



Covenant Presbyterian Church  
Wedding Handbook

*"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other"*

--Ecclesiastes 4:9-10a

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## **NOTE FROM THE STAFF**

The staff of Covenant Presbyterian Church considers it a great honor to join couples on their journey to marriage. Our Presbyterian Book of Order describes the importance of this journey:

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 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.

To assist you in planning your wedding, we have prepared guidelines for the wedding service and use of the church facilities. The guidelines let you know what you can expect of us and what we expect of you. As we work together, we are confident that God's Spirit will be present and that your marriage will glorify God and enrich your lives as well.

Yours sincerely,

Staff of Covenant Presbyterian Church

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## **REQUESTING A WEDDING AT COVENANT CHURCH**

Church members and their family are welcome to request the services of the pastor and the use of the sanctuary for their weddings. You will be asked to affirm your intention to build a Christian marriage in the context of active participation in the Body of Christ. Those who cannot make such an affirmation are encouraged to seek the services of a justice of the peace instead.

## **SETTING YOUR DATE**

We ask that you contact the church office to schedule the date for the marriage ceremony at least 4 months, and no more than 18 months, prior to your wedding date. Because dates and times for the rehearsal and the wedding need to be placed in the context of a busy church calendar, the earlier you contact the church office, the better the chance you will receive your preferred date. Preparations for Sunday worship prevent us from scheduling Saturday weddings later than 6:00 p.m.

Weddings cannot be scheduled on holiday weekends (Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day) or Sundays. Scheduling a wedding during the week will be at the discretion of a pastor.

## **CHOOSING A PASTOR**

One of our pastors is glad to officiate at your wedding. If you intend to use clergy from another Christian church or faith tradition to officiate instead of Covenant's pastor, you should make a request at the church office. A letter of invitation will be sent to the participating clergy to review the guidelines in this handbook.

## **PREMARITAL PREPARATION**

Covenant requires premarital counseling for all couples planning to be married in this church. Such counseling normally consists of three or four sessions with the officiating pastor.

## **MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING**

Music plays an important role in the wedding service; all music must be appropriate for a Christian worship service by directing people's attention to God and expressing the faith of the Church.

If you need assistance with selecting appropriate music for your ceremony, our music coordinator would be happy to help you. All music must be approved by a Covenant pastor along with any subsequent changes.

If you wish to incorporate the Covenant organ in your ceremony, the Covenant organist will have the first right of refusal to provide music. If unavailable, the church can help you find another qualified organist. Any guest organist whom you invite to play is required to meet with the Covenant organist for an orientation to the instrument.

Covenant's music coordinator and organist can be reached through the church office.

## **COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS**

Music, Recording and Livestreaming: All churches are subject to the copyright laws of the United States, and Covenant Presbyterian Church seeks to comply with all applicable laws. Therefore, all worship services held at Covenant will be planned and executed in full compliance. The music coordinator and a pastor are responsible for copyright compliance and will permit or prohibit use of certain music content accordingly.

Covenant pays a premium cost for certain licenses that enable copyright compliance. However, not all music is covered by these licenses. Any worship service at Covenant will use music that is either covered by an existing license or is in public domain. Under no circumstance will recordings of commercially produced music, including audio tapes, CD's, MP3' files, etc. be permitted for use in worship services at Covenant.

Covenant has audio and video equipment available to record and livestream worship services, however, Covenant's copyright licenses do not permit reproduction of these recordings in any form by Covenant. Such recordings will be livestreamed and posted to Covenant's YouTube channel and available for access via the internet for a period of time not to exceed one year.

## **COVENANT EVENTS COORDINATOR**

You will be required to use the services of a Covenant Events Coordinator who will serve as the liaison between you and the church staff and coordinate activities for the rehearsal and wedding. Although an outside wedding consultant can be helpful in planning your wedding, the consultant cannot be responsible for the use of Covenant's facilities for the rehearsal and ceremony. The events coordinator will contact you approximately 4 months prior to the wedding date and be present for the rehearsal and wedding at the church. The Wedding Information Form must be completed and returned to the church prior to this meeting.

## **BUILDING USE**

### **General Rules for the Use of Covenant's Facilities**

1. NO ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS are permitted inside the church or on church grounds. This includes the parking lot.
2. Smoking is permitted outside the church and away from the doors only.
3. Building use on your wedding day will be limited to 5 hours from your arrival time to the departure of your wedding party and guests.
4. The following rooms are available for your use for your wedding: narthex, sanctuary, lounge and dressing rooms. The nursery is NOT available. Other rooms may be available upon request but must be arranged with the events coordinator.
5. The wedding participants and guests are expected to leave the rooms as they were when they arrived.
6. You may not throw rice, confetti, glitter or birdseed. Balloons are not permitted in the sanctuary. Bubbles and biodegradable confetti are permitted outside.
7. Covenant cannot be responsible for lost or stolen articles. Please arrange with the events coordinator to lock the dressing rooms as needed.

### **Sanctuary**

The narthex and sanctuary cannot be significantly altered. Please consult the events coordinator before making decorative plans for the sanctuary.

1. The sanctuary seats 450 people including the balcony.
2. The sanctuary is wheel chair accessible, and there are designated areas in the pews for wheel chairs.
3. Chancel furniture may not be moved except by special permission. The choir chairs, piano and other musical instruments may not be moved. Hymnals and bibles may not be removed from the pews.
4. Banners are part of the seasonal decorations of the church and can only be removed by special permission.
5. Nails and tacks may not be used on walls, woodwork, furniture or pews. Tape which would mar the pew surface may not be used.
6. Pew bows are allowed and are your responsibility. No candles are permitted on the pews.

7. Flowers may be placed on small tables or stands but are not permitted on the piano or organ. Please make arrangements to have flowers delivered at a time approved by the Events Coordinator.
8. A unity candle may be used but you are responsible for providing this. The events coordinator will discuss the lighting of any candles used. You are responsible to provide an appropriate candle holder for the unity candle.
9. If you would like to use a runner, you are responsible for the rental or purchase of the runner as well as its installation. Please discuss your intention to use an aisle runner with the events coordinator. The center aisle is 36 feet long. No real flower petals are permitted but silk petals can be used. Please assign someone to pick up the silk petals after the ceremony.

### **Lighting and Sound System**

1. The events coordinator will provide basic lighting and sound arrangements. Officiants and readers will be provided with lapel and/or pulpit microphones. Our acoustics are very good and soloists should not need a microphone, but one can be provided if requested.
2. You will be responsible for supplying any additional sound equipment as well as its set up and operation. Sound equipment may not be placed in the balcony. Only trained volunteers or staff may operate Covenant's sound system. Please discuss your needs/plans with the events coordinator at your first meeting.
3. Covenant's projection system may be available for use in the sanctuary, but you must discuss your intention to use this equipment with the events coordinator at your first meeting. You will receive a copy of Covenant's policy for using the projection system. Only trained volunteers or staff may operate Covenant's projection system. See the fee schedule for this service cost.
4. All content (photos and text) that will be displayed on the projection system must be received 72 hours in advance of the wedding for review and approval. Pictures may run prior to the service but will not be permitted during the service. Audio tracks may not be played.

### **Photography/Video recording**

1. No flash photography is allowed during the ceremony.
2. The photographer/videographer should minimize movement around the sanctuary during the service.
3. Video recording is permitted from the balcony or rear of the sanctuary.
4. Formal wedding photographs may be taken before or after the ceremony, within the time allotted for building use (five hours for wedding).

## **Receiving Line**

The narthex is available for a receiving line following the ceremony if desired. Keep in mind that a receiving line takes considerable time and will delay your guests' departure from the church and arrival at the reception. Many couples prefer to have a receiving line at the reception.

## **Rehearsal**

1. The rehearsal must be scheduled at the time you request your wedding date and is expected to last 1 to 1-1/2 hours. Please plan your rehearsal dinner accordingly.
2. The rehearsal will be conducted by a pastor. Organists, pianists and other musicians may or may not be present. The events coordinator will assist in rehearsing the processional and recessional as well as answering any questions concerning Covenant's facilities.
3. All wedding participants are expected to attend the rehearsal. PLEASE REMIND THEM TO BE PROMPT SO THE REHEARSAL CAN BEGIN ON TIME.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUPLE**

1. Complete the Covenant Wedding Information Form and return it to the church prior to the initial meeting with the events coordinator.
2. Obtain a marriage license from the Dane County Clerk's Office.
3. Bring the marriage license to the rehearsal. The Events Coordinator will arrange for the necessary signatures and it will be mailed to the Register of Deeds by the church office.
4. Obtain an aisle runner if desired.
5. Provide a unity candle, candle holder and tapers.
6. Provide wedding programs if desired.
7. Provide a guest book if desired.



## FEES

The member will be required to pay the Building Usage Fee to reserve the sanctuary AT THE TIME THE WEDDING IS SCHEDULED. Please make a check payable to Covenant Presbyterian Church and deliver to the church office. The deposit will be applied to the total fees. **If the wedding is canceled one week or less before the scheduled date, the deposit to reserve the sanctuary will be forfeited.** You should make arrangements to pay the clergy, organist, Events Coordinator, and musicians PRIOR TO THE WEDDING and these would be separate payments to each individual.

## FEE SCHEDULE

Description	Fee	Payable to
Building Usage Fee (Reserves and confirms the date and includes custodial fees)	\$300	Covenant Presbyterian Church
Covenant Pastor (pre marriage counseling included)	\$300	Individual Providing this Service
Covenant Organist	\$175 for wedding \$100 for rehearsal with wedding party \$50 per hour for additional rehearsals	Individual Providing this Service
Covenant Events Coordinator	\$250 for wedding	Individual Providing this Service
Musicians/Soloists	Fee determined by musician/soloist	Individual(s) Providing this Service
Covenant Projection and Livestream Operator	\$50	Individual Providing this Service

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Reviewed: Worship Committee; Barb Danahy, Bailey Green