The Wedding Handbook of Bethel Presbyterian Church

2999 Bethel Church Road Bethel Park, Pennsylvania 15102

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Bethel Presbyterian Church is delighted to share with you in the joy of Christian marriage. This handbook has been prepared to make the planning and celebration of your wedding meaningful and memorable, as is fitting for such a sacred occasion. The guidelines contained herein reflect our accumulated experience in conducting wedding services, as well as the directives of our Presbyterian denomination.

All weddings in Bethel Presbyterian Church are conducted in accordance with these guidelines and if you decide to submit your application form to have your wedding here, it is understood that you have read the handbook and agreed to abide by the guidelines we have established.

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The Meaning of Christian Marriage

For a couple being married in the Church, the marriage ceremony is the most important part of the day as a couple stands before God, surrounded by family and friends, and exchange vows to love each other for a lifetime, through good times and bad times. As our Presbyterian Directory for Worship notes, Christian marriage is a time to celebrate the gift of love God has bestowed on a couple.

Book of Order

W-4.0601: Christian Marriage

In Baptism, each Christian is claimed in the covenant of God's faithful love. 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, 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. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

Sometimes the momentum of completing all the details for your wedding day distract from the central meaning of the marriage itself. There are times when couples are so intent on planning for rings or gift registries, reserving rooms and halls, making rehearsal dinner and reception plans, that their relationship becomes lost in the details. You are encouraged to take some time during this planning time to be together for a day or evening, with the "rule" that you will not discuss wedding plans. Your relationship is the most important gift you have – find ways to treasure it during these hectic days.

Wedding Preparation Guidelines

Setting the Date:

You have probably already spoken with the church office to determine if the time and date you desire is available. Because of the careful planning which is necessary for all weddings, you should arrange to meet with the minister as soon as possible, but at least six months in advance of your intended wedding date. Your wedding date cannot be confirmed until such a meeting has taken place; thus, wedding planning, especially invitations, should not proceed until you have met with the minister.

Should you decide you want to have your wedding at Bethel Presbyterian Church, the two of you should fill out Part 1 of the application and send it back to the church as soon as possible, or you may bring Part 1 to your meeting with the minister. (If you want to complete Part 2, that is fine, but many times couples don't have all the details and persons confirmed, so you can wait a bit to complete this part.) After you meet with the minister and all the details have been discussed, your application will be forwarded to the Session (governing board) of the church. Upon approval of your application, you will be asked to sign an agreement specifying fees for use of the church facilities and services.

Church members and events have priority over non-members regarding dates; however, once a date has been confirmed, it will be honored.

Due to both the minister's schedule and the use of the church, it is our policy to avoid scheduling weddings on Sundays, legal holidays, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and during Holy Week. In addition, we ask that wedding times be set between 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Three hours will be allowed for your wedding, which includes use of the McMillan Room, photography session, receiving lines, etc.

Pre-Marriage Consultations with the Minister:

Presbyterian Churches require their ministers to meet with couples prior to the wedding for pre-marital counseling. This normally requires four or five sessions that are done in an informal atmosphere, not only to plan your wedding, but also to support you in this vital moment in your lives. Anything shared with the minister in these consultations will be held in the strictest confidence.

The minister will discuss with you the nature of Christian marriage, your relationship and practical matters related to marriage, including financial decision-making and debt. Should either of you be divorced, the minister will probably discuss the circumstances of this. The meetings with the minister also include the discussion of details relating to the wedding ceremony, bulletin and wedding license. Other details will be discussed with the wedding coordinator.

If you desire participation of another minister, priest or rabbi at your wedding, such can be arranged. Visiting ministers must be ordained clergy of a recognized religious body or denomination. Visiting ministers must be invited to participate by the senior minister of Bethel Presbyterian Church. Therefore, visiting clergy should not be asked to participate until approval from Bethel's minister is received.

Arrangements with the Church Organist:

The organist of Bethel Presbyterian Church has right of first refusal for all weddings. Once your wedding application has been confirmed, the church office will provide contact information for the organist. It is your responsibility to contact the organist to plan music and obtain permission for the use of any additional musicians. Guest musicians should not be procured until this has been approved and arranged with the organist. If the organist is unavailable to play for your wedding, we will work to help you find a suitable substitute.

Contact with the Wedding Coordinator:

The wedding coordinator will guide and assist you in all of your wedding plans. She will explain the policies and procedures of Bethel Presbyterian Church. She will meet with the bride and groom and discuss the wedding plans, the decorations and general wedding etiquette. On the day of the wedding, she will assist with the flowers and dressing of the bridal party, instruct the ushers as to the seating of the guests and be of assistance in whatever way required.

Wedding Service Guidelines

The Marriage Service as Worship:

Book of Order

W-4.0603: Order of Worship

The marriage service shall be conducted in a manner appropriate to this covenant and to the forms of Reformed worship, under the direction of the minister of the Word and Sacrament† and the supervision of the session (W-2.03). In a service of marriage, the couple marries each other by exchanging mutual promises. The minister of the Word and Sacrament† witnesses the couple's promises and pronounces God's blessing upon their union. The community of faith pledges to support the couple in upholding their promises; prayers may be offered for the couple, for the communities that support them, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness.

The marriage ceremony itself, in all its aspects, including music and decoration, is an act of worship. Primary focus is to be on God's blessing of the marriage. You and your guests should keep this uppermost in mind in the planning and conduct of the entire service.

Music:

Since the marriage service is clearly set forth as a celebration of worship – joyful, reverent and dignified – it follows, therefore, that the music used should enhance this joy, reverence and dignity and possess a level of musical integrity consistent with that of weekly church music. Popular favorites or songs of a sentimental character or secular connotation are not appropriate for the wedding ceremony and are more properly reserved for the wedding reception.

Rehearsal:

The wedding party will have a rehearsal with the minister, wedding coordinator and organist to prepare for the service of worship by enabling people to think less about "what do I do next" and be able to focus on the joy of the day. All participants should observe this purpose in both dress and decorum. The rehearsal will last about one hour from the time all parties have arrived. Please plan the rehearsal for a time which will assure all members of your wedding party can be on time. The rehearsal should not be rushed because of plans made for following the rehearsal.

There are many details to be covered at rehearsal, including specific training of ushers and it is thus necessary that the entire wedding party, including parents, attend. **The couple is required to bring their wedding license to the church the day of the rehearsal.** The minister cannot perform the wedding without a valid license.

Flowers and Decorations:

Bethel Presbyterian Church offers a setting for a sacred service that is dignified and beautiful. A minimum of decoration is required and this should be carefully planned. Flowers, decorations and other appointments should not be unduly elaborate. It is the responsibility of the florist to check with the wedding coordinator regarding plans for the delivery of decorations.

The wedding coordinator will be happy to work with any florist you select regarding the policies for decoration of the church. The following are general precepts for weddings in the sanctuary of Bethel Presbyterian Church:

- 1. Two floral arrangements are suggested for the flower stands. Ferns and greenery may be used, but the wedding coordinator and the organist must approve placement. No flowers or greenery are allowed on the communion table.
- 2. Decorations, flowers or ribbons should not be tacked or nailed to the walls or any of the furniture, nor taped to the walls or pews.
- 3. The removal of items in, or the rearrangement of, the chancel area or other furnishings in the sanctuary shall be under the supervision of the wedding coordinator.
- 4. The following items are available at the church and can be used without charge:
 - ♣ A pair of candelabra (charge for candles)
 - ♣ Wooden flower stands
 - Kneeling bench
- 5. Aisle candelabra are also available for a nominal fee.
- 6. You are not required to use an aisle runner, but if you do wish to use one, it must be made of a substantial, nonflammable material. For reasons of safety, rolls of plastic table covering material are not acceptable. Only plastic aisle runners specifically made for weddings are acceptable. The length of runner needed is 75 feet.
- 7. The church should be decorated two hours before the ceremony. Following the ceremony, the florist is expected to remove all decorations as soon as possible. The bride's bouquet and bridesmaids' flowers must also be at the church one hour before the service.
- 8. The use of extra light devices for special effects is not allowed.
- 9. No rice, birdseed or confetti should be thrown or scattered within or outside the church building.

To assist you in communicating these guidelines to your florist, we have included a letter to your florist which should be delivered when making your arrangements. In it, your florist is asked to report to the wedding coordinator upon arriving at the church for a review of these guidelines.

Other Church Guidelines

Photography and Photographers:

Your photographer must adhere carefully to the following guidelines:

- 1. No flash or auxiliary lighting may be used at any time the wedding service is taking place.
- 2. No pictures may be taken in the main sanctuary during the wedding service, except that the photographer may stand behind the seated guests to take pictures of the processional or recessional. Photographs of the wedding service may be taken from the balcony of the sanctuary using available light.
- 3. Photographs of arriving guests may not be taken in the sanctuary or narthex before the service. Photographs of guests may be taken after the service if a reception line is held in the narthex.
- 4. Formal posed pictures of the wedding party may be taken after the wedding service. If the minister is to be included in pictures, he or she should be among the first pictures taken. If formal pictures are planned for before the wedding guests arrive, they should be taken well before the service and arrangements should be made in advance with the wedding coordinator. Formal pictures will be completed within one hour following the ceremony.
- 5. The photographer is expected to wear appropriate attire.

To assist you in communicating these guidelines to your photographer, we have included a letter to your photographer which should be delivered when making your arrangements. In it, your photographer is asked to report to the wedding coordinator upon arriving at the church for a review of these guidelines.

It has been our experience that the dignity of a wedding service can be destroyed by those who disregard the above guidelines and create distractions. Thus, the rules that govern your professional photographer also apply to wedding guests. Your ushers will be instructed to advise guests with cameras that they are not to use them during the wedding service. It is our desire that the couple be the focus of the guests, not the photographer moving about. Further, the flashes from well-meaning guests' cameras can ruin a picture that the photographer is trying to take.

In our desire to provide you with the finest possible wedding experience, we ask that you and your families consider it your obligation to see your photographer and guests observe these guidelines.

Videotaping and Videographers:

Wedding services may be videotaped only under the following conditions:

- 1. One videographer may sit and handhold a video camera or use a tripod on either side of the choir loft in the areas designated by the wedding coordinator and in the balcony or narthex. The videographer may not "roam" with the camera.
- 2. Microphone cords, if used, must be placed discreetly and all cords (microphone and power) must be taped to the floor.
- 3. Videotaping will be done with available light only. No additional lighting is permitted.
- 4. Permission to videotape the wedding must be arranged through the wedding coordinator at least one week prior to the service.
- 5. He or she is expected to wear appropriate attire.

To assist you in communicating these guidelines to your videographer, we have included a letter to your videographer which should be delivered when making your arrangements. In it, your videographer is asked to report to the wedding coordinator upon arriving at the church for a review of these guidelines.

<u>Decorum – Alcohol Restrictions</u>:

It is expected that a proper decorum be followed by all members of the wedding party in keeping with the understanding of the wedding being a service of worship of God. While we wish it were not necessary to do so, we must remind you that any consumption of alcoholic beverages or other inappropriate behavior on church property cannot be tolerated. This alcohol restriction for family and guests also includes wedding party limousines, busses or cars in our church parking lot. If persons are in violation of this rule, the minister has the right to either prohibit certain members of the wedding party from participating or to postpone the wedding. To avoid embarrassing confrontations, we would ask you to please pass along these expectations to all members of your wedding party and families.

Receptions at the Church:

Wedding receptions can be arranged on the church premises. In that this is an extensive subject in and of itself, if you desire such services, please indicate this on your wedding application (Part 2). The wedding coordinator must approve the request and retains the right for all final decisions regarding the details of the reception. Receptions may be catered by an approved caterer, catered by members of the church or prepared and served by family members and friends. As noted above, alcoholic beverages and smoking are not permitted anywhere on church premises, which includes our parking lots.

Fees for Weddings at Bethel Presbyterian Church

Fees	Active Members *	Former or Non-Members	Comments
Wedding Ceremony			
Sanctuary **	No Charge	\$500.00	
Minister	\$200.00	\$500.00	
Wedding Coordinator	\$150.00	\$150.00	
Organist	\$150.00	\$150.00	
Custodian	\$100.00	\$100.00	
Reception (if applicable)			
Fellowship Hall/Kitchen**	No Charge	\$300.00	An added fee may be required for custodial services depending upon the time and length of the reception. The amount of this added fee will be determined by the wedding coordinator.
Wedding Coordinator	\$50.00	\$75.00	
Miscellaneous (if applicable)			
Bulletins	\$25.00 per 100	\$25.00 per 100	
Candelabra Candles	\$50.00	\$50.00	
Pew Candles	\$15.00 Each	\$15.00 Each	

^{*} Includes Children of Active Members

- ♣ A non-refundable deposit of \$50 is required when the church is reserved by a non-member. The check should be made payable to Bethel Presbyterian Church.
- → All rental/miscellaneous fees must be paid in full one week prior to the wedding. If the balance due has not been received, the wedding may not proceed. Checks should be made payable to Bethel Presbyterian Church and submitted to the church administrative assistant for processing.
- ♣ Checks for the minister, wedding coordinator, organist and custodian should be made payable directly to these individuals and must be paid in full one week prior to the wedding. Checks are to be submitted to the church administrative assistant for distribution.

^{**} Rental Fees



founded 1776

Florist's Letter for the Wedding of	on		
	Name	Date	
Dear Friend.			

We look forward to working with you for this upcoming wedding. The couple has been given the following policy guidelines regarding decorations at Bethel Presbyterian Church. We have asked them to give this letter to you so there is no confusion as we all plan for the wedding day. When you come to the church, we would ask that you first contact the wedding coordinator to again review these guidelines. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please call the church office. Thank you.

The Session and Staff of Bethel Presbyterian Church

Bethel Presbyterian Church offers a setting for a sacred service that is dignified and beautiful. A minimum of decoration is required and this should be carefully planned. Flowers, decorations and other appointments should not be unduly elaborate. It is the responsibility of the florist to check with the wedding coordinator regarding plans for the delivery of decorations. The wedding coordinator will be happy to work with any florist selected regarding the policies for decoration of the church. The following are general precepts for weddings in the sanctuary of Bethel Presbyterian Church:

- 1. Two floral arrangements are suggested for the flower stands. Ferns and greenery may be used, but the wedding coordinator and the organist must approve placement. No flowers or greenery are allowed on the communion table.
- 2. Decorations, flowers or ribbons should not be tacked or nailed to the walls or any of the furniture, nor taped to the walls or pews.
- 3. The removal of items in, or the rearrangement of the chancel area or other furnishings in the sanctuary, shall be under the supervision of the wedding coordinator.
- 4. The following items are available at the church and can be used without charge:
 - * A pair of candelabra (charge for candles)
 - * Wooden flower stands
 - * Kneeling bench
- 5. Aisle candelabra are also available for a nominal fee.
- 6. You are not required to use an aisle runner, but if you do wish to use one, it must be made of a substantial, nonflammable material. For reasons of safety, rolls of plastic table covering material are not acceptable. Only plastic aisle runners specifically made for weddings are acceptable. The length of runner needed is 75 feet.
- 7. The church should be decorated two hours before the ceremony. Following the ceremony, the florist is expected to remove all decorations as soon as possible. The bride's bouquet and bridesmaids' flowers must also be at the church one hour before the service.
- 8. The use of extra light devices for special effects is not allowed.
- 9. No rice, birdseed or confetti should be thrown or scattered within or outside the church building.

founded 1776

Photographer's Letter for the Wedding of _		on	
	Name	Date	
Dear Friend,			

We look forward to working with you for this upcoming wedding. The couple has been given the following policy guidelines regarding photography at Bethel Presbyterian Church. We have asked them to give this letter to you so there is no confusion as we all plan for the wedding day. When you come to the church, we would ask that you first contact the wedding coordinator to again review these guidelines. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please call the church office. Thank you.

The Session and Staff of Bethel Presbyterian Church

Photographers must adhere carefully to the following guidelines:

- 1. No flash or auxiliary lighting may be used at any time the wedding service is taking place.
- 2. No pictures may be taken in the main sanctuary during the wedding service, except that the photographer may stand behind the seated guests to take pictures of the processional or recessional. Photographs of the wedding service may be taken from the balcony of the sanctuary using available light.
- 3. Photographs of arriving guests may not be taken in the sanctuary or narthex before the service. Photographs of guests may be taken after the service if a reception line is held in the narthex.
- 4. Formal posed pictures of the wedding party may be taken after the wedding service. If the minister is to be included in pictures, he or she should be among the first pictures taken. If formal pictures are planned for before the wedding guests arrive, they should be taken well before the service and arrangements should be made in advance with the wedding coordinator.
- 5. The photographer is expected to wear appropriate attire.



founded 1776

Videographer's Letter for the Wedding of	on		
	Name	Date	
Dear Friend,			

We look forward to working with you for this upcoming wedding. The couple has been given the following policy guidelines regarding videography at Bethel Presbyterian Church. We have asked them to give this letter to you so there is no confusion as we all plan for the wedding day. When you come to the church, we would ask that you first contact the wedding coordinator to again review these guidelines. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please call the church office. Thank you.

The Session and Staff of Bethel Presbyterian Church

Wedding services may be videotaped only under the following conditions:

- 1. One videographer may sit and handhold a video camera or use a tripod on either side of the choir loft in the areas designated by the wedding coordinator or in the balcony or narthex. He or she may not "roam" with the camera.
- 2. Microphone cords, if used, must be placed discreetly and all cords (microphone and power) must be taped to the floor.
- 3. Videotaping will be done with available light only. No additional lighting is permitted.
- 4. Permission to videotape the wedding must be arranged through the wedding coordinator at least one week prior to the service.
- 5. The videographer is expected to wear appropriate attire.

AGREEMENT FOR USE OF FACILITY AND OTHER SERVICES FOR WEDDINGS

I by Bethel Presbyterian (Handbook:	-		facilities/services provided on Page 10 of the Wedding
Fees	Active Members	Former or Non-Members	Comments
Deposit			
Booking Deposit	No Charge		
Wedding Ceremony			
Sanctuary	No Charge		
Minister			
Wedding Coordinator			
Organist			
Custodian			
Reception (if applicable)			
Fellowship Hall/Kitchen	No Charge		
Wedding Coordinator			
Custodian (if applicable)			
Miscellaneous (if applicable	e)		
Bulletins			
Candelabra Candles			
Pew Candles			
Total Amount			
Minus Deposit			
Balance Due			
<u>Date/Signatures</u> :			
Date:			
Bride/Groom:			
Church Representative	e:		

PART 1 – Wedding Application Form for Bethel Presbyterian Church 2999 Bethel Church Road, Bethel Park, PA 15102 (412) 835-0405 Fax: (412) 835-1037

Requested Rehearsal Date:	Time Requested:
Requested Wedding Date:	Time Requested:
Minister requested to officiate at the service:	
Information about the Bride:	Information about the Groom:
Full Name	Full Name
Address	Address
E-mail address	E-mail address
Telephone #/s: Home	Telephone #/s: Home
Work	Work
Cell	Cell
Birth Date	Birth Date
Birthplace	Birthplace
Marital History: Never Married	Marital History: Never Married
Divorced (date of dissolution)	Divorced (date of dissolution)
Widowed (date)	Widowed (date)
Occupation	Occupation
Have you been baptized?	Have you been baptized?
If so, where?	If so, where?
Have you been confirmed (professed your faith in Jesus Christ) and been received into membership of a Christian Church?	Have you been confirmed (professed your faith in Jesus Christ) and been received into membership of a Christian Church?
If so, where?	If so, where?
Are you currently a member of a church?	Are you currently a member of a church?
If so, where?	If so, where?

We understand that all payments/fees will be paid in full one week prior to the wedding.

Signatures: We request to have our marriage service at Bethel Presbyterian Church after having received and read the Wedding Handbook. We agree to follow the guidelines for church weddings therein outlined and will inform members of our wedding party, families, florists, photographers and videographers of the guidelines as they pertain to them.

Bride:	Date:
Groom:	Date:

PART 2 – Wedding Application Form for Bethel Presbyterian Church 2999 Bethel Church Road, Bethel Park, PA 15102 (412) 835-0405 Fax: (412) 835-1037

Please note any changes in dates or times for the wedding or rehearsal that are different than from Part 1 of the application:

Bride:	Groom:
Bride's parents and/or step-parent/s names:	Groom's parents and/or step-parent/s names:
Father	Father
Mother	Mother
Step-parent/s	Step-parent/s
Will all parents be present at wedding?	Will all parents be present at wedding?
Will you be escorted down the aisle?	
If so, by whom?	
Bride's mother's usher	Groom's mother's usher
Maid/Matron of Honor	Best Man
Bridesmaid/s:	Groomsmen:
Flower Girl:	Ring Bearer:
Minister	Organist
Soloist/s?	Single or Double Ring?
Number of Guests Expected	Florist
Photographer	Videographer
Receiving line at the church? Will you use:	Candelabra? Unity Candle? Kneeler?
Place of Reception	
Address after wedding (if known)	