

Weddings at Westminster

We're happy to be able to share in such joyous occasions!

Westminster believes marriage is a wonderful gift from God to couples. Weddings are regularly celebrated at Westminster Presbyterian Church, and we conduct ceremonies for members as well as non-members of our congregation.

If you would like to hold your wedding at Westminster, you should start by doing a few things:

1. Call the church office, 402-475-6702, to verify that your date is available.
2. If your date is available, please read through the Wedding Guidelines. We suggest that you print out the complete guidelines in order to have all the necessary information and forms.
3. Fill out the Wedding Reservation Request form located at the end of the Wedding Guidelines and return it to the church office with your deposit to reserve the date.

Westminster Presbyterian Church Wedding Guidelines

A wedding is one of the most important days in a person's life, and we want to make your wedding at Westminster Presbyterian Church (WPC) as wonderful as possible! Marriage is "instituted of God, regulated by God's commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be held in honor among all." Your wedding will be most meaningful to you and your family and friends when there is careful concern for the sanctity of the church and its services.

The marriage service within our church is a celebration of worship, therefore all plans, and arrangements should be in keeping with the nature of worship. Plans should be made as far in advance as possible.

Westminster's Session (governing council) approves weddings individually as a part of its task of overseeing worship in our facilities, while delegating responsibility for further determination regarding a wedding request by the pastoral staff. In conjunction with the PC(USA) Book of Order, we recognize that, "Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people... ** to love, support and teach each other for the rest of their lives." (Book of Order, G-4.0601). At Westminster, no couple will be denied the opportunity to be married based on race, sexual orientation, gender identity, or differing abilities. As Presbyterians we affirm, "The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person." (Book of Order, F-1.0403)

The Pastor, under his or her ecclesiastical authority, always has the final decision as to whether or not a wedding shall take place at WPC and there is no provision for an exception.

The Date & Time of Your Wedding

Before rehearsal and wedding dates can be considered confirmed, they must be communicated with:

1. The Church office to be certain the church is available at chosen rehearsal and ceremony times

2. The Pastor to be certain he/she is available and to determine the first of the counseling/planning meetings
3. The Wedding Coordinator to be certain she is available at chosen rehearsal and ceremony times

No weddings will normally be scheduled on Sundays, during Holy Week, Thanksgiving, the weekend after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the weekend before or after Christmas, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, National holidays, or on Saturday evenings after 7:00 PM.

As a part of your reservation process, once you have checked to see if your date is available with the church office, you and your intended spouse are asked to complete a **Wedding Reservation Request Form** and submit this to the church. This will help us begin to know you a bit better and help in the planning for your wedding day. After reviewing the form, a member of the WPC staff will get back to you within 48 hours to let you know about the availability of the church for your wedding.

You can find a link to the request form [here](#).

Westminster Ministers

Everyone desiring to be married at Westminster Church must agree to have an ordained Westminster Church minister officiate. Occasionally we are asked to conduct weddings with other ministers or use a format that is different from the Presbyterian form of worship.

The Pastors at WPC are happy to work alongside other ministers or clergy from other faiths. This can create a beautiful and meaningful experience. However, all weddings conducted at WPC are officially conducted by a Pastor of WPC and must follow the requirements of the Bible for a marriage as well as the Presbyterian order of worship/wedding. There is great flexibility within the wedding service in terms of language and possibilities, however the pastors are firmly committed to ensure that your wedding is both Christian and Presbyterian.

Premarital Counseling

Pastors are given the privilege of joining two people in marriage. The objective is not to simply go through a wedding ceremony but to prepare a couple's foundation for a mutually uplifting life together. This mandatory premarital preparation includes at least three sessions with both members of the couple present. Assignments will be given for personal study and evaluation.

Topics discussed will include:

- Your relationship with God and one another
- Pre-marital Assessment – Prepare/Enrich or other as determined by the pastor. Testing may include a fee of no more than \$100 per couple
- Biblical design and purpose for marriage
- Family history Analysis or Decision making and problems solving/conflict resolution
- Ceremony details

Premarital appointments will be scheduled at the convenience of the pastor and couple.

Financial Matters

\$1,300 Fee for a Westminster Presbyterian member (There will be no building fee for members.)

\$1,800 Fee for non-members (This includes a \$500 building fee.)

\$1,200 Refundable Security Deposit (This shall be given as a separate check and returned to you after your wedding if no damage or rule violations have occurred.)

A 25% deposit and your separate Security Deposit is due at the time of confirmation of your wedding date. The remaining fee is due one week before the wedding.

The flat fees include:

- Use of the Building: You will have access to the building for five hours on the day of your wedding. This includes the use of the Sanctuary, Cole Hall and the Bridal Room, the Parlor, the Garden Room and other hallways. Most wedding services last about 25-35 minutes. The service is preceded by approximately 30 minutes of music, and up to 30 minutes of music may follow the service.
- Pastoral Services: mandatory premarital counseling sessions, wedding rehearsal, and the wedding service.
- One Accompanist: This fee includes one musician. Additional musicians (soloists and instrumentalists) may be hired at the couple's expense.
- Wedding Coordinator: One premarital meeting to review your plans and help you with your rehearsal and wedding service.
- Sound Capabilities: Video of the wedding can be obtained for an additional fee.
- Janitorial Services: Cleanup before and after the use of the building.

PLEASE NOTE: *The wedding fee is a flat rate. Please feel free to take advantage of the services included in the price. However, if you choose not to utilize the provided services, the amount will not be adjusted. It is at the discretion of the couple whether they utilize the included benefits.*

Also available for no charge:

- A kneeler is available for use during the ceremony.
- Two brass candelabras are available for use. Each holds seven candles. We request dripless candles be used in the service.

Services available for an additional charge:

Live Streaming is available for an additional charge of \$200 and a video recording is available for an additional \$50. Please discuss this option with your wedding coordinator.

The use of the Fellowship Hall and kitchen for a church reception are available for \$250. More information is available upon request. If interested, please discuss this with your wedding coordinator.

Marriage License

A Nebraska marriage license is required for all weddings to take place through Westminster Church. Each couple is responsible for obtaining their marriage license through the County Clerk's office and should be valid at the time of the wedding.

Nebraska Marriage License requirements: to obtain a marriage license, both applicants must appear together in person at the County Clerk's office. The cost is \$25 and \$9 for a certified copy for a total of \$34. Picture ID and proof of age is required. Your license is good for one year from the date of purchase before it expires.

The Lancaster County Clerk's office is open Monday through Friday, 7:30am to 4:30pm. The County Clerk's office is located in room 108 on the first floor of the County City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE. You do not need to make an appointment.

The Facilities

Sanctuary Seating Capacity: 400 people

Smoking, vaping and alcoholic beverages are not permitted anywhere on the church property, including the parking lot. **All members of the wedding party shall refrain from alcohol use prior to the start of the wedding service.** Failure to comply with this request will result in a forfeit of the \$1,200 security deposit.

The sanctuary will be available three hours before the ceremony is scheduled to accommodate your florist, photographer, and attendants.

Dressing areas are available for the bride, groom, and attendants. These areas will not be locked during the ceremony and the church assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items.

No rice, confetti, bird seed, real or fake flower petals or any other material that might be thrown or dropped at the wedding or reception may be used inside or outside the facilities for safety reasons.

Blowing bubbles is allowed outside the facility only.

Flowers and Decorations

Policies and guidelines concerning floral decorations must be strictly followed.

The florist will have access to the room three hours before the scheduled time of your wedding. Flowers and decorations must be in place at least one hour before the service begins.

Discretion must be used in your floral decorations. Absolutely no wire, tape, glue, staples, nails or tacks may be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture, floor, walls, or candelabras. Markers or bows must be secured with padded or plastic hooks or clips.

All flowers and decorations must be removed from the facilities immediately after the wedding ceremony by the florist or designated person.

Plants, greenery, and other furnishings within the church facilities must not be moved in order to use them as decoration for weddings. Furnishings will remain as they appear in the regular church setting.

All policies and restrictions that apply to the florist also apply to any friend or member of the family planning to provide floral arrangements and decorations.

Photography and Videotaping

For all weddings within the church, please remember that this is a sanctuary of God and that the wedding is a worship celebration, much like what we would do on Sunday morning. Nothing can destroy a special moment more than to have dozens, or even hundreds, of cameras flashing and a photographer or videographer moving around during your wedding.

Those attending the wedding should not notice the photographer's/videographer's presence. Once the couple has arrived at the chancel at the end of the bridal procession the photographer should and should retire to the last row of guests during the marriage ceremony. The photographer/videographer is free to move about prior to the first words of the wedding and following the blessing.

Flash photography is NOT allowed during the ceremony. We ask that the ushers please remind those with cameras and cell phones of this responsibility.

Should the photographer/videographer choose not to abide by this policy, his or her name will be maintained in the church office and the photographer will not be permitted to perform services at the church. The photographer should consult with the Pastor to be sure he/she understands the church's policy.

All policies and restrictions that apply to the photographer and videographer also apply to any friend or member of the family who may be planning to use his or her own personal camera for taking pictures of the wedding.

Music

The church musicians of WPC are trained in music appropriate for the marriage/worship service. It is recommended that the couple consult the church musician early in their wedding planning to get specific help on organ, vocal, or other instrumental music suggestions. Congregational singing is encouraged when appropriate.

As you are selecting the music for your wedding, please remember that this is a service of worship. Only music that is suitable for a worship service may be used. Classical instrumental music, other Christian music, and hymns are acceptable.

Fees for soloists and additional instrumentalists should be arranged directly with them. Please submit the contact information of the additional musicians to the wedding coordinator. Please work with the wedding coordinator if you need help finding a soloist or connecting your soloist with the WPC musicians.

Wedding Coordinator

Both the bride and groom must meet with the WPC wedding coordinator preferably three months before and no later than one month prior to the wedding date to consult about the desired order of the ceremony and all ceremony details. You must have met at least once with the pastor before meeting with the wedding coordinator.

Wedding Rehearsal

Your wedding rehearsal will be scheduled on the evening before your wedding date and will last for one hour. It is very important that all members of your wedding party attend the rehearsal and that they arrive on time. If you have ushers in addition to groomsmen, please ask them to be present at the rehearsal. Parents of the bride and groom are also encouraged to attend.

Because the Westminster wedding coordinator is familiar with the church facility and each of the Westminster ministers, they will be responsible for directing the wedding rehearsal. If you use an outside wedding coordinator, that person must work with the Westminster wedding coordinator to ensure that all Westminster wedding procedures are followed.

We appreciate your cooperation and congratulate you on your upcoming marriage!