

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
**BUILDING USE POLICY**  
Draft Revision November 2024

First Presbyterian Church of Davenport is an inclusive, caring community of faith committed to loving God, loving neighbor as self, and sharing the love of Jesus Christ with all people through worship, fellowship and service. We consider our church building and grounds to be assets to be shared – with respect and care – as part of our mission to the larger community. Our goal is to welcome others as we would welcome Christ.

**Principles for Use:**

First Presbyterian Church of Davenport (FPC) offers the use of its building and grounds for a wide range of functions both affiliated and not affiliated with the church. In the context of this document, hereafter, the use of the word “building” also includes the “grounds.” Although the building and equipment of First Presbyterian Church exist for the primary purpose of supporting the ministries of FPC and its members, they are also an instrument of Christ’s mission.

Therefore, FPC’s policy is that the church building will be used to the fullest extent practical to fulfill the church’s mission, recognizing the limitations of the budget and the necessity of establishing priorities for many worthwhile ministries. The following are our principles for use of our building:

- To use the building for activities which fit who we are and what we believe (as determined by Session)
- To offer our building to groups and individuals both affiliated and not affiliated with FPC
- To give due consideration to the care and protection of the property
- To charge reasonable fees for building usage and for staffing requirements

**Please see separate policy and fee schedule for weddings.**

**Priority of Use Considerations:**

No outside events or building use will be allowed on church holidays as defined in the Personnel Manual. On all other dates, the priority of facilities usage shall be as follows:

1. Church Functions, such as,
  - a. Church services (i.e., worship, Sunday school, funerals, weddings)
  - b. FPC Performing Arts Series
  - c. Scheduled church activities for spiritual growth and/or administration (i.e., committee meetings, Adult Education, youth group, choirs)
2. The priority of all other building use requests will be judged on a case-by-case basis. In general, events which support the mission of the church, whether by outside groups/individuals or church members, are given priority.

## **Building Use Commission:**

In 2024, Session created an administrative commission titled the “Building Use Commission” to act upon building use requests for non-church functions. The Commission membership shall consist of the Church Corporation officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) and the Pastor/Head Pastor who shall serve with voice and vote. If, for any reason, none on the corporate officers have been ordained as a ruling elder, then the Commission shall also include at least two ruling elders (who do not need to be actively serving on Session) in order to be in compliance with the PC(USA) Book of Order. The Building Use Commission will report to Session on all requests, approved as well as declined.

## **Procedure for Requesting Building Use:**

A *Building Use Request Form* (BUF) obtainable from FPC website or through the church office – must be completed by any individual or group requesting building use.

- The BUF should be submitted to the church office at least four (4) weeks in advance. It provides for every area of the church available for use. All rooms requested, set-ups and other service needs (i.e., kitchen items, AV, etc.) must be included on the form.
- Upon receipt, the request will be reviewed by the FPC staff. Then the request, together with any feedback from staff, will be forwarded to the Building Use Commission for review, to be approved or declined.
- The Director of BG&S will be available, to meet with the user to review conditions of use, the expectations and needs for the event, and to confirm schedules for room set-up and clean-up as needed. For new, large, or unusual events, the church staff may require an in-person meeting with the user at a mutually agreeable time.
- When use of church musical instruments is included in the request, a member of the music staff shall meet with the user.
- Requests that include use of the sanctuary sound system require the user to meet with a sound technician.
- The building use fee schedule will be provided to the user at the time of the request.
- All church and non-church activities are scheduled on the master church calendar.
- A staff member or church volunteer must be in the building at all times during the event.

First Presbyterian Church reserves the right to make changes to any/all schedules in order to accommodate church ministry or unforeseen events. This includes any contractual agreements for any group. The church may adjust or waive any/all charges on an individual basis at the direction of the Building Use Commission.

## **Fundraising by Outside Organizations:**

From time to time, outside organizations may ask for significant support for their fundraising events from members of First Presbyterian Church, including, but not limited to, use of the First Presbyterian Church facilities for fundraising events.

If a fundraising request does not also include the use of the building, the request should be considered under the FPC Fundraising Policy and be submitted first to the Clerk of Session and then to Session.

If a fundraising request is part of a building use request, both will be considered together by the Building Use Commission. For the fund-raising portion of the request, the Building Use Commission will rely on the principles of the FPC Fundraising Policy for direction.

## **Building Use Agreement:**

A formal Building Use Agreement defines the user's obligations to maintain and safeguard the building, indemnify the Church and properly insure its activities. By signing, the user agrees:

- To not use the premises for any unlawful purposes, and to obey all laws, rules and regulations of all governmental authorities while using the facilities
- To abide by any rules and regulations established by FPC for use of its facilities including,
  - ✓ No alcoholic beverages consumed on church properties
  - ✓ No smoking inside the building or within 15 feet of an entrance
  - ✓ No controlled substances, drugs or weapons on church properties
  - ✓ No gambling activities, such as bingo or lotteries
  - ✓ No partisan political activities or campaigns
  - ✓ No use of candles unless approved by Building Use Commission (requires additional fee).
  - ✓ Receiving approval from Building Use Commission before affixing decorations or other items to any surface.
- To not use the premises for any purpose contrary to the mission, purpose or belief of FPC
- To assure that the conduct of all persons attending programs is respectful of the property, maintaining noise levels that respect others in adjoining spaces
- To respect ministry furniture and equipment (i.e. tables, chairs, projectors, laptops, microphones, etc.) purchased and owned by the church; these may not be removed from the premises
- To be solely responsible to protect children, youth and vulnerable adults attending user's function at the building. This includes adherence to FPC's Child Protection Policy for Outside Groups, as appropriate. (A copy will be provided to the user)

- To assure children in attendance are under the control of their parents or adults at all times and are not permitted to roam freely on church property
- To return to the pre-use condition all areas of the premises used by the user
- To be held responsible for any damages done to church property by the user/group
- To turn out lights and turn off appliances (fans, coffee maker, etc.) when you are finished
- To vacate the church building by time specified on the agreement.,
- To provide the Church Office with reasonable notice in the event of cancellation. The Building Use Commission will determine the refunding of fees based upon costs to the church.

The Building Use Agreement must be signed by both parties. Willful violation of any guidelines or regulations could lead to the loss of eligibility to use the building and loss of refunds.

### **Use of Audio/Visual Technology:**

Programs in the Sanctuary that require the use of the sound system must have one of the church's sound technicians on duty. There is a fee for this service.

If the group or organization is hiring a local audio/visual company, the hired company's sound technician must arrange a meeting with the church sound technician prior to the event to discuss the sound system and to review the program's sound requirements. If the audio/visual company is an out-of-town company, the company must e-mail or phone the church sound technician to discuss the sound system and to review the program's sound requirements prior to the event. An in-person meeting of the company's technician and the church sound technician may still be required before the event.

Concert volume levels are at the discretion of the sound technicians of First Presbyterian Church in consultation with the Director of Music and Arts.

**Building Use Fees:** Please refer to the FPC Building Use Fee Schedule

### **Liability Insurance:**

Groups or organizations requesting use of church facilities are required to provide a Certificate of Insurance showing a minimum liability coverage of \$1,000,000 and naming First Presbyterian Church of Davenport added as an "additional insured" for the date of the event. Individuals are strongly encouraged to have their own liability insurance.

First Presbyterian Church and/or its employees shall not be responsible for damage or loss of property on First Presbyterian Church premises sustained by applicant, a participant in a program, or anyone attending any program or event held on church property. By submitting the Building Use Request Form, the organization shall indemnify and hold First Presbyterian Church harmless from any claims arising from its use.

## **Child Protection Policy:**

For activities with children and youth under the age of eighteen (18), the church's Child and Youth Protection Policy for Outside Groups must be adhered to. A copy will be provided. Important to note is that all groups must maintain a minimum of two background checked (2) adults present in supervisory roles at any time. The church can provide the background checks, at your request, at current rates prior to the event. If background checks are done by a different source, the church must receive copies of the reports prior to the event.

## **Church Responsibilities:**

Session (acting Board of Elders): Responsible for general supervision, management and control over all the affairs of the Church and exercise of specific authority to include:

- Approval of Building Use Guidelines and Procedures and implementation guidance, as delegated to the Building Use Commission.
- Enforcement of all provisions of this policy, as delegated to the Building Use Commission.
- Final decision authority for any disagreements over requested use.

### Church Staff:

- Building Use Requests for non-church related activities are to be submitted to the Director of Office Administration. The request will be forwarded to church staff for initial review. The request will then be forwarded to the Building Use Commission with staff recommendations.
- Shall comply with these guidelines and procedures.

### Director of Office Administration:

- With the staff, maintain church calendar.
- Receive Building Use Requests for non-church functions.
- Communicate final approval with those requesting use of the building.
- Check for completion of all requirements.
- Provide current information to the Director of Buildings and Grounds and other staff, as appropriate.

### Director of Buildings and Grounds:

- Confirm that all information on the Building Use Request form is accurate and current.
- Communicate event and room set-ups with custodial staff.
- Schedule custodial staff, as appropriate.