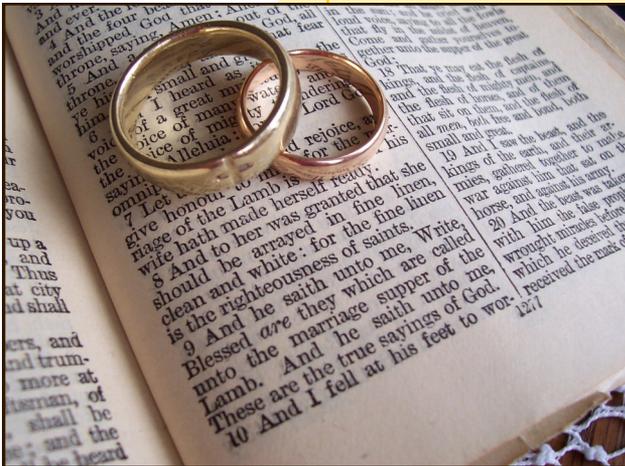


Wedding Guide



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
NATCHITOCHES**

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Congratulations on your engagement! Deciding to get married is the *second* most important decision you will ever make. The first is trusting Jesus as your Lord and Savior. At First Baptist Church we believe marriage is instituted of God, regulated by His commandments, blessed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be held in honor among all men. A wedding is a very special occasion, as it is establishing a Christian home.

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 the 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 bride and the groom 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.

As you begin to make specific plans, please read through these pages carefully. Should you decide to use First Baptist Church for your special day, please fill out and return the reservation form and the pre-marital questionnaire. The next step is for you and your fiancé to schedule an appointment with a ministerial staff member for a premarital interview.

It is our prayer that you will continue to seek God's direction for your married life, and that your marriage will be strong in the years to come.

In Christ,

The Staff of First Baptist Church

Scheduling Your Wedding

Due to the importance and sacredness of marriage, the risks to marriage in our society, and the responsibility of the church to preserve and strengthen Christian marriages, both individuals must be believers in Jesus Christ and must evidence the desire to serve Him in their lives and marriage. First Baptist Church allows only Christian ceremonies.

Weddings are scheduled through the Wedding Coordinator of First Baptist Church by completing the Wedding Arrangement Form. Before your wedding date can be confirmed on the calendar, you and your fiancé must schedule an appointment with a member of the ministerial staff for a premarital interview. Once the staff member has given his approval and the security deposit has been received your wedding can be placed on the First Baptist Church calendar. However, please understand your wedding date will be considered tentative until you complete all of the requirements including attendance of both you and your fiancé at a Marriage Preparation Class held at First Baptist Church.

Facilities are available to members of First Baptist Church and their children and to non-members. Members of six months or longer will be able to schedule a wedding up to eight (8) months in advance of the wedding date. Non-member weddings will only be scheduled six (6) months prior to the wedding date. You will receive a letter of confirmation from the Wedding Coordinator when your wedding has been firmly calendared.

Weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays, Wednesdays, Holiday weekends (New Year's, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving), the weekends before and after Vacation Bible School and the month of December. Weddings may be scheduled no later than 6:00 pm on Saturdays.

Wedding Coordinator

To facilitate your wedding, First Baptist Church has a Wedding Coordinator who will help you understand the policies and procedures for weddings held at our church. She will provide answers to questions concerning facilities, procedures, rehearsals, decorations and custodial services. She will be present at your wedding rehearsal and the wedding itself in case you have last minute questions.

Marriage Preparation Class

Because of the concern of our ministerial staff that your life together is Christ-centered, a prerequisite to being married at First Baptist Church is your participation in one two-hour Marriage Preparation Class. These classes are held four times throughout the year. To be married at First Baptist Church and/or by any of the FBC ministerial staff, you and your fiancé are required to complete the Marriage Preparation Class. Please check with the church office for the next scheduled class.

Rehearsal

Rehearsal time is limited to one hour from the scheduled beginning time. All members of the wedding party must attend the rehearsal. Please bring the marriage license to the rehearsal.

Facilities

Facilities available include:

- Sanctuary (capacity—400 people)
- Chapel (capacity—80 people)
- Bride's Room
- Dressing area for wedding attendants
- Bostick Room and Kitchen. The kitchen may be used for serving purposes only.
- Gym

Please note due to insurance liabilities, First Baptist Church does not provide facilities or personnel for childcare during weddings.

No food or drinks are permitted inside the Sanctuary or Chapel.

Decorations

Decorations should be in keeping with the beauty of the Sanctuary or Chapel and the sacredness of the occasion. All decorations and decorating equipment must be furnished by the wedding party or florist and must be removed immediately following the wedding.

Please remember to be respectful of church property and observe the following:

- Decorations and equipment may not be attached using nails, tacks, staples or tape to walls, woodwork, furniture or floors as this may deface church property.
- Hymnals are not to be removed from the pews or used as props or flower stands.
- No furniture may be moved in or out of the Sanctuary.
- Only the use of mechanical candles is permitted. Please make sure your florist is aware of this. If other candles are used, the Wedding Coordinator will not allow them to be lit.
- Candle stands are not permitted in the aisles.
- Any potted plants must be placed in saucers.
- Silk or cloth petals only are permitted for use by flower girls.
- Facilities staff will not load or off-load equipment or decorations to be used in the wedding.
- Birdseed and bubbles are permitted to be used outside the building only. No rice is permitted. If birdseed is used, it must be swept free from the entrances following the wedding.

Property Damage and Personal Property Liability

Breakage of and/or damage to any church equipment or facilities must be reimbursed at replacement value. The bride is strongly urged not to leave her wedding dress or bridesmaids dresses in the bride's room following the rehearsal. First Baptist Church will not be liable for dresses, silver, jewelry, purses/billfolds, or any personal items lost, stolen or damaged at any event related to this wedding.

FBC is an Alcohol-Free, Smoke-Free Facility

A wedding is a worship service and the members of the wedding party are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting the atmosphere of the place of worship. The wedding party will refrain from using alcoholic beverages or drugs prior to and during the activities held at First Baptist Church. No rehearsal or wedding will be conducted if any member of the wedding party or those who service the wedding are under the influence. Guests under the influence of alcohol will be asked to leave. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the First Baptist Church campus at any time. Smoking is not permitted in any of the FBC facilities by the wedding party, those who service the wedding, or guests.

Wedding Music

Your church wedding should be a worship service in every sense. Therefore, all music, whether instrumental, recorded, or vocal, must be appropriate for a worship service. All music must be approved by First Baptist Church's Minister of Music at least two (2) weeks prior to your wedding.

If the organ in the Sanctuary is to be used, a First Baptist Church organist must be used unless otherwise approved by the Minister of Music.

Sound System

All weddings in the Sanctuary require our trained sound technician. The sound technician will attend your rehearsal and be available one hour prior to the wedding.

Custodial Services

The use of First Baptist Church's custodian is required. The Custodian's fees cover having the building clean and ready for use at the proper time and a general cleaning after the events are over. The fee does NOT include removing decorations, replacing any rearranged furniture or washing dishes.

Photography Guidelines

Capturing your wedding on film is an important goal for most wedding couples. Photographs and video taping of your wedding are permitted within the following guidelines:

- No flash photography or extra lighting will be allowed during your wedding ceremony. The ceremony begins when the mother's are seated. Non-flash pictures by the photographer are permissible during the ceremony when made quietly from the rear of the Sanctuary or center balcony.
- Flash pictures may be taken before and after the ceremony and during the reception.
- A flash picture of the bride may be made by the photographer as she first enters the Sanctuary. Flash pictures may be made of the bridal party as they exit the Sanctuary.
- Standing on pews/seats in the building is not permitted.
- Wedding party pictures may be taken preceding the ceremony or following the ceremony.
- Video taping of your ceremony is permitted with the camera personnel in fixed, unobtrusive locations.
- We suggest that your photographer visit the church in advance to become familiar with the facilities.

Other Important Instructions

No unsightly or inappropriate materials should be used to decorate the wedding car (beer cans for example).

If the buildings are not cleared, closed and locked three and one-half hours after the time the wedding began, a fee of \$50 per hour will be deducted from the damage deposit.

All members of the wedding party should be at the Church no less than one hour prior to the ceremony.

Questions about anything not covered in this policy should be directed to the Wedding Coordinator.

Fee Schedule

First Baptist Church does not wish to charge its members for the use of the buildings. However it is necessary to charge for personnel providing services for church member weddings. Member fees apply to those who are presently on the active church membership rolls and have been a part of this church family for six (6) months or more. Membership status applies to the bride or groom if a parent is a member of First Baptist Church.

All costs are expected to be paid in full no less than two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled date of the wedding. A personalized statement will be prepared by the Wedding Coordinator and given to the bride along with confirmation of the scheduled date.

Member Fees:

- Security Deposit—\$100
- Minister's gratuity

Non-Member Fees:

- Security Deposit—\$250
- Sanctuary and dressing areas—\$750
- Chapel and dressing areas—\$375
- Bostick Room and kitchen—\$300
- Gym, Bostick Room and Kitchen—\$500
- Minister—\$225

Special Arrangements & Fees for Everyone:

- Breaking down the platform / stage - moving the piano, removing orchestra equipment, chairs, microphones, monitors , and music equipment.
- Re-setting the stage for Sunday Worship.
- Removing and Replacing the Chairs in the choir loft.

FEES:

- Wedding Coordinator—\$150
- Sound and Lighting Technician—\$350
- Maintenance—\$150
- Maintenance Helper - \$150
- FBC Organist (if used)—\$150

Questions and Notes

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