

## Westminster Presbyterian Church Wedding Policy for Active Members (Not accepting applications from nonmembers)

A wedding is one of the happiest and most sacred moments in all of life. A wedding is the door through which a man and woman enter a committed, meaningful relationship that is intended by God to reflect Christ's love for the Church. Because of this belief and understanding of the intent of Christian marriage, the entire Christian congregation rejoices with a couple and cooperates to make this a service of deep sacred meaning. This is a service of worship and dedication, not just a ceremony. It is a time when a couple comes to pledge themselves not only to each other but also to Christ as a couple.

Westminster Presbyterian Church ("Westminster") is part of ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. All wedding services must respect the essential tenets and core values of ECO and must comply with the Facilities Purpose Statement, which is attached.

It is not necessary that a wedding be elaborate to be beautiful. The true beauty lies in the spirit and attitude of the participants.

It is essential that the details related to wedding planning be arranged well in advance. The following are the procedures, authorized by the Session, for ministers and couples in planning for wedding services:

- **FACILITIES:** At this time, only current members of Westminster and their children may reserve our facilities for their wedding in accordance with established rules and procedures outlined herein. If a couple desires to be married at Westminster, and they are not a member or a child of a member, we invite them to visit our church, get to know the community and determine whether Westminster is the right church home for them as they begin their life together as a married couple.
- **ARRANGEMENTS:** All arrangements begin with the applicant submitting a complete Wedding Application (attached) to the church office, [admin@wpc-clt.org](mailto:admin@wpc-clt.org). The chair of the Session's wedding committee, Karen Cauthen, will assign a wedding director once the application is received. The wedding director will contact the applicant to arrange an initial interview to discuss plans and guide the applicant through the Westminster wedding process.
- **MINISTERS:** All weddings at Westminster will be officiated by one or more ministers of Westminster. If the couple desires that another minister conduct the wedding ceremony, that minister must be approved by a minister of Westminster, who will issue the invitation. An honorarium is appropriate for ministers.
- **PREMARITAL COUNSELING:** Any couple seeking to be married at Westminster is required to go through premarital counseling with a minister of Westminster or someone approved by a minister of Westminster.
- **WEDDING DIRECTOR:** Every wedding must have a wedding director from Westminster who will serve as Westminster's representative and assist with the rehearsal and the wedding service. The wedding director will be the point of contact for all communication and needs for the rehearsal and wedding.

- **REHEARSALS:** The rehearsal is to be scheduled at the time the wedding reservations are made. Typically, the rehearsal is held on the night before the wedding. The minister conducts the rehearsal and will be assisted by the wedding director. Rehearsals generally last about one hour.
- **COMMUNION:** If you desire communion during the wedding, you must invite all who are attending to participate. You also have the option of having communion at the rehearsal for the wedding party and others who are attending.
- **MUSIC:** Westminster believes that a wedding ceremony is a worship service, and all music used in the service must contribute to the honor and glory of God. Purely secular music is not allowed. The minister of Westminster has the discretion to determine whether any particular music falls outside these guidelines.
- **ORGANIST:** Westminster's church organist has first right of refusal for all weddings using the organ. If you desire to have someone other than Westminster's organist play for a wedding, you must have the approval of a Westminster minister.
- **PHOTOGRAPHS AND RECORDINGS: Camera flashes are not allowed during the progress of the service (which begins with the Call to Worship and ends with the Benediction.)** Photographers may only take photographs without a flash from the rear of the sanctuary during the service. During the processional, photographers may take photographs from a seated position from a pew in the midpoint of the sanctuary. Photographs may be taken in the narthex, chapel or halls preceding the service, and the wedding party may return to the chancel after the service for photographs.

If recordings are to be made, all instruments, including microphones, recorders, video equipment, etc., as well as the person making the recording, must be thoroughly obscured from the sight of the congregation. Videotaping is allowed with the following restrictions:

- a) one camera (with a camera operator) is allowed on a stand at the rear of the sanctuary
- b) one unmanned stationary video camera is permitted in the choir loft if it is concealed
- c) no additional lighting may be used
- d) no movement of the camera is allowed in the sanctuary at any time during the service
- e) the camera cannot block the organist's view
- f) livestreaming is an option

It is the responsibility of the couple to ensure that the photographer and videographer understand and comply with these guidelines. A copy of this information must be signed by the photographer and videographer and returned to the wedding director.

- **DATES EXCLUDED:** No formal weddings may be scheduled on the following days:
  - 1) Sundays when evening services are scheduled,
  - 2) New Year's Day,
  - 3) Independence Day,
  - 4) Labor Day,
  - 5) Thanksgiving,
  - 6) Christmas Eve,
  - 7) Christmas Day,
  - 8) Holy Week,
  - 9) or other such dates as determined by a minister of Westminster.

- **USE OF ROOMS FOR DRESSING:** Younts Parlor is available for brides/bridesmaids who would like to dress at the church. Brides desiring to use this room should inform the wedding director. There is also a room for the groom and ushers if needed. The Church shall not be responsible for any items that are lost, stolen, or damaged. It is recommended that the couple retain someone to remain in the dressing areas during the service to safeguard personal belongings. Westminster does not provide interior or perimeter security during wedding events.
- **DECORATIONS:** The sanctuary is a place of dignified beauty where worship may be directed to God through Christ. Decorations are not required to enhance the simple beauty of the sanctuary for the purpose to which it is dedicated. The following regulations are therefore offered to preserve the proper atmosphere of the sanctuary and to safeguard its furnishings.
  - a) Within the chancel, there may be two candelabrams. Candles on the communion table have symbolic meaning and are appropriate for use in the service. A kneeling bench may be used in the chancel.
  - b) No tacks, pins, nails, wire or glue of any kind may be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture or building.
  - c) Pew candles that are specifically designed to fit the sanctuary pews are available for use through Westminster. No outside pew candle holders may be attached to sanctuary pews. The wedding director will assist in the setup of the pew candles.
  - d) The furniture and floor must be fully protected from moisture, candle wax, or other damage. The applicant for the wedding ceremony will be held responsible for damage to the building and furniture resulting from use of these items.
  - e) All decorations must be removed from the building immediately after the wedding unless special permission is granted. The building must be left in the condition in which it is found and clean and ready for Sunday morning worship.
  - f) Sacramental furniture, including the pulpit and baptismal font, cannot to be removed from the chancel area of the sanctuary.
  - g) During Advent and Christmas the sanctuary is fully decorated, and these decorations will remain through the last Sunday of Christmas. These decorations shall not be moved or altered in any fashion.
  - h) The florist should contact the wedding director if there are any questions regarding these guidelines. It is the responsibility of the couple to ensure that time of delivery and removal of the wedding decorations are coordinated with the church schedule. A copy of this information must be signed by the florist and returned to the wedding director.
- **BULLETINS:** The church office does not prepare bulletins for weddings. If you prepare and distribute a bulletin, please indicate in the bulletin that **no cameras or cell phone photography may be used during the ceremony.**
- **CLEANING:** The wedding director will notify the janitorial service of the date of your wedding. The janitorial service will determine the cost of the cleaning service for your wedding depending upon the time of day, the specific rooms used, and level of cleaning services required. The janitorial service is only responsible for general cleaning, which covers only vacuuming and general

cleaning. The clean-up fee does not cover cleaning tables or chairs or any food or drink spills. Chairs and tables must be wiped clean and the floor must be free of any food or drink spills or a cleaning fee equal to the charged to the church will be applied. Also, the janitorial service is not responsible for the removal of decorations brought in or the movement of any furniture. If you are using Beard Hall for the reception, the janitorial service will set up the room according to any diagrams given to them in advance and will reset the room for Sunday morning.

☐ **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

- a) Westminster will not accept liability for any items not removed or picked up after the wedding service or reception.
- b) The cost of repairing or replacing broken or damaged items and property of the church is the responsibility of the bride and groom.
- c) No rice or confetti may be used inside or outside the church building. Bird seed or bubbles may be used outside.
- d) **NO SMOKING OR DRINKING OF ALCOHOL IN OR ON CHURCH PREMISES.**

☐ **FEES:**

Use of Sanctuary and/or Beard Hall (member)	\$0
Honorarium for officiating minister(s)	\$200 (per minister)
Wedding Director	\$400
A/V Engineer	\$150 (wedding) \$175 (wedding & livestream) \$300 (wedding & reception)
Westminster organist	\$250 (wedding & rehearsal)
Janitorial service	TBD

All fees are due to the wedding director by the time of the rehearsal. Each service provider is to be paid by cash or check payable to the provider. **Fees are subject to change.**

**IN SUMMARY:**

1. Complete the Wedding Application and submit to [admin@wpc-clt.org](mailto:admin@wpc-clt.org). The date must be approved by the Session of the church before it can be placed on the church calendar.
2. A wedding director will be assigned and will contact the bride to discuss details.

Please call Karen Cauthen, 704-650-2736, if you have any questions or need any assistance with the Wedding Application. To meet at the church with the florist, musicians or any others assisting with the wedding, please call your wedding director to set up a time.

## FACILITIES PURPOSE STATEMENT

The facilities of Westminster were provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of members of Westminster. Westminster desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, on occasion, we make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.

However, facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with our faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the *ECO Essential Tenets, Polity and Rules of Discipline*. Further, Westminster's facilities may not be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, our faith or moral teachings. The Session is the final decision-maker concerning use of WPC's facilities.

This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two important reasons. First, Westminster may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or beliefs that are contrary to its faith. Allowing its facilities to be used for purposes that contradict its beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity and would be a grave violation of our faith and religious practice. (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Thess 5:22.)

Second, it is important that Westminster present a consistent message to the community and that Westminster's pastors, elders, deacons and staff conscientiously maintain that message as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Allowing facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to our faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that WPC strives to promote. It could also cause confusion and scandal to church members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our facilities, Westminster agrees with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using its facilities.

Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate, or engage in practices that contradict Westminster's faith or moral teachings use any of its facilities, nor may Westminster's facilities be used in any way that contradicts Westminster's faith or moral teachings. This policy applies to all of Westminster's facilities, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the church's sanctuary, because Westminster sees all of its property as holy and set apart to worship God. (Col 3:17.)

## RELEASE, INDEMNITY AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

It is the purpose of this Release, Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement (this "Agreement") to allow the undersigned, \_\_\_\_\_, to benefit from the use of the facilities of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Inc., Charlotte, North Carolina ("Westminster") without exposing Westminster to any risk of loss or harm. Accordingly and in consideration for receiving permission to use the facilities of Westminster, the designed, on its/his/her behalf and on behalf of each other person using the facilities of Westminster through the undersigned (hereinafter referred to collectively as "releasers"), hereby

1. releases, waives, discharges and covenants not to sue Westminster or its pastors, officers, elders, deacons or employees (hereinafter referred to as "releasees") from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions and causes of action whatsoever arising out of or relating to any loss, damage or injury, including death, that may be sustained by any releasor, or to any property belonging to any releasor, whether caused by the negligence of the releasees, or otherwise, while at or using the facilities of Westminster and while in transit to or from such facilities.
2. agrees to indemnify and save and hold harmless the releasees, and each of them, from any and all claims, demands, losses, liabilities, damages or costs that any of them may incur in connection with or arising out of any releasor's use of the facilities of Westminster or transit to or from such facilities, whether caused by the negligence of any or all of the releasees, or otherwise.
3. agrees to reimburse Westminster on demand for any and all costs or expenses, including all repair costs (other than normal wear and tear), incurred by Westminster as a result of the use of the facilities of Westminster by any releasor.

In signing this Agreement, the signatory acknowledges and represents that:

- A. He/she has read this Agreement, understands it, and signs it voluntarily as his/her own free act and deed;
- B. No oral representation, statements or inducements, apart from the foregoing written agreement, have been made; and
- C. He/she executes this Agreement for full, adequate and complete consideration, fully intending to be bound by same.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina  
Wedding Application

Wedding date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Minister \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Organist \_\_\_\_\_ Vocalist \_\_\_\_\_

Florist \_\_\_\_\_

Groom Elect \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number work \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_

Present address \_\_\_\_\_

Address after marriage \_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Where \_\_\_\_\_

Parents \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Bride Elect \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number work \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Where \_\_\_\_\_

Parents \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Where \_\_\_\_\_

Church Facilities Desired \_\_\_\_\_

This application is subjected to the Regulations authorized by the Session.

Date of Submission \_\_\_\_\_ Applicants signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Approval by Session \_\_\_\_\_

**To the Florist:**

I certify that I have read Westminster's Wedding Policy, including guidelines relating to floral decoration, and agree to abide by these guidelines.

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Florist \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**To the Photographer:**

I certify that I have read Westminster's Wedding Policy, including guidelines relating to photography/vid-eography, and agree to abide by these guidelines.

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Photographer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**To the Videographer:**

I certify that I have read Westminster's Wedding Policy, including guidelines relating to photography/vid-eography, and agree to abide by these guidelines.

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Videographer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_