

South Hill United Methodist Church

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WEDDING GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

“Wedding Guidelines” for a Christian Marriage is written for couples considering a wedding at South Hill United Methodist Church. The first question you, as a couple, should ask yourselves is whether you want a Christian marriage or a secular service. The deep and wonderful meaning of a Christian marriage can be lost when we allow ourselves to be lulled into thinking that the church is only a beautiful setting for a ceremony or when we set as the only criterion a sanctuary with a center aisle.

If you choose a Christian marriage and desire to be married at South Hill United Methodist Church, the following are some questions and answers which may be of help to you in understanding the procedures involved in the wedding service and church regulations.

A wedding is a sacred service of the church just as the Sunday worship service. The worship of God is the dominant objective, and it should reflect the tradition and theology of the church.

The following “Wedding Guidelines” are given to help you in your planning for this important event in your life. It will inform you of our church’s policy and expectations concerning weddings, and the couple’s responsibility.

WHO MAY BE MARRIED AT SOUTH HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Our church facilities are primarily for members and their families. However, in some instances, permission will be granted when neither the bride nor groom are members and are unrelated to members. Before a wedding is planned, approval must be granted by the Minister.

The couple must come seeking a Christian marriage, be willing to conform to the church policy outlined in these “Wedding Guidelines”, and abide by the laws of the State of Virginia.

HOW ARE WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS MADE

Contact the Church Office at (434) 447-4761 for an appointment with the Minister. Please give the desired dates of your rehearsal and wedding so the Minister can check his/her schedule and the church calendar prior to your first appointment. It is suggested that the couple have alternative dates should there be a scheduling conflict.

WHAT IS PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

Pre-marital counseling by the Minister is extremely important. Couples should make the initial contact with the Minister at least three months prior to the desired wedding date to allow adequate time for counseling. There will be a minimum of three sessions with the Minister. During these pre-marital counseling sessions the couple will receive training and guidance from the Minister concerning the nature and expectations of a Christian marriage.

WHAT IS THE BEST TIME OF YEAR FOR WEDDINGS

Anytime, but weddings are discouraged during Holy Week (Palm Sunday to Easter), on Sunday, and four days prior to Christmas Day.

WHAT IS THE WEDDING SERVICE

The wedding service is a worship service. Marriages at South Hill United Methodist Church will be performed within the Christian tradition using a United Methodist Service of Christian Marriage. Any adaptations to the traditional service must be discussed and approved by the Minister well in advance of the service.

During pre-marital counseling, the couple will be asked to review the service, decide what music they prefer, and other particulars relating to the service.

WHO MAY OFFICIATE

No service of Holy Matrimony may be conducted at South Hill United Methodist Church without the Minister present or without his/her permission. The Minister bears full responsibility for the maintenance of dignity and reverence in the service. Therefore, the Minister is the final authority on all matters related to the service.

The South Hill United Methodist Church Minister may extend an invitation to other United Methodist Ministers and to ministers of other denominations to assist in the service. When an outside minister is involved, it is customary and proper for the Minister of this Church to extend the invitation to the visiting minister.

WHAT IS THE REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is an event to provide an opportunity to review and practice the wedding service itself. It is an important part of the wedding preparation, where questions involving the wedding ceremony may be answered. It lasts about an hour and involves the entire wedding party “walking through” the service. The bride-to-be is responsible for obtaining a “Mistress of Ceremonies” to direct the wedding.

Rehearsals are generally scheduled in the late afternoon or early evening prior to the wedding day. The Minister and the Mistress of Ceremonies or Wedding Director will be in charge of the rehearsal. The organist, bride and groom, members of the wedding party, soloists, additional musicians, and other participants in the wedding should arrive at least fifteen minutes prior to the actual rehearsal. The couple and Mistress of Ceremonies should have all plans finalized before the actual rehearsal such as: Placement of the wedding party at the altar, special

seating, and proper usher procedure, lighting of candles, and other duties. Only the very simplest of weddings will not require a rehearsal.

At the rehearsal the wedding license will be given to the minister.

REHEARSAL DINNER IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL OF THE CHURCH

The rehearsal dinner is the responsibility of the couple. South Hill United Methodist Church members and their families may use items available in the kitchen when they prepare and serve the rehearsal dinner. The church custodian will clean and replace tables and chairs, but not be available for other services unless previously arranged with the couple.

Caterers or other food providers shall furnish all utensils, crystal, silver, linen, and etc. The stove and refrigerator are available for use by the caterer. Caterers or other food providers are responsible for arranging the fellowship hall as they need for serving.

Following the rehearsal dinner the kitchen and fellowship hall must be left clean and in good order. No food should be left.

WHAT ABOUT FLOWERS

Flowers used to adorn the church must be arranged and placed by a person familiar with our church or by a florist.

Flowers and greenery used on the Altar table must be kept below the arm of the Cross and should not be spread wide enough to crowd the Cross. However, the brass Cross on the Altar table may be removed since there is another Cross on the wall over the Altar. It is requested that only fresh flowers be used. If silk flowers are used they cannot be placed near a lighted candle because of fire regulations.

South Hill United Methodist Church prohibits the use of tape, tacks, and other materials that could damage furniture. For pew markers you may use heavy duty rubber bands, ribbons, or pew clips.

The church requires that the florist and/or couple insure that carpets and furniture are protected from dripping candle wax. Metal candles with wax inserts are strongly recommended to be used in the candelabra.

The wedding paraments will be WHITE. A "Unity Candelabra", if desired, is not provided by the church and must be obtained from the florist.

Immediately following the service and after pictures have been taken, the florist must promptly remove all equipment or make arrangements for their removal. Also, at this time all other decorations must be removed from the sanctuary and all furniture that has been moved must be returned to its proper position. This is necessary so that the custodian can clean and prepare for Sunday morning worship. Any professional cleaning (wax on the carpet, furniture, and etc.) is the responsibility of the florist or the couple. This must be done promptly.

Flowers used on the altar for the wedding may be shared for the Sunday morning worship service. If you so desire, please indicate this to the minister during counseling. Flowers left on the altar are appreciated and will be acknowledged in the church bulletin.

WHAT ABOUT MUSIC

Music should emphasize the worship and adoration of God. Some contemporary music may be suitable if the words and music are appropriate in the worship setting. Music is an important part of your wedding. You will want to conform to standards of dignity in keeping with a Holy Service.

The South Hill United Methodist Church Music Staff is available for your wedding ceremony. It is recommended that the couple contact our church organist at least two months prior to the wedding. If a guest organist is playing for your wedding, an appointment with our church organist might be necessary. However, for those who have played our church organ this appointment may not be necessary. The couple will be responsible for paying the organist's fee. Guest organists may wish to contact the church office to arrange to have the sanctuary unlocked at the times they wish to practice.

Music should be selected carefully and in good taste. All music to be performed both before and during the ceremony should be submitted to the Minister and church organist for approval. The church organist when not participating personally in the service, must approve both the participating organist and musical selections.

WHAT RULES GOVERN PHOTOGRAPHY

The wedding ceremony is a worship service and a sacred occasion for the two persons being married. To insure there are no distractions during the ceremony, the following rules on photography are to be followed:

PRIOR TO THE SERVICE-

Flash photographs of the chancel area, arriving guests, ushers, family, wedding party, and bride and groom are permitted.

DURING THE SERVICE-

Only professional photographers may take time exposures from the rear of the church. The professional photographer may make one flash photograph of the bride's entrance into the sanctuary from the narthex.

No flash photographs may be taken during any part of the wedding ceremony.

A video camera may be located inconspicuously in the chancel area and one video camera may be used at the side or rear of the church. However, during the service, no camera is to be relocated and no camera lights are to be used.

CONCLUSION OF THE SERVICE-

Professional flash photographs may be made of the bridal party leaving the chancel area and sanctuary.

WEDDING RECEPTION IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL OF THE CHURCH

The wedding reception is the responsibility of the couple. South Hill United Methodist Church members and their families may use the items available in the kitchen when they prepare and serve the reception themselves.

Caterers or other food providers shall furnish all utensils, crystal, silver, linens and other items used for the reception. The stove and refrigerator are available for use by caterers. Caterers or other food providers are responsible for arranging the fellowship hall as they need for serving.

The church custodian will clean and replace furniture, but will not be available for other services unless previously arranged with the couple.

The kitchen must be left clean and in order. No food is to be left.

The use of alcoholic beverages is strictly forbidden on church property.

HELPFUL NOTATIONS

1. The wedding license, honorariums, and fees should be placed in marked envelopes and given to the Minister at the wedding rehearsal.
2. The couple is responsible for the following persons adhering to these “Wedding Guidelines”
 - Bridal Party
 - Caterer
 - Mistress of Ceremonies (Wedding Director)
 - Florist
 - Photographer
 - Guest Musicians
3. Wedding Ceremony Bulletins, if desired, are the responsibility of the couple.
4. The Mistress of Ceremonies (Wedding Director) should contact the Minister well in advance of the rehearsal and wedding in order to provide an opportunity to familiarize himself/herself with the church: restrooms, dressing rooms, kitchen, sanctuary, chapel, and social hall.
5. Only designated church Sunday School rooms will be available for dressing.
6. At no time is rice to be thrown either inside or outside of the church. When the bridal couple is leaving the church, birdseed or flower petals may be thrown outside of the church.
7. At no time will alcohol or drugs be permitted on the church premises. Smoking is not allowed inside the church.
8. When used the kitchen and fellowship hall is to be left clean and in order. No food is to be left.

ONE FINAL REMINDER . . .

A wedding is a worship service. It, therefore, should be planned and carried out with this fact uttermost in mind. All aspects of the ceremony should glorify God!

WEDDING FEES

Approved by Administrative Board
November 27, 2007

Sexton's (Custodian) Fee — Members and Non-Members \$ 70.00

CHURCH USAGE FOR NON-MEMBERS:

Sanctuary or Chapel (Rehearsal & Wedding) \$600.00

Rehearsal Dinner (Social Hall) \$200.00

Wedding Reception (Social Hall) \$200.00

Fees are due one month before the wedding.

HONORARIUMS

ORGANIST and OTHER MUSICIANS - This is negotiated between the couple and the musicians.

SOUND SYSTEM TECHNICIAN - This is negotiated between the couple and the technician

CLERGY - Left to the discretion of the couple. (Suggested honorarium \$75.00 to \$100.00)