

A Guide to Weddings at West End UMC

Our Theological Perspective

God has consecrated the covenant of Christian marriage for those who profess their love for one another, and who seek God's blessing on their lives together. A wedding at West End UMC is thus a sacred ritual for couples who wish to solemnize their marriage in a service of Christian worship. Everything about the service is designed to witness that this is a Christian marriage. Both words and actions in the wedding ceremony reflect the belief that both partners are equal participants in Christian marriage. Those present are understood to be an active congregation rather than simply passive witnesses. They give their blessing to the couple and to the marriage, and they join in prayer and praise. Ethnic and cultural traditions are encouraged and may be incorporated into the service at the discretion of the officiating pastor.

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:12-15, 17

General Policies & Information

The following information is prepared in the hope that it will help you in the planning for one of the most significant events of your life.

- Members of WEUMC and children of WEUMC members may be married at West End.
- **Rare exceptions to this policy may be made** at the discretion of the WEUMC clergy.

- Our ministers counsel with each couple before the ceremony. You will want to contact the officiating minister early in your planning to schedule counseling at mutually convenient times.
- The music staff at West End is responsible for all wedding music. Matt Phelps, Minister of Music, can be reached at 615.321.8500, ext. 8820, or mphelps@westendumc.org. Please contact him soon after the wedding is scheduled so that ample time is allowed for this important aspect of the ceremony.
- A member of the Wedding Committee of West End Church will meet with the couple prior to the wedding to provide any assistance and guidance necessary. Kate Canty is head of the Wedding Committee and her email is ekcanty@gmail.com and her phone number is (270) 779-7334. She will be happy to answer your questions. A wedding committee member will also be present the day of the ceremony to ensure that all the details go smoothly.
- The sanctuary seats approximately 800 people, and the chapel accommodates approximately 75 guests.

Scheduling

- The wedding and the rehearsal must be scheduled through Cindy Siemer as to the day and hour of each, 615.321.8500 or csiemer@westendumc.org. Julie must also be notified if any changes in time occur.
- No more than one wedding may take place in a day. You are allowed in the church two hours prior to the ceremony. If any additional time is required, a fee of \$50.00 per hour will be charged and paid prior to the ceremony.
- Weddings will not be performed at West End on these days: New Year's Eve; New Year's Day; Palm Sunday; any day during Holy Week (including the day before Easter); Easter Day; the Fourth of July; Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day; Christmas Eve; Christmas Day; Sundays.

Ministers and Ceremony

- One of the pastors of West End must perform the marriage ceremony. You may want to include a relative or family friends as one of the assisting ministers. He or she will be invited to participate in the wedding by the officiating clergy from our church.

- Either the “traditional” liturgy or a “contemporary” service—recently adopted by our denomination—may be used. These services are not interchangeable since the language bases are quite different.

Music

Weddings at West End are worship services that are part of the regular liturgical life of our congregation. Because music at West End is a high priority, the standards of music at West End weddings will be consistent with the regular worshiping life of the church.

1. Music for weddings at West End will consist of instrumental music employing the organ or organ along with trumpet. Other instrumental combinations are generally not encouraged. Any requests will be handled on a case by case basis and with the sole discretion of the Minister of Music or his departmental staff.
2. Vocal music will be sacred and will be consistent with the department's standards. All music must be approved by the Minister of Music or his departmental staff.
3. A decision made by the music department is final. When securing West End as the church for their wedding, all couples agree to abide by the above guidelines.

Photography

- No flash pictures may be taken in the sanctuary or chapel by commercial photographers, family or friends from forty-five minutes prior to the beginning of the service until the entire ceremony is completed.
- Please ask your ushers to inform guests with cameras of this policy.
- The photographer will be asked to leave the nave of the sanctuary at 45 minutes prior to the service.
- The photographer may stand only in the balcony in the event of a wedding in the sanctuary, to take photographs or to videotape the ceremony. Such pictures must be made with available light.
- Photographers may not stop members of the wedding party as they exit the sanctuary or the chapel in order to photograph them.

- Photographers will not ask members of the wedding party to stand on kneeling cushions for posed photographers, nor will they themselves stand in the pews.

Decorations

- Please keep decorations to a minimum.
- All chancel furniture stays in place with the exception of the stewards' chairs.
- The baptismal font, altar, cross and paraments remain where they are since they indicate that the sanctuary is a place where worship is conducted. The sexton will make arrangements when the kneeler is used.
- The two brass urns provided by the church are suggested for flower arrangements. They may be placed on flower stands which match the chancel furniture. Flowers may not be placed on the altar. Flowers near the altar must not extend above the arms of the cross.
- Only fresh flowers or greenery may be used in altar arrangements.
- Pews may be marked by bows or flowers and attached with ribbon or special clamps.
- No tape, tacks, staples, or plastic may be used to secure any decorations in the church.
- Seasonal decorations remain in place.
- The church has four seven-branch candelabra and two seven-branch table candelabra available for your use. The candles are provided in the church fee.
- Other candelabra may be used in addition to ours, though plastic protection must be placed under them to catch the dripping wax.
- Candles and/or candelabra may be placed only in the chancel area and choir loft.
- An aisle cloth is not used in West End since it is dangerous for both the wedding party and departing guests.

Receptions

- McWhirter Hall is the designated area for church receptions. Reed Hall may be available for a small number of guests.
- Arrangements must be made through Cindy Siemer, 615.321.8500 or csiemer@westendumc.org, for the kitchen and social hall.

- The church custodian does not work at a reception, moving tables, carrying food, etc. unless he or she has been contracted to do so for an additional sum of money.
- The Wedding Committee is not involved in the planning of wedding receptions.
- No alcoholic beverages may be served or consumed on church property.

You will be given a wedding fee schedule when you schedule your wedding. All fees beyond deposits must be paid two Mondays prior to the wedding date. If not, it will be assumed your wedding is cancelled.

- **Please bring to the rehearsal:**
- Marriage License -- if not previously given to the pastor.

***** Note: Guidelines are subject to change.**

Helpful Telephone Numbers

All ministers, Matt Phelps and Cindy Siemer can all be reached at the church: 615.321.8500

Helen Burrus, photographer 356-4172

Jan Giordano, florist 370-8042

Chair of the Wedding Committee, Kate Canty - (270) 779-7334