

WEDDING PLANNING

Rev'd Dr. Philip Gardner, Minister
Lianne Tan, Director of Music
Wendy Thomson, Administrator

WEST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH



549 Plains Road West
Burlington, Ontario
L7T 1H1
905 529 4871
www.westplains.ca

Revised — Winter 2025

Introduction

Congratulations to you on your forthcoming marriage! The church staff looks forward to helping you to create your own marriage service that honours the institution of marriage and also reflects who you are as a couple. Our church community offers wedding ceremonies for all couples, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Our minister is available to perform weddings both within the church building and at off-site locations.

Some details about West Plains:

- A wedding service normally lasts 20-30 minutes
- Our sanctuary has a wide centre aisle and seats about 200.
- Our sanctuary is **air-conditioned** and wheelchair accessible
- We are the closest church to the Royal Botanical gardens.
You do *not* have to be a member to be married at West Plains. Nevertheless, West Plains has a strict policy that *only* our current minister is to officiate at weddings.
- The parking lot holds 60 cars and we have the use of the cemetery parking across the street when needed.
- If you do not wish to use our musician for your ceremony, or if you invite another musician to perform for your wedding (approved by the West Plains Music Director), our

music director still receives the customary fee.

The wedding ceremony is set in the context of Christian worship. Those who come as guests are part of the worshipping community. In this act of worship the congregation gathers to celebrate God's gifts and to seek with the marital couple God's blessing on their lives and relationship.

Initial interview with the minister— as soon as possible

Please contact the church office to book an appointment. The meeting will typically last about an hour. Both partners must be present. With your help, the minister will fill in a *Marriage Information Form*. The date and time will be reserved once this form is filled out. There is no deposit required.

Ceremony Choices

Our normal wedding words and order (also called a liturgy) follow the forms recommended by the United Church of Canada. In consultation with the minister, you are invited to share in the creation of your own wedding service based on these guidelines, but not necessarily limited to them.

Wedding License

We will need you to provide your wedding license (with envelope) *before* the rehearsal day. You may purchase a wedding license up to three months prior to your wedding at any City or Town Hall in Ontario.

Music Consultation —at least one month before the ceremony

The role of music is to express joy and praise to God. Couples should meet with the West Plains Music Director at least one month before the wedding date. She will be pleased to discuss the options that are available and help you to find appropriate music. She will also assist you in finding a singer or additional instrumentalists if you wish. The fees of additional singers or instrumentalists are to be negotiated privately with them.

Bulletins

The church office can prepare a wedding bulletin that lists your wedding party and order of service. You are responsible for supplying the bulletin covers (available at most Christian bookstores). This service costs \$30.

The Rehearsal

You will set up a rehearsal time with the minister. It is better when children are included to begin a rehearsal early (5-6 p.m.). Please be sure you are on time and that your wedding party is aware of the

importance of being prompt. The sanctuary is booked for one hour for a wedding rehearsal which will normally take about 45 minutes.

Decoration/Flowers

Flowers are the responsibility of the wedding couple. Flowers can be delivered to the church **one hour prior to the ceremony**, or by prior arrangement. It may be possible for decorations to be placed at the rehearsal time. Any seasonal decorations (e.g. Christmas, Thanksgiving) will remain in place. Please note that the use of confetti and rice is not permitted. The church has two 7-branch candelabra which you may use at no charge. Please bring 14 white candles (“Jubla” – Ikea). We also offer a unity candle-lighting set at no charge. We have a set of 10 white pew bows for your use, also at no charge, or you may bring your own. If you bring your own, please bring them to the rehearsal and ask someone to remove them from the church following the ceremony.

Photography

Because the ceremony is a service of worship, the taking of photographs should be respectful of your marriage *as* an act of worship. A designated photographer or videographer may take discreet pictures during the ceremony. All photographers or videographers should check with the minister 15 minutes prior to the ceremony.

Fees

Use of church: \$250

Minister: \$300

Music Director: \$200 (if additional rehearsals are required, \$50 per)

Use of the Fellowship Hall: \$200

Live streaming (if requested): \$150

Wedding Bulletin: \$30

Parking Steward (if needed): \$35