

# Wedding Guidelines

## Westminster United Methodist Church



At Westminster United Methodist Church (WUMC), we believe that **Christian marriage is a holy covenant** that is an expression of love and personal commitment. The marriage ceremony is a worship service that seeks God's blessing on this covenant.

It is not required that a couple seeking marriage be members of WUMC. Because of time constraints, not all requests can be honored.

To schedule a wedding, please complete the **Wedding Request** form and mail it or take it to the church office **at least six months prior to your wedding date** with a **deposit of \$150 (held and refunded following your payment(s) made in full)** to reserve the date. Prior to submitting the form, feel free to first call the administrative assistant in the church office with any questions and/or to determine availability of your chosen date. Once your wedding date is confirmed by the church, please:

- 1) contact the church organist, and
- 2) start completing the **Wedding Information** form. Bring a draft to your meeting with the officiating pastor, and provide a final copy to the church office at least two months prior to your wedding.

### Officiating Pastor

Before the wedding date is confirmed, a couple should contact one of the Westminster United Methodist Church pastors to arrange for a consultation. Because we want your marriage to last a lifetime, we require you to complete pre-marital counseling, either by a pastor or by a licensed counselor (with a letter of certification stating the counseling was completed).

### The Marriage License

The **Marriage License** must be obtained from the **Clerk's Office at Carroll County Circuit Court** and given to the officiating pastor **at least two weeks prior to the ceremony**. See <http://mdcourts.gov/clerks/carroll/marriage.html> for more information about the marriage license.

### The Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is typically held **the night before the wedding** and lasts about an hour. It is attended by the pastor, the wedding consultant, the organist, and all members of the wedding party (including parents and young children). Please make sure to ask all members of your wedding party to be on time, as the rehearsal may need to proceed without them if they are late. (The bride or groom can't miss the rehearsal, however; it wouldn't be the same without them.)

## **The Ceremony**

The couple will be invited to select portions of the ceremony in consultation with the pastor. Any additional readings, etc., must be submitted to and approved by the pastor at least a month in advance of the ceremony. The pastor will create the order of worship. **Children are welcome to participate** in the ceremony, provided that everyone understands that they are children and may require extra attention and understanding. Please ask that all family members and members of the wedding party plan to arrive **at least a half hour ahead of time** in case of unanticipated problems with transportation.

## **Our Facilities**

The seating capacity in the sanctuary is 450. The length of the center aisle is 60'. To prevent damage to the carpet, no rice, confetti, flower petals or bird seed may be thrown in the building. **Outside, only bubbles may be used.** Due to safety reasons, aisle runners are not permitted. Because they are a tripping hazard, hard to unroll and keep straight, and hence unattractive, aisle runners are not permitted. A chapel, accommodating 25 people, with a piano, is also available for weddings. Dressing rooms for the bride and groom and their attendants are available. Alcohol and illegal drugs are not permitted on church property, either inside or outside. Smoking is not permitted by anyone inside the building.

## **Music**

Music should serve to enhance the consciousness of God's presence, both in the minds of those who witness and those who participate in the service. In addition to the organ, there is a grand piano and a Clavinova in the sanctuary. The church organist should be asked first to play. (The use of any other organist must be approved by our church organist.) It is the couple's responsibility to contact the organist, well in advance of the wedding date, to discuss choice of wedding music. The organist or pastor can provide names of capable soloists and instrumentalists, if desired. If the sound system is needed for playing recorded music on CDs, the wedding consultant should be advised of this, as a trained sound system operator may be needed (for an additional fee).

## **The Wedding Consultant**

The Wedding Consultants at Westminster UMC take pride in the appearance of the ceremony and the details involved in the planning process. One of the consultants will attend the rehearsal and the marriage ceremony. Prior to the marriage, the consultant is available to assist with details such as candles, flowers, and other decorations. Due to the nature of planning a worshipful wedding at WUMC, we do not plan wedding ceremonies with outside wedding coordinators, or with family members or friends as a substitute for the bride/groom. It is the couple's responsibility to maintain contact with the Wedding Consultant during the months leading up to the wedding.

## **Flowers**

Flowers may be placed on the altar table (30" x 60") and/or in the narthex (two 12"x 12" tables). As the church has a plant-free and flower-free policy for Sunday worship (so that no one is excluded from worship due to allergies), artificial plants or flowers are preferred. When engaging a florist, be sure your florist coordinates delivery with the church, well in advance of your ceremony. Before leaving the premises, please remove flowers and other items you brought with you, or they will be discarded.

## Candles

The candle choices supplied by the church are:

- 1) Two large candles on the altar (which we use for Sunday services), either brass or pewter, or
- 2) Two free standing black wrought iron candelabras with 7 candles each that are placed on either side of the altar (this is usually the choice for weddings).

## Additional Candles and Symbols

- 1) If desired, a couple may supply their own Unity candle with two side candles and a holder. These will be placed on the altar. An example of how this might happen is that the mothers of the bride and groom come forward before the wedding procession begins and light the two side candles. During the service, the couple will light the Unity candle from the two side candles (so they must be easily removable from the holder).
- 2) Other creative symbols of your union may be used in place of a Unity candle and should be discussed with the pastor. These can include such things as a hand joining ceremony, braiding a common rope, or mixing colored sand.

## Photography

**No flash pictures** may be taken in the sanctuary during the wedding ceremony, **except during the processional and recessional**. Pictures without flash may be taken during the ceremony from the balcony, provided the photographer is discreet and unobtrusive. Remember, your wedding ceremony is not just an opportunity for pictures; it is a worship service in which you stand before God and pledge your lives to one another. ***Your photographer should not become the center of attention on your special day.*** Flash photographs may be taken of the wedding party, families, and friends after the worship service is over. If you would like the pastor to be in your photographs, please let the pastor and photographer know ahead of time and kindly take the pastor's photo with the couple soon after the service. Existing-light videography should be done very discreetly from a fixed tripod, either in the balcony or behind the pulpit or lectern. It is the responsibility of the families to advise photographers and guests of these guidelines in order to avoid embarrassment or misunderstanding.

## Church Addresses

The physical address of the main church building for invitations is 165 E. Main Street (or the intersection of E. Main and Center Streets), Westminster, MD 21157. The church's mailing address, and the location of the church offices, is 162 E. Main Street (across Main Street from the main church building.)

## Bulletin

If a bulletin is desired, it may be prepared by the couple or by the church. The pastor can assist with wording and the order of the service. If the bulletin is prepared by the church, there will be a cost for this service. If you want to purchase your own bulletin covers, you may do so. Please bring them to the church office, along with the content for the bulletin, to the church office no later than two weeks prior to the ceremony. If the bulletin is prepared by the couple, it should be approved by the pastor prior to completion.

## Reception

Our social hall, **Jubilee Hall, is available for receptions.** The seating capacity is 225. A caterer may be hired – the church does not provide catering services. The couple is responsible for breakage or damage to equipment. Again, **alcohol and smoking are not permitted.** If Jubilee Hall is reserved, the couple is responsible for contacting the WUMC Kitchen Coordinator.

## Custodial Services

It is critical that following a wedding the sanctuary and other areas of the church building be cleaned and made ready for worship services and other activities. Custodial services for all necessary preparations and clean-up are included in the fee schedule and may not be waived.

## Required Fees

**Fees are due two months prior to the wedding.** The basic fee for **non-church members** includes use of the building for the rehearsal and ceremony, the pastor, the wedding coordinator, the organist, and the custodian. The fees should be **paid by checks made out directly to each individual and given to the officiating pastor at your premarital counseling session or consultation.** On rare occasions, the pastor may adjust the fees.

If you are a **WUMC or Union Street United Methodist church member**, you are only charged for the organist, wedding consultant, and custodian. You are not charged fees for the building, ceremony, or pastor, as it is assumed that you are already supporting your church. However, if you wish, you may make additional gifts to the glory of God and in honor of your marriage, paid by check made payable to *Westminster United Methodist Church.*

### Basic fees for non-church members:

Use of sanctuary –OR– chapel	\$ 250 –OR– \$ 150
Pastor’s honorarium	\$ 350 to be paid directly to the clergy, day of event
Organist	\$ 200
Wedding coordinator	\$ 50
Custodian	\$ 50

*The total cost for non-members will be \$900 for a ceremony in the sanctuary and \$800 for a ceremony in the chapel.*

### Basic fees for WUMC/Union St. members (organist, wedding consultant, custodian):

Pastor’s honorarium	\$ at your discretion; paid directly to clergy, day of event
Organist	\$ 200
Wedding coordinator	\$ 50
Custodian	\$ 50

*The total cost for church members will be \$300, plus pastor’s honorarium, for a ceremony in the sanctuary or chapel.*

**Additional fees for all:**

Jubilee Hall for reception	\$ 200
Custodian, if using Jubilee Hall for reception	\$ 50 (required)
Additional organist fee for rehearsal with musicians	\$ 50 per musician/soloist
Sound system engineer (if needed)	\$ 50
Bulletins on cardstock paper	\$ 50
Bulletins on standard paper	\$ 25
Bulletins on paper you provide	\$ 15

**Contact Information**

Church Office	162 E. Main Street Westminster, MD 21157 410-848-8325 or 410-876-2124 <a href="http://www.wumcmd.org">www.wumcmd.org</a>
Pastors	Rev. Malcolm Stranathan 443-660-66006 <a href="mailto:M.Stranathan@wumcmd.org">M.Stranathan@wumcmd.org</a>  Rev. Shari McCourt 410-596-4040 <a href="mailto:ShariMcCourt@aol.com">ShariMcCourt@aol.com</a>
Administrative Assistant	Sherri Haines Church office, ext. 10 <a href="mailto:S.Haines@wumcmd.org">S.Haines@wumcmd.org</a>
Organist	Peggy Brengle 410-848-4902 <a href="mailto:P.Brengle@wumcmd.org">P.Brengle@wumcmd.org</a>
Wedding Consultant	Sue Thomas 410-848-2860 <a href="mailto:susanhthomas@aol.com">susanhthomas@aol.com</a>
Wedding Consultant and Kitchen Coordinator	Cindy Potee 410-795-3610 <a href="mailto:cpotee@verizon.net">cpotee@verizon.net</a>

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