**The Presbyterian Church of Prospect (TPCP)**

**Wedding Statement and Policies1**

**Christian Marriage**: The session and minister of the Presbyterian Church of Prospect discern, through the Holy Spirit, an understanding of the Word of God, which describes Christian marriage to be a unique gift of God, involving one man and one woman. In addition to being a civil contract, Christian marriage is a “covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.” (W-4.9002)

**Initial Consultation:** After a wedding request is received, the Minister of TPCP and the couple will meet to discuss their "understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and (their) commitment to living their lives together according to its values." (W-4.9003) Approval of the Church’s governing board, called the “session,” is required of all wedding requests.

Right of Refusal: The session “has authority to permit or deny the use of church property for a marriage service.” (W-4.9003) If approval is not granted, the church and minister will not be financially liable for any expenses resulting from the session and pastor exercising their Right of Refusal.

**Scheduling:** Early planning and notification through the church office is important in order to schedule a consultation, obtain Session approval, and establish dates for pre-marital instruction, rehearsal, and the wedding. NOTE: Church events and functions take priority over rehearsal and wedding schedule requests.

**Pre-marital counseling**: A minimum of three sessions with the pastor and/or another pastor-approved professional shall be required of the couple prior to the wedding. Failure to fulfill this requirement will be sufficient cause to delay or cancel the wedding service.

**Marriage License:** Obtaining a valid marriage license is the responsibility of the couple to be wed. A valid marriage license is to be in the hands of the minister of TPCP no later than the time of the rehearsal. A license may be obtained at the County Courthouse.

**Minister Duties:** The TPCP minister shall perform weddings to be held on church property.**2** Plans and ideas for the wedding will be worked out between the minister and couple following session approval.  The minister of TPCP is responsible, on behalf of the Session, for overseeing the rehearsal, decorations, music, and details of the wedding service.

**1** References in parentheses () are taken from the Presbyterian Church (USA) Constitution Part II, Book of Order, 2015-2017.

**2** The minister may, when requested by the couple and at his/her discretion, invite other duly ordained and recognized pastors to officiate in the wedding “in a manner appropriate to this covenant and to the forms of Reformed worship." (W-9.004)

**Organist / Pianist:** The church’s organist is responsible for playing during the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. A properly trained and experienced organist/pianist may be requested, but must be approved by the Choir Director/Church Organist of TPCP well in advance of the rehearsal. An orientation about the sanctuary organ may be required.

**Facilities:** A marriage ceremony normally takes place in the sanctuary. Alternate arrangements may be made in consultation with the minister.

Children: Children are not to be left unsupervised anywhere in the church at any time.

Organ and Piano Care: The organ and piano may not be moved. Real flowers or liquids may not be placed on the instruments, unless a protective surface is placed underneath. Nothing may be attached to these instruments by use of adhesive or fastener of any sort.

Personal Items and Decorations: Wedding participants accept full responsibility to see that all personal items are removed from the church immediately following the wedding. All decorations not belonging to the church shall also be removed by the wedding party immediately following the wedding unless arrangements have been made with the minister or church office.

Damages: The person to whom session approval was given for the wedding, shall be responsible for any damages to the church facilities caused by persons during the use of the church for the rehearsal, wedding ceremony, or reception, which the initial deposit does not cover.

**Ceremony:** A Church wedding is more than a social event. Weddings at TPCP are services of Christian worship in which the primary goal is to glorify God.

Music: Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. To insure this, all music must have the approval of the pastor in the early stages of the planning process. If other musicians are to perform, approval by the officiating minister is required.

Photography: Wedding guests and any official photographer(s) are not to use flash photography during the wedding ceremony. Videotaping is permissible and prior arrangements for the placement of the video equipment should be made with the minister. Immediately after or prior to the ceremony, photographs may be taken.

Alcoholic Beverages, Drugs, and Tobacco: Alcoholic beverages, recreational drugs or tobacco products are prohibited on Church property before, during, or after any and all wedding events. Appropriate and responsible behavior of all who participate is expected. Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave the premises.

**Use of rice, birdseed, bubbles, or confetti:** The use of rice or confetti to shower the couple is prohibited. However, bubbles or birdseed to shower the couple is acceptable and may be distributed to the guests after they have left the sanctuary.

**Fees:** Itemized costs cover use of various church facilities, kitchen (optional), minister, organist, cleaning, and a security deposit. Fees are determined depending upon arrangements made between the pastor and the couple and approved by the Session. For a breakdown of current costs please contact the church office (phone: 724.865.2063 / email: tpcp@zoominternet.net). Thank you.