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**FIRST EVANGELICAL CHURCH**  
**Memphis, Tennessee**

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**A First Evan Wedding**

**A wedding is a sacred occasion. A wedding at First Evan is a public statement that the bride and groom want Jesus Christ to be Lord of their new life together. Our church regards any other rationale for a church wedding to be secondary and by itself insufficient to justify the use of the church's facilities.**

**All weddings taking place at First Evangelical Church must be approved by a member of our pastoral staff regardless of who is officiating the wedding. This approval must be secured no later than 4 months prior to the wedding or the date will be released for use by others. It is the responsibility of the engaged couple to schedule and make arrangements to meet with a member of the First Evan pastoral staff for wedding approval.**

**Policies Regarding Marriage**

**As best we understand God's revealed will on the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage, we, the Session of First Evangelical Church affirm the following:**

***Marriage is a divinely instituted union between one man and one woman and is to be celebrated with great rejoicing. It is the most intimate of all human relationships and is illustrative of God's union with the Jewish nation and Christ's union with His church. It therefore should always be treated as the most binding of all human commitments.***

***God's design is that the husband and wife remain in a lifelong marital relationship, and that relationship be such as to bring glory and honor to the Creator of all life and to His son Jesus. We at First Evangelical Church will work diligently to teach, encourage and model this design.***

***Although it is clear that God's ideal is always one husband for one wife in a lifelong relationship, we recognize that biblical arguments can be made for remarriage when God's ideal has been compromised by sin in the previous marriage. Therefore, whenever a divorced person with a living ex-spouse believes there are biblical grounds for remarriage and requests to be married at First Evangelical Church, special approval is required. Each case will be considered in light of scripture.***

### **The Wedding Coordinator**

**The Wedding Coordinator at First Evangelical Church will help you plan your wedding. Her experience will be invaluable to you in working out the many details related to your use of the church's facilities. She has been delegated full authority to make decisions in matters related to the use of the church facilities for weddings. All non-pastoral matters regarding the details of the wedding should be channeled through her.**

### **The Reception Coordinator (optional)**

**The Reception Coordinator at First Evangelical Church will help you plan your reception. Her experience will be invaluable to you in working out the many details related to your reception and the flow and timing of your reception. She will work closely with the caterer, photographer, and videographer during the reception to insure continuity and the family's wishes. The Wedding Coordinator can provide you with further information and details about this service.**

### **The Pastors**

**A member of the First Evan pastoral staff will have input into each wedding held at the church. The pastoral staff member will be referred to as "pastor in charge" whether or not officiating the wedding. All requests for an outside pastor to officiate must be approved by the "pastor in charge," in**

**consultation with the Session, if necessary. The “pastor in charge” will explain premarital counseling requirements and may reserve the right to be in charge of the planning as well as participate in the ceremony.**

**Prospective brides and grooms may request any licensed or ordained member of the pastoral staff to officiate, but should not assume that any particular pastor will automatically be available. Conducting a wedding, along with all its accompanying responsibilities, occupies a significant amount of a pastor’s time. Arrangements must be made with the officiating pastor well in advance. He will then prescribe the course of appropriate premarital counseling.**

**First Evangelical Church is committed to the biblical principles of marriage. A pastor asked to officiate a wedding at the church must be satisfied that the intended marriage is in keeping with God’s revealed will in the Bible.**

### **Making Arrangements**

**Church members will be given preference in scheduling. Requests for the use of these facilities by non-members will be considered on an individual basis. *Non-members may not schedule a wedding sooner than six (6) months in advance. Non-members may not schedule a wedding on Sundays, Wednesdays, holidays or during church-wide events.***

**We will make every effort to schedule your wedding on the date that you desire. However, because of our heavy schedule, this may not be possible, and we suggest that you have several dates in mind. In considering the date, it should be noted that, with the exception of *small family weddings of members only*, the church does not schedule weddings on Sunday, Wednesday evening, holidays, or during church-wide events. (You should also be aware that December is an extremely busy month, with choir rehearsals and Sunday School class activities taking priority, making it difficult to schedule a wedding during this month.) Evening weddings should be scheduled no later than 7:30 p.m. Only one wedding per day will be scheduled in the church’s facilities.**

**Holiday weddings are those weddings which fall on a weekend where the church office is closed on Friday or Monday due to the holiday. The seven main holidays are New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Other holidays will be determined by the Wedding Coordinator and "pastor in charge."**

**Equipment not owned by the church *must* be removed from the building immediately after the wedding ceremony or reception, and all areas used for the wedding returned to their normal condition. *Exceptions:* With the approval of the Building Superintendent, large greenery used for Friday night receptions may stay until Noon on Saturday and for Saturday night receptions until Noon on Monday.**

***Some reminders regarding the use of the facilities:***

- 1. Birdseed and flower petals may be thrown outside the building as the couple departs. *Rice, confetti and bubbles are not permitted.***
- 2. Alcoholic beverages *may not* be served or consumed on the church premises.**
- 3. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the buildings.**
- 4. Dancing is not permitted in the church facilities.**
- 5. Free-standing candle holders must use "Paradise" non-drip candle shafts. (The carpeting must be fully protected.)**
- 6. Nails, tacks, pins, etc. are not to be used for supporting any types of decorations. Only Gaffer tape may be used to secure cords to carpet.**
- 7. The bridal couple's car should be protected from having offensive words or statements written on it.**
- 8. During special celebration or promotional times, the Sanctuary may be decorated for these occasions, and it is understood that these decorations will not be removed for weddings.**

***Violation of any of the above guidelines may result in loss of deposit.***

## **Music**

**A wedding at First Evan, including its music and ceremony, is to be considered a worship service. All wedding music should be in keeping with Christian ideals, including any music connected with the reception, if the reception is held in the church's facilities. Music should be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator thirty (30) days prior to the wedding for approval by the Worship Pastor. Out of consideration for the officiating minister, you should also make the music available to him for approval should he so desire. Due to the fact that the processional and recessional timing is unpredictable, no taped music may be used for this part of the ceremony.**

**Music needs for your wedding can be coordinated through the First Evan Worship Pastor. Unless there is some family or other significant relationship with an organist, we prefer to use the organists who are familiar with the instrument in our sanctuary. Organist, pianist, soloists, string or brass ensembles, or other instrumentalists may also be coordinated through our Worship Pastor. Oftentimes the bride or groom has friends or family members who can provide music for the wedding. However, should you need any assistance in this area, please contact the First Evan Worship Pastor or the Wedding Coordinator. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the bride and groom to secure musicians for the wedding.**

## **Flowers and Decorations**

**The Wedding Coordinator can provide the names of florists who are familiar with our facilities and procedures, if desired. However, neither First Evan nor any of its representatives endorses or guarantees the work of any vendor providing wedding related services. The wedding couple should practice due diligence before entering into any contractual agreement with a vendor. A Florist's Permit setting forth the regulations regarding the decorations is enclosed and should be signed by the florist and returned to the Wedding Coordinator sixty (60) days prior to the wedding. The florist should note that all equipment must be removed from the building immediately following the**

wedding and reception. With approval from the Building Superintendent, an exception can be made for large greenery items used at the wedding and/or reception: for Friday night receptions, the greenery may remain in the building until Saturday Noon; it may remain until Monday Noon for Saturday night receptions. *First Evangelical Church assumes no responsibility for any property left on the premises following the wedding.*

It is customary at First Evangelical Church for the bride and groom to leave the floral arrangement at the altar for the Sunday morning services. If those flowers are desired by the family they may be picked up after 1:00 p.m. Sunday afternoon. Many times the family wishes to have the bride and Groom or other family member honored in the bulletin on Sunday. The Wedding Coordinator can provide you with further information and the appropriate contact.

### **Photography**

Flash pictures of the bride may be taken as she enters and/or leaves the Sanctuary, so long as they are confined to the rear of the aisles. Because the wedding ceremony is a sacred occasion, *flash pictures should not be taken during the ceremony.* Non-flash exposures may be taken from the balcony. Picture taking (by guests bringing cameras) during the ceremony or as the wedding party is coming down the aisle is prohibited. Ushers should assist in cautioning guests carrying cameras. The ceremony may be videotaped. The Wedding Coordinator will tell the videographer where cameras may be located. Additional lighting is prohibited. The presence of a videographer or photographer in the choir or platform area during the wedding ceremony is prohibited.

The Wedding Coordinator can give the names of potential photographers, if so desired. However, neither First Evan nor any of its representatives endorses or guarantees the work of any vendor providing wedding related services. The wedding couple should practice due diligence before entering into any contractual agreement with a vendor. Any photographer must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator. *All photography* is under the general supervision of the Wedding Coordinator. The photographer does not function autonomously at the wedding or the reception.

## **Rehearsal**

**The time of the rehearsal should be arranged with the Wedding Coordinator and the “pastor in charge.” When the rehearsal takes place the night before the wedding, it is usually easier to gather the members of the party *before* rather than after an evening meal. The suggested time for a rehearsal is 5:30 in the evening. Rehearsal dinners are allowed at the church for members. The Wedding Coordinator can provide you with further information and the appropriate contact.**

**Encourage members of the wedding party to arrive on time for the rehearsal. Normally, the rehearsal should not take more than one (1) hour. The officiating pastor and the Wedding Coordinator should be present for the rehearsal.**

## **Dressing at the Church**

**In the lower level of the Sanctuary, First Evangelical Church has a well-appointed dressing area for brides and their attendants. The choir dressing rooms are available for the grooms and their attendants. Facilities are provided for the securing of the wedding party’s valuables during the time they are on the church campus. However, the church can assume no responsibility for clothing or other articles brought to or left at the church.**

## **Reception**

**If there is to be a reception at the church, the concerned parties should meet with the Wedding Coordinator to arrange for any use of the kitchen and available equipment. The Staff Cook is required to be on hand during any use of the kitchen. She may or may not help in preparation of the reception. If she is required to assist in the reception in any way, she must be paid extra in addition to the mandatory fee. Arrangements for any such assistance must be made directly between the bridal party and the Staff Cook.**

**The Wedding Coordinator can supply a list of possible caterers if the reception is to be catered. However, neither First Evan nor any of its representatives endorses or guarantees the work of any vendor providing wedding related services. The wedding couple should practice due diligence before entering into any contractual agreement with a vendor. Any caterers must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator. The enclosed Caterer's Permit must be signed by the caterer and returned to the Wedding Coordinator sixty (60) days prior to the reception. Caterers should remove all equipment *immediately* following the reception. The church assumes no responsibility for items left on the premises.**

***For receptions which are not catered, it is important that the parties concerned furnish sufficient help to remove equipment and leave the areas that have been used clean and neat. The Wedding Coordinator should be supplied with a list of the people who will be responsible for this task, along with the name and phone number of the one who will be in charge, well in advance of the reception. These people should meet with the Kitchen Coordinator and the Staff Cook before the day of the wedding to finalize all details and receive instructions.***

### **Wedding Ministry**

**First Evangelical Wedding Ministry is available to a bride or groom or their parents if any one of them is a member of First Evangelical Church. The ministry will assist in the planning, preparation, serving, and clean-up of a wedding reception held at First Evan. The only cost for this ministry is the food and materials consumed during the reception and two members of the First Evan Kitchen Staff. At least one member of the family will serve in the ministry for six weddings in exchange for the services of the group. The Wedding Coordinator can provide you with further information and the appropriate contact.**

### **Custodial Staff**

**A custodian is required to be present to open the building prior to the rehearsal and wedding, turn on heating or air conditioning, assist in the set-up and the returning of church equipment to its proper storage or place of use, turn off all lights and see that the building is securely locked. The Wedding Coordinator will make these arrangements.**

### **Sound and Lighting**

**The sound and lighting systems of the church require a trained operator. The custodians of the church are not trained to operate these systems. Thus, the wedding will require the services of one of the church's sound/lighting technicians for the wedding and the rehearsal. The Wedding Coordinator will make these arrangements.**

**The sound/lighting technician can be available for the reception for an extra fee. This service is optional. The Wedding Coordinator will make these arrangements.**

### **Furniture**

**Furniture should not be removed or exchanged, except for the normal pulpit furniture and the tables and chairs in the Fellowship Hall. The custodian will oversee the moving of all furniture.**

### **Wedding Security**

**Unfortunately, it has been our experience that valuables have occasionally been removed from the designated dressing areas during a wedding/reception. While we have taken measures to protect the perimeters of the building, we are not able to provide absolute security for unoccupied parts of the building during a wedding.**

**In light of this, we would ask that the Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor be responsible for the securing of personal valuables for the wedding party. At the rehearsal, the Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor will be given a key to**

**a lock-up area in each of the respective dressing areas. Please see to it that the key is returned to the custodial staff on duty following the removal of all personal items from those areas.**