

Wedding and Premarital Counseling Policy

We are honored that you would consider hosting your wedding at the Merrimacport United Methodist Church, and we look forward to being part of your special day. The purpose of our marriage policy is to provide couples with information about what the church offers as well as outlining expectations for the couple so that all are in agreement.

We look forward to meeting you and hope we can share in the blessing of your upcoming marriage!

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Wedding Policy



Helping to create a meaningful day
and a healthy, lifelong marriage

Pastor Gwyneth Arrison of the
Merrimacport United Methodist Church

Why the Church?

Today's weddings may take place in large cathedrals, country chapels, courthouses or outdoors, and may be performed by a justice-of-the-peace, rabbi, ordained minister or even a friend who applies for certification with the state. Church weddings, however, are particularly meaningful to those who wish to publicly submit their relationship to Jesus Christ and desire to be married in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The wedding itself includes prayer, Scripture, and a short homily. The couple exchanges vows, either traditional or their own, and asks those gathered to support them in their lifelong marriage. We do not require that the couple be Christian, but they need to consider whether they can authentically proclaim these vows which assume the Christian faith. We invite the couple to initiate or strengthen their relationship with God through Jesus Christ during our time together.

Why pre-marital counseling?

Couples spend hundreds of hours preparing for their wedding day, but most spend little time preparing for their lifelong marriage. Our goal is to provide couples with some helpful tools to increase their chances of a healthy and lasting marriage. Couples will be asked to perform a premarital inventory, not to judge or qualify a marriage but to highlight relational strengths and weaknesses which will help focus our discussion time during counseling sessions. Particular attention will be paid to faith, finances, family and friends, personality differences, role expectations, sex, communication and conflict resolution. We hope through these counseling sessions that couples will grow closer to one another and God, gaining insights that will help their relationship flourish.

Expectations and Covenant

- Desire for a Christian wedding with vows taken before God the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Understand that the wedding is subject to the rules of the United Methodist Church.
- Complete a premarital inventory, which will be used to guide the counseling process.
- Faithfully attend 6 two-hour premarital counseling sessions together, preferably through at least a four month period.
- Understand that the pastor reserves the right to not marry a couple if there are signs of abuse or other serious issues.
- Regularly attend church worship services or a Christian small group together throughout the counseling process.
- Take seriously the pastor's recommendation to cease sexual activity until marriage.
- Agree to the photography policy during wedding: no flash, and video & stills taken from one location only.
- \$100 non-refundable deposit by first counseling session. Payment of all fees prior to the wedding day: \$200 for use of Sanctuary, \$300 for counseling and rehearsal, and \$200 for use of reception hall if needed and available. There is a small fee for the inventory, and \$300 for church organist if needed.
- Agree that anyone arriving to the wedding under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave, perhaps leading to the cancellation of the wedding.
- Attend one post-marital counseling session within six months of marriage.