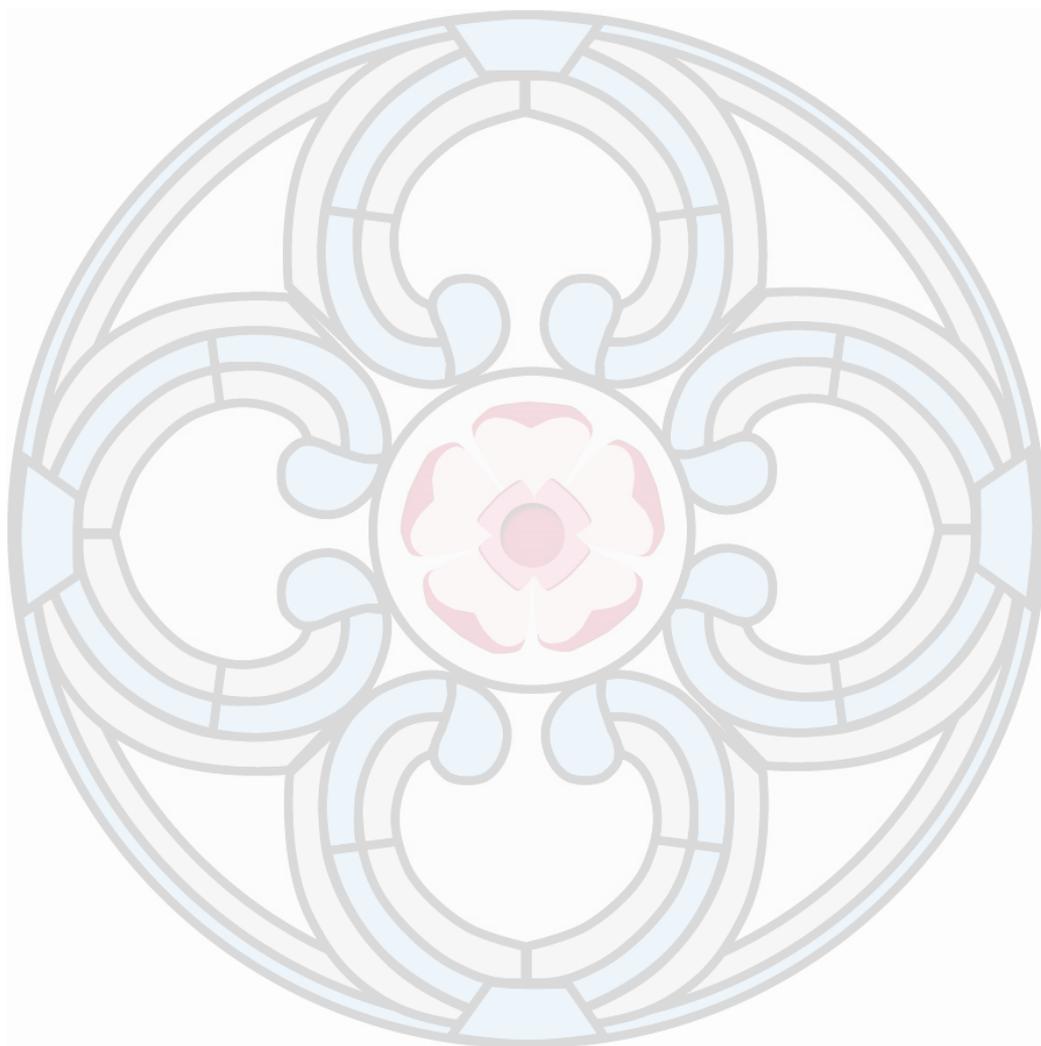


# Planning a Wedding



**Alpha Phi Alpha Church**

180 Academy Street, Alpharetta, GA 30009 ♦ 770-751-0033 ♦ [www.alpha-phi-alpha.com](http://www.alpha-phi-alpha.com)



*We are glad that you are considering Alpharetta Presbyterian Church for your wedding.  
We fully appreciate the importance of this time, and pledge to do all  
we can to make your wedding meaningful for you and your guests.*

Please review this booklet carefully and if you have questions please contact the church office at 770-751-0033.  
***Scheduling and submitting the deposit constitutes an agreement to all of the policies and Church guidelines as stated in this booklet.***  
*Revised on 03-15-2017*

### **Marriage Defined**

*The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) defines marriage as follows:*

“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-4.9001 - 4.9002)*

The Session of Alpharetta Presbyterian Church (APC) permits any Christian marriage service deemed appropriate by the Teaching Elder (officiating minister) and permitted by state law to be performed at APC. Any visiting clergy officiants must be approved by the session.

### **Setting the Date**

The wedding should be planned as far ahead as possible to ensure that the date is available. Please contact the Church office to check on the availability for your desired date.

Notes on scheduling:

- The latest time for a Saturday wedding to begin is 7:00PM.
- There may be some December dates that are unavailable.
- There are certain times of the year that require special approval and consideration due to holidays and seasonal events.
- Receptions in Fellowship Hall have a time limit of 2 hours and must conclude by 9:00 p.m..

### **Officiating Minister**

One of the pastors of Alpharetta Presbyterian Church normally will officiate weddings in the Church. When guest ministers are requested, a formal invitation will be extended by the church Session to the guest minister. It is understood that the visiting minister will abide by the wedding policies set forth in this booklet. Visiting ministers must be ordained by a recognized denominational governing body. Administration of the sacrament of communion must be in accordance with Presbyterian polity.

### **Conference with Pastor**

It is important for the engaged couple to speak with the officiating pastor soon after the wedding date has been selected. If one of the APC pastors is officiating, APC will gladly schedule the first appointment. Pre-marital conversations with the pastor will focus on the nature of marriage as well as the service itself. Normally, three pre-marital counseling sessions are required by our pastors.

### **Marriage License**

The marriage license must be presented to the pastor before the wedding can be performed. It is recommended that the license be secured at least one week before the wedding. The license should be brought to the Church at rehearsal. The license may be obtained at the North Fulton County Courthouse Annex on Roswell Road or from the probate court of the appropriate county. After the ceremony, the pastor will mail the completed form to the probate court for recording, and an official copy will be mailed to the couple after the wedding (if requested at the time of application).

### **Wedding Coordinator**

The Church will assign a Wedding Coordinator for each wedding. Our coordinators have been trained to work with pastors, musicians, and wedding parties to help with the planning, rehearsal, and ceremony.

A Wedding Coordinator will contact the couple 4-6 weeks prior to the wedding to obtain information and answer questions about the wedding, and to schedule a meeting prior to the wedding to develop a plan for your wedding day. If there are questions at any time during the preparation, the Coordinator may be contacted through the Church office.

On the day of your wedding, the Coordinator will arrive one hour prior to the wedding party in order to set up and greet persons providing services for the wedding; i.e. florists, musicians, photographers. The wedding party may arrive up to 3 hours prior to the wedding.

### **Music and Musicians**

At APC a wedding ceremony is considered a service of worship. All music selections for the ceremony must be approved by the Organist. The use of pre-recorded music and secular music selections are not permitted.

A consultation with APC's Organist is required and must be scheduled in advance of the ceremony. Changes in musical selections can be made up to two weeks prior to the date of the wedding. Suggestions regarding music are always welcome, however final approval of all music remains with the Organist.

In the event that the Organist is unavailable the Church will provide an approved substitute.

The Music Department will assist the couple in finding vocalists or instrumentalists, if desired. If the Church provides a soloist for your ceremony, the fee will be the market rate in Greater Atlanta for that soloist (typically \$150 - \$350.00). This fee should be paid prior to the wedding rehearsal. You may select your own soloist or instrumentalist; however the payment is between you and that contracted person. The musicians you choose should provide quality work for your ceremony. Guest musicians must provide contact information to the Wedding Coordinator. The APC Organist may be contacted through the Church office.

All photographers and videographers must make contact with the Wedding Coordinator upon arriving at the Church for the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator will give specific directions for positioning and timing for capturing the ceremony and suggest locations for taking those special pictures (more information follows).

## **Church Decorations**

Arrangements for floral decorations are made through the florist of your choice. You may wish to provide a copy of these guidelines to your florist:

- No nails, tacks, staples, or tape may be used to attach decorations or equipment to the walls, furniture or fixtures.
- The Church has two brass candelabras with spring loaded oil candles which you may use. If desired, the candelabras may be decorated.
- The Church has a unity candle and stand which may be used and decorated. You must supply the candles for the candle holder.
- APC has a kneeling bench which you may use.
- Seasonal decorations (such as Christmas poinsettias or Easter flowers) may not be changed or moved.
- Arrangements and all other decorations are to be removed by the florist following the wedding ceremony.
- The chancel furniture (communion table, pulpit, baptismal font, Christ candle) will remain in place for the ceremony.

Florists should contact the Wedding Coordinator prior to the wedding to obtain information in regards to access.

Seating capacity is 350. It is recommended that you have ushers available to seat your guests.

## **Rehearsal**

The rehearsal is an important part of the wedding. Rehearsals generally are scheduled for the day or evening prior to the wedding. Plan to arrive on time and allow for late afternoon traffic. The Coordinator will be at the Church 15 minutes before the scheduled time and will allow a full hour to rehearse the wedding. All persons involved in the ceremony should attend the rehearsal, including all special seating guests (those being escorted in as part of the ceremony). Seating, placement of the wedding party, instructions to ushers, attendants, readers, musicians, as well as other details will be covered at the rehearsal.

## **Dressing Rooms**

Rooms are available for the convenience of all members of the wedding party and will be designated by the wedding coordinator. APC cannot guarantee the security of valuables left in these rooms, and for that reason wedding gowns and other personal belongings may not be left following the rehearsal.

## **Photography and Videography**

Photographs are important mementos to capture your wedding day, so careful planning ensures that special pictures are taken without distracting the worship service.

Pictures of the wedding party may be taken prior to the ceremony and following the ceremony. There is a 30 minute time limit for pictures taken following the wedding. Pictures prior to the wedding begin anytime during the 3 hour period before the ceremony begins. Pictures in open areas of the Church end 45 minutes prior to the ceremony; but pictures may be taken in dressing areas during that time.

Pictures inside the Sanctuary end once the entire wedding party has positioned themselves for the ceremony to begin. Photographers must leave the Sanctuary to take pictures behind the glass once the wedding party is positioned and the ceremony begins.

Videotaping is permitted if equipment is stationary, quiet and requires no special lighting. The video camera may be hand held or placed in an inconspicuous position as designated by the wedding coordinator. Only unmanned video cameras are allowed in the front of the Sanctuary.

## **Other**

Alcoholic beverages and smoking are not permitted on Church property.

Throwing of any material such as rice, confetti, birdseed, etc. is not allowed inside the Church. Flower girls may use real flower petals inside the Church. In the interest of ecology, only birdseed or real flower petals are allowed to be thrown outside the Church building.

## **Reception**

If desired, the Fellowship Hall may be used for the wedding reception. Arrangements should be made when the wedding date is set. The hall's capacity is 200 seated guests. In good weather, the patio and lawn are also available.

Use of the sound system or video projection in the Fellowship Hall will require the hiring of an A/V technician (see below).

The church kitchen may be used for the preparation of food. A dishwasher is available for use by wedding caterers. Please note the following guidelines:

- All arrangements with a caterer must be made by the couple. The Church has a contract with a private chef who may be used, if you wish.
- The catering staff will be responsible for setting up the tables and other necessary items for the reception.
- The caterer will furnish all necessary items for the reception including service pieces, linens, etc.
- The caterer is responsible for the cleanliness of all kitchen areas.
- No alcoholic beverages are to be served on Church premises.

## **Fees for Facility and Services**

### **For Couples Who are Members of APC: (member for at least 6 months or member's immediate family)**

\$825.00 - For a traditional wedding that includes the services of a pastor, organist, A/V technician, wedding coordinator, and custodian. (Clergy accept honorarium but charge no fee for members.)

APC members may sponsor children or grandchildren, parents or grandparents for the APC member fee. To receive the APC member fee, you must have joined APC at least 6 months prior to the wedding date.

A non-refundable deposit of \$100.00 is required to reserve the Church. The balance should be paid two weeks prior to the wedding.

The Fellowship Hall is available for receptions for \$100.00 per coordinator, \$75.00 for custodian, \$75.00 for A/V technician.

### **For All Other Couples**

\$1,900.00 – For a traditional wedding that includes the services of a pastor, organist, A/V technician, wedding coordinator and custodian.

A non-refundable deposit of \$200.00 is required to reserve the Church. The balance should be paid two weeks prior to the wedding.

The Fellowship Hall is available for receptions and the fees are \$300.00 for the room rental, \$100.00 per coordinator, \$75.00 for custodian, and \$75.00 for A/V technician.

### **Small Weddings (fewer than 50 in attendance)**

Members- No fee when only the use of the sanctuary and a minister (with no coordinator, rehearsal or music) are requested. The couple is responsible for set-up/clean-up. Communication for a small wedding should be addressed to the officiating pastor.

Non-members- The fee is \$250.00 where only the use of the sanctuary and a minister (with no coordinator, rehearsal or music) are requested. The couple is responsible for set-up/clean-up. Communication for a small wedding should be addressed to the officiating pastor.



## Wedding Planning Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ Request a date online or in person ([office@alpharettapres.com](mailto:office@alpharettapres.com))
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete Wedding Planning Information Sheet online using the link sent from the office
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mail deposit to the church (180 Academy St, Alpharetta, GA 30009) within 1 month of booking your wedding
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ If using a guest minister, get approval from the session of Alpharetta Presbyterian Church. The church office will assist you.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule a Wedding consultation with Wedding Coordinator
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule a Music consultation with Organist or designee from the Music Department
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notify florist, photographer, videographer and cater of facility policies and Wedding Coordinator contact information
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make final payment for wedding