

Weddings at Rye Presbyterian Church

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A wedding is a rite of the Church that witnesses the vows of marriage between two people, and that asks for God's blessing upon them. In the Presbyterian Church it is a worship service, and thus a time when attention is ultimately turned to God. Even though there are cultural elements in the service, the purpose of a Christian wedding service is clear from the Church's tradition. It is worship before God which acknowledges God's gracious love that calls a couple to a life-long covenant relationship. The service is an expression of faith in God and of a couple's desire for God to be an ongoing partner in the marriage. Those gathered for the service witness the vows, and affirm their support for the couple and even may reaffirm for themselves their own wedding vows.

In the Presbyterian Constitution, the wedding service is under the direction of the pastor of the church and the supervision of the church Session. Those seeking to be married at Rye Presbyterian Church are assumed to hold to the expectations that proceed from this understanding of marriage and that are set forth in this booklet.

THE WEDDING LICENSE

Since marriage is also a civil contract, regulated by the state, all weddings require a marriage license. Regardless of your state of residence, if you are to be married in New York State, you must secure a New York State Marriage License. *Please present this license to the officiating pastor on the night of your rehearsal.*

Normally, you should apply for a marriage license at the town or city hall in the place of your residence. However, if for some reason this is inconvenient, you can legally apply at any town or city hall in New York State. The marriage license fee is approximately \$40. There is a 24-hour waiting period between the time that you complete your application and when you can pick up your license. No premarital physical examination is currently required, but both partners to the marriage must be present with proof of age in the form of birth certificate, passport or driver's license. New York law requires both parties to be at least 18 years of age to be married without parental consent. If you have been previously married, proof of a divorce decree or certificate of dissolution may be required. (If your divorce was granted in another state or country, it is most often required.)

When you present your license to the officiating pastor, it is his or her responsibility to obtain the necessary signatures and return the completed license and affidavit to the town or city clerk. Usually the best man and maid of honor sign the license as witnesses. While other persons may be substituted as witnesses, no one under 18 years of age can sign as a witness.

In most states you would receive a copy of the license immediately after the ceremony, but New York is different. You must apply by mail to the clerk of the town or city with whom the license is filed for a certified copy for a \$10 fee. If you apply for a license from the City Clerk in Rye and you will require an immediate certified copy for foreign travel or otherwise, you should request such special arrangements when you apply.

A New York State marriage license is valid for 60 calendar days beginning the day after it is issued. The wedding must take place within this limit. If you are coming from out of state, please make sure that you take note of the 24-hour waiting period and the 60-day expiration. Town and city clerk's offices are usually open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., but it is recommended to confirm this by telephone. There are exceptions for persons stationed out of state or country for military service.

THE OFFICIATING PASTOR

The prospective wedding couple will need to make an appointment with a pastor to discuss the wedding before the date can be confirmed by the church secretary. Since weddings are worship services of the congregation, one of the pastors of Rye Presbyterian Church will officiate.

However, recognizing that sometimes weddings can be occasions for two faiths to be represented or that relatives or family friends may be clergy, the Session of Rye Presbyterian Church is pleased to welcome clergy who hold valid ordination in other churches or faiths to assist in your wedding service. It is necessary to make this request with the officiating pastor when you are discussing wedding plans. He or she alone can issue an invitation for another clergy person to participate in the wedding, and alone can determine how this participation occurs.

Arranging for a Wedding

You should contact the church office to determine the availability of church facilities as far in advance as possible. After contacting the office, couples must meet with one of the pastors before the wedding date can be booked.

Our Sanctuary seats 450 and the adjacent Crawford Chapel seats 80. During certain times of the year several weddings may be scheduled on the same day. If this occurs, it is necessary for us to schedule weddings at appropriate intervals to leave adequate time for cleaning, floral decorations, and photography between individual weddings.

A minimum interval of three hours must be maintained between weddings. In the event that on-site photography is expected, an additional hour must be added to the scheduled minimum.

The Presbyterian order of service for a wedding is usually about thirty minutes in length and does not include the Sacrament of Holy Communion. If Communion is requested, it must be approved by our Session, the church's official ruling body. All those who are baptized are welcome at the Lord's Table, and are to be invited to participate in it. An additional 15 minutes would be added to the service if communion is celebrated.

Given the fullness of the church calendar, it is important that weddings begin and end on time and as scheduled.

Weddings are usually scheduled on Saturday, with a 45-minute rehearsal scheduled on the Friday evening before. Weddings can be arranged at other times convenient to the church's master calendar.

Financial Arrangements

A deposit of \$500 is required within 14 days after arranging a wedding date. This payment should be made by check to Rye Presbyterian Church, with "Wedding Deposit" noted on the check memo line. This deposit will be deducted from the total cost of the wedding outlined below. In the event that a wedding is cancelled, the deposit will be refunded upon receipt of a letter 60 days before the wedding signed by either partner or a parent of one of the partners.

NON-MEMBER SANCTUARY FEE OF \$2,250 includes honoraria to the officiating pastor, the organist, the sexton, and use of the building and chancel candles.

MEMBER SANCTUARY FEE OF \$1,100 includes honoraria to the officiating pastor, the organist, the sexton, and use of the building and chancel candles.

NON-MEMBER CHAPEL FEE OF \$1,750 includes the same as the sanctuary elements above.

MEMBER CHAPEL FEE OF \$1,100 includes the same as the sanctuary fee.

ADDITIONAL FEES are charged for soloist (\$175); organist attendance if required at rehearsal (\$75); pew candles (\$75). If visiting clergy share in the service, any honorarium is paid directly to them by the wedding couple.

The appropriate wedding fee (minus the deposit) is payable a week before the scheduled wedding and should be sent to the church office.

If a wedding is desired off church premises, the date is arranged through the officiating clergy and an honorarium of \$500 (plus expenses) for members, or \$750 (plus expenses) for non-members, is paid directly to them.

Music

The Rye Presbyterian Church music director/organist is the accompanist for the musical portion of the wedding worship. You should call him for an appointment to assist you in selecting processional and recessional organ music which will be in keeping with the purpose of a Christian wedding service. If desired, the selection of music to be used by your vocalist will also be discussed. Neither recorded music nor amplification of music selections is permitted. Suggestions for vocalists and/or instrumentalists are also available through our music director/organist. A guest vocalist or instrumentalist is subject to the approval and discretion of the church music director.

Photography

You will want to arrange with your photographer for specific pictures within the time limits arranged for your wedding. Generally, *informal* pictures are taken before the ceremony during the pre-wedding activity. If *formal* wedding pictures are to be taken of the wedding party and families at the church following the ceremony, 45 to 60 minutes will be required depending on the size of your wedding party.

Your photographer can take pictures of your processional and recessional with a flash camera. ***However, once the service has begun, we strictly prohibit flash photography during the ceremony.*** Any photography or video during the service must be done from the rear of the church or from the balcony. If you wish to reshoot pictures with flash after the ceremony, the officiating pastor will be pleased to remain.

The professional photographer you use is the only person who may take photos during the service. Please inform your guests that there is to be no photography, including with cell phones, during the service.

Florist

Your florist can arrive at the church no more than an hour and a half ahead of your wedding. Please share this time constraint with him or her. Floral decorations may be placed on the communion table, on chancel stands, or attached to candles and pews – providing that no tape or sticky substance is used. If your florist does not abide by this request, there will be an additional cleaning fee to remove the remaining substance from our brass and woodwork.

If you desire a white runner or unity candles, these arrangements should be made with the florist. For your florist's information, the center aisle of the sanctuary is 67 feet long and the Crawford Chapel is 30 feet long.

Parking

The church parking lot of 90 parking spaces is located off Milton Road. An additional 10 parking spaces are found in the church driveway along Parsons Street. Parking is also sometimes available along Milton Road and in the High School parking lot across Parsons Street from the church. Entrance to the church parking lots can be gained only from Parsons Street or Milton Road.

Order of Service

Prelude and Lighting of Candles (Vocal selection if desired)

Processional

Call to Worship

Statement on the Gift of Marriage

Prayer of Invocation

Declarations of Intent

Affirmations of the Families

Affirmation of the Congregation

Scripture Readings (Choice of two or three from Old and New Testament)

Homily (Brief reflection/statement upon marriage)

Marriage Vows

Exchange of Rings

Wedding Prayer with the Lord's Prayer

Declaration of Marriage

Blessing

Recessional