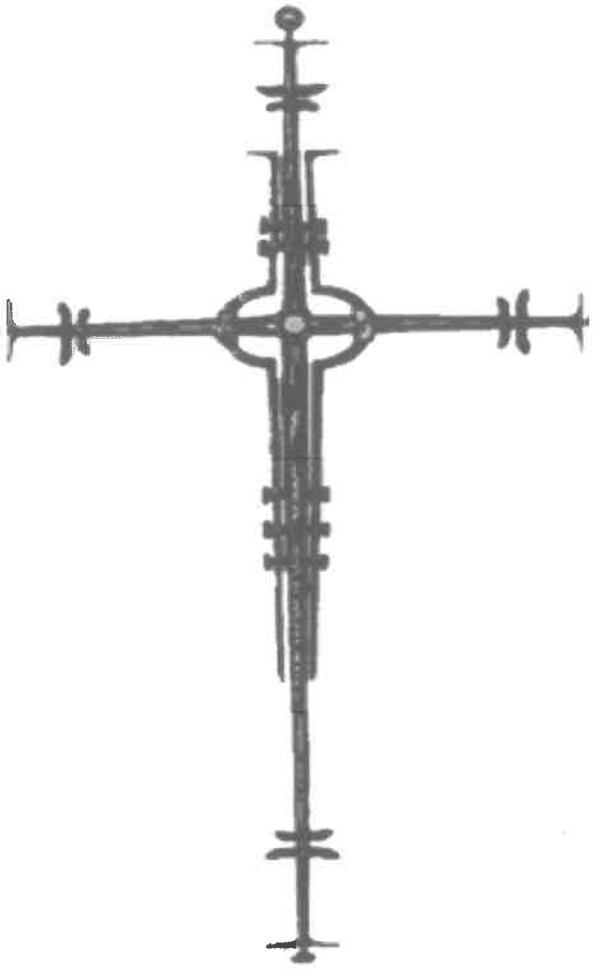
Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church

611 Baltimore Annapolis Blvd.
Severna Park, Maryland
410-647-2550



A Guide to Your Wedding

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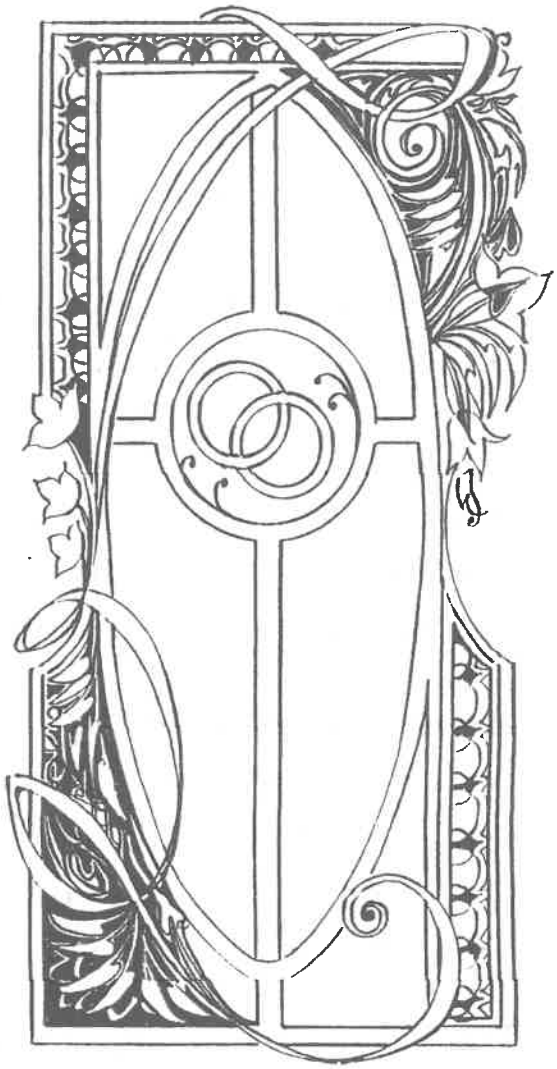

The pastors at Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church consider it a privilege to officiate your wedding. We are available for consultation as you begin a successful marriage, both in planning the service and for support and counseling as you begin your new life together and thereafter as needed.

Marriage is a relationship instituted by God for the mutual happiness of two people for the glory of God's name. As such, a wedding is a joyous and holy occasion of Christian worship in which two become one as they unite their lives to establish a Christian home.

Planning the details of your wedding well in advance will eliminate most last-minute questions and decisions. The procedures which follow are at the direction of the pastors of Woods Church and are designed to offer every possible assistance in the planning of your wedding. We have attempted to address general and specific questions and concerns. Please read the entire booklet carefully.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can be married at Woods Church?

Active members of Woods Church and their immediate family members may be married at Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church. Others may be married at Woods as deemed appropriate after a consultation with a pastor.

How do we reserve the facilities?

Once you have decided you would like to have your wedding at Woods, contact the Wedding Coordinator to request a date and time. The Wedding Coordinator will speak with you and present your request to a pastor who will arrange a meeting with you to plan the service. No invitations should be printed until you have met with a pastor and have confirmed the date and time.

What if we want an off-site wedding?

The clergy and Session of Woods Church encourage weddings to be held in the sanctuary. Offsite weddings may be discussed with the pastor.

Is there someone on staff to help me and answer my questions?

Yes. The Wedding Coordinator will initially review the process with you and will be available to assist you with your planning by answering any questions. The Wedding Coordinator and/or two wedding coordinator assistants will be present at the rehearsal and the wedding.

Who may serve as officiating pastor?

All weddings are officiated by a member of our pastoral staff. You may request a specific pastor or pastors but our ability to comply with the request depends upon the pastor's availability. If you are interested in having an officiant who is not a member of our pastoral staff, you should make your desires known to the pastor during your initial meeting. Other clergy are welcome to assist in the service at the invitation of one of the pastors of Woods. The invitation should come from the Woods pastor. You may not extend an invitation to another pastor to participate without the participation of a Woods pastor.

How do we select the music for our wedding?

Sacred music adds to the beauty of the service. Our Director of Music and Arts will arrange for an instrumentalist (organist, pianist, etc.) to play for all weddings and meet with you early in the planning stages to assist you in selecting music which must be suitable for a worship service. As this is a worship service, all vocal music should have a sacred text. Scriptural texts and those of most hymns are quite acceptable. Secular music and popular songs that have special meaning for you should be saved for the reception. All decisions about music played or sung will be made by the presiding pastor in consultation with the Director of Music and Arts.

Does the church require premarital counseling?

Yes. Woods Church is a member of the Severna Park Area Ministry Group which requires pre-marital counseling for any couple being married at a Severna Park Church. Premarital counseling includes and involves a consultation session with a designated counselor or Woods pastor. A fee of $150 includes written and online personality inventories and premarital counseling. If a referral for further counseling is suggested, an additional fee will be discussed at that time.

Do we need our marriage license?

Yes. Woods is in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, which is where your license needs to be issued. It is the responsibility of the couple to bring the marriage license packet to Woods Church no later than 4 days before the wedding.

How many guests may we invite?

The sanctuary will hold about 375 people. When planning your guest list, please keep these numbers in mind. Inviting more guests than can be comfortably seated is a hazard and may violate the fire code.

Where should the guests and wedding party park?
General parking and handicapped parking are available in our church parking lot.

Can video and/or audio equipment be used in the sanctuary?
The Woods sanctuary has two large projection screens. You may provide a DVD to be played prior to the ceremony by our sound technician. Refer to the Wedding Fees on page 9. Our equipment can only be operated by church employees. If you wish to use an outside audio-visual service, they must use their own equipment, from the balcony only.

When should photographs be taken?
We encourage the wedding party to have photographs at the church. Photographers may meet the wedding party before and/or after the ceremony in the narthex or sanctuary. All pre-wedding photography must be completed 45 minutes before the start of the wedding service.

What about photographs during the ceremony?
Unrestricted use of cameras is a distraction to the wedding party and guests and is inappropriate in a service of worship. No flash photographs shall be taken during the ceremony so that worship remains the primary focus of the wedding. At no time is anyone to stand or move around the sanctuary with a camera. This applies to professional photographers as well as individual family members or guests. Unobtrusive recording devices may be used from the balcony. It is the responsibility ofthe bridal party to convey these rules to the photographer, family members and guests. A photographer may photograph the bride entering the sanctuary but must stay behind the last row of seats. If you have questions about these guidelines, please ask the Wedding Coordinator.

How may we decorate?
Since your wedding is a service of worship, the decorations should be appropriate for a place of worship. The baptismal font and communion table cannot be removed, and no decorations are permitted on these fixtures. No tacks, pins or glue may be used to fasten any decorations on furniture or walls.

All plans for decorations shall be thoroughly discussed and approved with the Wedding Coordinator. All decorations must be removed immediately following the ceremony. It is the responsibility of the bridal party to advise the florist or other participants of these rules.

May we leave flowers in the sanctuary for worship?
Yes, they may be left and will be used in Fellowship Hall the following Sunday.

May we use rice, confetti, rose petals or bird seed?
No. These items cause hazards to people and animals and shall not be used. Family and friends are welcome to gather on the steps or on the grounds for photographs and celebration but shall refrain from throwing anything.

May we use candles?
Yes. Only glass enclosed candles may be used. All candles must be dripless and placed well away from walls and furniture and never placed in the aisles or in windows.

When should we have the rehearsal?
The rehearsal is usually held the day before the wedding. You should plan for it to last between one and one and a half hours. The pastor and the Wedding Coordinators will be available to assist you with the rehearsal. Please remind everyone in the wedding party to be prompt.

Is the church available for our reception?
Yes. Our Fellowship Hall is available for an additional fee. Please discuss this at the time you are making your plans.

May we use our own caterer?
Yes. Your caterer may be used with the approval of the Kitchen Coordinator. The Kitchen Coordinator must meet with the caterer not less than two weeks prior to the reception to review our facility and equipment. The caterer shall leave the facility clean and orderly. The Kitchen Coordinator shall inspect the facility after the caterer is finished and may assess any applicable fees which the couple must pay.

Is alcohol permitted?
The current policy at Woods Church prohibits alcohol on the premises. However, it is possible to request a champagne toast at the reception. This request is to be made to the Pastor.

Is Smoking Allowed?
No. The Woods Church is a smoke free facility.

Where may we dress?
The bride and her attendants may dress in the Founders Room. The custodians will have available hanging racks for dresses and full-length mirrors. There is one rest room directly outside the Founders Room. Groomsmen may dress and gather in the Child Development Library, Room 110.

What about fees? (Facilities, Music, Pastor, Custodian, Sound, etc.)

The basic fees are discussed with you when you speak with the Wedding Coordinator. A deposit is required and may be non-refundable. A facility fee for weddings in the sanctuary is required only for non-members. Fees include the services of one custodian for the rehearsal and one custodian the day of the wedding. One custodian will be available before, during and after the rehearsal to open and lock up the building. One custodian will be available two hours prior, on the day of the wedding, to open the building for the florist and bridal party, to provide security within the building during the ceremony and to clean up and secure the building after the ceremony. The bride and groom are responsible for any rented or personal items left in the building and these may be discarded if left on the premises unless prior arrangements are made. Woods Church does not assume any liability for such items. If these fees present a hardship, please notify our Wedding Coordinator at *weddings@woodschurch.org.*

What about fees for soloists or musicians other than the organist?

All music should be arranged with the Director of Music and Arts at least two months prior to the wedding. Please consult with the Director of Music and Arts regarding independent soloists.

A fee schedule is included at the back of this booklet.

Policies on Marriage from The Book of Order (PCUSA)

The Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church is a member of the larger church known as the Presbyterian Church (USA). We are governed by the Book of Order and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Book of Order contains the following statements about marriage:

"Marriage is a gift god has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community."

Preparing for marriage:

a) In preparation for the marriage service, the pastor shall provide for a discussion with the couple concerning

(1) the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian;

(2) the legal requirements of the state,

(3) the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,

(4) the nature and form of the marriage service,

(5) the vows and commitments they will be asked to make,

(6) the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,

(7) the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments. This discussion is equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse and a marriage following divorce.

b) If the minister is convinced after discussion with the couple that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the minister shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision the minister may seek the counsel of the Session.

Time and Place of the Service

Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the session. The marriage ordinarily takes place in a special service which focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the pastor. Celebration of the Lord's Supper at the marriage service is possible and requires the approval of the Session.

Form and Order of Service

The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The couple shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation.

Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of the discipleship and for all who seek to live in faithfulness.

In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that couple are now joined in marriage. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.

Wedding Fees

FEES:	Member	Non-Member
Sanctuary:	No Fee	$200 per hour
Reception:		
Fellowship Hall	$100	$110 per hour
Founders Room	$ 50	$44 per hour
Custodian:	$125 for the first 4 hrs, $50 per hour after	$150 for first 4 hrs, $35 per hour after
Organist:	$300	same

Includes 20 minutes of Pre-Service Music, Prelude, Three Hymns, Solo (with rehearsal), Postlude.

Any additional music for the organist will be an extra $100.

Soloist:	$125 (if arranged through Woods Church)	
Bulletins-b/w:	$ 30/100	same
Bulletins-color:	$ 80/100	same
Unity Candle:	$ 15	same
Pastor:	$300	$500
Sound Tech:	$ 75	same

Linens: $10/round; $15/rectangular

Mileage: Current IRS mileage fee will be charged for weddings and rehearsals not held at Woods.

***** Half of your fee is due to Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church, 611 Baltimore-Annapolis Blvd., Severna Park, MD 21146, 60 days prior to your wedding date. The balance is due at least ten days prior to the wedding. Any additional charges will be billed following the ceremony.***

Please complete these two pages and return them to our Wedding Administrator three months before the wedding date.

Bride's Name: _____Phone_____

Groom's Name: _____Phone_____

Wedding Date: _____Time:_____

Preference for Officiating Minister: 1. _____

2. _____ 3._____

Organist:_____

Soloist:_____

Photographer:_____

Florist: _____Phone:_____

No. Bridesmaids: _____ No. Groomsmen: _____

Approximate number of wedding guests: _____

Couple has met with the Director of Music: Yes No

Date for Pre-Marital Counseling: _____

Address after Marriage:_____

_____

AGREEMENT

We have read and understand the Wedding Policies of Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church and agree to abide by all rules, regulations and policies contained therein and to be governed by the decisions of the Pastors, Organist, Staff, Wedding Administrator and Wedding Coordinators regarding the same. We understand and accept that any failure to follow the Wedding Policies and directions of responsible persons may result in cancellation of the ceremony at any time and with no refund of any fees.

_____ _____

Bride's signature Date

_____

Bride's name printed

_____ _____

Groom's signature Date

_____

Groom's name printed