

Wedding Guidelines & Customs of National City Christian Church



National City Christian Church

**5 Thomas Circle, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: 202-232-0323
Fax: 202-797-0111
www.nationalcitycc.org**

Rev. Dr. Stephen Gentle, Senior Pastor
Rev. Noemi Mena, Pastor for Hispanic Ministries
Rev. Beverly Goines, Assistant Pastor
Dr. J. Michael McMahon, Minister of Music

National City Christian Church Welcomes You!

National City Christian Church (NCCC) extends its congratulations to you on your engagement and upcoming wedding! We wish you God's richest blessings as you prepare for this most holy union. Your wedding is a sacred occasion and, with careful planning, is certain to be a joyous one.

The following wedding guidelines will help you, your family, and friends create a beautiful, meaningful, and worshipful service. This church is honored to have a significant part in your union and wants to work with you to insure that your church wedding is a happy and memorable event. Please carefully read through the following statements and guidelines so that you know what you can expect from us, and we will know what to expect from you, your wedding party, family, and event planners.

Members and non-members may use NCCC for weddings. A member is defined as a person who has been a fully participating member for a year prior to the wedding date. We would be very pleased to speak with you about becoming a member of NCCC.

Scheduling

In order to inquire about and confirm a wedding date, a completed and signed wedding reservation form and a refundable security deposit of \$500 must be submitted to NCCC. This fee covers the security of the date as well as any potential building damage or staff overtime fees. At the conclusion of the wedding NCCC will return the security deposit to the bridal couple if there has been no damage to the building or overtime charges.

NCCC is only able to accommodate two weddings per day, with each wedding scheduled in three-hour segments. This time includes: A) floral arrangement delivery and setup, decorating, and on-site dressing; B) the ceremony; C) the greeting of guests and the taking of photographs; and D) clean up and departure. If your wedding activities exceed the allotted time, additional staff and building use charges will apply. If your date changes for any reason, NCCC will do its very best to accommodate the change. You will receive a written confirmation of the agreed-upon rehearsal and wedding ceremony dates and times with your deposit receipt.

Weddings cannot be scheduled on Sundays, national holidays (such as Thanksgiving, New Year's Eve or Day, Fourth of July) and liturgical holidays (such as Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Holy Week, Easter Day). Weddings are also difficult for the church on both Memorial

Day and Labor Day weekend because of limited staffing. Weddings cannot begin earlier than 10:00am or later than 7:00pm.

Church Coordinator

All weddings performed at NCCC require the use of our church coordinator. Once your wedding date is confirmed, you will be contacted by a church coordinator who will discuss your rehearsal, wedding ceremony, and logistical details. The church coordinator, who is NOT a full-time, paid member of NCCC's professional staff, will be your main point of contact as you prepare for your wedding at NCCC and will provide the following support:

- Serves as the liaison between the church staff and the bridal couple.
- Meets with the bridal couple by in person or by phone to discuss wedding details once the wedding date is confirmed, and prior to the wedding to finalize details, and is available to help answer additional questions during the couple's wedding planning process.
- Assists in the coordination of the wedding rehearsal, ceremony preparation, and logistics on your wedding day.
- Prepares the facilities for the ceremony and facilitates the entry of the wedding vendors for their set-up on the day of the wedding.
- Manages the overall wedding event so that all church guidelines are followed and things run smoothly for all concerned.
- Provides information about parking and directions to the church.

Please note: The church coordinator is NOT responsible for checking orders for vendor deliveries (i.e. flowers, catering, dresses, etc.). Please provide your wedding program/order of ceremony and any Scriptures or readings to be rehearsed PRIOR to the wedding rehearsal.

Pre-Wedding Counseling and Minister Participation

All bridal couples wishing to be married at NCCC must complete a counseling session with the officiating minister prior to the wedding date. If an NCCC minister will be officiating your ceremony, please contact the church coordinator to arrange the counseling session.

In cases where a visiting minister is officiating the ceremony, a letter or e-mail from the visiting minister to the senior pastor of NCCC, confirming that the counseling has been completed, and must be given to NCCC before further planning can take place.

Guest ministers are welcome to officiate and/or participate in the wedding ceremony. However, they need to be approved by NCCC's senior minister.

Please note: It is very important to be sure that all guest ministers are fully licensed to perform weddings in the District of Columbia.

Pre-Ceremony Planning Meeting

After a date for your wedding has been confirmed and you have completed the counseling session, you should arrange an in-person meeting with the officiating minister to discuss the kind of ceremony you desire and who will participate in the ceremony. The minister will help you in developing a ceremony that is meaningful to you and consistent with sacred theology and church traditions. Following that meeting, you will need to arrange a meeting with the minister of music/organist to plan your music selections.

Music for Your Wedding

The kind of music you choose for your wedding, sometimes more than the spoken word, sets the tone for the ceremony. Being a sacred occasion, wedding music needs to be the same style as that which would be offered at worship services in this church. NCCC's minister of music/organist is happy to assist you with your musical selections. Your consultation with the minister of music/organist should be scheduled after your first planning meeting with the officiating minister. Begin planning your music by talking with the organist/pianist who is playing for your wedding. Do not make advance music plans without first consulting the organist/pianist as they can offer guidelines and advice that will make things run smoothly. Please contact the NCCC minister of music/organist directly at 202-797-0103 to schedule an in-person appointment.

Every reasonable effort will be made to honor your particular musical requests. However, popular music (easy listening, top 40's, R & B, etc.), operatic arias, Broadway show tunes, and all other music with secular texts or commercial usage are not appropriate for the wedding ceremony itself. The use of pre-recorded music (i.e. CD's) is also very strongly discouraged. You may wish to use congregational singing. There are several hymns that are appropriate for wedding ceremonies and the organist (or pianist) can suggest hymns that are familiar to people from many different faith backgrounds.

The pipe organ is the time-honored instrument for leading Christian worship, and NCCC's organist is available for your ceremony should you wish for organ music. Other instrumentalists and singers may be used to great effect. If a guest organist or other musicians are to be used, they must be approved by NCCC's minister of music/organist. The minister of music/organist can provide a list of qualified, professional soloists. If the soloist is a member of the family or a family friend, it is required that they rehearse with the organist in advance of the day of the ceremony.

The wedding couple will be responsible for providing the organist with any printed music not already available or owned by the organist. Original music must be provided. Photocopies of music will not be accepted. The fee for the organist is covered in the basic wedding fee. Extra solo musicians are paid separately. Please consult with the organist or church coordinator for more information.

Use of the Facilities and Decorations

The sanctuary of National City Christian Church seats approximately 700 persons. Phillips Chapel and Howland Center each seat up to 100 persons.

- Decorations can enhance the beauty of the building and the wedding ceremony. Please review and follow the guidelines very carefully. If any damage is done to the building or furnishings, the \$500 security deposit will not be returned and additional fees may be assessed.
- All decorations must be appropriate to a Christian worship service.
- Moving or removal of the chancel furniture must be approved by the church coordinator. Only church staff members are allowed to move church furniture. The communion table is moved for weddings, but the carved organ screen remains in place.
- No tape, tacks, nails, pins, screws, or other objects shall be driven into or attached to the walls, floors, furnishings, etc. **Aisle runners may not be used. Flower petals, rice, birdseed, confetti, or other similar objects are not to be thrown on the floor or used anywhere inside or outside the building.** Bubbles may be used outside only.
- If a Unity Candle is lit as part of the wedding ceremony, the candles are to be provided by the bridal party. A table and cover will be provided by the church. Congregational candle lighting ceremonies are not allowed.

- All decorations, flowers, plants, and other equipment shall be removed from the church building immediately following the ceremony. If you would like to leave a flower arrangement for the Sunday worship service, please check with the church coordinator.
- Only drip-less candles are to be used during the ceremony.
- Weddings held during the Christmas and Easter season must use the church's decorations that are already in place.
- All decorations and flowers are to be placed and removed at the expense of the couple on the day of the wedding within the three-hour allotted time. Overtime charges will apply if additional time is needed.
- National City Christian Church is NOT responsible for lost or stolen property.

Smoking, Alcohol, and Illegal Substances

Smoking, drinking of alcoholic beverages, and the use of illegal substances/drugs are not allowed on the church property at any time. Any wedding party member, family member, or guest who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug will not be allowed to participate in the ceremony.

Photography and Video Recording

All photography and videotaping must be done without disrupting the ceremony or distracting the wedding party, worship leaders, or guests.

The photographer must work from the back of the sanctuary except during the processional and recessional. The photographer may take non-flash pictures during the ceremony from the very back of the sanctuary. The only flash pictures permitted during the ceremony are those of the wedding party entering during the processional and the wedding party leaving during the recessional.

“No flash photography is permitted during the ceremony.” This statement is to appear on any programs/bulletins that are used for your ceremony. This rule applies to both the professional photographer and to all guests.

Videotaping is permitted during the wedding. The videographer must remain stationary throughout the ceremony. The videographer may not patch into the church's sound system.

Other pictures may be posed either before or after the ceremony within the three-hour allotted time.

Please refer all photography and videography questions to the church coordinator.

Dressing Facilities

Two rooms are allotted for the bride and groom's dressing rooms. These are included in the facility use fee. Extra rooms can be reserved for an additional charge. Only rooms that have been reserved for your wedding are to be entered. Dressing rooms must be cleared of clothing and personal items immediately following the wedding. Personal items cannot be stored at the church before or after the ceremony. NCCC is NOT responsible for lost or stolen property. If any damage is done to the dressing facilities, the security deposit will not be returned.

Parking

Parking in the District of Columbia is scarce. NCCC cannot offer or guarantee parking for all your guests. Very limited parking is available in the church's parking garage for physically disabled guests, members of the wedding party, guest ministers, musicians, and any outside wedding planners. This parking is not always available, so it is on a first-come, first-served basis. Additional parking may be sought after by the wedding couple at the Washington Plaza Hotel and other Thomas Circle area parking garages. The church coordinator can give you information about this. Please encourage your guests to share rides to the ceremony or arrange alternate transportation for your guests.

The Wedding Rehearsal

The church coordinator will schedule a one-hour rehearsal for you, usually to be held on the evening before the wedding ceremony. It is important that your rehearsal begin on time. The church is reserved for one hour for the rehearsal. If your wedding rehearsal exceeds the allotted time, additional staff and building use charges will apply. All members of the wedding party must participate in the rehearsal including: the bride, groom, matron of honor, bridesmaids, best man, groomsmen, flower girls, ring bearer, candle lighters, ushers, all parents, grandparents (if possible), and anyone else designated for a special role in the service, such as a Scripture reader.

The marriage license MUST be delivered to the church coordinator at the rehearsal.

We respectfully request that you inform all participants in your wedding party to refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages prior to the rehearsal and wedding. Any member of the wedding party who is inebriated will not be allowed to participate.

The Wedding Ceremony

Bridal couples wishing to have printed bulletins/programs must arrange to have them designed and printed at their expense. The order of service and all music will be e-mailed to the bridal couple for the designer to use. Samples of order of service bulletins are available on the internet or by contacting the church coordinator. Wedding programs must be reviewed by the officiating pastor, church coordinator, and organist before being printed.

- All physical arrangements and decorating must be completed at least 30 minutes prior to the wedding ceremony.
- All principal participants in the wedding are to be present one hour before the wedding. The bride must notify the church coordinator if the bride will be dressing at another location and arriving at the church only immediately before the ceremony.
- The wedding party should remain in their dressing rooms until advised by the church coordinator that it is time for them to proceed to the sanctuary.
- Members of the wedding party and other guests are expected to participate in the service joyfully and with an attitude of dignity, respect, and reverence.
- It is advisable that if flower girls and ring bearers are participants in the ceremony they be at least 5 years old.
- **The ceremony must begin on time. Church staff overtime fees will be charged if the ceremony goes over the allotted time, and/or the ceremony may be cut short.**

Wedding Fees

Payment to National City Christian Church MUST be made, in full, 60 days before the wedding date. These include facility use, minister, organist, church coordinator, custodian, and security guard. Fees subject to change.

Sanctuary: \$3,500 (non-members)
\$2,700 (members)
\$2,000 (active duty military personnel)

Phillips Chapel or Howland Center:
\$2,500 (non-members)
\$2,200 (members)
\$1,750 (active duty military personnel)

A \$500 security deposit is required to hold the wedding date. This deposit will be refunded in full if there is no damage to the church property or if the wedding is cancelled. The deposit will not be returned if the wedding ceremony starts later than 15 minutes past the agreed-upon start time. **NOTE: There is a \$750 overtime premium for weddings on holiday weekends.**

A personal or banker's certified check, or a money order, for all wedding fees must be sent to the NCCC Financial Officer and paid in full 60 days prior to the wedding date. Clergy and musicians will not perform the ceremony unless paid in advance of the ceremony.

Checks should be made out to "National City Christian Church Foundation" and clearly labeled "wedding" on the memo line. All checks that are returned by the bank (i.e. "bounced") will result in the assessment of bank and/or collection fees. All fees MUST be paid in full in order for the ceremony to proceed as scheduled.

Active participating members of NCCC receive a discount on facility charges (please refer to wedding fees paragraph, above). Relatives and friends of NCCC members are not eligible for this discount.

Optional/Additional Fees

Vocal or Instrumental Soloist Fee: \$200 per musician
Harpist Fee: \$300
Additional Facility Use Fee: \$500 per half hour

Cancellation

- Cancellation 90 days or more prior to wedding date: 75% of any pre-paid fees will be returned.
- Cancellation less than 30-90 days prior to wedding date: 50% of any pre-paid fees will be returned.
- Cancellation less than 14 days prior to the wedding date: Only the \$500 security deposit will be returned.

[This wedding guidelines booklet was updated on August 14, 2015.]