



Westminster
Presbyterian Church

A HANDBOOK FOR YOUR WEDDING

Dear Friends:

Congratulations on your engagement! These are exciting days for you as you work together to plan a special day for yourselves, your families, and your friends. We are so glad that the church is a part of your beginning life together as a married couple.

This handbook provides essential information for planning your wedding at Westminster Presbyterian Church. In preparation for your wedding, and before meeting with the minister who will preside, I invite you to read this entire booklet.

A wedding at Westminster is a worship service, a sacred event that reflects the same commitment to dignity and beauty for which this church community has become known over the years in its Sunday morning worship services. Westminster's ministers and organist are committed to upholding the highest standards of worship and music in all that we do. Westminster's wedding coordinator will also be very helpful to you in planning many of the logistical elements of your wedding day at Westminster.

We look forward to journeying with you in preparation for your commitment of marriage, and celebrating with you the gift of love expressed in the worship of God.

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Meghan K. Gage-Finn | Executive Associate Pastor

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | westminsternpls.org

Mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org

1200 Marquette Avenue | Minneapolis, MN 55403

(612) 332-3421

WEDDING COORDINATOR

Westminster's Wedding Ceremony Coordinator will help to make sure your wedding ceremony goes smoothly and guide you through the procedures and policies established by the church. Any matters of decorum or etiquette need to be discussed with the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator, who has the right and responsibility to state and interpret the church's policies and procedures to photographers, videographers, florists, and others involved with your wedding in keeping with the standards to which you have agreed.

The Wedding Ceremony Coordinator is available by telephone or appointment throughout the planning process. This person will contact you approximately 2-3 months before the ceremony to schedule an appointment to finalize plans for your wedding ceremony, and will welcome contact so that you have ongoing support throughout the process

The Wedding Ceremony Coordinator is present for your rehearsal and receives your packet of license & certificates, checks, printed programs and guest book at that time. This person also directs the processional, coordinates signals with the organist, minister and wedding party, instructs the ushers in their role, and assists your group in feeling comfortable with the process.

On your wedding day, Wedding Ceremony Coordinator checks the setup with the custodians, prepares the license/certificates for signatures, checks the florist's work, is available for each person in the couple, the wedding party, photographers or videographers, assists the ushers, directs the seating of grandparents, parents and step-parents, directs and coordinates the processional, and processes the signed license.

EARLY PLANNING FOR YOUR WEDDING

Setting the date and obtaining clergy

Your wedding date is confirmed upon receipt of \$100 non-refundable deposit for either the sanctuary or chapel. The Sanctuary can seat approximately 1,200 people; however, weddings of any size can be accommodated suitably in the Sanctuary. The Chapel seats 150 people maximum.

Policy dictates Westminster's clergy, or approved clergy of Westminster's choosing, will perform the services. Given special circumstances, clergy from other churches and traditions may be invited by the clergy to participate in the ceremony. If that is your wish, discuss it at your first meeting with the minister. Any other officiating clergy must be registered in the state of Minnesota.

Your initial inquiry to the church will be directed to the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator, who will tell you if your preferred date is available on the church calendar. If you have a preference for a certain minister, we will let you know if that person is available to conduct your service. If you have no preference at that time, a follow up letter will inform you which minister you should contact. It will be your responsibility to set up a meeting with that minister.

Marriage Preparation

The purpose of the couple's initial meeting with the minister is to discuss and confirm plans. Further counseling and meetings with the minister will be scheduled at that time. Alternatively, counseling may be scheduled with the Westminster Counseling Center.

Marriage License

The marriage license & certificate are given to the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator at the rehearsal and signed by two witnesses, typically the maid/matron of honor, best man, and minister following the wedding ceremony.

The Wedding Ceremony Coordinator will process the license with the county where you registered, which will mail you an official, certified copy of the license approximately two weeks after the ceremony.

Music

Music for your wedding should reflect the nature of the ceremony as a worship service. All music performed at Westminster weddings, instrumental or vocal, is chosen in consultation with the minister and organist, and must be approved by them. You should schedule a conference with the organist several months before the wedding to choose music. Call 612-332-3421 to make arrangements. Our policy provides that Westminster's organist/pianist, or one of their choosing, play for all weddings when music is desired. Please also be in consultation with the minister and organist before you hire other instrumental soloists or ensembles.

Photography

It is important to share Westminster's policy on photography with your photographer prior to signing any contract. Pictures may be taken beginning 2 ½ hours before the service and must be completed 30 minutes before the service in the Chapel or 45 minutes in the Sanctuary. If you choose to have photos taken following the service, your photographer may do so for one hour following the service.

The photographer must do all in their power to maintain and uphold the warmth and beauty of the service by remaining as unobtrusive as possible. During the procession, the

photographer may take pictures from the tiled area of the narthex. Once the service begins, the photographer must remain behind the last row of pews and/or in the balcony of the Sanctuary, staying out of the sightline of the guests. There will be absolutely no photography from the aisles and no flash pictures during the ceremony. Your photographer may resume taking flash pictures at the recession from the narthex or behind the last row of pews. Photography equipment should not clutter the worship space during the ceremony; the wedding coordinator can show photographers where to store equipment.

Video

Two video cameras are permitted during the service. The video camera must be staffed and on a tripod. In the Sanctuary, it must be placed in the balcony no further forward than the railed platform, or behind the last row of pews on the main floor, out of the sightline of the guests. Please be aware that the Sanctuary is dimly lit for most weddings. In the Chapel, it can be in the choir area to the right of the communion table or on the side in the rear. All equipment must be in place at least 40 minutes prior to the service. The photographer must dress appropriately, remain stationary, and be as unobtrusive as possible throughout the service. No videotaping by guests is permitted from pews.

Audio

Westminster has equipment to record the service if the wedding is in the Sanctuary. If you would like this service, please advise the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator. There is a \$15.00 fee and it must be scheduled in advance.

Decorations

Flowers

Please ask your florist to be finished 30 minutes before your scheduled time to begin photos if they will be taken preceding the service, one hour if photos are to be taken following the service.

Two brass vases are available for use in either the Sanctuary or Chapel at no charge. The florist must provide liners measuring five inches across the top, two inches across the bottom and nine and a half inches tall. The brass vases need to be reserved with the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator.

A single arrangement is possible in the Chapel if you do not have a unity candle arrangement; however, it is blocked from view during the service. A single arrangement is not possible in the Sanctuary.

If you choose to use candles for pews, the church has installed six pairs of pew candleholders that have a permanent mounting bracket installed on the appropriate pews in

the Sanctuary and Chapel. (See below for candle rental details.) Please tell your florist that bows and/or greens must be attached to pew candleholders with a protective coated fastener. Raw wire or tape must not be used.

You may wish to arrange for someone to take the flowers from the church to your reception.

Aisle Runner

An aisle runner is not permitted in the Chapel or the Sanctuary for safety reasons.

Furniture

Furniture other than the communion table, baptismal font, and elder chairs may not be removed.

Candles

Westminster has two (seven-branch) candelabras for use in the Sanctuary or Chapel and six pairs of pew candleholders. All candle hardware includes chimneys. Since the fixtures are permanent, no outside accessories are to be used. Our prices for candles and their supporting accessories are as follows, and **must be rented from Westminster:**

- Six pairs pew candle holders (candle and chimney) **\$25.00 per pair (\$150.00)** all twelve
- Two candelabra (seven candles in each candelabra) **\$160.00 total**
- Use of the complete set of six pew sets and two candelabras **\$310.00**
- Neutral-colored candles are furnished with the accessories at no charge.

Please reserve any of the above through the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator.

If you desire to have a unity candle, you or your florist will need to provide the three-candle arrangement consisting of two identical tapers and a center (unity) pillar of a different height or width, all of which must be DRIPLESS candles. The arrangement is placed on a table beneath the pulpit in the Sanctuary and in the center of the table in the Chapel. We have holders and request that you do not rent a unity candle stand. If you, rather than the florist, provide the candles, they must be brought to the rehearsal.

Rehearsal & Ceremony

Printed Order of Worship

Many couples desire to have a printed bulletin for the wedding ceremony. In this case, the officiating minister and organist will assist with preparing the order of service. It is your responsibility to have the bulletins printed. The minister and organist will review and approve the bulletin before printing. Please bring the pre-folded printed programs to the rehearsal.

Children

Children can be a delightful addition to your wedding party, but consider the child's ability to sit through the duration of the ceremony. Children who are members of the wedding party must attend the rehearsal.

The Rehearsal

The purpose of the rehearsal is to acquaint members of the wedding party with their respective roles in the service so that the service itself may be conducted in a relaxed but worshipful manner.

Your rehearsal will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour. **Please** encourage everyone to be on time.

Please bring your license & certificates, printed programs, and guest book to the rehearsal. Please bring payment for fees associated with the wedding, including those for building use and honorariums. The Wedding Ceremony Coordinator will advise you of the amounts.

Please be certain everyone in your group knows the Nicollet Mall doors to the Sanctuary are not open for the rehearsal.

Ushers

It is important that ushers, parents and all members of the wedding party attend the rehearsal. You will need to plan on one usher for every 50 guests. Ushers should attend the rehearsal and must be present at the wedding 45 minutes before the service begins.

Dressing Rooms

On the day of your wedding, you will have access to two dressing rooms and the Chapel or Sanctuary 2.5 hours prior to your wedding. You will have a full hour for your ceremony. You may contact the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator if there is a conflict.

The dressing room space(s) for bride(s) will be equipped with an ironing board and iron.

You may bring non-alcoholic beverages and snacks for the wedding party to share in the dressing room before the wedding. Food and beverages are to be kept downstairs and are not allowed in the Sanctuary or Chapel. **Westminster is a smoke-free building and alcoholic beverages are not permitted.**

Receiving Line

Westminster discourages receiving lines if the reception is held outside the building. However, if you choose to greet your guests at Westminster, the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator will assist you with the location and placement of the receiving line.

Ceremony Fees

Payment of all fees is due at your wedding rehearsal.

Honoraria should be given to the clergy and the organist, soloist, musician, etc. or given to the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator. For other charges, make checks payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church and give to the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator.

Building Fees

- Non-Refundable Deposit \$100
- Chapel Wedding: Members \$750; Non-Members \$1000
- Sanctuary Wedding: Members \$1000; Non-Members \$1500
- [Rooms include Chapel** or Sanctuary*** and two dressing rooms]

Clergy/Organist Fees

- Organist Honorarium: Member- \$275; Non-Member \$325
- Clergy Honorarium: Member- \$350; Non-Member \$400

Recording & Candles (may be paid with the church fee)

- Audio Recording (Sanctuary only) \$15
- Candles (see page 8) varies

Receptions

Cake Reception

Westminster can provide space for a cake and coffee reception, and these reservations can be made with the Events Manager. Westminster can provide the room, coffee and condiments. Contact ggates@wpc-mpls.org for pricing and details.

Westminster Hall Reception

Westminster can provide space for a reception in Westminster Hall. Please work with the Events Manager on scheduling large, dinner receptions in Westminster Hall. Alcohol may only be served by a caterer with a liquor license. Contact ggates@wpc-mpls.org for pricing and details. You may also visit our website for more details: westminstermpls.org/space-rental/

Parking

Westminster cannot validate for parking at Orchestra Hall, Central Lutheran Church, or anywhere else. Westminster is not responsible for reimbursing for parking. Guests needing extra assistance to access the building should plan to be dropped off with help at one of the doors.

General Parking Information

- ***Parking is available free for wedding attendees for the ceremony only. Cars must be moved off site for the reception, unless reception is on site. Persons outside the building after hours (check with receptionist for hours) will not be able to access their cars through the building or garage. Unauthorized cars will be towed at owner's expense.***
- Entrance to the parking structure is off Alice Rainville Place (13th St) between Nicollet Mall and Marquette Avenue.
- Access to Alice Rainville Place only can be made **from the south** via Marquette Avenue or Nicollet Mall. There is no driving entrance to Nicollet Mall from 12th Street and Marquette Avenue is a one-way street south of 12th.
- The parking facility provides direct access to the church via a large, open staircase or bank of elevators making entry and exit safe and easy no matter the weather.
- There is a drop-off area off Marquette Avenue on the east side of the building.

Other Things to Know

Throwing of rice, confetti, birdseed, rose petals or release of balloons is not permitted.

No alcohol is allowed in the dressing rooms or parking lot. **Alcohol is only permitted at receptions when it is served by a licensed caterer.** Westminster is a smoke-free building. Firearms are not permitted.

A friend or family member should be designated to take care of any gifts or other items that are brought to church, as Westminster will not be responsible for loss or theft of gifts or any other personal items or clothing.

It is necessary that a designated person remove all items such as flowers and empty and pick up the dressing rooms within an hour of the ceremony. **Westminster is not responsible for property left on the premises and does not have the facilities or staff to store any equipment.**

Non-Member Wedding Policy

Westminster seeks to be an open, welcoming, vibrant church, worshipping in the heart of Downtown Minneapolis. With this in mind, we make our spaces available for wedding ceremonies and receptions to non-members, and for those who need the support of an open and welcoming faith community.

Westminster remains intentionally Christian and Reformed in its worship, and is, first, a community that worships and furthers ministry in our building. Therefore, couples wishing to be married here must have a wedding that is a service of worship to God, and will respect everything else that happens in our space. Furthermore, we expect that couples agree to certain theological convictions about marriage: that marriage is a gift given by God to the whole human family, regardless of gender or identity. Marriage is a covenant in which God plays an active part.

For those seeking to know more about membership at Westminster, you may contact Rev. Dr. Meghan K. Gage-Finn at mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org.

Timing and Building Usage

- 1) Non-Members may book their wedding no more than one year ahead. Westminster members may book out more than a year ahead.
- 2) There will not be more than one non-member wedding per weekend unless they are in different locations (chapel, sanctuary, etc.), and non-member weddings do not take place on Sundays.
- 3) Other events may happen in the building concurrently.
- 4) Wedding party may have access to the Chapel/Sanctuary and dressing rooms three hours in advance of the wedding.
- 5) Wedding ceremonies must take place between 4 pm and 6 pm.
- 6) Non-member wedding ceremonies may take place in Westminster Hall, the Chapel, or the Sanctuary, but not outdoors.
- 7) Outdoor spaces may be used for photos or informal gatherings, but no ceremonies or receptions will be held outside.

Worship and Officiants

- 1) Westminster will retain a list of clergy to perform non-member weddings, and at least one of these clergy persons must officiate and be the primary officiant if there are co-officiants.

- 2) Outside clergy must be approved before they may participate in non-member weddings. They will take a supporting role and will work with the Westminster's clergy in leadership on all liturgy.
- 3) Co-officiants of other faith traditions are welcome, pending approval and agreement in participating in a Christian ceremony.
- 4) A suggested liturgy will be provided to officiants, and must meet certain guidelines, including inclusive, equitable language.
- 5) Westminster must have an officiant agree to the date, and a \$500 non-refundable deposit must be collected before the wedding can be officially put on the calendar.
- 6) All non-member wedding music must be approved by the Westminster music department.
- 7) Westminster will provide a roster of musicians that may be used.

Wedding Coordinator

- 1) Non-member wedding ceremonies must work with Westminster's Wedding Ceremony Coordinator.
- 2) Non-members must work to schedule a meeting with the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator at least three months prior to their ceremony.

Receptions

See facilities use agreement. Westminster's Events Manager will work with couples on receptions.