

## **WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WEDDING POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

A wedding is a joyous and holy occasion as two people unite their lives to form a Christian union. Marriage is a gift God has given all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a man and a woman. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage, a lifelong commitment is made by man and a woman to each other, publicly witnessed, and acknowledged by the community of faith.

The procedures set forth herein, at the direction of the Session, are meant to answer questions about your wedding. To ensure this, we wish to share with you the following policies and guidelines. In addition, our pastor, church office staff, and wedding coordinator will assist you in answering your questions.

### **ARRANGEMENTS**

All arrangements for a wedding should be initiated through the church office. After receiving the Wedding Information form from the couple and checking both the calendars of the pastor and the church for the tentative wedding date, please call for an appointment with the pastor. The wedding date must be available on both the calendar of the pastor and church.

Church office address:	1360 W. Main, Decatur, IL 62522
Church office phone:	217-428-6603
Church fax:	217-428-2580
Church E-mail address:	<a href="mailto:wpcdecaturnet@sbcglobal.net">wpcdecaturnet@sbcglobal.net</a>
Church office hours:	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday
Administrative Secretary:	Mrs. Pat Starbird
Pastor:	Reverend Steve Hill <a href="mailto:wprevsbcglobalnet">wprevsbcglobalnet</a>
Organist:	Mrs. Rose Marie Thompson 423-2470
Custodian:	Mr. Thomas "Skip" Mower

## **POLICIES OF WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

The Session has the final authority in making decisions regarding weddings at Westminster. The Session has established particular responsibilities listed below:

### **Westminster Presbyterian Pastors:**

Ordinarily the Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church will perform the ordinance of marriage. Should another minister be requested to participate by the couple, he or she must be recommended by the Pastor and approved by the Session before an invitation is made. If a minister other than the pastor from Westminster Presbyterian Church assists or officiates in the wedding ceremony, he or she will abide by the wedding policies of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

### **Wedding Coordinator:**

The church will provide a wedding coordinator to coordinate usage and arrangements of the church facility, and to assist the pastor with the rehearsal and the wedding. The coordinator, he/she has particular responsibilities (see Wedding Coordinator Duties).

### **Weddings for Non-Members:**

Ordinarily, weddings for nonmembers are accepted at the discretion of the Pastor. A deposit of \$200 is required to hold the date.

### **Premarital Pastoral Counseling Required**

Premarital counseling of the couple is required and should be arranged with the minister who officiates at the wedding. Normally this consists of three (3) one-hour meetings. If a minister other than a Westminster Presbyterian minister is officiating, he or she will be responsible for counseling.

## FACILITIES

Sanctuary - Largest facility and is used for large weddings. It seats 500 guests

Blue Chapel - Available for smaller weddings. Its seats 100 guests.

Pratt Chapel – More intimate atmosphere. It seats 30 guests.

- The symbols of worship must remain visible in all three locations so that the integrity of the worship space is maintained.
- Dressing rooms and bathrooms are available for the wedding party. Full-length mirrors are available. Food may be brought in for the wedding party prior to the ceremony; however, it must be prearranged with the Wedding Coordinator.
- Simple sewing and first aid kits will be available for emergencies.
- A kneeling bench is available.
- A wedding banner is available.

## MUSIC

The music is a traditional and beautiful part of the ceremony. The music should direct attention to God, and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent, as well as expressing the joyous nature of the ceremony.

The church organist shall ordinarily play at all weddings. Should it be necessary to engage a substitute, the choice shall be subject to the approval of the Pastor, and an invitation is issued by the Pastor. The Organist must be on the church's approved organists list or be able to demonstrate a familiarity with five manual organs. If approved, the requested organist will be contacted by the Westminster organist.

If a soloist is used, the organist will arrange rehearsal time with the soloist prior to the wedding rehearsal. Ordinarily secular selections should be pre-service only with sacred music during the service. Non-sacred music must convey the Christian dimensions of love and marriage. Upon request, the organist will provide a listing of appropriate materials. The list, however may not be all inclusive, and the prospective couple may suggest additional selections for approval. Exceptions to these guidelines for service music must be approved by the Westminster Presbyterian Church organist.

Musical selections using other acoustical instruments may be used (amplified guitars shall not be used). The same guidelines as for other music also apply in this instance.

If special tuning of either the piano and/or the organ is requested for a wedding, the work must be done by the Church's contracted tuners/technicians. If this special tuning does not coincide with the regular tuning maintenance of the instrument, the wedding party will assume this fee.

Decisions regarding music shall rest with the Pastor in consultation with the Church organist.

## PHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEOS, AND RECORDINGS

Wedding pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary before the guests arrive and after the ceremony.

Since the marriage ceremony is a service of worship, no flash photographs may be taken during the processional and the ceremony. **Time exposures, quietly executed from the balcony or rear of the Sanctuary** are allowed, **provided the photographer remains unobtrusive.** If audio cassette tape recording is desired, arrangements should be made in advance with the pastor, and a cassette tape is to be provided. Video tape recording **without additional lighting** is permitted from the balcony. A video camera may also be inconspicuously placed at the side of the choir loft.

## **DECORATIONS AND FLOWERS**

Arrangements must be made through the wedding coordinator at least two weeks prior to the ceremony. The florist should arrange a time through the church office when the sanctuary is to be decorated. The church office staff or wedding coordinator must approve the decorations two weeks prior to the ceremony.

Decorations should be in keeping with the nature of the service and preserve the atmosphere of worship. The items that establish this as a place of Christian worship should not be obscured; specifically, the decorations are not to cover the Communion Table, Baptismal Font, or the Pulpit.

Floral arrangements are permitted in the chancel area. Protective measures must be taken with the use of plants and floral arrangements to assure the furnishings are not damaged. Floral arrangements are not allowed on the Communion Table (except small arrangements on the unity candle) or organ; however, floral stands are available in the chancel area.

If the floral arrangements are to be left for the Sunday worship service, please indicate on the attached information form.

There are two seven-branch candelabra for use in the chancel area and 14 pew candlesticks. The church can provide white candles for the pew candlesticks at a cost of \$1.00 each. Candles for the candelabra are furnished.

No nails, screws, thumbtacks, staples, or sticky tape may be used in any part of the church nor may any carpentry work or other temporary construction be erected. All surfaces must be protected from wax, water, scars, marks or other damage. Any damage to the buildings or furnishings will be the responsibility of those who have engaged the church facilities.

## **REHEARSAL**

The officiating pastor assisted by the wedding coordinator is in charge of the rehearsal and will explain all procedures. Ordinarily the rehearsal is held at 5:00 p.m. the night before the wedding and is expected to last one hour.

The prospective couple is responsible for ensuring that all participants in the wedding rehearsal (attendants, groomsmen, ushers, relatives, organist, soloist, etc.) are prompt and on time for the rehearsal. The couple is to contact the officiating minister at least two weeks in advance if any changes are desired for the time of the rehearsal. Every effort will be made to accommodate the change.

Alcoholic beverages and members of the wedding party under the influence of alcohol are not permitted on church property; smoking is not permitted in the church. If the pastor is invited to attend the rehearsal dinner and/or wedding reception, the invitation

should be extended several weeks in advance so that the pastor can let the couple know if he or she can attend.

### RECEPTIONS

The Fellowship Hall, Parlor or Library Lounge are available for receptions. Catering arrangements should be discussed with the church office staff.

Church kitchen equipment may be used. However, the caterer must be licensed by the City of Decatur. Complete cleanup of the reception area and the kitchen equipment is required. The couple will be held responsible for any breakage or other damage. An extra fee of \$50 may be charged for the use of the kitchen.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The marriage license should be brought to the church office at least three days prior to the wedding, unless other arrangements have been made. In Illinois, the marriage license is valid for 30 days and must be obtained at the Macon County Clerk's office in Decatur

**The building must be left in the condition it was found.**

- **All decorations should be removed immediately after the ceremony. The areas are to be left neat and clean.**
- **Wedding bulletins will be printed only for church members. If the church staff is to publish a bulletin the couple must furnish the information and bulletin cover two weeks prior to the wedding day. The information presented must be on a computer disk or copy ready. One week before the wedding, the couple is responsible for proofing the master copy.**
- **The bride is responsible for notifying the florist or outside decorator after contacting the church office when the Sanctuary may be decorated.**
- **It is the responsibility of the wedding families to communicate these policies to all the members of the wedding party and to all other parties involved in the preparation of the wedding.**
- **If the church facilities are damage or defaced by the wedding party or guests during the rehearsal, wedding or reception, the couple may be asked to reimburse the church for clean up or repairs.**
- **The building is a smoke-free facility.**
- **Alcoholic beverages or anyone under the influence of alcohol is not permitted on church property.**

## HONORARIUMS

In recognition of the time spent with the wedding couple for the counseling sessions, rehearsal, and wedding ceremony, suitable honorariums range from \$200-\$400 depending on the ability of the wedding couple to pay. Such an honorarium is made directly to the officiating pastor.

## THROWING OF RICE, ETC. – (not permitted)

We ask your courtesy in helping to keep our church facilities clean and litter free. The throwing of birdseed, rice, confetti, flower petals, or any other substance either inside or outside of the building is not permitted. The release of balloons or live animals is also prohibited. Bubbles are acceptable.

## WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WEDDING GUILD GUIDELINES

### BRIDE:

1. If pictures are to be taken before the wedding the bride will be at the church at least two hours before the ceremony.
2. Will know where the flowers are and will be told where to dress.
3. Will enter on her escort's left.
4. Will give her flowers to maid of honor as her escort steps back.
5. Will turn toward the groom after the benediction, take her flowers from the maid of honor, and take the groom's right arm.

### GROOM:

1. If pictures are to be taken before the wedding the groom will be at the church at least two hours before the ceremony, and wait for the Pastor, the best man, and groomsmen.
2. Will enter the sanctuary or chapel with the Pastor, best man and groomsmen.
3. Will stand with hands folded in the front and face entry of the bride.
4. Will turn toward the bride as she reaches the chancel.
5. Will turn toward the bride after the benediction and offer her his right arm.

### MATRON/MAID OF HONOR (HONOR ATTENDANT)

1. Assist the bride in any way needed.
2. Receive the bride's flowers as her escort steps back.
3. Give the bride her flowers after the benediction and straighten her train or gown.
4. Be responsible for the groom's ring.
5. Will take the best man's right arm.

### BEST MAN

1. If pictures are to be taken before the wedding the best man should be at the church two hours before the ceremony.
2. Get boutonnieres, and wait for the groom and minister.
3. Be responsible for the bride's ring.
4. Follow the groom and minister into the sanctuary or chapel.
5. Escort the Matron/Maid of Honor after the benediction and offer her his right arm.

### BRIDESMAIDS:

1. If pictures are to be taken the bridesmaids should be at the church at least two hours before the ceremony.
2. Dress and find flowers.
3. Assemble at least 20 minutes before the wedding in the parlor or other designated place.
4. Enter in the order determined by the bride and wedding coordinator.
5. Face the bride as she enters. Turn towards the bride as she reaches the chapel.
6. Allow half the length of sanctuary or chapel between bridesmaids on entry and exit, unless wedding coordinator says otherwise.

### USHERS:

1. Be at the church at least one hour before the ceremony, dressed and with gloves (if used).
2. Get boutonnieres.
3. Reserve pews in the front for family members.
4. Light candles 30 minutes prior to the ceremony. Light candles from the outside toward the center. \*If candles are lit for the wedding pictures, they must be extinguished and relit 30 minutes before the wedding.
5. Stand by the doors ready to usher guests.
6. SMILE. (If appropriate make polite conversation with guests.)
7. Remind guests with cameras not to take flash pictures during the processional and wedding ceremony. Pictures may be taken after the ceremony.
8. Escort all ladies (girls over 12) on the right arm. (Remain standing at the end of the pew until guest is seated.)
9. Escort all single men by walking in front of them.
10. Divide all guests evenly on both sides except at guest's request: bride's side on the left and groom's side on the right.
11. Seat family members as follows:  
Mother of the Bride: Left side, her choice of 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> row  
(SEATED LAST)  
Mother of the Groom: Right side, across from the mother of the bride  
Grandparents of Bride: Directly behind the mother of the bride  
Grandparents of Groom: Directly behind the mother of the groom  
(The wedding coordinator may need to give special instructions for seating family members as appropriate.)

12. Seat no guests after the bride's mother has been seated. (Late guests may stand or slip in the side aisle at the back only.)
13. Escort remaining family members after the recessional by designated ushers. (The wedding coordinator will instruct the ushers.)
14. After the guests have departed, extinguish all candles.

GROOMSMEN:

1. If pictures are to be taken before the wedding be at the church at least two hours before the ceremony.
2. Get boutonnieres.
3. Stand with hands folded in front or hands down...all the same way.
4. Face the bride as she enter and turn towards her as she reaches the chancel.
5. Exit the sanctuary or chapel after the wedding extending the right arm to the bridesmaid.

LAY READER:

The wedding couple may wish to have a friend or family member read scripture or a poem which is appropriate to the occasion. The request must be approved by the officiating minister.

ASSISTING MINISTER: If the couple desires another minister to assist the officiating pastor, that request shall be approved by the Session upon the recommendation of the Pastor.