

Weddings at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church



• Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania •



Congratulations on your engagement!

We would be honored to walk with you through your decision to marry and to help make your wedding a rich and meaningful event. Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church is committed to the belief that marriage is a sacred blessing from God, which begins with the wedding. We request your careful attention to the following guidelines as we seek to facilitate worshipful weddings with clarity for both the church and the couple.

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) says this about marriage and weddings:

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the wellbeing of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, 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.

(W-4.9001 of the PC(USA)'s Book of Order)



Reserving a Wedding Date

Weddings are customarily held on Saturdays and not on holidays or on holiday weekends. To reserve a wedding date at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, please contact our Wedding Coordinator who will advise you on the availability of your desired date, work with you to provide an available pastor, and secure an organist. ***Please note that your wedding will not be confirmed on our calendar until you meet with a pastor, meet with a wedding coordinator and we receive your deposit.***

We welcome those who are not church members to hold their wedding at BMPC if they desire to marry before God in a worship service under the authority of one of our pastors. We would be honored to walk with you during this exciting time in your life. Members of Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church are given priority for dates and times. Non-member weddings will not be confirmed until nine months prior to the wedding date and will be assigned a pastor on a rotating basis. Please note that we are not able to accommodate all non-member wedding requests. Requests will be taken on a first-come first-served basis.

Wedding Coordinator

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church will provide a wedding coordinator to advise you of the church's policies and to harmonize church aspects of your wedding. In order to discuss church policy and wedding details, you are required to speak with our wedding coordinator at least six weeks prior to the wedding before your wedding date can be finally confirmed.

The wedding coordinator will supply you with guidelines for your photographer and florist, and the wedding music. You are responsible for sharing these guidelines with your vendors. You are also responsible for completing the music request form and sending it to our Music and Fine Arts Administrative Assistant.

Should you hire a professional wedding planner, we ask that he/she limit his/her involvement to activities outside the church. BMPC staff and pastors are responsible for activities on our campus.



BMPC Pastors

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church is blessed with gifted pastors who caringly meet with couples prior to their wedding and plan meaningful wedding services. BMPC recognizes that God calls people to ordained ministry inclusive of age, gender, and race. You must understand and accept this expression of the ministry of BMPC when a pastor is selected for you.

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church pastors officiate at all weddings at the church. Should you want another clergy person to assist in the wedding service, please inform the wedding coordinator and your presiding pastor. An outside clergy person may assist with the service at the invitation of the presiding pastor. The presiding pastor from BMPC has primary responsibility for the order and conduct of the wedding service.

Meeting with a pastor. Once the Wedding Coordinator has provided a pastor for you (and not before), it is your responsibility to contact the pastor to arrange a meeting. Each pastor will ask a couple to meet with him/her a certain number of times before the wedding for pre-marriage counseling. According to the governance of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the pastor is responsible to bless and approve each wedding he/she officiates; therefore, ***you must meet with your pastor before your wedding date can be confirmed*** and no later than six weeks prior to the date of the wedding. The pastor may ask another professional to do non-member pre-marriage counseling, in which case the couple is responsible for the charges.

The Wedding Service

Because you have decided to be married in a church, your wedding will be a service of worship honoring God in recognition of the love between two people. As Christians, we view marriage as a means of discipleship and seek to allow our relationship with Christ to form the pattern for the covenant of marriage. It is assumed that at least one of the marriage partners is a faithful member of a Christian community and that the vows of marriage will be made in response to the Word of God, in the context of prayer, and in the presence of a faith community. In consultation with your pastor, the liturgy for your service will most likely be based on the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship including scripture readings and a brief homily.



Music

BMPC musicians will play/sing at all weddings unless other arrangements are made with the Fine Arts staff. Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the community (W-4.9005). Since your marriage ceremony is a “service of Christian worship,” the music chosen should praise and glorify God and should be appropriate for the instruments and vocalists available. In general, popular music from Broadway shows, television, and “pop chart” tunes do not meet these criteria and are inappropriate for the marriage ceremony. The presiding pastor and church musician have responsibility for approving the music used and can suggest appropriate selections.

Please see the Wedding Music information brochure for more details, and ***turn in the music request form at least six weeks prior to the wedding.***

Adornments and Flowers

According to our denominations “Book of Order”, all adornments 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. The Sanctuary and Chapel at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church are beautiful spaces and do not need excessive adornments. Two large floral arrangements in the front of the worship space are more than adequate; however, in the Sanctuary two additional arrangements on the side communion tables are permitted as well.

The Communion Table and all seasonal church decorations will remain in place and no decorations will be placed on the table. If desired, you may place up to twelve small arrangements or bows on the pews ends without the use of nails, tape, or tacks. All other decorations are prohibited. Due to safety concerns and insurance restrictions, aisle runners are not allowed. No materials of any kind (flower petals, birdseed, rice, etc.) may be scattered or thrown inside or outside of the church buildings.

Please see our Florist Guidelines for more details. It is the couple’s responsibility to ensure the florist understands the church policies.



Photos and Videos

With the understanding that your wedding is a worship service, guests are not permitted to take photographs or videos during the wedding service. Please indicate this in your bulletin. The worship service begins with the processional and ends with the recessional. At no time after the processional begins is a professional photographer or videographer allowed in front of the gathered congregation. Professionals may take non-flash silent photography and stationary video without artificial lighting from the rear of the worship space without disrupting the service. You may gather for pictures before or after your wedding ceremony providing you remain within the allotted time frame (two hours prior to start time and one hour after the conclusion of the service).

Please see our Photography and Videography Guidelines for more details. It is the couple's responsibility to ensure the photographer and videographer (professional or amateur) understand the church policies.

Wedding Rehearsals

Wedding rehearsals are customarily on Friday late afternoon or early evening and are scheduled in consultation with your pastor and the wedding coordinator. The pastor will ordinarily conduct the rehearsal with the assistance of the musician (if requested and extra fee paid for this service), wedding coordinator, and sexton. Your entire wedding party including parents of the couple and ushers must be present for instructions. The couple should ensure the wedding party's timeliness as the rehearsal will conclude one hour after the scheduled time whether or not the rehearsal has fully taken place.

Facility Information

You will have use of designated areas within the church up to two hours prior to the start of the wedding and one hour after the wedding ends. Both wedding parties may request dressing rooms. Please note alcohol is not permitted on church property. Food and drink are allowed only in the dressing areas. Clean-up is the responsibility of the wedding party and subject to an additional custodial fee. The couple are responsible for damages their party or guests cause to the church property. BMPC cannot be held responsible for personal items if lost, stolen or damaged.



The capacity of the Sanctuary is 1150 including lofts and the capacity of the Chapel is 174. The parking lots adjacent to the church have 300 spaces. Should you expect more than 300 guests, you must contract with Harcum College for the use of their parking lot across Montgomery Avenue from the church. This requires a traffic officer to serve as a crossing guard, which you are responsible for securing through Lower Merion Township. Weddings of 300 guests or more also require an assistant wedding coordinator (see fee schedule).

Both the Sanctuary and the Chapel are accessible by wheelchair; however, accessible restrooms are limited.

Receptions

The church can accommodate small receptions in the Ministries Center. There is NO alcohol allowed on the premises, and a DJ is not permitted. Strings or piano may be allowed. All food must be prepared by a professional caterer who needs advance training in the use of our kitchen equipment. Please discuss this with your wedding coordinator for more details. The church does not have china, silverware, glassware, or linens for your use.

Programs/Bulletins

Programs or bulletins are optional for your wedding service. Should you decide to use bulletins, you are responsible for producing them. Your pastor will give you the order of the worship service. The text of the entire bulletin and the cover art you choose must be approved by the presiding pastor at least ten days prior to the wedding date. For church cover art, a black and white image of the church building and one of the cross in the chapel are available digitally. Please bring your bulletins to the rehearsal.



Marriage License from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

A marriage license from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is required to marry at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church. Please give the wedding coordinator your Pennsylvania marriage license at the rehearsal so that she can record the number for office use. The presiding pastor is the only one that signs the license following the service. The church is responsible for returning the signed license to the state. Note that licenses in the state of Pennsylvania must be used within 60 days and that there is a three-day waiting period prior to your wedding date. For information about obtaining a marriage license in Montgomery County see <http://rwoc.montcopa.org> and click on “Our Services” then “Marriage License.” You may apply in any Pennsylvania county.

The Marriage After the Wedding

It is our hope at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church is to be as much a part of your marriage as we are a part of your wedding where, together in Christ, we claim hope over despair, prefer truth to complacency, and seek to grow in personal faith and compassion for the world. Please let us know if we can assist you in any way as you learn to live in marriage. We pray God’s blessings and love for your life together.

Fee Schedule

In thanksgiving to God, couples are encouraged to give a percentage of the total cost of their wedding celebrations as a gift to the church. All fees are due to the wedding coordinator no later than thirty days prior to the wedding date. Checks should be made payable to Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church with the exception of the honorarium for the pastor, which should be written separately to his/her name. The security deposit is due before a wedding can be confirmed. In the event of a cancellation, we will retain the deposit as a charitable donation.

For fees, contact the wedding coordinator.



Wedding Check List and Time Line

All forms and correspondence should be mailed to:

Wedding Coordinator, BMPC, 625 Montgomery Ave, Bryn Mawr PA, 19010.

To secure your date on the church calendar (no later than six weeks prior to the wedding):

Speak with Wedding Coordinator

Mail Deposit
(checks payable to BMPC)
Attn: Wedding Coordinator

Meet with presiding pastor

Five Weeks Prior to the Wedding Date:

Share guidelines with
photographer & florist

Send Music Request Form to
Music & Fine Arts assistant

One Month Prior to Wedding Date:

Apply for Marriage License
with the county

Meet with Wedding Coordinator

Pay remaining balance of fees

Give honorarium to pastor

Ten Days Prior to the Wedding Date:

Email presiding pastor a copy
of the text and cover art for
your bulletin

Confirm the day, time & location
of rehearsal with all members of
the wedding party

At the Wedding Rehearsal

Give wedding bulletins and/or
programs to coordinator

Give Wedding Coordinator
your Marriage License



