

YOU AND YOUR WEDDING
The Cecilton United Methodist Parish
(Revised December 2004)

Mailing Address:
Cecilton United Methodist Parish
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A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

The Zion and St. Paul's Church are eager to make your wedding a beautiful and memorable occasion. The following information is given to help you plan for this important event.

The Christian wedding is an act of worship of God, as well as an act of commitment of two people in the covenant relationship of marriage. It is a celebration of life and love the couple share with their family and friends. The wedding ceremony itself is not only a legal requirement for marriage, but it also publicly affirms the uniting of two people in a loving relation sanctioned by God through the Church of Jesus Christ. While it is easy to allow the ceremony to take on the appearance of a Hollywood or Broadway "production," it should not be forgotten that this is a sacred event usually celebrated in the sanctuary of God's House. It should, therefore, be a service of joy, reverence, and dedication that will be remembered and cherished in all the years ahead. The pastor is here to help make your wedding as meaningful as possible.

PRELIMINARY TO ARRANGEMENT FOR WEDDING

The couple desiring to be married by the pastor (whether in St. Paul's Church, Zion Church or at another location in the parish) should contact him (hereafter referred to simply as the pastor) and arrange a preliminary meeting. At that time the pastor will discuss with the couple their intentions and plans. The wedding date and time may be set at that time, as well as any further dates for premarital counseling. *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* states under the "Responsibilities and Duties of a Pastor" the following: "To perform the marriage ceremony *after due counsel* with the parties involved. *The decision to perform the ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor.* Qualifications for performing marriage shall be in accordance with the laws of the state and The United Methodist Church." [¶331.1i, page 218]

Every couple seeking to be married in this must understand and be agreeable to the rules and regulations listed below and on the following pages.

1. Weddings performed in St. Paul's or Zion Churches must be consistent with the doctrines and customs of the United Methodist Church. We do not simply "rent the sanctuary out" to anyone for weddings, but we do allow persons who are not members of our congregation to be married here at the discretion and availability of the pastor.
2. Due to the logistics of preparing for each wedding ceremony, if there is to be a second wedding in the sanctuary on the same day, the starting time of the second wedding to be scheduled will not be within three and one-half (and preferably four) hours of the first to be

scheduled (i.e., if the first wedding is scheduled at 2:00 pm, the second wedding would have to begin no later than 10:30 am or no sooner than 5:30 pm). The availability of the location of your wedding reception will not dictate the availability of the church!

3. While other members of the clergy may assist with your wedding, the pastor of the Cecilton Parish will officiate at all weddings held at either of these churches (i.e., you may not simply “rent” the church and have another pastor officiate the service).
4. The planning of the wedding ceremony will be done in consultation with the pastor, and the pastor has the “*final word*” concerning any requested additions and/or changes to the wedding ceremony.
5. No alcoholic beverages are permitted at any time or any where on the premises of the churches (i.e., church, church hall, parking lots, etc.).
6. Smoking is also prohibited inside any of the facilities.
7. Food and drinks are not allowed in the sanctuary.
8. Use of rice, confetti or birdseed is prohibited.
9. The church office does not provide or produce wedding bulletins.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING SESSIONS

The couple to be married will meet with the pastor for premarital counseling as mandated in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (as referenced above). Premarital sessions with the pastor are customized with and for each couple, and the number of sessions will be determined by the couple’s needs and desires; however, the pastor requires that each couple completes the “*Prepare*” *Inventory of Life Innovations* which is a 165-item questionnaire that assists the pastor in assessing your relationship in regards to such areas as conflict resolution, financial management, sexual relations, etc. This inventory is *not* a test which you can pass or fail; however, your honesty in answering the questions is essential if it is to be beneficial to your relationship. **The cost of taking this inventory is \$35** and is payable by check to *Life Innovations, Inc.*

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

Wedding licenses in the State of Maryland are valid for six (6) months; however, they are only valid in the county in which they are issued. Therefore, **to be married in one of our churches or anywhere in Cecil County, you must obtain your wedding license from the Clerk of the Court’s Office in the Cecil County Courthouse in Elkton, Maryland.** The Marriage Bureau is *normally* open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm; however, it is recommended that you call first to verify this (410-996-5376). The license is valid the day after it is applied for and received., it is recommended that you obtain your license at least two weeks before your wedding day. Both the bride and groom must appear in person with a photo ID. If divorced or widowed, the court will request the dates and places of occurrence. If you are 20 years of age or younger, you will need to bring your birth certificate. You also must be 18 years of age to be married without parental consent.

You are encouraged to bring the license into the pastor as soon as possible and no later than the day before your wedding!

FEES AND COMPENSATIONS

The Church makes every effort to assist in keeping the costs at a minimum. Weddings, however, do involve some extra work, which the church is unable to underwrite. The fees are to be paid (preferably by check) to the pastor as stated in the “Building Use Contract”. The stated “security deposit” does not apply to the use of the sanctuary only for a wedding.

Active supporting members (defined here as one who has contributed financially to the support of the congregation in the past year) are not expected to pay for the pastor’s service. The pastor does not have a “set fee” for inactive or non-members, but has faith that you will not forget the time and assistance he has given you.

You will be responsible for any and all fees for the organist, soloist, custodian, etc. Checks for each should be made separately instead of one large inclusive check to the church (this makes our record keeping a whole lot easier). *Please ask your organist what his/her fee may be as each organist sets their own fee.*

All checks for fees should be given to the pastor no later than the day of the rehearsal!

CUSTODIAL SERVICES (Zion Church only)

The services of the custodian are needed to prepare the church prior to the ceremony as well as to clean up after the service. While many have “good intentions” of doing this themselves to save paying the custodial fee, experience has proven otherwise too many times. **The custodial fee at Zion Church is \$ 40.00**, and a separate check made payable to **Mr. Frank Gatewood** should be given to the pastor with the other checks no later than the date of the wedding rehearsal.

WEDDING SERVICE MUSIC

One of the organists/pianists of our churches will provide the music at all wedding services. It is the organist/pianist’s responsibility, within the policy of the church, to see that music of high standard and good taste is used at every service of Holy Matrimony. Our organist/pianist will be happy to discuss with you a program of music to be played at your wedding. If you have any preferences in the selection of music, please contact the organist/pianist as soon as possible (no less than two weeks prior to the wedding); otherwise, the organist/pianist will choose a program that she/he believes will be suitable for this sacred occasion. If you wish to have a vocal soloist, you need to make arrangements for this with the organist. After an organist/pianist has been obtained, please contact the pastor with the name of that person.

Organists at Zion U.M. Church:

Karen Davis	410-275-2727
Chris Loller	410-275-2427
Joan Magee	410-275-8426
Karen Morgan	410-885-2302

Organist at St. Paul’s U.M. Church:

Diane Zang	410-275-8225
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Pianist at St. Paul’s U.M. Church:

Sara Mullin	410-275-8373
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THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

A rehearsal date and time should be arranged as soon as possible. Approximately one hour should be allowed for the rehearsal, and all are asked to be punctual! In cases where other rehearsals are also scheduled on a given evening, your goodwill and cooperation will be even more appreciated.

USE OF FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS IN THE CHURCH

Arrangements for floral decorations should be made with the florist of your choice; however, church policy suggests that floral arrangements be limited. Decorations on the altar rail or the “Lord’s Table” are not permitted. Most of the local florists are acquainted with our church, and will be able to suggest various decorations for your consideration. Please ask the florist to deliver the flowers at least two hours before the wedding. If the altar flowers are to be left for the Sunday services, please let the church secretary know so that we may cancel our standing order for that week (traditionally, we send these flowers to the sick or shut-ins following the Sunday morning worship services). If the flowers are to be left, an announcement of your wedding will be placed in the church bulletin.

Other Decorating Notes: Aisle ribbons, outdoor canopies, or a white aisle cloth to be unrolled over the aisle can be ordered from your florist. ***For safety reasons, use of a white aisle cloth is strongly discouraged.*** Decorations on the pews (i.e., to reserve pews for the family) may ***not*** be attached with anything that will mar the wood finish (i.e., thumb tacks, nails, staples, tape, etc.). The altar paraments (the colored hangings on the pulpit, lectern, etc.) shall be the color of the liturgical season.

Regarding the use of candles in the windows of Zion Church: Please contact Joan Magee (410-275-8426) about doing this. She will advise you as to what type of candle you need to purchase) and will assist you with making the protective globes available for your use.

Regarding the use of a unity candle: If you desire to do this, please speak with the pastor about the type of candles and candle holders you will need for this.

OTHER PASTORS and WEDDING COORDINATORS

We are happy to have relatives and friends of your family, who are members of the clergy, participate in the wedding service. Please feel free to make such suggestions to the pastor. However, it is important to understand that the pastor will be in charge of the rehearsal and the wedding service. It is appropriate for your wedding coordinator (if you have one) to contact the pastor prior to the rehearsal and/or wedding in order to avoid any “misunderstandings” at either of these events.

THE PASTOR’S ATTENDANCE AT WEDDING REHEARSAL DINNERS AND RECEPTIONS

If you desire to have the pastor and his wife attend your rehearsal dinner, wedding, and/or wedding reception, please make your desires known to them by way of an invitation prior to the day of the event. Many have only asked as they were leaving the church: “*You are coming to the*

rehearsal dinner/wedding reception, aren't you?" The pastor assumes he and his wife are **not** invited unless an invitation is extended to them **before** the day of the event. Enough said about that.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

As a wedding ceremony is a religious ceremony, ***NO flash photography is permitted during the ceremony.*** The pastor will permit a professional photographer to take a flash picture of the bride entering the church and the couple leaving; however, others are discouraged from doing so. This does not preclude the use of "natural light" photography (without flash or floodlights) or videotaping from inconspicuous locations during the service (the rear of the sanctuary). Please be sure to advise your friends, relatives, and photographer of this policy. If you use a printed bulletin, please include a statement to the effect: "*We ask our wedding guests to please refrain from flash photography during the wedding service.*" And a special note for photographers and videographers: Your cooperation with the pastor is essential. Failure to respect the sacredness of the service and the instruction of the pastor will mandate the service being stopped until you leave the sanctuary (no kidding!).