (\$300 if you are doing counseling elsewhere).
 - Organist: We recommend a gift equivalent or greater than \$150.
 - Wedding Coordinator: Considering the time commitment and responsibility, we recommend a gift equivalent or greater than \$200.
4. Optional Extra Fees
 - Additional Musicians – To be determined, as consulted with the church musician. Payable directly to the additional musicians.

- If you choose to use our Fellowship Hall for your reception, there is a separate building use and rental policy. Speak to the wedding coordinator about this inquiry.

Checks for parts 1 and 2 are payable to Mills River Presbyterian Church. Checks for parts 3 and 4 are made out to the individual.

GUIDE FOR WEDDING DECORATIONS

The wedding ceremony in our tradition may be characterized as one of simple dignity. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) says this about wedding decorations: "Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance worshipers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life."

Therefore,

- A. Floral arrangements should be simple. If the bridal party wishes to leave these to decorate the sanctuary for the following Sunday, that will be up to the discretion of the wedding coordinator.
- B. During Christmas and Easter seasons (Advent and Lent) the sanctuary is fully decorated; these decorations cannot be altered.
- C. The Communion Table, Baptismal Font, Pulpit and all vestments/banners shall not be moved or altered.
- D. For the protection of our facility and furnishings, no tape, nails, tacks, screws or wire should be used for attaching wedding decorations.
- E. All decorations must be removed from the premises immediately following the service, along with all personal items.
- F. Any candles used must be dripless and the florist needs to supply protective covering for our surfaces.
- G. The florist should contact the wedding coordinator to schedule flower delivery.
- H. Neither rice nor birdseed may be used inside or outside this church.
- I. Only artificial flower petals may be used by flower girls.

PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS

A Presbyterian wedding ceremony is, first and last, a worship service. We understand that couples want to document their happy day. We also seek to give God our full attention during worship. Therefore, the photographer or videographer shall not obstruct the view of the congregation.

- A. Flash photographs may not be taken during the wedding service. The entrance of the couple and their wedding party may be photographed with flash. But once the pastor begins speaking, the service has begun.
- B. No photos may be taken from the chancel or the choir area during the ceremony, since this inevitably draws attention away from the worship service.
- C. The couple is requested to make arrangements with the photographer in advance for any photographs before or following the wedding ceremony.
- D. Advanced preparation will help assure a prompt arrival of the wedding party at the reception.
- E. It is the responsibility of the wedding party and family to see that photographers, videographers, and wedding guests honor God and the worship of God.

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Alcohol and weapons (including those covered by a concealed carry permit) are not permitted on church property. Use of the Fellowship Hall is a separate rental and will follow the building use policy for the Fellowship Hall. Our sanctuary seating capacity is 150.

To Do:

1. __Contact the Church office to tentatively clear the date on the Church calendar.
2. __Contact the Minister to confirm availability for your wedding day. The wedding date is confirmed on the Church calendar only after the couple has contacted the Minister, paid the deposit and session approval.
3. __Contact the Wedding Coordinator to review details.
4. __Set an appointment with the Director of Music Ministries and/or Accompanist for assistance in music selection.
5. __Pay balance within 30 days of approval.

WEDDING INFORMATION FORM

Please Complete and Return to Mills River Presbyterian Church by MAIL: 10
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ROAD, MILLS RIVER, NC 28759. (828) 891-7101

Or by EMAIL: mrpc10@att.net

Rehearsal day and date: _____ Rehearsal time: _____

Wedding day and date: _____ Wedding time: _____

Bride/Merrier: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Groom/Merrier: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail Address: _____

First Meeting with Pastor scheduled for: Date: _____ Time: _____

Meeting with Organist and Director of Music Ministries scheduled for:

Date: _____ Time: _____

(Complete if Pastor requested is not a member of the Mills River staff.)

Pastor's Name: _____ Denomination: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Wedding Policy Provided to Pastor on (date:) _____

Photographer: _____ Phone: _____

Has the Photographer signed an acknowledgment of Church policy concerning
wedding photography? YES NO

Videographer: _____ Phone: _____

Has the Videographer signed an acknowledgment of Church policy concerning
wedding videography? YES NO

WEDDING PARTY:

Number of Bridesmaids/attendants: _____

Number of Groomsmen/attendants: _____

Number of Ring bearers/Junior attendant: _____

Number of Flower child: _____

Number of Ushers: _____

Number of guests invited to wedding: _____

Do you wish your reception to be held at Mills River Presbyterian Church? YES NO

If NO, location of reception: _____

Florist: _____ Phone: _____

Has the Florist been informed of Church policy concerning décor? YES NO

Wedding Party Designated Representative or Wedding Consultant:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Has the Designated Representative/Consultant been informed of the Church's

Wedding Policy? YES NO

FEES:

Security deposit due with application. Upon approval of application, all other fees are due within 30 days of receipt of approval. \$ _____

WEDDING Deposit: \$250 Sanctuary fee: For Members \$250 For Non-Members \$500 \$ _____

RECEPTION in Fellowship Hall \$250 (optional) \$ _____

OTHER \$ _____

By your signature below you acknowledge that you have read, understood, and agree to be bound by the Wedding Policy of Mills River Presbyterian Church. Any violation of this policy could result in your use of the Church being denied, without refund.

Signature of couple: _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

For MRPC: _____ Date: _____