



FIRST COLONY CHURCH OF CHRIST

# WEDDING POLICIES

Revised October 2020

Congratulations to both of you on making one of the most significant decisions of your lives! While we believe making Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior is the most important life-changing decision you can make, choosing the one with whom you will spend the rest of your life in the sacred covenant of marriage is incredibly significant. Now that you have chosen to commit yourselves to one another, we encourage you to make and keep Christ the center of your engagement, your marriage and your home.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR FACILITY USE

The First Colony Church of Christ and its satellite campuses have the following basic requirements for the use of its facilities as a wedding venue:

- The engaged couple must live in separate residences until the wedding day.
- The couple will make a commitment not to engage in sexual activity prior to marriage.
- The couple will commit to successfully complete premarital counseling.
- The wedding must be in accordance with First Colony's Statement of Faith and related doctrinal teachings on Biblical marriage. In particular, the following is from First Colony's Statement of Faith on Biblical marriage as contained in First Colony's Bylaws:

*We believe that God has established marriage as a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman and that all intimate sexual activity outside the marriage relationship, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or otherwise, is immoral and therefore sin (Genesis 2:24-25; Exodus 20:14, 17, 22:19; Leviticus 18:22-23, 20:13, 15-16; Matthew 19:4-6, 9; Romans 1:18-31; 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10, 15-20; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; Jude 7). We believe that God created the human race male and female and that all conduct with the intent to adopt a gender other than one's birth gender is immoral and therefore sin (Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 22:5).*

Any questions regarding fulfillment of these requirements shall be determined by the Church's leadership, in accordance with its governance structure. Any disputes regarding the Church's wedding policy shall be resolved in accordance with the Church's alternative dispute resolution policy conducted in accordance with the "Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation" contained in the Peacemaker Ministries booklet on Guidelines for Christian Conciliation. Fees are charged solely to help cover the Church's actual wedding-related ministry and facility costs.

During your initial contact with the First Colony Wedding Director she will ask for the signatures of the bride and groom on our [Wedding Requirements Form](#) showing acceptance and agreement. The signatures are required before she can proceed with making any confirmations or arrangements.

## IN WHAT ORDER SHOULD I PLAN MY WEDDING DETAILS?

**1. Select a date and time** that works well for the bride, groom and both families. Take into consideration time for a honeymoon and give yourself some margin space for a move, starting a new job, etc.

**2. Select a place** that fits your needs in a realistic manner. We would love to serve you here at our First Colony campus. To have a wedding here:

- A. You must sign our [Wedding Requirements Form](#).
- B. Review the following pages of this policy.
- C. Review the [Wedding Fees](#).
- D. Complete the Online [Wedding Information Form](#).

**3. Select your minister.** At First Colony, all of our "ordained" ministers are trained to conduct weddings in a personal and honorable way. Never let the selection of a specific minister override the selection of a date that works well for both families.

*We are committed to working with you to see that your wedding places God at its center and is worshipful, memorable and personal. May God continue to bless you as you look to Him for guidance regarding this important event.*

## FIRST COLONY WEDDING DIRECTOR

The First Colony Wedding Director is an official representative of the church and is your primary contact for all wedding related activities. After you complete and submit the Online Wedding Information Form, the Wedding Director will contact you and let you know if your requested date is available.

The wedding couple may use a wedding planner of their choice; however, the First Colony Wedding Director will still attend the rehearsal and the wedding to assist the minister and instruct the wedding party as to proper procedure. The Wedding Director is to be advised of all wedding details even if an outside wedding planner is used.

## **WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THE FIRST COLONY WEDDING DIRECTOR?**

The First Colony Wedding Director is not your personal wedding planner; however, you can expect her to be very helpful in the overall planning process. The Wedding Director can advise you on some of the details regarding your wedding but her primary role is to make sure your rehearsal and wedding flow smoothly.

### **The First Colony Wedding Director does the following:**

- Meets with you for initial consultation
- Recommends vendors, music, etc.
- Point person for your questions
- Provides input along the way
- Liaison to the minister, Facilities Manager and multimedia needs
- Directs your rehearsal and wedding

## **LOCATIONS FOR WEDDINGS AT FIRST COLONY**

There are three locations in our facility suitable for weddings:

- Worship Center - Seats 900
- Chapel - Seats 110
- The Gym - Seats 600

## **NO WEDDINGS MAY BE SCHEDULED ON:**

- Sunday
- Good Friday thru Easter Sunday
- Thanksgiving Day and Weekend
- Christmas Eve or Day
- New Year's Eve or Day
- Anytime, day or evening, that would conflict with church events already scheduled in the Chapel, Worship Center or in other church facilities.

Please Note: There shall be no expectation the church will remove stage and Worship Center decorations/fixtures for your wedding. A backdrop may be rented by the wedding couple to hide stage pieces.

## **WEDDING REHEARSAL**

The Wedding Director will conduct your wedding rehearsal and will facilitate the ceremony on your wedding day. The Wedding Director is in charge of the rehearsal, not an outside wedding planner, (if used). The minister conducting your wedding will also assist at the rehearsal. All persons in the wedding party, including both parents of the bride and groom, will be expected to attend the rehearsal. All details of seating, ushering, processional and recessional will be carefully explained at that time. We ask that everyone please be prompt, as the rehearsal will last only one hour. The recommended rehearsal start time is 6:00pm.

## **REHEARSAL DINNER**

First Colony does not handle any of the catering details or cleanup. If you choose to have your dinner on-site using room F1 12, please note the kitchen is unavailable (See Wedding Fees). The wedding party/family is responsible for the facility being left according to all guidelines. Please Note: This option is only available to members of First Colony.

## **WEDDING RECEPTION**

The Wedding Director is not in charge of the reception. The Wedding party must designate a person (family member or a friend) who will be present at and responsible for facilitating the reception. The designated person must meet with the Wedding Director in advance to cover all details and expectations in conjunction with the use of the facility. (See Wedding Fees).

When a caterer is involved, the caterer must communicate with the Wedding Director at least four weeks before the wedding to discuss use. (See Wedding Fees). The wedding party/ family is responsible to see that the facility is left according to our Guidelines.

## **PRINTED PROGRAMS**

First Colony is not responsible for printing the program/bulletin. Please contract with an outside printer.

## **SCHEDULING OF VENDORS**

The wedding party/family will schedule all vendors. The Wedding Director will assist by providing a resource list, if requested. The wedding party will be held liable for any damage to carpets, furniture or buildings by the vendors so it is important you carefully note the guidelines included herein and make sure the vendors follow the guidelines. First Colony reserves the right to restrict the privileges of any outside vendor who violates the wedding policy of the church.

## **DRESSING ROOMS**

Bride and groom dressing rooms are provided. First Colony assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items from these premises and recommends valuables not be left in these rooms during the ceremony.

## **ALCOHOL, SMOKING, DANCING**

No alcoholic beverages or smoking will be allowed in the building or on the church grounds. No one under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be allowed to participate in the rehearsal or wedding and will be asked to leave the premises.

The traditional dance of the wedding party (i.e., bride/groom, father/bride, and mother/groom) is acceptable. However, we do not permit an open dance floor or environment in our facility. The list of planned wedding and reception music must be submitted and approved by the First Colony minister prior to the wedding.

## **FLOWERS & DECORATIONS**

Florists will have access to the location of the wedding ceremony one day prior to the wedding at a mutually agreeable time between the florist and Wedding Director. When the ceremony is concluded and all photography completed, the wedding party/family is responsible for ensuring all areas are cleaned and all flowers and decorations are removed immediately after the event. With approval from the Wedding Director, vendor-supplied decorations, if necessary, can be stored for pick-up until the Monday after the wedding. Vendors must schedule pick-up during normal business hours. First Colony is not responsible for any items left behind by the wedding party. Leaving floral arrangements for worship services must also be approved by Wedding Director. No decoration of any kind may be applied to walls, ceilings or glass. Florist wire, ribbon or pipe cleaners can be used when necessary, but nails, staples and adhesives of any kind are not permitted.

No plain wax candles are to be used. Candles need to be spring loaded or Paradise brand. Votive or drip less candles may be used in hurricane lamps. Candelabras may not be attached to pew ends. Aisle candles are permitted in hurricane lamps only. In order to protect the floor and furniture, plastic material must be placed under all floral arrangements and candles.

## **MUSIC & MEDIA**

Only music & media that is suitable for a church wedding may be used. Sacred, contemporary Christian, hymns and classical instrumental music are appropriate. Some secular wedding and love songs are permissible with approval of the First Colony minister in charge. Music selections must be turned in 2 weeks prior to the wedding. Any changes must be given to the Wedding Director before rehearsal. A finalized CD/DVD must be given to the Sound Tech at rehearsal. Outside musicians may be used with the approval of the Wedding Director. Media to be shown at the wedding must be approved by the Wedding Director 2-weeks prior to the ceremony.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY**

The location chosen for the wedding and the surrounding church grounds, when available, may be used for photographs immediately before and after the ceremony. The photographer's and videographer's movements must not interfere with or distract from the wedding ceremony.

## **PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING**

We require all couples being married by a First Colony minister have at least one premarital counseling session with the minister who will perform their ceremony.

## **MARRIAGE OF DIVORCED PERSONS**

All marriages involving a divorced person to be conducted by a First Colony minister or in the First Colony building require approval by the First Colony elder

## **REMINDERS**

- We ask that you help us treat our church facility with respect. Members of the wedding party and guests must abide by the following guidelines, which are strictly enforced:
- No ceremony can start later than 7:00pm or if during the day more than one hour after scheduled time
- First Colony does not provide childcare. Childcare is not allowed at the building.
- All children must stay with parents or caregivers at all times and not left unattended.
- No red punch can be served at the rehearsal or reception.
- Use of inappropriate language is prohibited.
- Proper dress is required at the rehearsal and the wedding.
- No unsightly or inappropriate materials shall be used to decorate the wedding car (for example, beer cans or lewd comments).
- The use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, or items resembling such is strictly prohibited on the premises.
- Only birdseed, bubbles, or butterflies may be used as the couple is leaving and only outside of the building.
- No furniture may be moved from other parts of the building without approval of the Wedding Director.
- The church is in no way responsible or liable for personal items such as dresses, wraps, purses, jewelry, silver, glassware, musical instruments or cameras brought to the church for use during the rehearsal, wedding or reception.

## **RESERVING WEDDING LOCATION & TIME**

The Wedding Director will confirm the availability of the date, time and location you requested for your wedding after you have submitted the Online Wedding Information Form. Reservations may be made no more than one year in advance.

Reservation for the space in your name will be guaranteed only upon receipt of a signed Application, signed Wedding Requirements Form and a nonrefundable deposit.

Please make checks out to First Colony Church of Christ. The check should be mailed or dropped off at 2140 First Colony Boulevard, Sugar Land, Texas 77479. The deposit amount will be deducted from your final charges, which are due 30 days prior to the wedding.

## **RESERVING YOUR MINISTER**

All of our staff ministers are ordained and trained to conduct weddings in a tasteful, reverent, and personal manner. Our Wedding Director will assist you in selecting a minister. You may request any First Colony minister to preside over your wedding. Every effort will be made to honor your request, but your minister selection cannot be confirmed more than 6 months in advance.

The wedding vows must be performed by a First Colony minister or an approved guest minister.

All co-officiating or guest ministers must be approved by First Colony. Please be prepared to provide the Wedding Director with the contact information for any guest ministers.

## **WHAT ABOUT MINISTER'S FEES?**

The Minister's fee is usually covered by the groom's family and should be paid directly to the minister himself. The amount is up to the discretion of the family but usually something in the \$300/\$500 range. The Wedding Director can help you with this decision.