

Westminster
Presbyterian Church
Dayton, Ohio

Weddings



Marriage Covenant

Marriage is a covenant: a commitment and a promise between two people to live their lives together. It is also a gift: given and blessed by God so that two persons can live their lives together in service and discipleship before God.

As covenant and a gift, marriage is to be celebrated with joy and gratitude, throughout life and in the wedding service itself. Thus, the service as a whole, and all of its parts, is an act of worship.



To be married at Westminster, at least one party must be a member of the church, or belong to a family with active membership. An exception can be made for an active member of a Dayton-area Presbyterian church that is too small for the anticipated number of guests. The pastor of that church should make the request.



First Steps

Contacting the Church

Please call **Amanda Newhart** at the church (**937-223-7285**, **anewhart@westminsterdayton.org**) during business hours, (M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.). Amanda will help you to reserve a date and secure a pastor to officiate the service. The church calendar does not allow weddings on December 24, 25, 26, 31, January 1 or during Holy Week.

Meeting with Your Pastor

You will have at least two conferences with your officiating pastor. The purposes of these are (1) to provide guidance and counsel for your married life, and (2) to plan and develop the service.

As you plan the service with the officiating pastor, you will consider Scripture passages or other readings during the service, hymns, the homily, whether or not the Lord's supper will be celebrated, vows, ushers (usually one per 50 guests), the wedding bulletin (the officiating pastor approves; you are responsible for the printing), and the roles of other participants in the service. A pastor, rabbi, or priest may be assist in the service, with the approval and invitation of the officiating pastor.

Music

You will also meet with Associate Pastor for Music, **Rev. John Neely**. Please contact him by phone at the church during office hours on Tuesday through Friday, or by email, : **john@westminsterdayton.org**.

As you plan with Rev. Neely, you will consider musical selections, hymns, soloists, and congregational participation. **Please do not invite soloists or musicians to participate in the service prior to this meeting.** There is an additional fee for the participation of Westminster Choir soloists or ensembles, (see fee schedule). Music should focus on God with the joy, reverence, dignity, and integrity consistent with worship and the music ministry of Westminster. Rev. Neely has final approval of all music.

The Big Day and the Day Before

The rehearsal, which typically runs about 45 minutes, is normally held on the day before the wedding between 4 and 7 pm. Because the rehearsal covers the entire service, it is important that everyone arrive on time. **Remember to bring the marriage license and the printed bulletins!**

You will be assisted by two volunteer Westminster Wedding Coordinators. They will be at the church 15 minutes before the rehearsal and one hour before the wedding.

In the following paragraphs, you will find information about the big day itself: church facilities, fees, decorations, guidelines for photographers, videographers, and florists, and instructions for ushers.

Westminster Presbyterian Church is pleased to be part of this new beginning in your life.

We pray for God to bless you both on the big day and in all the days ahead.

Building Hours

The church building will be open and available to the wedding participants beginning 2 ½ hours before the wedding. It will remain open for a total of four hours. Time needed beyond the allotted four hours will increase the fee for the sexton (see fee schedule).

Photographers, Videographers, and Audio Recordings

A professional photographer is welcome to document the wedding while following the procedures listed below. We request that each check with the officiating pastor at least 45 minutes prior to the wedding to discuss any last-minute details.

1. Photographs of arriving guests may not be taken in the Narthex, Sanctuary (or Chapel).

2. Photographs may not be taken on the main floor of the Sanctuary (or the Chapel) before or during the wedding service, with the exception of one picture of the bride and escort may be taken (by the professional photographer only) between pews #40 and 41 as the procession enters the Sanctuary.

3. Photographs of the processional may be taken as it forms in the Narthex. Photographs of the recessional may also be taken, if the photographer remains in the Narthex.

4. During the wedding service, photographs using available light only (no flash) and minimum bracketing may be taken from the Sanctuary balcony or the Narthex (or from the Chapel Reception Room for Chapel weddings).

5. Formal posed pictures of the wedding party may be taken in the Sanctuary (or the Chapel) up to 60 minutes after the wedding service. The photographer is asked to begin setting up for this "shoot" only after the last member of the congregation has exited the Sanctuary (or Chapel).

If such a photo session is to be held in the Sanctuary (or Chapel) before the arrival of the wedding guests, arrangements should be made with Amanda Newhart at the time when the wedding is scheduled. If photos in the Sanctuary (or Chapel) are taken before the wedding service, they must be completed 45 minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin.

6. Photographers may set up backdrops and take photographs in the West Parlor, Fellowship Hall, or a classroom at any time the building is open on the day of the wedding.

7. If you would like the officiating clergy to be included in any photographs, please make that request prior to the wedding day.

8. After the wedding service has been completed, flash pictures may be taken in any area of the church. Portions of the wedding service may be reenacted at this time if desired.

9. Videographers must work from the balcony.

Guests should not use phones or video equipment during the service.

Recordings

If you would like a recording of your service through the church recording equipment, please contact Amanda Newhart at least two weeks prior to the wedding. There is an additional fee for recording the service.

Flowers and Decorations

Your florist should check with Amanda Newhart regarding plans for decorating the Sanctuary (or the Chapel) and for flower delivery.

Outside the Sanctuary

The two sets of railings (2 outside railings and 4 inside railings) leading up to the Narthex should not be decorated as many people rely on them as they enter the building.

In the Sanctuary

We recommend that flowers be placed only in the Sanctuary flower urns (requires liners measuring 10" across and 6" high). Flowers may not be placed on the Sanctuary (or Chapel) communion table.

Simple flower arrangements or ribbons may mark reserved pews. Please use clips or high quality masking tape (not wire, nails, or scotch tape) to attach the flowers. Scattering of flower petals are not permitted.

If you desire to keep the floral decorations from your wedding, please make arrangements to have them removed immediately following the wedding service; if you wish to leave the flowers in the Sanctuary urns for worship on Sunday, please let Amanda know.

Candles

Two freestanding seven-branch candelabras for the chancel area and 18 aisle candles are available for your use. Aisle candles are placed every fifth pew in the Sanctuary – 9 on each side of the main aisle. If candles are desired on the outside aisles in the Sanctuary, they are placed every sixth row – a total of 12. The candles will be supplied by the church but are an additional expense (see Fee Schedule).

The use of additional candles (other than those provided by the church) or extra lighting devised for special effects is not permitted.

The Building

The Sanctuary

Our Sanctuary seats 1,200 people. Ten people sit comfortably in each pew. The aisle is 103 ft. long.

The Chapel

Our Chapel seats 80 people. Five people sit comfortably in each pew. The aisle is 35 ft. long. Note that there is limited room for attendants, usually six or less in addition to the pastor and the couple to be married.

Dressing Rooms

A room off Heritage Hall (below the Narthex) is available and typically used by the bride and her attendants prior to the service. It will be available 2 ½ hours before the wedding. The West Parlor (beyond the Sanctuary in the SW corner of the church) is also available and is often used by the groom and groomsmen before the service.

These rooms will be locked during the service. Please remember to remove your belongings after the service.

Parking

Free parking is available for 100 cars in the church's lot which is located on First Street across from the entrance of the church. Ample free parking is also available near the church.

Assisted Access

Westminster is handicapped-accessible on its southwest corner (Perry St.). You may enter through the Chapel entrance and use the elevator (at the end of the hall) to the Sanctuary level. Pews 21 and 22 in the Sanctuary accommodate wheelchairs. Handicapped parking is also available outside the Chapel entrance on Perry Street.

Child Care

Two Child-care Coordinators for infants and children through age four. Requests must be made to Amanda Newhart at least two weeks prior to the wedding. In the request, please indicate the number of children anticipated. See the Fee Schedule for cost.

Reception and Food Service

If you desire a reception in Fellowship Hall, please schedule this with Amanda Newhart at least one month prior to the wedding date.

Miscellaneous Information

Confetti, Rice, Balloons, etc.

Throwing rice, birdseed, or confetti (etc.) and launching balloons is not permitted on church property. Bubbles are permitted outside the church building.

Smoking and Drinking

The church is a smoke-free and an alcohol-free facility. Smokers will be asked to smoke no closer to church entrances than the sidewalk surrounding the church. Alcohol should not be included in any pre-wedding parties on the day of the wedding or before a rehearsal. The use of alcohol is prohibited on church property. If the use of alcohol or other drugs is affecting the actions of anyone in the wedding party, the pastor may refuse to perform the wedding service.

Ministerial Protocol

Without an invitation, the officiating pastor and organist will not assume their own participation in rehearsal dinners or receptions.

