

Weddings in The Church of the Covenant



Policies and procedures for those seeking to be married through the Church

The Church of the Covenant
267 East Beau Street, Washington, PA 15301
Phone: 724.222.0190 Fax: 724.222.0196
Email: churchoftheco@comcast.net
Web: www.churchofthecov.org

Revised September 14, 2016

The Session, Staff, and Congregation of The Church of the Covenant welcome you and want to assist you in making your wedding a beautiful, memorable and spiritual occasion. Upon the official scheduling of your rehearsal and wedding dates in the church calendar, it is understood that you have agreed to follow these guidelines. The Church of the Covenant is committed to hosting Christian marriage ceremonies that are distinctly God-centered worship.

God has ordained that a man and a woman may enter together into marriage, pledging their love and promising fidelity to each other, as long as they both shall live. As Jesus Christ has blessed this relationship, and it has been declared holy throughout the life of the church, those who pledge themselves each to the other in the sight of God are promised God's help as they enter into the joys and duties of life together. The Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God, normally conducted within the house of God. Reverence shall be expected on the part of all present, and the service shall be under the sole direction of the minister.

GUIDELINES

Eligibility: *We schedule weddings exclusively for active members in good standing.* We define this to include children, grandchildren, or parents of active participating members. Active membership is defined as regular weekly participation in worship, study, service and stewardship for at least 6 months prior to the date of the wedding. Persons who are not yet members may enroll in the New Member Class and must clearly demonstrate their Christian commitment and active membership prior to the wedding. Children, grandchildren, or parents of members who live a distance from the church must demonstrate their active membership in another Christian Church in the area of their residence.

Scheduling: *Weddings should be scheduled at least 6 months in advance.* The first step is to call the Church Administrator to see if the date and time requested is available. If there are no requested exceptions, the staff will set the date and time in the church calendar at their regular weekly meeting. If exceptions to this policy are requested, both the Worship Committee and the Session must approve the wedding. The couple will then receive a wedding packet by mail or email. The couple is to contact their assigned Minister for the first wedding consultation. *It is the couple's responsibility to contact the Pastor, the Wedding Coordinator, and the Director of Music to proactively initiate the steps in this wedding policy.*

No weddings are scheduled on Sundays, legal holidays (New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day Weekend, Fourth of July Weekend, Labor Day Weekend), during Holy Week and Easter, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. No wedding is scheduled prior to 10:30 a.m. nor after 7:30 p.m. Ordinarily, weddings are scheduled only at 1:30 or 4:30 p.m. on a Saturday. The church is available one hour prior to the wedding and the maximum length of time permitted for church usage is three hours. If there are two weddings set for the same day, at least three hours between the start times for the wedding is required. No wedding receptions are permitted on Church of the Covenant property.

Exceptions: *The Worship Committee and the Session must approve any exception to the policies stated in this document.* Guest ministers and guest organists are discouraged and require approval. All such additional musical elements of the service must be approved by the Director of Music in advance. Off site weddings are discouraged and require approval. Ordinarily weddings are scheduled on Saturday (see **Scheduling** above). The wedding ceremony is the ceremony offered by the Minister of The Church of the Covenant and Guest Pastors are included in that service only by invitation of the Minister. Non-traditional and secular items as part of the service require approval and must be in keeping with the worshipful nature of the service. The membership requirement above cannot be waived. There is no exception for outside, secular wedding coordinators; these are prohibited. Please do not assume any exception is okay prior to speaking with the Minister, Music Director and Wedding Coordinator.

Requirements: The wedding ceremony, including the rehearsal, is under the sole direction of the Minister. The wedding music, including potential solos and additional instrumentals, is under the sole direction of the Director of Music. The arrangements within the sanctuary, including flowers, decorations, ushering, seating of special guests, receiving lines, photography and videography are under the sole direction of the Wedding Coordinators.

There are four required steps in advance:

1. Three pre-wedding conferences with the Minister.
2. Pre-marital counseling prior to the wedding.
3. A music planning time with the Director of Music.
4. Detail planning with the Wedding Coordinators.

All of these meetings must occur in advance of your wedding date and it is your responsibility to initiate contact; initial contacts with the Minister and the Wedding Coordinator should be scheduled within a month of receiving your wedding packet in the mail.

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

*The Minister directs the wedding rehearsal and is responsible for each element within it. Ordinarily, rehearsals are scheduled for 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. on Friday, the day prior to the wedding. Rehearsals take one hour and 15 minutes, if the entire wedding party arrives on time. Any rehearsal dinner should follow the rehearsal. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to assure that their wedding party, including all participants, parents, grandparents, and possible ring bearers and flower girls (and their parents) are present for the rehearsal *and arrive on time. The rehearsal cannot begin until all are present. An excellent rehearsal with the entire wedding party present and attentive is the prerequisite for an excellent wedding the next day.**

THE WEDDING

The Wedding Coordinators will open the church one hour prior to the wedding. Florists should make special arrangements with the Wedding Coordinator for decoration of the sanctuary. Photographers and videographers must meet with the Wedding Coordinators one hour prior to the wedding to review our wedding guidelines. One half hour prior to the service the sanctuary should be entirely ready for the service and guests will begin arriving, therefore, all photographs and decoration must cease 30 minutes prior to the service. Photographs can be re-staged immediately following the service.

The Director of Music will play the organ for all weddings; only the Director of Music may approve any exception to this guideline. The music in the marriage service should direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage. Fee is due even if the arrangements are changed.

The photographer and videographer must abide by the attached guidelines. It is the couple's responsibility to assure that the photographer and videographer receive the guidelines in advance.

The florist must abide by the attached guidelines. It is the couple's responsibility to assure that the florist receives the guidelines in advance.

Children under the age of 6 should not be asked to be flower girls or ring bearers; this requires a special exception from the Worship Committee.

There can be no alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs anywhere on church property.

THE WEDDING BULLETIN

The Wedding Bulletin preparation is the responsibility of the family. Please review what is to be included in the bulletin, especially the order of service, with the Minister. The Minister approves the final draft of the bulletin prior to its printing.

Please include in your wedding bulletin the following announcement: *"Photos during service are prohibited by the Session of The Church of the Covenant. Please also turn off your cell phones during the service. Thank you for your cooperation."*

THINGS TO KNOW

In keeping with the sacred nature of both the sanctuary and a wedding, please follow these important rules:

1. There is to be no alcohol or drugs in the building or on church property, including the church parking lot, at any time associated with the rehearsal or wedding. The minister is obligated to cancel the wedding if any participant is deemed to be impaired at either the rehearsal or wedding.
2. There is to be no smoking in the building.
3. There is to be no food in the building except in certain designated areas and with the permission of the Wedding Coordinators.
4. The church-designated Wedding Coordinators are the only coordinators; no “outside” Wedding Coordinators are accepted.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name and position	Email address	Office phone	Cell phone
Rev. Daniel Merry, Interim Sr. Pastor	Pastordanpgh55@gmail.com	724-222-0190 x 117	
Rev. J. Scott Shetter, Associate Pastor	pastor.scott.shetter@gmail.com	724-222-0190 x 115	
Darla Pepper-Miller, Director of Music	d52chilipepper@yahoo.com	412-997-9214	
Cyndi Barney, Wedding Coordinator	cyndi_lu_hooo@yahoo.com		
Debi Nicolella, Church Administrator	churchoftheco@comcast.net	724-222-0190 x 111	

Updated: 02.27.2021

Please remember how much your pastors, church staff and church family love and care for you and want your wedding to be an extraordinarily special day in your lives together! Our wish for you --*“So faith, hope, love abide, these three...but the greatest of these is LOVE” (I Corinthians 13: 13)*

WEDDING CHECKLIST
Countdown to an Awesome Wedding
The Church of the Covenant

AT LEAST SIX MONTHS IN ADVANCE...

- You must be a fully participating member of The Church of the Covenant in good standing. Speak with the Church Administrator about the next New Member Class if you and your fiancé/fiancée are not yet members.
- Call the Church Administrator at 724.222.0190 ext 111 to request a Wedding Packet be sent in the mail and to reserve a tentative date on the church calendar.
- Fill out the requested Ceremony Information Forms and return to The Church of the Covenant, attention Wedding Coordinators. Make any requests for EXCEPTIONS to the Wedding Guidelines at this time (Guest minister, outside musicians, etc.).
- *The Wedding Packet includes the name of the Minister assigned to your wedding. Please contact that Minister ASAP to schedule your first Wedding Consultation.*

Dr. Daniel Merry – 724-222-0190 x 117
Rev. Scott Shetter – 724-222-0190 x 115

- The Wedding Packet also includes the names of the Wedding Coordinators/ please call the Wedding Coordinators asap to schedule a time to speak with them.
- You need to schedule your required pre-marital counseling.
- Your wedding is “official” when the staff has approved it, a minister is assigned, and if there are any requested exceptions to the Wedding Policies and Guidelines, those exceptions have been approved by both the Worship Committee and the Session of The Church of the Covenant.

AT LEAST THREE MONTHS IN ADVANCE...

- You need to call the Minister for your second wedding consultation and review the “PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY” materials to plan your own service.
- You need to call the Wedding Coordinators to schedule your detail meeting (who is in your service, order of the processional, seating of special guests, etc.).
- You need to call the Director of Music to schedule your music consultation and to begin planning your wedding music. **Darla Pepper-Miller – 412-997-9214**
- You need to review the Florist and Decoration Guidelines and then make certain your Florist has a copy of them as they are planning your wedding decorations.
- You need to review the Photographer Guidelines and then make certain your Photographer has a copy of them.

- You need to review the Videography Guidelines and then make certain your Videographer has a copy of them.
- Continue to participate in the worship life of The Church of the Covenant and prepare your heart for your special day by praying daily for your wedding and your fiancé/fiancée!!!!

ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE...

- You need to go to the Courthouse and apply for your WEDDING LICENSE. Your wedding license is only valid for 60 days so please do not apply for it any earlier than one month in advance. There is a three day waiting period – so do not put off applying for it until the last minute – the last day they can issue it is no later than THREE DAYS PRIOR to your wedding.
- You need to write all of the *checks* to the Minister, church staff members and church one month in advance of the wedding and mail them or drop them off at the church office. The check for candles/candelabra should be made payable to “The Church of the Covenant”. All other fees and honorariums should be written to the persons rendering the services – Minister, Director of Music, Wedding Coordinators, Sound Board Operator. Payments to outside soloists, guest ministers, etc. should be given directly to them. Please note on the check notation the last name of the bride “ _____ wedding”.
- Meeting with the Minister. You will finalize the ceremony and also coordinate the wedding bulletin with the service, either in person, or by sending the draft bulletin to the Minister via E-mail attachment for review.
- Keep praying and keep attending!!!! How can God bless your special day and your marriage if you aren’t making a commitment to enter into His presence on an ongoing basis?

THE WEEK PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING...

- Drop off the wedding license and a copy of your Wedding Bulletin to the Church Office.
- Remind all members of your wedding party of the time of your wedding and especially of the rehearsal with the reminder that they are to be on time.
- Breathe deeply and relax! It’s all in God’s hands now and it will be a beautiful, wonderful and deeply spiritual wedding!!!!!!!

WEDDING FEE GUIDELINES
The Church of the Covenant

Church Building and Sanctuary	No Charge
Minister.....	Suggested Honorarium \$200
*Director of Music.....	\$150 (This assumes no additional or special rehearsals or music and is due whether the Director of Music plays at the service or not)
Director of Music with special rehearsals/ music.....	\$175
*Co-Wedding Coordinator.....	\$100
*Co-Wedding Coordinator.....	\$100
Candelabra.....	\$20 each
*Sound System Operator.....	\$50

****Denotes Required***

TOTAL FEES DUE _____

DATE FEES ARE DUE _____

Note: Fees are subject to change without notice.

Note: All fees are to be in the church office no later than **one month** prior to the wedding.

Signature: _____ (groom) _____ (bride)

Note: If there is a guest minister, direct arrangements are made for an honorarium with that minister. The suggested honorarium remains for The Church of the Covenant Minister in charge of the service.

Note: If there is a guest soloist or other musicians, direct arrangements are made for an honorarium with those individuals. The fee remains for The Church of the Covenant Director of Music.

Note: Contact the Wedding Coordinators if you have any questions or to clarify fees.

VIDEOGRAPHER GUIDELINES
The Church of the Covenant

Name of Bride: _____

Name of Videographer: _____

Phone Number: _____

Date of Wedding: _____

1. No pictures may be taken inside the main Sanctuary or Chapel before or during the entire wedding service, with one exception: the videographer may stand behind the seated guests to take pictures of the processional and recessional.
2. Photographs of arriving guests may not be taken in the Sanctuary or Chapel or Narthex before the service. Photographs of guests may be taken after the service concludes.
3. Formal posed pictures of the wedding party may be taken in the Sanctuary or Chapel or Narthex after the wedding service.
4. If wedding videos are planned prior to the service these arrangements must be made in advance with the Wedding Coordinators and must conclude no later than 30 minutes prior to the service.
5. The videographer must meet with the Wedding Coordinators one hour prior to the service to review these guidelines.
6. During the wedding service videos with available light (no additional lighting permitted) may be taken from the balcony or Narthex.
7. One videographer must use a tripod rather than handheld video camera and be placed discreetly in the chancel area by the organ console. Stationary video cameras may also be placed discreetly behind a pillar on the sanctuary floor or from the balcony. Never should the videographer be roaming about the chancel area or the front of the sanctuary.
8. Failure to abide with these guidelines places the videographer on a prohibited list of videographers who may not be used in the future for the many weddings held at The Church of the Covenant.

For questions related to these guidelines please contact Wedding.

Thank you for your attentive cooperation to these guidelines.

IT IS THE WEDDING COUPLE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSURE THAT THESE GUIDELINES ARE PLACED IN THE HANDS OF THE VIDEOGRAPHER AND REVIEWED WITH THEM PRIOR TO THE WEDDING.

PHOTOGRAPHER GUIDELINES
The Church of the Covenant

Name of Bride: _____

Name of Photographer: _____

Phone Number: _____

Date of Wedding: _____

1. No pictures may be taken inside the main Sanctuary or Chapel before or during the entire wedding service, with one exception: the wedding photographer may stand behind the seated guests to take pictures of the processional and recessional.
2. Photographs of arriving guests may not be taken in the Sanctuary or Chapel or Narthex before the service. Photographs of guests may be taken after the service concludes.
3. Formal posed pictures of the wedding party may be taken in the Sanctuary or Chapel or Narthex after the wedding service.
4. If wedding photographs are planned prior to the service these arrangements must be made in advance with the Wedding Coordinators and must conclude no later than 30 minutes prior to the service.
5. The photographer must meet with the Wedding Coordinators one hour prior to the service to review these guidelines.
6. During the wedding service photographs with available light (no flash) may be taken from the balcony or Narthex.
7. Failure to abide with these guidelines places the photographer on a prohibited list of photographers who may not be used in the future for the many weddings held at The Church of the Covenant.

For questions related to these guidelines please contact Wedding Coordinators Cyndi Barney at 724.222.0190 ext. 119, or Karen Simonini at 724.745.3276.

Thank you for your attentive cooperation to these guidelines.

IT IS THE WEDDING COUPLE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSURE THAT THESE GUIDELINES ARE PLACED IN THE HANDS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND REVIEWED WITH THEM PRIOR TO THE WEDDING.

FLORIST AND DECORATION GUIDELINES
The Church of the Covenant

Name of Bride: _____

Name of Florist: _____

Phone Number: _____

Date of Wedding: _____

1. Flowers may not be placed on the Sanctuary Communion Table. Per PC (USA) Constitution.
2. Please provide a Unity Candle, stand and surrounding flower arrangement for the pedestal provided, when the couple is having a Unity Candle in the service.
3. We ask that flower petals not be used during or after the service; please do not include flower petals in the flower girl baskets; please do not have flowers or petals thrown inside or outside following the ceremony.
4. Balloon releases outside following the ceremony are prohibited as is throwing bird seed, streamers, or confetti.
5. The florist is responsible for providing the aisle runner, if one is requested, and for seeing that it is correctly in place. It needs to be a cloth, non-flammable substantial runner. For safety reasons plastic runners are prohibited.
6. The florist is responsible for making certain that each member of the wedding party has their correct flowers and is also responsible for pinning them in place.
7. Use ribbon or simple flower arrangements to mark reserved pews; please use rubber bands and not tape to affix.
8. The Church is open one hour in advance of the service; all floral decorations need to be in place and the florist exits the sanctuary no later than 30 minutes prior to the service.
9. Please meet with the Wedding Coordinators upon arrival to review Florist Guidelines.
10. The use of Asparagus Ferns is prohibited in arrangements on pews.
11. The florist needs to arrange a drop off time with the wedding coordinator. Unauthorized deliveries will be refused. The Church of the Covenant is not responsible for any problems or inconsistencies with the delivery. It is the bride's responsibility to ensure that the order is correct.
12. Failure to abide with these Guidelines results in the florist being placed on a prohibited list of Florists; they cannot participate in the many future weddings at The Church of the Covenant.

For questions related to these guidelines please contact Wedding Coordinators Cyndi Barney at 724.222.0190 ext 119 or Karen Simonini at 724.745.3276.

Thank you for your attentive cooperation to these guidelines.

IT IS THE WEDDING COUPLE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSURE THAT THESE GUIDELINES ARE PLACED IN THE HANDS OF YOUR FLORIST AND REVIEWED WITH THEM PRIOR TO THE WEDDING.

The Church of the Covenant

Wedding Information Form

Please fill out this form and return immediately to the Church of the Covenant, 267 E. Beau St.,
Washington PA 15301. Attn: Wedding Coordinators

Bride: _____ Groom: _____

Wedding: _____ (Date / Time) Rehearsal: _____ (Date / Time)

Requested Minister: _____ Organist: _____

Bride's Address: _____ Groom's Address: _____

City _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Cell Phone _____

E-Mail Address: _____ E - Mail Address: _____

Date of Birth _____ Date of Birth _____

Church Membership _____ Church Membership _____

Previously married? _____ Previously married? _____

Do you have any children? _____

Bride and Groom's address following the wedding:
Street: _____ City _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: Minister _____

Staff meeting date _____ Approved _____

Worship Committee meeting date _____ Approved _____

Session meeting date _____ Approved _____

Wedding Party

Please fill out this form and return immediately to the Church of the Covenant, 267 E. Beau St., Washington PA 15301. Attn: Wedding Coordinators.

Bridal Escort: _____

Best Man _____

Maid / Matron
of Honor _____

Groomsmen / Ushers

Bridesmaids / Attendants

1. _____

1. _____

2. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. _____

4. _____

4. _____

5. _____

5. _____

6. _____

6. _____

Ring Bearer _____ Age _____

Flower Girl _____ Age _____

Escort of Bride's Mother _____

Escort of Groom's Mother _____

Escort of Bride's Grandmother _____

Escort of Groom's Grandmother _____

Please do not use the groom or best man as escorts, if at all possible. The same person who ushers mothers in, should take them out.

Ceremony Information

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Please fill out this form and return immediately to the Church of the Covenant, 267 E. Beau St., Washington PA 15301. Attn: Wedding Coordinators.

Location: Sanctuary _____ Chapel _____ **Ring:** Single _____ Double _____

Organist: _____ Soloist: _____

Instrumentalist: _____ Florist: _____

Photographer: _____ Videographer: _____

County of origin of wedding license _____

Please mail your license to the Church of the Covenant, 267 E. Beau St., Washington PA. Attn: Minister, no later than one week before your wedding.

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Aisle Cloth Yes No Candelabra Yes No Unity Candle Yes No

Sand ceremony Yes No

Are you giving the mothers flowers? Yes No

Are the mothers lighting the Unity Candle? Yes No

How are your attendants coming down the aisle? Yes No

Girls walking alone? Yes No Girls walking with groomsmen? Yes No

.....
Are you having a receiving line at the Church? Yes No

(Note: having a receiving line at the church takes away from your picture session time. We strongly suggest you have the receiving line at the reception.)

Copy to: Pastor _____ Director of Music _____ Secretary _____
Coordinator _____ Coordinator _____ Bride _____