

# *Christian Marriage*

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Buckingham Presbyterian Church



To assist you with your wedding planning, the Worship Committee of Buckingham Presbyterian Church has prepared a few guidelines and answers to questions you may have. Please accept them with our best wishes for your perfect wedding and a long and loving life together.

Address: P.O. Box 248  
20 South Main Street  
Berlin, MD 21811

Email: [info@buckinghampcusa.org](mailto:info@buckinghampcusa.org)

Phone: 410-641-0234

*Form Approved by Session 12/2/14*

Fax: 410-641-1959

This pamphlet is intended to be of assistance to you in planning and preparing for marriage at Buckingham Presbyterian Church. We are fully aware that there is a wide range of customs and practices, which we are willing to discuss with you in order to make your wedding a special occasion; however, some of these customs and practices would not be appropriate for this setting nor encouraged by the staff and leadership of Buckingham Presbyterian Church. Please read the following pages carefully and communicate regularly with us regarding this information and your hopes, dreams, ideas, and any concerns for your special day.

## A Word from the Clergy on Christian Marriage

“Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together, before God, their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian Marriage, a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.”

[Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) W-4.9001]



## Preparing for Marriage

“In preparation for the marriage service, the minister [who is asked to lead the service] shall provide for a discussion with the man and the woman concerning:

- (1) The nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
- (2) the legal requirements of the state,
- (3) the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
- (4) the nature and form of the marriage service,
- (5) the vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
- (6) the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship,
- (7) the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.”

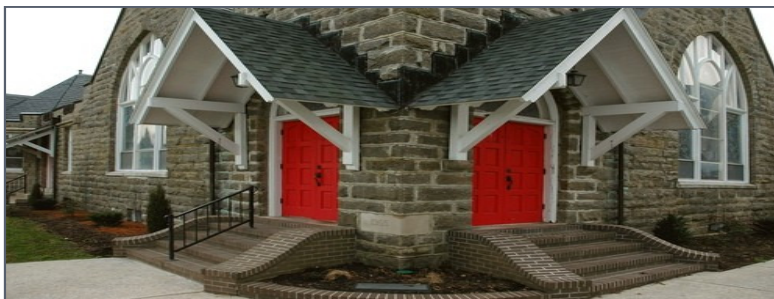
“This discussion is equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse, and a marriage following divorce. If the minister is convinced, after discussion with the couple, that commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the minister shall assure the couple of the church’s continuing concern for them and not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision, the minister may seek the counsel of the Session.”

Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) W-4.9002]

## Time and Place of the Service

“Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the Session. The marriage ordinarily takes place in a special service which focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and as an expression of the Christian life. Others may be invited to participate as leaders in the service at the discretion of the pastor. Celebration of the Lord’s Supper at the marriage service requires the approval of the Session, and care shall be taken that the invitation to the Table is extended to all baptized present. The marriage service may take place during the Service for the Lord’s Day upon authorization by the Session. It should be placed in the order as a response to the proclamation of the Word. It may then be followed by the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.”

Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) W-4.9003]



## Form and Order of the Service

“The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The man and the woman shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the woman and the man are now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.”

[Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) W-4.9004]

## Music and Appointments

“Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. The congregation may join in hymns and other music forms of praise and prayer. Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshipers’ consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life.”

[Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) W-4.9005]

A wedding is a service of worship at which a man and a woman, in the company of those who are dearest to them, come to praise and thank God for their love. Wedding music should reflect this Christian joy! To help stay within these principles, the music for the ceremony must be chosen in consultation with the clergy and the music director, if used, at Buckingham Presbyterian Church. Various uses of music may be made, such as congregational hymns, vocal or instrumental soloists, piano, or organ music.

Wedding music should be true to the Christian faith and contribute to the overall integrity of worship at Buckingham Presbyterian Church. With this in mind, vocal music should be sacred in text and nature. Instrumental music should be appropriate to the worship of God and take into consideration the physical characteristics and capabilities of the instrument. Personal favorites, popular, and sentimental love songs may be used upon approval of pastor and music director.

There is a fine piano and organ in the sanctuary for use at weddings by Buckingham Presbyterian Church’s pianist, for a fee, or if you prefer you may use a friend or family member. Brass or string ensembles, instrumental soloists (such as harp) are also appropriate forms of worship music in the church.

**(Music & Appointments, Cont’d on page 5)**



## Music and Appointments (Cont'd from page 4)

Soloists are often friends or relatives of the bride and groom. They should be advised of our philosophies of music in worship and urged to consult with the music director of Buckingham Presbyterian Church in selection of appropriate music. Legal copies of all music to be used in the service should be in the hands of participating musicians at least six (6) weeks in advance of the wedding. Asking musicians to prepare “new” music (that which is outside their normal repertoire) will merit additional pay and be first agreed to by the musicians. Soloists should come prepared (with music learned) to the music rehearsal. Additional rehearsals before the wedding rehearsal to “help” the soloist select and/or learn music will also merit additional pay.

The music director of Buckingham Presbyterian Church would be happy to provide assistance in selecting instrumentalists and soloists for hire should the bride and groom desire.

**Music Director—Susan Bunting-Rencher**  
**443-783-5281**

## Wedding Scheduling

The scheduling for a wedding is arranged through the Buckingham Presbyterian Church Office, the Buckingham wedding coordinator, and the officiating clergy.

- (1) A church member may reserve the facilities as far in advance of the ceremony as he/she wishes;
- (2) You must meet with the clergy before the date will be confirmed;
- (3) An appointment must be made with the church wedding coordinator, who will explain the wedding policies and procedures outlined in this booklet.

Tentative dates may be checked by telephone and held for one week. In the case of a non-member, the date will be held until the following Session meets whereby Session will vote to approve or not the marriage service. Ordinarily there will be only one wedding per day unless approved by all staff involved. Unless specifically authorized by the Worship Committee, the building will be cleared by 10:00pm. No weddings are scheduled on the following days:

New Year's Eve	New Year's Day
Maundy Thursday	Good Friday
Easter Sunday	July 4th
Labor Day	Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Eve	Christmas Day

**Buckingham Wedding Coordinator—Rosealee Campion**  
**410-641-0157**

*Please indicate on your wedding form any special times you may need  
the building open on the day of the wedding for deliveries, etc.  
The building will be locked except for the times you request it be opened.*

## Buckingham Wedding Coordinator

The Buckingham Wedding Coordinator shall:

1. Contact the couple getting married after the approval of Session;
2. Meet with the couple to determine their requirements and schedule for rehearsal and wedding dates;
3. Open and remain at the church for the rehearsal;
4. Open the church for the florist and assist, if necessary;
5. Assist with the wedding party and bride in the back of the church and coordinate the time to start down the aisle;
6. Open and remain at the church until all the photos are completed and the wedding party has left the building;
7. Return the church to readiness for the Sunday service—Put the bulletins out, place the hymn numbers on the hymn board, and return the hymnals, Bibles, and friendship pads to the pews.

Active members are not required to use these services



## Rehearsals

The bride and groom are responsible to inform the wedding party about the following:

- Remind all that the sanctuary is dedicated to the worship of God;
- Rehearsals begin promptly and proceed in a dignified manner;
- No alcoholic beverages, drugs, smoking, or use of other tobacco products is allowed throughout the church facility;
- Please advise all to refrain from celebrating until after the rehearsal.

The clergy will conduct the wedding rehearsal in conjunction with the Buckingham wedding coordinator. The wedding rehearsal is not a proper time for musicians to practice. Please arrange through the music director for practice times for your musicians. The Buckingham wedding coordinator will be available to help with the logistics of the processional in the sanctuary. If wedding bulletins are going to be used, they should be delivered to the church office at least one (1) week prior to the rehearsal. As a matter of courtesy, please introduce your family members and wedding party to the clergy and other participants whom they may not know.

## Photographs, Cell Phones, and Pagers

Please inform your photographer and your guests that cameras with flash attachments are not allowed to be used in the sanctuary during the ceremony. Cameras without flash may be used during the ceremony only if the photographer is not visible to the wedding guests and the wedding party. Flash pictures of the wedding party may be taken during the processional and recessional providing the photographer stays behind the guests. The wedding party may return to the sanctuary for flash pictures, for group photos, or re-enactment of special shots. Many couples now choose to have most of the photography, with the exception of the bride and groom together, prior to the guests' arrival. If photographs are to be taken at that time, please request the photographer finish and remove equipment at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the ceremony.

Ushers should remind guests with cameras not to take pictures during the ceremony and that all cell phones and pagers should be turned to silent mode. This policy should be included in the wedding bulletin.

## Recordings and Videos

If videotaping is done, it must be done from a stationary position. Aisles must be kept clear. No moving around with the video camera during the ceremony is allowed. The video camera must be silent and not involve any lighting changes or additional portable lighting in the sanctuary. If directional microphones are used, they must be placed near the camera as cords may not be laid from the camera to the front of the sanctuary.

***NOTE: Please inform whomever is responsible for the above of our policy.***

## The Marriage License

In Worcester County Maryland, marriage licenses are valid for six (6) months from the date of issue and must be issued in the same county in which you will be married.

### Requirements:

- Must be 18 years of age;
- If between 18 & 21, must provide ID in the form of a driver's license or birth certificate;
- Both parties do not have to appear but you need to complete names, social security numbers, birth location (State), & complete current address;
- Fee is \$35, cash only;
- If previously married you will need documentation of date of divorce and county where divorce was issued; if the spouse died, you will need date of death and the county where the death occurred
- There is a two-day waiting period.

Application for this license must be made at the **Office of Clerk of Circuit Court, 1 West Market Street Room 104, Snow Hill, Maryland**. For answers to other questions, please call the clerk's office at (410) 632-5500 or (800) 340-0691. Hours 8:30am—4:00pm.



## Decorations

The sanctuary requires little decoration as the beauty is crafted into it. If decorations are used, the Buckingham wedding coordinator should approve them. The sanctuary will be decorated in December. These decorations may not be removed.

If you desire, contact the florist of your preference and make decisions about types of flowers, greens, candles, and their locations. Most area florists are familiar with Buckingham Presbyterian Church and know what is most appropriate.

The Buckingham wedding coordinator will help you with decorations and any other church-related details if you desire.

- Decorations that might cause damage to walls, pews, or woodwork may not be used;
- Furniture on the podium is not to be moved or removed;
- Bows, ropes, ribbons, flowers, etc. are acceptable for use on the ends of pews on the center aisle;
- No tacks, pins, nails, glue, or tape of any kind may be used to fasten any decoration to the pews, furniture, floor, or walls;
- Flowers and/or decorations may not be placed on the organ console, organ pipes, piano, baptismal font, or modesty railings;
- An aisle runner may be used and your florist can furnish one.

Some families choose to leave their flowers for the church services. If you plan to do so, please complete the information on the enclosed form. The florist needs to pick up equipment as soon as possible after the wedding or make arrangements with the Buckingham wedding coordinator. Buckingham Presbyterian Church is not responsible for items left by the florist or caterer.



## Miscellaneous

Should any members of the wedding party wish to dress at the church, this may be arranged. Check the appropriate space on the form and discuss this with the Buckingham wedding coordinator. The church cannot be responsible for wedding dresses, purses, silver, money, jewelry, or other valuables if they are lost, stolen, or damaged. It is suggested that these items be entrusted to a reliable person of the family's choice. The reception room articles need to be watched during the wedding ceremony.

Kitchen equipment may be used, but must be left clean. Heat & air-conditioning is strictly governed by climate conditions and is controlled by the church wedding coordinator. Tables and chairs must be left in order and not removed from the area. **No alcoholic beverage or drugs are allowed throughout the church facility or grounds.** Smoking is allowed outside of the building in the area of the South Parking Lot only. Rice, birdseed, and confetti may not be thrown in the church proper or on the church grounds. No cake, punch, or other refreshments will be allowed in the sanctuary.



## Fees for Weddings and Receptions

	ACTIVE MEMBERS	NON-MEMBERS
CHURCH USE (Includes rehearsal & ceremony)	<u>Donation Accepted</u>	<u>*\$500.00</u>
BUCKINGHAM WEDDING COORDINATOR	<u>\$175.00</u>	<u>\$250.00</u>
CUSTODIAL FEE	<u>\$75.00</u>	<u>\$100.00</u>
CLERGY FEE		* _____
*For non-members, the Clergy Fee will be set by the pastor or the officiating clergy, based on the number of pre-marital counseling and planning meetings required. A reasonable estimate for your budget is		
		\$ _____
PIANIST/ORGANIST	<u>\$175.00</u>	<u>\$200.00</u>
Music director's fees are subject to change according to rehearsal times or rehearsals with soloist(s).		
Additional fees are applicable for receptions held on church grounds:		
FELLOWSHIP HALL	<u>No Charge</u>	<u>\$400.00</u>

CUSTODIAL FEE—Room rental includes custodial fees; however, additional custodial fees as required will be billed at the prevailing rate per hour. A set-up/take-down fee for tables, chairs, and other equipment will be determined according to need.

For members and non-members, the Worship Committee offers the following for optional use during weddings:

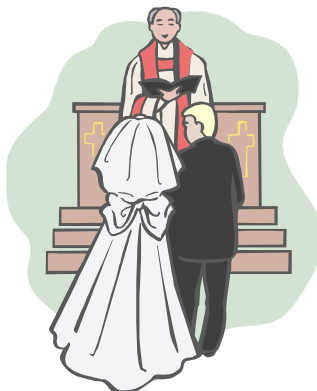
- Two (2) Candles on Organ
- Two (2) Brass Candelabras

**Payment of applicable fees are to be made at the time of the rehearsal.** Please make out separate checks to the clergy, pianist, Buckingham wedding coordinator, and custodian, and/or other musicians, and to Buckingham Presbyterian Church.

The Marriage License and the forms should be turned into the church office **at least one (1) week prior to the ceremony.**

**NOTE: In this context, “active member” means bride, groom, parents, or grandparents of bride or groom, or children of bride or groom.**

**\* A \$100.00 refund will be given for rehearsals and weddings starting on-time—at the discretion of the Wedding Coordinator.**



## Wedding Check List

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Tentative wedding date scheduled with church office & clergy.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment with the clergy for counseling sessions.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment with Buckingham wedding coordinator.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment with music director.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding date confirmed.

## One Week Prior to Ceremony

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Marriage license to church office.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding forms completed and returned to church office.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding bulletins (if used) delivered to church office. One (1) copy to clergy and other officiating clergy, pianist, and two (2) for office use.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Guest Book.

## Wedding Information Form

WEDDING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

REHEARSAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

BRIDE: \_\_\_\_\_ GROOM: \_\_\_\_\_

BRIDE'S ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE # (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

BRIDE'S PARENTS' NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

GROOM'S PARENTS' NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

CLERGY (If visiting): \_\_\_\_\_ Assisting Clergy: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Arrival Schedule on Wedding Day

	Company Name	Phone #	Arrival Time
Florist			
Photographer			
Cake			
Caterer			
Other			
*Wedding Party			

NOTE: Ushers should arrive at least one hour prior to ceremony.

## For Your Notes

