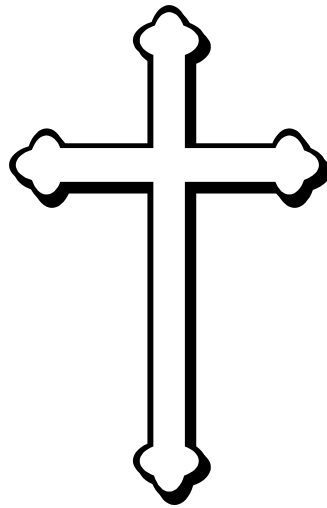


Wedding Policy



SOUTH HIGHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Highland Avenue at Richard Arrington, Jr. Blvd (formerly 21st Street)
Post Office Box 55933
Birmingham, Alabama 35255

Phone (205) 933-0790
FAX (205) 933-7361

www.SouthHighland.org

(Revised 02/02/2012)

A Message from the Pastor

Congratulations on your decision to marry! We look forward to working with you to create a service that both honors God and reflects the holiness of the covenant you are making with one another.

To marry in a church is to decide to make the Living God central not only to your wedding but also to your marriage. Our Lord Jesus Christ performed His first miracle at a wedding and with His presence came the joy that we pray will permeate every aspect of this wonderful celebration.

In making this decision to commit yourselves to one another in a lifelong covenant, you are giving yourselves a precious gift. We hope that you will be a good steward of this gift of marriage and will use all the resources available to nurture your relationship and to strengthen your foundation of faith.

God bless and keep you!

Dr. Ed Hurley, Senior Pastor

So faith, hope, love abide, these three:

But the greatest of these is love.

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

South Highland Wedding Directors

South Highland Presbyterian Church
2035 Highland Avenue
Birmingham, Alabama 35205
(205) 933-0790 FAX (205) 933-7361
www.shpcbhm.org

To Persons Interested In Planning a Wedding Ceremony at South Highland,

We are delighted to hear the good news of your upcoming wedding! What an exciting and sometimes overwhelming time for you and your families. It is our job to guide you through the wedding policies and procedures of South Highland Presbyterian Church while assisting you in planning the wedding ceremony you have always dreamed of.

Here you will find the Wedding Policy of South Highland Presbyterian Church, the important Wedding Information Forms, and the Order of Worship handout. Please read over the Summary Of Steps in Planning a Wedding at South Highland. The first step is to schedule an appointment with the Senior Pastor by contacting the Ministers' Secretary.

Please feel free to call us with your questions. Our phone numbers and emails are listed below. We look forward to meeting with you and assisting you in any way we can.

Wishing you God's blessing,

The South Highland Wedding Directors

CONTACT PERSONS FOR WEDDINGS

Executive Assistant to the Pastors		Church Office, 933-0790 Ext. 21
Wedding Directors Elsa Holaday Courtney Harper	eholaday@donscarpetone.com charper@aol.com	Church Office, 205-933-0790 Home, 663-7103 Work, 655-8777 Cell, 902-5348
Organist Jami McLemore	jamiemcl@centurytel.net	Church office, 933-0790 Ext. 24
Flower Committee Faye Mills Carol Craig Elsa Holaday	b_fmills@bellsouth.net eholaday@donscarpetone.com	Home, 823-7937 Home, 592-3420 Home, 663-7103 Work, 655-8777
Director of Food Service Joe Whitley	jwhitley@southhighland.org	Church Office, 933-0790 Ext. 54
Director of Administration & Finance		Church Office, 933-0790 Ext.15

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SUMMARY OF STEPS IN PLANNING A WEDDING AT SOUTH HIGHLAND

- Initial consultation with Ministers' Secretary. Tentatively choose a date for the wedding (a minimum of 4 - 6 months prior).
- Receive Wedding Policy packet, Wedding Information Forms, and the Order of Worship handout (these can also be emailed or downloaded from the church's website).
- Return Wedding Information Forms and deposit to the church to the attention of the Ministers' Secretary who will set up your initial appointment with the Minister (at least 3 - 4 months prior).
- After meeting with the Minister, you'll receive confirmation of the wedding date and time, the officiating Minister and the Organist. You'll also be contacted by your personal South Highland Wedding Director. *Note: Final approval of a non-member wedding rests with the senior Minister and the Session of the church.*
- Applicant sets up pre-marital counseling conferences with the officiating Minister through the Ministers' Secretary (2 - 3 months prior).
- Applicant consults with the Wedding Director (1 - 3 months prior) and as needed.
- Applicant consults with the Organist (1 - 3 months prior).
- The marriage license must be secured within and not before 30 days prior. ***The license should be delivered to the Minister as soon as it is obtained or at the rehearsal.***
- The balance of all fees is due 30 days prior to the wedding.
- Rehearsal and wedding take place.

I. GENERAL SCHEDULING NOTES

The wedding date and time are set in consultation with the church office and the officiating Minister. In scheduling a wedding, the church staff will make every effort to respond to the needs and desires of the wedding party. However, use of the facilities for church-wide religious services must take precedence over wedding services.

No formal wedding may be scheduled on Sundays, during Holy Week, or on staff holidays. All Saturday weddings (and receptions, if held in the Davis Family Hall) must be concluded by 8:00 p.m.

Two weddings may not be held on the same day if the first wedding includes a reception in Davis Family Hall. If no receptions in the church's facilities are involved, two weddings may be scheduled on the same day provided the beginning times are at least four hours apart.

The rehearsal is ordinarily held the evening before the wedding. Between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. is ordinarily the best time for the beginning of the rehearsal. Approximately one and one half hours should be allowed between the beginning of the rehearsal and the rehearsal dinner if one is held.

The church will be unlocked and available for arrival of the wedding party 3 hours prior to the scheduled wedding time. Any exceptions to this policy due to special circumstances should be discussed with the Wedding Director and may result in overtime charges.

Note: For a Saturday wedding, the church will be available for decorating purposes from 8 am to 12 noon.

II. SERVICES OF PERSONS RELATED TO THE WEDDING

A. MINISTER

The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) places upon the Minister of the church several responsibilities regarding a wedding and the covenant of marriage. These include discussion of:

- the nature of the couple's Christian commitment assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
- the legal requirements of the state,
- the nature and form of the marriage service as well as its vows and commitments,
- the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
- the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments, and
- the importance of conducting the wedding service in such a way that reverence by all in the house of God will be observed.

Only an ordained pastor of South Highland Presbyterian Church may officiate at weddings in our facilities. Other ministers may be invited to share in the wedding service with the consent and invitation of the Senior Minister and the Session.

At least three pre-marital counseling conferences (and possibly more depending upon circumstances) are ordinarily scheduled between the Minister and the couple to be married.

The first conference usually provides an opportunity for the Minister and the couple to know one another better and to discuss the nature of Christian marriage. The Minister's commitment to conduct the wedding is confirmed at this conference.

The second conference focuses upon the marriage expectations of the couple and generally requires two and a half to three hours or several separate hour-long sessions.

The last conference has to do with planning the wedding service.

The church's Wedding Director, Organist, and others assist the Minister in these responsibilities. The bride and groom or their facilitators should not make plans relating to the order of worship of the wedding service without consulting the Minister and his/her assistants. Ordinarily, this will be done during the regularly scheduled conferences in preparation for the wedding.

B. WEDDING DIRECTOR

South Highland is fortunate to have several capable wedding directors who are available to persons planning to be married in the church. A Wedding Director is required for all weddings at South Highland unless the Minister makes an exception when there is no rehearsal and when the number of invited guests is less than twenty. A Wedding Director is not only for the benefit of the wedding party but also serves as a representative of the church to assist in those matters that affect the church's interests. Since the wedding service is a worship service of the church, outside wedding consultants shall not serve as the director for the wedding or rehearsal.

When an inquiry is made regarding a wedding, the Ministers' Secretary will check the availability of the date for the wedding on the church's calendar. However, no date can be reserved until the Wedding Information Forms and Fees have been submitted to the church and until the ministers, in conjunction with the church's calendar, have made a review of this information.

The Wedding Director has the responsibility of assisting the bride and groom in their planning, assisting the Minister in directing the wedding, and assuring that the details of the service are conducted in a manner appropriate to the church and to a Christian service of worship. The director is familiar with the policies of South Highland Presbyterian Church and its ministers as well as most matters of wedding etiquette. See Fee Schedule.

C. ORGANIST

Ordinarily, the church Organist is expected to play for all services in the church including weddings. If unavailable, the church Organist will be responsible for securing an approved substitute. A guest organist may be invited to participate upon consultation with the church Organist.

The Organist meets with the couple for consultation in selecting music for the wedding. A conference should be scheduled six to eight weeks prior to the wedding with the Organist who will offer assistance and guidance in the selection of appropriate music for a Christian wedding. The Organist then spends time rehearsing the music in addition to the rehearsal and wedding. Additional soloists or instrumentalists will be under the direction and approval of the church Organist. If the Organist will accompany an additional soloist or instrumentalist, an additional fee will be charged. See Fee Schedule.

D. SOLOIST OR INSTRUMENTALIST

It is the responsibility of a soloist or instrumentalist to take the initiative in arranging rehearsal time with the Organist. **Direct payment to an additional soloist or instrumentalist is the responsibility of the wedding party.**

E. SOUND SYSTEM CONTROLLER (for Sanctuary weddings only)

The sanctuary of the church has an excellent sound system with the capability of making a CD of the service. See Fee Schedule.

F. SEXTON

The services of the church's maintenance staff shall be used in connection with all weddings. The services that will be provided involve complete oversight of the building and facilities, opening and locking the building for the rehearsal and wedding, advance preparation and cleaning of the church and equipment, providing heat or air-conditioning as necessary and clean-up of the facilities afterward. Since these are over and above duties, a standard fee is charged. Should additional time be required in restoring the church facility to its normal use, an overtime charge will be made and billed after the wedding. Staff services do not include work in the kitchen at a reception, except by special arrangement where an additional charge will be made. See Fee Schedule.

G. DIRECTOR OF FOOD SERVICES AND RECEPTIONS

The bride will consult with the Director of Food Services and the Wedding Director if there is to be a reception in Davis Family Hall. See Fee Schedule. They will tell the bride what is available in the church for use, i.e., tables, chairs, tablecloths, dishes, serving pieces, and coffee equipment. If a reception is to be held at the church, the bride should meet with the Director of Food Services six to eight weeks prior to the wedding. He/she will provide the bride and/or caterer with a facilities request form to be turned in to the church office at least four weeks prior to the wedding date. The Director of Food Services may be available for catering this event.

H. FOOD SERVICE STAFF

A representative from the church food service staff is required if a reception is held at the church in addition to the catering service hired. The food service staff person will supervise the kitchen and will run the dishwasher. See Fee Schedule.

I. FLORIST/FLOWERS

Professional florists are generally familiar with church policies relating to weddings though each church has its own stipulations. If a non-professional florist or one who is not familiar with the policies of South Highland is to decorate for the wedding, the Wedding Director will see that they have read and agreed to all florist-related policies of the church. Also see the next section on DECORATING GUIDELINES.

For a Saturday wedding, the church will be open for your convenience from 8 am to 12 noon unless prior arrangements have been made to pay for additional custodial care.

Florists should use their own equipment and supplies. If a member of the Flower Committee is not arranging flowers for Sunday, the florist may use the flower room and cooler (space permitting) after prior approval from the Flower Committee. Church flowers are not to be removed. .

Flowers in the chancel area may be left in the Sanctuary or Chapel after the wedding for the following Sunday's worship unless memorial flowers are planned. This should be cleared with your Wedding Director. Otherwise, ALL wedding flowers must be removed from the sanctuary on the day of the wedding. NO exceptions will be made to this rule. In some cases, the wedding flowers may be placed in the reception area. Acknowledgement of the flowers and your wedding will be printed in the Sunday Bulletin. Please advise your Wedding Director regarding your wishes.

Example: The flowers in the worship service (or reception area) today are given in celebration of the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. _____ on _____. *(Brides who wish to leave their flowers should inform their Wedding Director who gives the specific wording to Director of Operations for the Sunday bulletin.)*

J. DECORATING GUIDELINES

South Highland Presbyterian Church has been blessed with a beautiful sanctuary and chapel. Decorations should be restrained and tasteful respecting the existing architectural beauty of the worship spaces. The paraments (cloths on the lectern and pulpit) used during the wedding service are white.

1. FLOWERS

- a. It is the responsibility of the florist (or wedding party) to remove all flowers and decorations from the church immediately after the wedding ceremony unless other arrangements have been made and approved by the Wedding Director.
- b. No flower arrangements of any kind are allowed on the Communion Table or may be allowed to obscure the view of the cross.
- c. Florists are encouraged to consult with the Flower Committee Chairman for suggestions of alternative floral placement and/or permission to use available containers, stands, etc. (See section VII. CONTACT PERSONS FOR WEDDINGS)
- d. Florists are responsible for care of containers and also for using their own equipment and supplies. SHPC containers should NOT be removed from church property.
- e. Small bouquets may be attached to the ends of pews with ribbons.
- f. The flower girl(s) may drop only artificial petals.
- g. Flower arrangements over the doorways in the sanctuary are not permitted.
- h. During Advent and Christmas when the church is decorated for the season, no decorations in place may be altered or removed for a wedding. No exceptions will be made. If additional wedding flowers are desired at this time, the Flower Committee Chairman must approve any additions.

2. OTHER

- a. No tacks, nails, screws or adhesives that leave a residue are to be using in the church.
- b. When potted plants or greens are used, floors and furniture must be protected from stains or drips.
- c. The church has two brass candelabras and two black iron candelabras each holding seven oil-filled candles that may be used in the sanctuary
- d. The church also has 3-candle brass candelabra that may be used for lighting a Unity Candle. Only dripleless candles may be used.
- e. The church has a wedding kneeler (kneeling bench) that is available for use.
- f. Rearranging of furniture in the church is not permitted other than pushing back the Communion Table, removing the lectern, pushing back the baptismal font and sliding the main pulpit a few feet to the right. Chancel area arrangements/moves must be cleared with the Wedding Director.
- g. The bride or her representative will be held responsible should any damage occur as a result of the decorations or as a result of any other rule violation.
- h. No material of any kind may be thrown by members of the wedding party or guest including, but not limited to, birdseed, rice, flower petals, confetti or soap bubbles.

K. PHOTOGRAPHER

A professional photographer with experience in working with weddings is recommended for the greatest efficiency at the wedding and for the quality of pictures. Photographers new to South Highland will read and agree to the photography-related policy of the church. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to inform the photographer (as well as the guests) that no flash pictures are to be taken in the sanctuary or chapel during the wedding from the time the bride enters until she and the groom leave. Photos from the rear of the sanctuary or the narthex of the chapel using existing light and a noise-free camera are allowed. Photographers may not move up or down the aisles in any fashion during the service. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in forfeiture of the security deposit. Posed wedding photos must conclude one hour prior to the start of the ceremony. If photos are taken after the ceremony, they must be completed within 30 minutes of the conclusion of the ceremony. Photographers must wear appropriate dress.

L. VIDEOGRAPHER

A video camera may be used discreetly to record the service only if the equipment is stationary, does not obstruct the view of worshippers, and no lights are used. Placement of a video camera must be in the rear of the sanctuary. An unmanned camera may be placed discreetly in front of a column on the side of the sanctuary. Clear this with the Wedding Director. Videographers must wear appropriate dress. Videographers new to South Highland will read and agree to the photography and videography-related policies of the church. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in forfeiture of the security deposit.

M. WEDDING PROGRAMS

Wedding programs are not provided by the church. If you will be providing wedding programs, please consult with the Minister and the Wedding Director or Organist about the order of service for the programs. Also, consider adding a note on your program that states "Please refrain from taking pictures during the wedding service."

N. GENERAL RULES & GUIDELINES

Food or beverages provided for the wedding party prior to the ceremony are only allowed in the following areas: the Bride's Room, Church Parlor, Davis Family Hall, and Small Dining Room.

Please keep food or beverages out of the Church Library and the front Reception Area (between Davis Family Hall and the sanctuary).

The Bride's Room and Church Parlor are available for the bride and her attendants to dress. The women should arrive with hair and makeup done. It is recommended that the men dress at home.

All food, clothes, supplies should be removed from the bride's and groom's area prior to the ceremony. You may wish to appoint a family member to help with this.

The church is not responsible for valuables left unattended during or after the wedding. The bride's dressing room can be locked and unlocked by the Wedding Director or one of the sextons.

As this is a ceremony to be sanctified by God, we request that all wedding party attire be appropriate to a worship service. Ladies' garments should afford the proper coverage as well as be adequately lined. Should you have any questions regarding appropriate dress, please contact the Wedding Director.

Please arrange to have at least one usher or groomsman for each 50 guests.

The use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted in any part of the church or on the grounds and will result in forfeiture of the security deposit. Under no circumstances will anyone under the influence of alcohol be permitted to take part in the wedding rehearsal or ceremony. The bride and groom are under obligation to make this expectation known to all members of the wedding party.

Smoking is not permitted in any part of the church. Those desiring to smoke are asked to do so by the delivery door entrance outside the kitchen.

III. THE WEDDING SERVICE

A. REHEARSAL

The purpose of the wedding rehearsal is to prepare each member of the wedding party for the part that he or she will play in the wedding service. For this reason, all members of the wedding party should be present at the rehearsal to practice their role. If possible, family members who are to be ushered out following the wedding should also attend the rehearsal.

Members of the wedding party should arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the rehearsal and should meet in the sanctuary (or chapel). The Wedding Director will use this time to review ushering guidelines and general rules.

The Minister will begin the rehearsal when the bride and groom inform him that all the participants are present. Most rehearsals take one hour or less if they are begun on time. Generally there should be a time gap of at least 1 and ½ hours between the start of the rehearsal and the start of the rehearsal dinner if one is held.

Please bring the marriage license and the minister's honorarium to the rehearsal and give it to the Wedding Director to give to the minister.

B. WEDDING

The Book of Order indicates the various elements appropriately included in a service of marriage. A copy of the wedding service generally used at South Highland is found in the Order of Worship handout and will be discussed at the last conference with the Minister if not sooner.

C. MUSIC OF THE WEDDING

Music can and should be an important part of a meaningful wedding ceremony. The Book of Order reminds us "such music as accompanies the ceremony should direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage." It is therefore appropriate that sacred music be used for solos. Pre-recorded music of all types is not permitted.

As the Book of Order indicates, the singing of a hymn or hymns by the congregation is appropriate; and the Minister can guide in the selection and use of such. See the Order of Worship handout.

The bride and groom are expected to arrange an appointment with the church Organist for the purpose of planning music for the service. The Organist will direct all musical elements of the wedding service including assisting the couple in the selection of music and directing other instrumentalists and vocalists. Outside musicians must be approved in advance by the Organist. See Section II, C. ORGANIST.

IV. SCHEDULE OF FEES FOR WEDDING

1. The following fees are charged for services of the church staff for weddings and rehearsals and are to be paid in advance (at least 30 days prior to the wedding) to “South Highland Presbyterian Church” to allow for transmittal to the proper staff member.
2. Before the date of the wedding may be entered on the church calendar, the completed **Wedding Information Forms** and **Security Deposit** must be submitted in the church office to the Ministers’ Secretary or Wedding Director.
3. The wedding party is expected to make payment directly to the soloist/instrumentalist for his/her services.
4. The Minister’s honorarium is not included in the basic wedding fee. Honorariums are usually given to the Minister along with the wedding license at or before the rehearsal and are traditionally the responsibility of the groom. (Suggested: \$250.00)

***Note: The Security Deposit will be held until after the wedding and may be forfeited should any of the stated wedding policies be broken or ignored.**

Return forms with payment identifying your wedding to: **South Highland Presbyterian Church**
Attn: Charles Rountree
P. O. Box 55933
Birmingham, AL 35255

Today's Date: _____

Wedding Date: _____

Bride: _____ Groom: _____

Person responsible for payment: _____

Address _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

FEE SCHEDULE: *It's VERY important to write your wedding date and names on your check. Otherwise, it will be put into the general fund.*

	Member	Non-member	Amount Due
Sanctuary (seats 600) or Chapel (seats 120)	\$100	\$1500	
Davis Family Hall (reception)	---	500	
Counseling with Minister (required)	---	300	
Minister's Honorarium (suggested)	250	250	-----
Wedding Director with reception	250 400	250 400	
Organist (consultation only)	350 75	350 75	
Sexton – wedding & rehearsal (up to 9 hrs.) with reception at church (14 hrs.) Overtime/hour – to be billed	225 375 25	225 375 25	
Food Service Staff – Reception w/ in-house catering, see Joe Whitley for quote Outside catering: Minimum fee:	Quote 150	Quote 150	
Sound System Controller (includes CD) (sanctuary only) If needed for the reception sound set up	100 50	100 50	
Security Deposit (refunded after wedding, after expenses)	250	250	250
Other: Nursery (quote available from wedding director)			
		Total Due	\$
		Deposit Paid	\$
NOTE: Balance is due 30 days prior to the wedding.		Balance Due	\$

V. THE PRESBYTERIAN BELIEF REGARDING MARRIAGE

The position and belief of the Presbyterian Church (USA) regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage is found in the Church's Book of Confessions, particularly in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 26, and in the Book of Order. As paragraph 3 below points out, the promise of a Christian marriage is based upon a common commitment to Christ by husband and wife and a common intent to make their marriage Christ-centered. To pronounce the blessing of God upon a marriage in which there is no such intent is to take the name of the Lord in vain.

A. MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE (Westminster Confession of Faith)

1. Marriage is a union between one man and one woman, designed of God to last so long as they both shall live.
2. Marriage is designed for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the safeguarding, undergirding, and development of their moral and spiritual character; for the propagation of children and the rearing of them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
3. All persons who are able with judgment to give their consent may marry, except within the limits of blood relationship forbidden by Scripture, and such marriages are valid before God in the eyes of the church. But no marriage can be fully and securely Christian in spirit or in purpose unless both partners are committed to a common Christian faith to a deeply shared intention of building a Christian home. Evangelical Christians should seek as partners in marriage only persons who hold in common a sound basis of evangelical faith.
4. Marriage for the Christian has religious as well as civil significance. The distinctive contribution of the church in performing the marriage ceremony is to affirm the divine institution of marriage; to invoke God's blessing upon those who enter into the marital relationship in accordance with his word; to hear the vows of those who desire to be married; and to assure the married partners of God's grace within their new relationship.
5. It is the divine intention that persons entering the marriage covenant become inseparably united, thus allowing for no dissolution save that caused by the death of either husband or wife. However, the weaknesses of one or both partners may lead to gross and persistent denial of the marriage vows so that marriage dies at the heart and the union becomes intolerable; yet only in cases of extreme, unrepented-of, and irremediable unfaithfulness (physical or spiritual) should separation or divorce be considered. Such separation or divorce is accepted as permissible only because of the failure of one or both of the partners, and does not lessen in any way the divine intention for indissoluble union.
6. The remarriage of divorced persons may be sanctioned by the church, in keeping with the redemptive gospel of Christ, when sufficient penitence for sin and failure is evident, and a firm purpose of and endeavor after Christian marriage is manifested.
7. Divorced persons should give prayerful thought to discover if God's vocation for them is to remain unmarried, since one failure in this realm raises serious questions as to the rightness and wisdom of undertaking another union.

B. CHRISTIAN SERVICE OF MARRIAGE (Book of Order)

God has ordained that a man and a woman may enter together into marriage, pledging their love and promising fidelity each to the other, as long as both shall live.

As Jesus Christ has blessed this relationship, and it has been declared holy throughout the life of the church; those who pledge themselves each to the other in the sight of God are promised God's help as they enter into the joys and duties of life together.

Humanly speaking, marriage is a civil contract among a man, a woman, and the state. When a marriage is performed in the context of Christian worship, the proclamation of the gospel of reconciliation in Jesus Christ is a promise of blessing to the marriage. As the man and woman respond affirmatively to this proclamation, their marriage is in the Lord. This applies equally to first marriage, to marriage after the death of a spouse, and to marriage after being divorced.

Any minister asked to officiate at a wedding shall counsel the couple on the privilege and obligations they will assume in Christian marriage.

It is fitting that the minister reminds the couple of the meaning of Christian Baptism, for themselves and their families. It will be expected that at least one of the partners is a professing Christian, and that ordinarily both of them will share a common faith. The minister may take this opportunity to instruct the man and the woman on the relationship between Christian faith and marriage.

The state has the authority to dissolve marriage. Recognizing the action of the state as an accomplished fact, the church's responsibility for education and counsel before marriage also extends to any special problems involved in marriage after divorce. Such problems include the competence of persons to enter into and sustain a new marital or familial relationship and to meet obligations to persons involved in a former marriage.

If the minister is convinced that Christian commitment and responsibility are lacking, and the marriage is not one that offers promise of being blessed by God, the minister shall not perform the ceremony. In order to fulfill the corporate responsibilities of the church to divorced persons seeking marriage, a pastor asked to officiate may seek, for advice only, the review and counsel of presbytery or its designated representative in determining the readiness of the man and woman for marriage.

In addition, before any man and woman are joined in marriage, they shall fulfill all the lawful requirements of the state in which the marriage is to be performed. They shall be in such health and body and soundness of mind as in the judgment of the minister will enable them to live responsibly within the bonds of marriage. They shall give indication of being prepared to enter upon life together with maturity and wisdom. When, after this discussion, the pastor finds it necessary to refuse to officiate at a marriage ceremony, the pastor shall inform the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and of additional steps they may take if they desire a marriage service in the church.

The Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God, normally conducted within the house of God. Reverence shall be expected on the part of all present, and the service shall be under the sole direction of the minister.

Such music as accompanies the ceremony shall direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage, and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent. If desired, the congregation may be invited to join in the singing of hymns at the beginning and conclusion of the service.

Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should not be unduly elaborate. In all the activities that surround the ceremony, excessive expense and ostentation should be avoided.

The marriage service shall begin with a brief statement of the meaning of Christian marriage. At appropriate times during the ceremony there shall be prayers for the couple as they enter their new estate. There shall be an exchange of vows between the man and the woman; and if so desired, a ring or rings may be given. Scripture appropriate for the occasion should be read and the minister should deliver a charge to the couple, laying before them the privilege and obligations which they are about to receive and undertake. Before the conclusion of the service, the minister shall declare publicly that this man and woman are now joined in marriage according to the ordinance of God and the law of the state. The service shall conclude with a benediction.

If a husband and wife previously married in a civil ceremony so desire, a service for the recognition of a marriage similar to that already specified for a Christian ceremony may be performed.

NOTE: Communion

In the Presbyterian Church (USA), the celebration of the Lord's Supper must be approved by the Session (Board of Elders). Furthermore, when it is celebrated, the gathered congregation must be included in the invitation to the table. It is not appropriate for the sacrament to be served exclusively to the bride and groom. If a couple wishes to celebrate communion during their wedding, the following needs to happen:

- Permission to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper on the date of the wedding must be given by the SHPC Session.
- A SHPC pastor must be in charge of the celebration of the sacrament.
- In the wedding, the entire gathered congregation must be included in the invitation to the table.
- Wedding coordinators will not arrange for the celebration of communion. This is done through the officiating minister. A \$25 additional charge is required for the set-up which includes the communion elements, the use of the church's communion ware and the clean-up.

VI. SEX: GOD'S GIFT -- HANDLE WITH CARE

In 1995, the Session of South Highland adopted an overture to the General Assembly lifting up the standard in regard to sexual behavior of "fidelity within the covenant of marriage of a man and a woman, of chastity in singleness." That overture was adopted by our Presbytery, and subsequently recommended to the General Assembly for inclusion in the Book of Order as a standard for those being ordained as ministers, elders, or deacons. In July of 1996, it was approved by the General Assembly, subject to approval by a majority of the 171 Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church USA. Ninety-seven Presbyteries approved the overture, and in 1997, the Amendment was included in our Book of Order. The 1997 General Assembly sought to modify that amendment with a more loosely defined amendment regarding sexual behavior, calling for "fidelity and integrity in marriage or singleness, and in all relationships of life" as the standard for those being ordained as ministers, elders and deacons.

The amendment approved by the Presbyteries and incorporated in the Book of Order as G-6.0106b is a standard which we believe is consistent with the teaching of Scripture and appropriate for all who would seek to follow God's way. Since we live in a time when there is disagreement, confusion, perversion and uncertainty regarding sexual behavior, the Session thought it appropriate to address this issue in the light of what Paul instructs in Colossians 2:8: "See that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ," and in the light of our mission as expressed in the Book of Order (G-3.0200): "The Church of Jesus Christ is the provisional demonstration of what God intends for all of humanity."

There are many differing views on sexual behavior portrayed in the media, entertainment, literature and education. It is our belief, based upon the Scriptures, that it is God's intention for the fullest expression of our human sexuality to be reserved for the marriage relationship, and that sexual intercourse outside of marriage not only falls short of God's will but also is detrimental to our genuine well-being.

Therefore, we affirm that:

1. God is the creator of sex, and as such it is part of what God declared "good," a gift of God which enhances and enriches the unity of a husband and wife.
2. Our sexuality is more than biological. It is an aspect of our humanity, and our true humanity is found in our relationship to God.
3. One of the essential purposes of our sexuality is the enrichment of a personal relationship designed to be permanent, and the willingness to accept the responsibilities of parenthood.
4. The ultimate expression of the sexual relationship in intercourse is intended by God as a fulfillment within the commitment of marriage.
5. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage denigrates its essential nature, and is contrary to the gracious purpose of God for sex. The practice of contraception in premarital or extra-marital sex does not eliminate the contradiction of God's intent.
6. Sexual intercourse involves consequences, not only in terms of potential conception but in terms of psychological and emotional bonding, and therefore is appropriate only when accompanied by the commitment of life together in marriage.
7. As with all sin, sexual sins may be forgiven where there is sincere repentance, i.e., recognition of and sorrow for wrong, and a turning away from it with the help of God's Spirit to a life in keeping with God's will.

The affirmations above are given from a Biblical perspective. There is much secular data from a sociological and psychological standpoint that reinforces the Biblical truth that the greatest emotional and physical fulfillment of sex is in the marital relationship. We pray that we as Christians will not fall prey to vain and deceptive philosophies but live a lifestyle in accordance with God's plan for our fulfillment.

- The Session of South Highland Presbyterian Church.

The following Scripture references are not an exhaustive list but do reflect Biblical guidance in sexual matters:

Genesis 1:31; 2:24-25; 39
 2 Samuel 11-12
 Psalm 51
 Proverbs 5; 6:23-29, 32;
 7:6-23

Matthew 5:27-30; 19:1-12
 John 8:1-11
 1 Corinthians 5; 6:9-20; 7
 2 Corinthians 5:17

Ephesians 5:21-33
 2 Timothy 3:1-9
 Hebrews 13:4
 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2

Suggested further reading:

Elizabeth Achtemeier, The Committed Marriage
 C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, pp. 88-103
 Richard Foster, The Challenge of the Disciplined Life, pp. 91-171
 Charlie Shedd, Letters to Karen, Letters to Philip
 Lewis B. Smedes, Sex for Christians

VII. CONTACT PERSONS FOR WEDDINGS & PASTORAL STAFF

Executive Assistant to the Ministers		Church Office, 933-0790 Ext. 21
Wedding Directors Elsa Holaday Courtney Harper	eholaday@donscarpetone.com charper@aol.com	Church Office, 205-933-0790 Home, 663-7103 Work, 655-8777 Cell, 902-5348
Organist Jamie McLemore	jamiemcl@centurytel.com	Church office, 933-0790 Ext. 24
Flower Committee Faye Mills Carol Craig Elsa Holaday	b_fmills@bellsouth.net eholaday@donscarpetone.com	Home, 823-7937 Home, 592-3420 Home, 663-7103 Work, 655-8777
Director of Food Service Joe Whitley	jwhitley@southhighland.org	Church Office, 933-0790 Ext. 54
Director of Administration & Finance		Church Office, 933-0790 Ext.15
Ministers Dr. Edwin Gray Hurley, Senior Pastor Rev. Jim Truesdell, Associate Pastor Rev. Susan Laney, Associate Pastor	ehurley@southhighland.org jtruesdell@southhighland.org slaney@southhighland.org	Church Office, 933-0790 Ext.14 Church Office, 933-0790 Ext.13 Church Office, 933-0790 Ext.19

Wedding Information Form

Please return all forms to:

South Highland Presbyterian Church
2035 Highland Avenue South
Birmingham, Alabama 35205
(205) 933-0790 FAX (205) 933-7361
www.shpcbhm.org

	BRIDE	GROOM
Name:		
Address:		
City/State/Zip:		
Phone (H):		
Phone (C):		
Phone (W):		
Email:		

Couple's Questionnaire

Date present relationship began: _____

How did you meet?

Date of engagement: _____

Future address if known: _____

Bride's Parents' Names:

Groom's Parents' Names:

Bride's Questionnaire *Name (please print)* _____

I am a baptized and professing Christian: Yes _____ No _____

Church I am a member of: _____

Please describe your current religious affiliation:

Describe your reason(s) for choosing South Highland Presbyterian Church for your wedding:

Current Occupation: _____

I have not _____ / have _____ been married previously. If applicable:

Number of previous marriages _____ Length of time previously married _____

Widowed _____ or date divorce was finalized _____

Names & ages of any children _____

Did you participate in counseling before the marriage? Yes _____ No _____

Did you participate in counseling during the marriage? Yes _____ No _____

Did you participate in counseling after the marriage? Yes _____ No _____

Is there anything else you wish to discuss with the pastor?

Groom's Questionnaire *Name (please print)* _____

I am a baptized and professing Christian: Yes _____ No _____

Church I am a member of: _____

Please describe your current religious affiliation:

Describe your reason(s) for choosing South Highland Presbyterian Church for your wedding:

Current Occupation: _____

I have not _____ / have _____ been married previously. If applicable:

Number of previous marriages _____ Length of time previously married _____

Widowed _____ or date divorce was finalized _____

Names & ages of any children _____

Did you participate in counseling before the marriage? Yes _____ No _____

Did you participate in counseling during the marriage? Yes _____ No _____

Did you participate in counseling after the marriage? Yes _____ No _____

Is there anything else you wish to discuss with the pastor?

Wedding Details (tentative)

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Please check all areas that best describe your tentative wedding plans.

Facilities Needed: ____ Sanctuary (seats 600) ____ Chapel (seats 120) ____ Davis Family Hall

Anticipated Number of Guests: _____

Attendants (indicate number where possible):

_____ Maid/Matron of Honor

_____ Best Man

_____ Bridesmaids

_____ Groomsmen

_____ Ushers

_____ Flower Girl(s)

_____ Ring Bearer(s)

Music:

_____ Organist

_____ Soloist(s)

_____ Instrumentalist(s)

Other:

_____ Guest Minister (Name & Church):

_____ Scripture Reader(s)

Having read and agreed to the policies and terms of weddings at South Highland Presbyterian Church and desiring to live our marriage in commitment to Christ in the fellowship of His Church, we make application to be married at South Highland Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. We understand that approval of all weddings is under the authority of the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Session and acting under the authority of the Book of Order PCUSA, Directory of Worship. We understand that on all occasions a South Highland pastor shall officiate and be in charge of all aspects of the wedding service and counseling preparations.

Signatures: _____

Bride

Groom

Today's Date: _____

Wedding Date: _____

Bride: _____

Groom: _____

Person responsible for payment:

Address _____ Zip _____ Phone _____