

We're here to assist you
The Staff of La Plata UMC

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Additional information about weddings at La Plata UMC
is available on our web site at
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*Planning Your
Wedding*



A Guidebook for Couples
inquiring about having
their wedding at
La Plata United Methodist Church



A Wedding Guide Book

Congratulations on your decision to get married! Our church staff stands ready to assist you to make your wedding a special and memorable celebration. Please feel free

to call the church office or speak to our pastor at any time, if you have questions during your planning phase. Our church office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please read this Guidebook completely before submitting your Wedding Reservation Form. This wedding manual has been created to assist you in making the arrangements related to the church and ceremony for your wedding. Once you have talked with our pastor to see if he is available, please check with our church office to make sure the date you'd like is available. Once confirmed verbally we ask you to return the Wedding Reservation Form along with the deposit fees. The date is not secured until your form and the deposits are received. Next, you will need to arrange to meet with the pastor for pre-marital counseling sessions. These should begin well in advance of the wedding date. The information covered here answers the most frequently asked questions.

Reserving the Church – When you call to inquire about the availability of a date, we will pencil your request onto our calendar. The date is not formally reserved for you until you have 1) spoken to our pastor and confirmed his availability to do the ceremony, and 2) sent in your deposit. When we receive your Wedding Reservation Form and your deposit(s), then the date and time will be reserved for your wedding.

Liturgy and Form – A wedding ceremony is a service of worship, whose shape is largely determined by the Wedding Ritual of the United Methodist Church and its Book of Worship. Other liturgies and forms may be authorized after consultation with the pastor. When

persons of different faiths wish to marry, the clergy person of another church or religion may officiate along with the pastor. The ritual may be an adaptation of the faith traditions of both the bride and the groom.

Sanctuary Decorations – Our church is a worshipping community that observes the liturgical year. Consequently, the “look” of our sanctuary changes with the church seasons. Sometimes there are special flowers. A special wreath and banners appear at Advent and there are special wall hangings during the season of Lent. The colors of the seasonal paraments, the banners and other liturgical decorations cannot be removed or changed.

Reception – If you desire to have your reception at the church in our social hall, there is an additional fee of \$400 for non-members; \$200 (non-refundable) is required with the Wedding Reservation Form. This amount includes use of the kitchen and church tables and chairs. There is no charge for use of the social hall to those who are active members for at least one year. Whether you hire a caterer or have friends or family prepare the food, it is best to prepare the food off site, and bring it in for serving. There is additionally, a \$200 refundable security deposit required with the Wedding Reservation Form, to cover any damage or loss. That amount will be refunded after the wedding, minus any expenses the church incurs. United Methodist Social Principles prohibit alcohol of any kind to be present, served or consumed in the church. Arrangements for decorating the social hall can be worked out.

Pastor – The pastor's fee for non-members is \$300; \$150 of this (non-refundable) is required with the Wedding Reservation Form and is payable to the pastor. The balance is due at the wedding rehearsal. There is no fee for those who are active church members. You may invite your home pastor or an ordained relative to participate in the service. Our pastor must participate in the ceremony even if only serving as the host, and his fees are not reduced by the participation of other clergy.

Organist – The fee for the organist is \$225. This includes consultation and wedding. The fee for the organist to attend the rehearsal (optional) is \$100. An additional \$50-100 per hour is charged for rehearsal with singers and/or musicians prior to the wedding rehearsal or at another agreed upon time. This amount is due at the time of the rehearsal. Please give the check for the organist to the wedding coordinator. She will give it to the organist at the wedding.

Custodian – The custodian’s fee is \$150. This check is also given to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal.

List of Fees:

Fee	Inactive & Non-Members	Active Members
Reservation Fee	\$175 / \$50♦	\$50
Sanctuary	\$400*	No Charge
Wedding Banners	\$35	No Charge
Candelabra	\$25	No Charge
Social Hall & Kitchen	\$400*	No Charge
Security Deposit for Hall	\$200	\$200
Pastor	\$300*	No Charge
Wedding Coordinator	\$150	\$150
Organist	\$225	\$175
Custodian	\$150	\$75

♦ Reservation Fee holds the date, but the deposits are due at time of reservation, or one year before the wedding. *One-half of these fees are non-refundable and are required at the time you send in your Wedding Reservation Form, and all remaining fees are due at the rehearsal.

Programs – If you desire a wedding bulletin (or program), the pastor will assist you in planning the Order of Worship. The type of bulletin you use is up to you, and printing is your responsibility.

Rehearsal – Rehearsals are recommended and under most circumstances are extremely valuable. They are typically held the evening before the wedding. Please list your preferred time on the Wedding Reservation Form. The actual date and time will be arranged with the pastor at the first conference.

License – A Charles County Marriage License is required and should be given to the pastor no later than the rehearsal. You may want to give it to the pastor as soon as you receive it. Please apply for the license at least four to six weeks in advance. For information please contact the Charles County Clerk of Court’s office.

Flowers – You may order flowers to decorate the sanctuary from the florist of your choice. It is recommended that you bring the florist to the church prior to ordering your flowers, so the florist can see the shape, size and arrangement of our sanctuary. You may take the flowers with you after the wedding, or you may leave them for the following Sunday’s worship service. An arrangement for the altar is recommended. Additional arrangements are permitted. You may also choose to have pew bows held on with plastic clips or ribbons. Typically the florist provides the aisle runner. The church has brass candelabra available for a small additional charge. You are asked to provide the candles (14). You may discuss decorating the candelabra with your florist. Please call the church office or arrange for the times and day the florist will deliver the flowers.

Photography – The photographer must consult with the pastor prior to the wedding. It is advisable for the photographer to contact the pastor prior to the rehearsal. Flash pictures are permitted for processional and recessional only. All other pictures during the ceremony must be taken with available light from the rear of the church. Your photographer must stay toward the back of the sanctuary during the ceremony. Guests may not take photographs.

Videography – Videographers must remain stationary in an inconspicuous location approved by the pastor. Video cameras on stationary tripods may be arranged in the chancel with consultation of the pastor. More than one video camera may be set up to get varied angles. Shoulder mounted and handheld video cameras are not allowed to be mobile during the service.

Church Members – You qualify for the active member rates, if one or both of you, or one of your parents, is frequently at worship and is a supporting member of La Plata UMC for at least one year. If you are an official member, but have not attended worship regularly and contributed financially in the past year, you are considered an inactive member.

Non-Members – If neither of you belong to this congregation, none of your parents belong to this church, or if any of these is a member but for less than a full year, you will pay the non-member rates.

Sobriety – Our pastor will not proceed with the wedding if any member of the wedding party is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited anywhere on church premises and none are to be consumed before the wedding.

Sanctuary – The fee for non-members is \$400; \$200 (non-refundable) is your Reservation Fee and is required with the Wedding Reservation Form and is payable to “La Plata UMC”. The balance is due at the rehearsal. There is no charge for the use of the sanctuary to those who are active members for at least one year. The \$50 reservation fee only holds the date until you pay the deposit, which is due no later than one year before the wedding.

Music – Our church’s organist will play for the wedding unless she is unable to do so. If another organist is requested, the organist must give approval. Arrangements for music should be made with our organist, Linda Dent-Mitchell. If there is to be singing by the congregation, a choir, or a soloist, the organist should be told.

Written Invitations – It is customary to include the pastor and spouse when sending your formal invitations, if you intend them to be at the reception. Also, if there is going to be a rehearsal dinner following the rehearsal to which the pastor is invited, typically the pastor and spouse are sent a written invitation. Dr. & Mrs. Bruce A. Jones’s address is 5909 Preswicke Lane, La Plata, MD 20646.

Candelabra (optional) – \$25 for two brass candelabra holding 14 candles, payable to the church, due at rehearsal. There is no charge for the candelabra to those who are active church members for at least one year. You or your florist are to provide the candles.

Facilities – Our sanctuary seats approximately 400 guests. The parlor is available for the bride’s party, to get dressed and/or for last minute preparations. A separate room is also provided for the groom and best man. The center aisle is approximately 75 feet long. We have a pipe organ and an audio system with wireless microphones. The service can be recorded for an additional charge. There is also a balcony that seats about 50 more people.

Wedding Coordinator – use of our church’s wedding coordinator is required, but you will find her assistance to be invaluable to the smooth flow of your wedding. She helps manage much that takes place behind the scenes leading up to the bride’s marching down the aisle. She makes sure the honored guests are properly seated and escorted out. She will be at the rehearsal to help everyone feel ready for the ceremony.

Pre-marital Counseling – Our pastor meets with couples for pre-marital conferences. At that time, you may discuss your ideas for the wedding, and ask any questions you may have. These meetings are intended to help you get to know the pastor better, for the pastor to learn about you and your relationship. They are also a time to explore the dynamics of your relationship, to discuss the church’s understanding of the marriage covenant and your own, and to talk about ways to prepare for your life together after the ceremony.