

Great Bridge Presbyterian Church Wedding Policy, Forms, and Fees

Following our denomination's Directory of Worship, Great Bridge Presbyterian Church understands that "In Baptism, each Christian is claimed in the covenant of God's faithful love. 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." (Book of Order, W-4.0601)

As well, marriage services shall be conducted in a manner appropriate to this covenant and to the forms of Reformed worship, under the direction of the Minister of the Word and Sacrament and the supervision of the Session (Book of Order, W-4.0603 and W-2.03). Great Bridge Presbyterian is available for weddings for members. The church may be used for the weddings of non-members if the Minister believes it to be appropriate. All marriage services regarding the details and coordination are facilitated by the Wedding Coordinator at the church.

Scheduling Your Wedding at Great Bridge Presbyterian Church

- Call, text or email one of our Wedding Coordinators, Robynne King at 757-650-4387 or soyking52@gmail.com, *or* Jennifer Cahoon at 757-403-8891 or jennifer.cahoon1971@gmail.com. Your Coordinator will be your contact person from the church, will check date availability, and will **see that your date is marked as tentative** on the church calendar.
- The couple will schedule an initial meeting with the Pastor before any scheduling of a date is finalized.
- **The Pastor of Great Bridge Presbyterian Church must be contacted even if you intend to ask a pastor from another church to officiate.** Another pastor may officiate only with the approval of the Pastor of GBPC.
- Please **read this policy thoroughly and carefully.** If you, as a couple, are in agreement with and wish to abide by this Wedding Policy, please **sign the accompanying Wedding Reservation Form and return it to the church with your reservation fee of \$100.00.**
- **Please note that the \$100.00 reservation fee is nonrefundable and does not apply to any other fees. Checks should be made out to Great Bridge Presbyterian Church.**
- **Receipt of your check and your signed Wedding Reservation form officially secures your wedding date on the church calendar. It is no longer tentative.**
- We recommend that you schedule as early as possible, as many activities and functions continue to be scheduled at the church. For planning purposes, it is important to note that weddings **will not** be scheduled on the following days: Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Easter.

Premarital Conferences

Premarital counseling is necessary and essential in preparation for marriage. Premarital **counseling sessions** provide an opportunity for the Pastor and couple to become better acquainted, to discuss the meaning of marriage within the context of faith, and to plan the marriage service.

The couple should arrange their premarital counseling sessions with the Pastor directly at least 3-6 months in advance of the wedding service. During this process, it should be understood that the Pastor has no obligation to marry couples when questions arise which, in their judgment, would be serious obstacles to a successful marriage.

Occasionally, a couple may desire that a pastor of another church officiate or assist in the wedding. While GBPC's Pastor may give approval for this, premarital counseling sessions are still required, and arrangements must be made with the officiating pastor to meet this requirement. The courtesy of our church shall be extended to visiting clergy, providing they follow the procedural ethics of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. as outlined in the Book of Order and abide by the policies of Great Bridge Presbyterian Church.

Planning and Coordinating Your Wedding Ceremony

The Pastor, by virtue of their office, will be the director of your church wedding service. It is the Pastor's responsibility and commitment to maintain your ceremony as a holy and reverent event.

Set up a meeting with the Wedding Coordinator 6 – 8 weeks prior to your wedding date. Your Wedding Coordinator will be present for the rehearsal and the ceremony. At this meeting, there will be a walk-through at the church. You will need to bring the form included in this packet signed by the Director of Worship and Music or Contemporary Worship Leader.

Should questions arise concerning details or information needed in advance of this contact, the Wedding Coordinator may be contacted. She will work closely with the couple and the Pastor, keep the Worship and Music and Buildings and Grounds Committees informed of all arrangements, schedule facility use, schedule the Sexton (custodial service), assist with color of flowers (church worship flowers), schedule the Audio-Visual Technician, and open and close the building. Her participation and direction will relieve you of many burdens and help you combine your personal taste with wedding etiquette and this policy.

Mistresses of Ceremonies or outside Wedding Coordinators will not be allowed.

Music for Your Wedding

Our Reformed tradition holds that music suitable for a marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. Hymns and other musical forms of praise and prayer may be included in marriage services, and all of the music should be appropriate to the place of worship; it should enhance the worshipers' consciousness of the reality of God and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life.

Music used in your wedding service is overseen by our Director of Worship and Music, Billye Brown Youmans. In the case of a contemporary worship style of wedding service our Contemporary Worship Leader, Cathy Sturgeon, will be contacted.

A wedding is a worship service and the music selected should be sacred and appropriate. **Our Director of Worship and Music or our Contemporary Worship Leader will contact you either by email or phone as soon as your date is reserved.** Either of them will make arrangements to meet with you and suggest appropriate music and recommend musicians. **At this meeting, you will obtain their signature of authorization on the form included in this packet.** The authorization for music must be finalized no later than 30 days prior to the wedding.

Our church organist, Cheryl Madison, shall play for all weddings in the church. You can schedule with her through the Director of Worship and Music. If the couple wishes to invite another organist, pianist, or other musicians to play, the Director of Worship and Music will discuss this with you.

All music must be in keeping with the above guidelines.

Payment of the organist's or musician's fees is the responsibility of the couple. Musicians and or singers should be at the rehearsal (if this is not possible, at least 1 hour or **earlier** on wedding day) as microphone adjustment may be necessary.

There will be 20-30 minutes of prenuptial music on the wedding day, and this will be guided by the number of guests that need to be seated, and the amount of time needed before the actual processional. The Wedding Coordinator will help with making this decision along with the Organist or Musicians.

Our sound system is fully controlled from the sound room at the rear of the Sanctuary by our trained Audio-Visual Technician. This technician must be present during the **rehearsal and wedding**. The Wedding Coordinator will make arrangements for the Audio-Visual Technician to be present. The couple is responsible for the fee of the Technician.

Decorations and Accessories

At GBPC, the following guidelines must be followed:

- The Communion table is not to be used for flowers or objects.
- Our church owns a wedding banner that is available for use in the Sanctuary. The Wedding Coordinator will hang the banner before the wedding and remove it before the Sunday Worship Services, if you choose to use the banner.
- The church Flower Guild is willing to coordinate floral colors of the wedding service for the Sunday Worship arrangement if possible. The church owns a large urn for the arrangement. Flower colors should be in keeping with the liturgical season. Using **white fresh** flower petals during the processional is acceptable if a runner is used. Artificial petals of any color may be used without a runner.
- **Please complete the “Instructions for the Florist” form contained in this packet and submit it to your florist at the time of initial consultation. Your florist is expected to know and abide by these guidelines.**

The following accessories are available for use at your wedding:

2 seven branch candelabra (black)

1 brass tabletop unity candle holder (for 2 tapers and 1 pillar candle)

Table or podium for guest registry

Table for flowers or other memorial tributes

The church will provide candles (white or ivory) for the candelabra. The candles for the unity candle stand must be provided by the couple.

Candles on ends of pews are permitted as long as they are clamp on type and have globes. There will be **no** candles in windows or elsewhere in the church without glass globes. Care must be taken that candle wax does not get on the carpet, furniture, or brick work. All candle use must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator.

No nails, tacks, wire, or tape may be used on walls, woodwork, pews, or carpet. **No** decorations are permitted that will mar the pews, walls, carpet, floors, or other property of the church.

Removal of flowers and other decorations from the Sanctuary should begin immediately following guests' departure. Arrangements for this should be made ahead of time with the florist or someone appointed by the couple. The Wedding Coordinator will oversee the removal of decorations. If it is not possible to have the floral decorations or rented items removed immediately after guests have left, following the service, they will be stored and must be picked up on the next business day.

The church sexton (custodian) will be scheduled to clean the Sanctuary, bathrooms and any other areas used by the wedding party immediately following wedding photography.

Photography and Video

Please complete the "Instructions for the Photographer" form contained in this packet and submit it to your photographer at the time of initial consultation. Your photographer is expected to know and abide by these guidelines. We are reminded that the wedding is a worship service and is not intended to be a photographic production. In that regard we share with you these policies of Great Bridge Presbyterian.

NO FLASH PICTURES MAY BE TAKEN DURING THE SERVICE. Specifically, this means from the end of the Processional to the beginning of the Recessional. Non-flash pictures are permitted from the back of the church. **No** photography shall detract or intrude into the service. We ask that motor drives be disengaged.

Pictures of the wedding party may be taken **before** the wedding but **must be completed at least 45 minutes prior to the start of the wedding service.** Photography at the conclusion of the wedding service should be completed as quickly as possible. This will enable you to join your guests at the reception in a timely manner for the celebration.

Videotaping of the service is permitted only if it does not interfere with the worship experience. If a video camera is to be placed at the front of the Chancel area, it is to be stationary (on a tripod) with no movement during the ceremony. Questions should be directed to the Wedding Coordinator.

Other Important Information

- The couple will be responsible for any property damage or cleaning expenses incurred due to failure to comply with the guidelines of the church.
- Please no rice or confetti thrown on church grounds. No balloons may be released.
- We recommend a reminder in your bulletin for guests: turn off electronic equipment. Remember the no flash photography during the service rule.
- Have the Groom and Groomsmen check the tuxedos the day before the wedding to make sure that they fit and everything is in order (make sure all accessories are included).
- Please be mindful and respectful of the time of all those involved in your service and be punctual. We begin ON TIME for both the rehearsal and the wedding service.
- Our Sanctuary seats 500 and the Fellowship Hall can accommodate approximately 250 for a reception.
- The Wedding Coordinator will take care of the lighting of the Communion table candles and the candelabra (unless someone has been appointed for the candelabra) prior to the start of the service.
- Based on experience, children younger than 4 years of age may not participate as well as you had planned and may detract from the dignity of your ceremony.
- The church will not be responsible for personal items that you bring or leave at the church (e.g. articles of clothing, purses, wallets, cameras, etc.).
- Smoking is **not** permitted in the building.
- **Alcohol consumption is not permitted in or on church grounds.**

Wedding Rehearsal

- Be prompt. The Rehearsal will begin at the designated time.
- Remember to purchase your marriage license and bring it with you on rehearsal night and give it to the Wedding Coordinator so she can give it to the Pastor.
- The rehearsal usually lasts about 1- 1 ½ hour.
- Do not bring wedding gowns or any other clothing or accessories to the rehearsal to remain at the church.
- You should bring your bulletins (they are used for conducting the rehearsal), guest registry, unity candle (if being used) and give them to the Wedding Coordinator.
- Rehearsals will be conducted exclusively by the officiating pastor(s) and assisted by a Wedding Coordinator from our church.

The Wedding Day

- The couple may arrive early with their attendants to dress in separate areas in the church. The Wedding Coordinator will coordinate which rooms will be used, and the church will be opened 2 hours prior to the wedding.
- Ushers/groomsmen will begin seating guests no more than 30 minutes prior to the hour of the wedding.
- Grandparents, parents, and special guests should be in the narthex at least 10 minutes prior to the start time.

- If you choose to provide a guest registry at the ceremony, a table or stand is available. Please designate someone to oversee this and take it to the reception. If the narthex gets overly crowded prior to the start time of the ceremony, the registry will be removed in order to get guests seated.
- If bulletins will be used, remember to bring them to the rehearsal. Please make sure you have designated someone to oversee their distribution. The distribution will begin approximately 30 minutes prior to the wedding.

Fees

All fees are to be paid at the rehearsal for your wedding and given to the Wedding Coordinator who will advise you as to whom checks should be made payable.

Non-members – \$800.00 for Sanctuary and ceremony related spaces.
 \$300.00 for Fellowship Hall (Reception with kitchen use)

Pastor – It is recommended that a minimum \$350.00 honorarium be offered to the Pastor for premarital counseling and the ceremony.

Wedding Coordinator and Assistant- \$300.00

Audio-Visual Technician- \$150.00 (rehearsal and wedding)

NOTE: In the event a video is used, the AV Technician fee will be \$175 (rehearsal and wedding)

Sexton- \$75.00 (wedding only), \$75.00 (reception only), \$150.00 (for both wedding and reception)

Organist *and* other musicians – Prearranged fees to be determined by those performing and shared with the Wedding Coordinator to inform the couple.

WEDDING RESERVATION FORM

Great Bridge Presbyterian Church, 333 Cedar Road, Chesapeake, VA 23322
 Telephone: (757) 547-4706

Date: _____

This form must be returned to the church with a check for \$100.00 (non-refundable) to secure the date for your wedding. If the form is **NOT** received within 2 weeks after meeting with the Pastor for confirmation of the wedding being held at GBPC on the date that has been marked as tentatively scheduled on the GBPC calendar, the date will be released for someone else. Please make the check payable to GBPC. All other fees are due as specified as page 6.

Wedding of:

Bride: _____
 First *Middle* *Last*

Groom: _____
 First *Middle* *Last*

Address _____

City, State, and Zip _____

Home phone number _____ Cell phone # _____

Email _____

Person to be contacted by Wedding Coordinator _____

Church member Yes _____ No _____

Officiating Minister _____

Date of Rehearsal _____ **Time desired** _____

Date of Wedding _____ **Time desired** _____

I/We hereby agree to be responsible for any damage to the building and /or equipment during its use.
 I/We have received and have read in its entirety the Wedding Book listing the Church's guidelines and policies concerning having a wedding at this facility and agree to abide by said policies.

(Signature) _____ **Date** _____

(Signature) _____ **Date** _____

A Wedding Coordinator of Great Bridge Presbyterian Church will be calling you about 6-8 weeks prior to your wedding. The Wedding Coordinator is a qualified member who will assist you during the rehearsal and wedding ceremony.

WEDDING PLANNING SHEETS

(MUST be presented to the Wedding Coordinator at the Walk-Through Meeting.)

Wedding of _____ and _____

Name of Contact Person _____

Date of Rehearsal _____ Time _____

Date of Wedding _____ Time _____

Officiating Pastor _____

Assisting Pastor _____

Organist/Pianist _____

Vocalist _____

Instrumentalist _____

Size of Wedding Party _____

Maid/Matron of Honor _____ Best Man _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Flower Girl _____ Ring Bearer _____

- It is strongly suggested that Flower Girls and Ring Bearers be at least 4 years old.

Grandmother of Bride _____ Escorted by _____

Grandmother of Bride _____ Escorted by _____

Grandmother of Groom _____ Escorted by _____

Grandmother of Groom _____ Escorted by _____

Mother of Bride _____ Escorted by _____

Mother of Groom _____ Escorted by _____

Other special guests and their escorts:

How many rows of pews on each side should be reserved for family seating? _____

Number of Guests expected for wedding _____

Time of arrival of wedding party _____

Reminder: The church is opened 2 hours before ceremony time for florist delivery & bride's arrival for dressing.

Florist Name _____ Phone# _____

Reminder: Florist must use pew clamps for holding flowers or ribbons. No tape or wire is allowed.

Floral Delivery time _____

Photographer _____ Arrival Time: _____

Video camera Yes/ No

Reminder: Photographer and video camera operator must abide by church guidelines of no flashes during the wedding service and the videographer must remain stationery at all times.

Reservation for special equipment:

2 seven branch candelabra (black) yes no

Unity candle holder (gold) yes no **OR** Sand Ceremony yes no

Table in Narthex for guest registry yes no

Extra table for flowers or other memorial tribute yes no

10/17/2025

DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP AND MUSIC APPROVAL FORM

Great Bridge Presbyterian Church
333 Cedar Road
Chesapeake, VA 23322
(757) 547-4706

MUSIC@GBPRES.ORG
CATHYSTURGEON@GBPRES.ORG

Bride's Name _____

Groom's Name _____

Date & Time of Wedding _____

- Wedding music has been discussed and approved.
- Musicians/vocalists have been discussed and scheduled.

Director of Worship and Music, GBPC

Date

Contemporary Worship Leader, GBPC

Date

This form must be signed by either the Director of Worship and Music or the Contemporary Worship Leader and presented to the Wedding Coordinator at the scheduled Walk Through Meeting (6 – 8 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FLORIST

Great Bridge Presbyterian Church
333 Cedar Road
Chesapeake, VA 23322
(757) 547-4706

Bride's Name _____

Groom's Name _____

Date & Time of Wedding _____

Time of Delivery _____

1. The church will be opened (2) hours before the wedding.
2. Nothing may be placed on the communion table (except ornamentation around unity candle stand).
3. Do not use tape or wire of any kind to secure bows or flowers on the ends of the pews. They may be affixed with ribbon, chenille stems, elastic bands or you may use clips.
4. Flowers may be used to decorate the candelabra and the pews (under conditions noted in #3 above).
5. Arrange to remove decorations promptly following the wedding and photography. As the church may have 2 weddings in one day, prompt cleanup and removal of your property is important. We will dispose of all flowers left by the wedding party.
6. Property belonging to the florist must be removed from the church immediately after the ceremony, unless the items are to be stored until the next business day. The church must be left clean and in good order.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Great Bridge Presbyterian Church
 333 Cedar Road
 Chesapeake, VA 23322
 (757) 547-4706

Bride _____ Groom _____

Wedding Date & Time _____

1. All pictures must be completed 45 minutes prior to the start of the wedding service.
2. The wedding service of worship officially begins with the seating of the mothers. The photographer may take a flash picture of the attendants, bride and father of the bride as they start down the aisle. In order to take these pictures, the photographer may not go forward down the aisle more than the 3rd row from the back.
 - No flash pictures may be taken during the service - specifically from the end of the processional to the beginning of the recessional.
 - Time exposures with no flash may be taken from the back of the church. If the camera has a motor drive, please disengage it.
3. Only the existing lighting is used in the Sanctuary during the wedding.
4. After the wedding, flash pictures may be taken from the back of the Sanctuary as the wedding party exits the center aisle.
5. After the wedding, the pastor, bride, groom, and wedding party return immediately to the Sanctuary for pictures.
6. Photography following the wedding in the Sanctuary is limited to **30 minutes.**
7. Any photographer secured to videotape the wedding must contact the Wedding Coordinator to coordinate setup and placement. These arrangements must be made at least 45 minutes before the wedding ceremony.