



## Edgington Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Established 1837

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### PHILOSOPHY AND POLICY OF CHRISTIAN WEDDINGS<sup>1</sup>

Congratulations upon your engagement! We appreciate your desire to have a wedding in the church. A church wedding is an indication that a couple realizes that marriage is a divine institution, regulated by the Word of God. The Session and staff would like to express the hope that God will guide, bless and enrich you with every spiritual blessing.

This wedding policy developed and practiced by the Session of our church is designed to promote the glory of God, the peace of the church, and the happiness of the couple in your life together, with the hope that your wedding will be a true service of worship to the one, true and living God.

As the wedding ceremony states: "The happiness contemplated by this union is realized only by those who fully appreciate its sacredness and are faithful in the performance of the mutual obligations growing out of it, and who see daily God's blessing." May you, by His grace, do so.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) authorizes its ministers to determine whom they will unite in marriage. Ministers are also given the authority to act for the state in performing marriages, but are not governed by any definition of marriage contrary to Scripture. It is the responsibility of each couple seeking to be married to comply with all requirements of the state and to present the minister with a valid marriage license at the wedding rehearsal. Further, we believe that God has designed marriage as a life-long union between one man and one woman, to be a reflection of the covenant love that our Savior Jesus Christ has with His Bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:32). As such, the following provisions should be observed to ensure that the integrity of the Church, the cherished value of the Gospel and the honor of God is maintained:

1. All brides and grooms must be confessing Christians with a desire to develop a Christian home and thus honor the sanctity of marriage. We are not free to perform the marriages of couples that have not made this commitment.
2. One of the parties applying for marriage must be an active member of EEPC, or be determined to be an affiliate member.
3. Marriages will not be performed for couples who are currently living together, or who have not pledged their faithfulness for separation and chastity prior to the wedding.

Provided you meet these aforementioned provisions, the Session of EEPC has also set forth the following policies for the use of our facilities for wedding services..

- 1) **Reserving the Church** – Please contact the church office to determine that your desired date is available. Your date may be tentatively scheduled, but the actual date is not finalized and placed on our calendar until Session has approved the wedding.
- 2) **Pre-marital Counseling** – At the same time you may make an appointment to meet with the minister and agree upon a plan for pre-marital counseling. Expect a minimum of at least three counseling sessions, to be completed not less than one month prior to the service.

- 3) **The Wedding Service** – As the wedding service takes place in the context of Christian worship, the officiating minister will work with you to plan an appropriately reverent ceremony. The important thing to remember is that the purpose of worship is to focus attention on God, and the act of God which has made human love and marriage special within the church. Planning the service, including all musical selections is part of the Pre-Martial Counseling. Poems and other non-sacred readings will not be approved. Couples may not write their own vows. Communion will not be served. All service details must be approved by the officiating minister in consultation with the couple.
- 4) **Guest Ministers** - Ordained clergy of other congregations may be invited to assist our pastor with the wedding ceremony. Invitations to these other clergy must be made by our pastor, following approval of the Session. Guest ministers will be required to comply with all aspects of this policy.
- 5) **Music** – Musical selections must be consistent with the purpose of the service itself, and will normally include hymns or other Christian songs. While certain secular songs may have special meaning to a couple, they are inappropriate for worship. Pam Pithan (798-2926) and Nancy Cooksey (798-5512) are our church organists, and our pianist is Lori Dixon (372-8491). They are ready to assist you in planning music for your wedding service. As the care of the organ and piano are directly under their control, guest musicians are to be invited only with the consent and supervision of our staff accompanists.
- 6) **Substances** – No alcohol or illegal drugs are allowed in the church or on the church grounds at any time. This includes the parking lot. Please observe this before, during, and after the wedding rehearsal; during any decorating which takes place prior to the wedding; and before, during and after the ceremony. Any member of the wedding party who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be permitted to participate in the rehearsal or wedding. The bride and groom shall be under obligation to make this known to all members of the wedding party, and shall be held solely responsible for their actions. Smoking is also not permitted in the church building.
- 7) **Wedding Rehearsal** - Rehearsals shall ordinarily be scheduled for 6pm, with any dinner plans taking place after the rehearsal. Rehearsals should be expected to last between 45-60 minutes. The minister shall conduct the rehearsal with full cooperation from the wedding party in a prompt and dignified manner. Please bring: programs, unity candle/sand (if any), payments for the service. Do not bring any dresses/suits the evening of the rehearsal; they may not be stored at the church.
- 8) **Liability** - Please do not leave personal items (purses, etc.) unattended in dressing rooms/areas. EEPC is not responsible for your personal belongings.
- 9) **Photographing and Video Taping** –We request professionals – photo or video – consult with the pastor before the service about how best to accomplish their task, while respecting the dignity and reverence of the wedding service. Formal pictures may be taken before and after the ceremony. However, all pictures taken before to the ceremony must be completed 60 minutes prior to the hour of the wedding. Also, please remind family and friends that taking pictures with flash bulbs during the service is distracting.
- 10) **Church Cleaning** – As a couple, you will be responsible for ensuring the church is restored to the same condition prior to your rehearsal and wedding service. This includes all flowers, rented equipment, and disposing of any trash created by your wedding. There is a large trash can near the shed on the north side of the property. Please keep this in mind that since most weddings occur on Saturday, there is a worship service the following day – Sunday morning. Therefore, the best time to clean is immediately after the guests have left the church. We advise you to make cleaning arrangements beforehand.
- 11) **Please Remember** - If one or more of these guidelines should be violated before or on the day of the wedding, the Session has given the pastor the authority to cancel the service.

12) **Fees** – The following fees for the use of the church sanctuary and personnel have been approved by the Session. Musicians and Pastor should be paid directly. The cleaning fee should be paid to the church.

a. <b>Music Services</b> ( <i>if applicable</i> )	<b>\$150 (includes rehearsal)</b>
b. <b>Pastor</b> ( <i>suggested honorarium</i> )	<b>\$150</b>
c. <b>Cleaning Fee</b>	<b>\$100</b>

A copy of this policy will be supplied to all couples planning to marry at EEPC. On the night of the rehearsal, copies will also be distributed to the parents and all members of the wedding party. If concerns arise, they should be brought to the Session before the wedding date. If you have any questions about this policy, please call the church office.

We trust that full observance of this policy will ensure not only the most enjoyable marriage service for the bride and groom, but will also glorify God. To that end, we commit ourselves to supporting, nurturing and encouraging the new couple not only in the course of the wedding service, but the remainder of their lives. We look forward to serving you.

On behalf of the Session, Yours Warmly,

Rev. Zachary A. Hopkins