



St. John's (Burry's) United Evangelical Protestant Church

1835 Route 68, Rochester, Pennsylvania 15074

(724) 452-6941 FAX (724) 452-2330

www.burryschurch.org

secretary@burryschurch.org

Congratulations on your engagement!

We at St. John's (Burry's) are pleased and excited for you as you begin this new season of your lives. Marriages are more than a public contract that is made; they are covenants that are made before God and in the presence of witnesses that bind a husband and a wife together as one flesh. Marriages are ordained by God, regulated by the Scriptures, and blessed by Jesus Christ himself as his first miracle took place at a wedding in Cana. Marriages also form the bedrock of our society, the family being the most basic building block of our community structure and of the propagation of the Christian faith.

Because God considers marriage significant, we at St. John's (Burry's) Church take marriages very seriously in the desire that "whatever God has so joined, no man will break" (Matthew 19:6). With that in mind and with a desire to make your wedding day go smoothly and be something that is joyfully remembered, the Church Council has established these guidelines to govern marriage ceremonies taking place in our church.

Again, we are pleased to be able to come alongside and celebrate your upcoming wedding with you and will pray that God will bless you and your marriage until death do you part.

Blessings to you in the Person of Jesus Christ,

Win Groseclose, Senior Pastor

and the

Church Council of

St. John's (Burry's) United Evangelical Protestant Church

Wedding Policy

As a church of Jesus Christ, we are responsible to God for our actions. We must maintain a clear conscience (I Timothy 1:19) before God as well as the state of Pennsylvania in the matter of uniting a man and woman together in Holy Matrimony. Below are the general marriage policies that we adhere to at St. John's (Burry's) Church, the basis of these can be found in Genesis 2:23-25 and 1 Corinthians 7.

Provisions:

1. The couple must be of legal age to marry in the state of Pennsylvania and must not be currently married to another spouse. We require at least two (2) months notice to officiate a wedding.¹
2. Couples who wish to marry at St. John's (Burry's) Church are required to attend at least four (4) counseling sessions with the officiating pastor.
3. If the wedding is to be officiated by a visiting pastor:
 - a) The visiting pastor must be approved and invited to perform the wedding by St. John's (Burry's) Church's Senior Pastor.
 - b) The visiting pastor must be an evangelical Christian pastor, duly ordained by his denomination or church and eligible to perform weddings in the state of Pennsylvania.
 - c) The couples are required to attend at least one (1) counseling session with a pastor from St. John's (Burry's) Church.
4. We will not officiate the marriage of a Christian to a non-Christian as that is forbidden in scripture (2 Corinthians 6:14-15)
5. We will not officiate the marriage of divorced individuals unless the divorce was based on Biblical grounds and the party to be remarried is not the guilty party.² Scripture offers two grounds upon which a divorce may be sanctioned:
 - a) Sexual Immorality or Adultery within the marriage relationship (Matthew 19:9)
 - b) The willful desertion of a believing spouse by a non-believing spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15)
6. Candidates for marriage should be:
 - a) Members in good standing at St. John's (Burry's) Church,
 - b) One a member of St. John's (Burry's) Church and the other a member of another Christian church,
 - c) At least one candidate having formerly been a member or related to a church member with the Pastor's and Church Council Approval.
 - d) Or members in good standing of another Christian church with the Pastor's and the Church Council's approval.
7. Co-habitation prior to marriage is not God's design for marriage. Thus those seeking to be married at St. John's (Burry's) Church will be asked to live apart for a season prior to the wedding.

¹ Exceptions may be made to the time provision only by the Church Council.

² Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis with the agreement of the Church Council.

8. Sexual intimacy is designed to be enjoyed within the marriage relationship alone; any form or sexual intimacy outside of that is sin. Thus all candidates for marriage will be expected to maintain their celibacy until the wedding is consummated on the wedding night. Couples so engaged will be expected to repent of their sin and live in celibacy from the point where this application made until the consummation on the wedding night. (1 Corinthians 5:9-12; 6:15-20; Hebrews 12:14-17).
9. Marriage is established by God to be between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5). No weddings outside of this design will be officiated by any minister of St. John's (Burry's) Church nor will they be permitted to take place within our church facility.
10. All weddings performed at St. John's (Burry's) Church will have one of our Wedding Coordinators present at both the wedding and rehearsal. If one of the pastors at St. John's (Burry's) Church is officiating the wedding, every effort will be made for the Wedding Coordinator to be present at the final planning meeting with the couple and pastor.
11. Communion is a Sacrament that God has given to the church and is entrusted to the church leadership for its purity and given to the church as a whole. Ordinarily, then, Communion will not be celebrated as part of a wedding ceremony.³
12. No rice, birdseed, or any other hard object may be thrown at the bride and groom on church property, nor may any object that is prone to make a mess (confetti, streamers, etc...) be thrown. It is strongly encouraged that bubbles be used as an alternative to the traditional throwing of rice.
13. The church bells may be rung upon the pronouncement that the bride and groom are married; this should be coordinated through the Wedding Coordinator.
14. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to obtain a wedding license and provide that to the officiating pastor on the night of the rehearsal. The officiating pastor will handle returning the appropriate portion to the court house after the wedding, maintain a copy for himself, and provide a copy for the church office to maintain on record.
15. If programs are to be used, it is the responsibility of the bride and groom to prepare and print them at their own expense.
16. Ordinarily, no weddings will be held on Sundays, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Good Friday, the Saturday before Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, or on days that conflict with other church activities.
17. The sanctuary can seat approximately 400 and the Fellowship Hall can host about 150.

³ The Council may choose to approve communion for a wedding, but **only** if the following circumstances are met: 1) the church as a whole is invited to be present for the wedding ceremony where Communion is to be celebrated, 2) a pastor from St. John's (Burry's) Church officiates, and 3) the Church Council is present and serves the communion. In the case where Communion is permitted, a formal service of the Lord's Table will take place where the Table will be verbally fenced.

Preliminary Scheduling:

All scheduling of wedding dates must be done through the Church Secretary/Office Manager. The secretary will confirm that the date is available and forward the requested date with the application to the President of Church Council for approval. No dates should be considered to be “in stone” until the Church Council gives their approval.

Formal Application:

On the final page of this document is the formal application for a wedding at St. John’s (Burry’s) Church. Said application should be completely filled out and mailed, faxed, or emailed to secretary@burryschurch.org to be forwarded to the Church Council for approval. No weddings will be performed or approved without the permission of the Senior Pastor and the Church Council.

Premarital Counseling:

As noted above, couples being married at St. John’s (Burry’s) Church are expected to attend at least four (4) counseling sessions with the officiating pastor. Counseling sessions should cover the nature of Christian Covenantal marriage, the establishment of a Christ-Centered home, Biblical models of marriages as well as teachings on marriage, and how conflict is to be worked through in a Christ-honoring way. Additional meetings will be scheduled as needed to work through and iron out specific details related to the service. If the officiating pastor is a guest, not affiliated with St. John’s (Burry’s) Church, one (1) additional premarital counseling session is required with a pastor from St. John’s (Burry’s) Church. This session will broadly cover the importance of a lifetime in covenantal Christian Marriage.

In the event that one or both parties getting married reside outside of the immediate area, it is possible to meet the counseling requirements through technological resources like Skype. It should always be considered preferable to meet face-to-face for matters like this, but it is recognized that sometimes in-person meetings are not readily possible and that technology is available that can circumvent such challenges.

Order of Service:

The order of service for the wedding should be agreed upon by the officiating pastor and the couple. Appended to this document is a general guide to the order of worship, but it should be noted that variations and personalizations are welcomed so long as those variations are reverent and Christ-honoring.

Music:

Many couples desire special music or non-traditional variations on the music played at their wedding. It is the policy of St. John’s (Burry’s) Church that all music be approved by the Pastor and Elders beforehand. If the music is a traditional wedding piece or a Christian piece, it will always be approved. If the music is from a secular source, but is to be played without vocals, then in most circumstances it will be approved. Normally secular music that includes secular vocals would not be considered acceptable for use in a worship service, but will be considered by the Pastor and Elders on a case by case basis. In any case, music should be presented to the Senior Pastor at St. John’s (Burry’s) Church as early as possible so that the approval process can

be completed in ample time. If our church organ is to be played for the wedding, then our church organist must be hired to play for the wedding.⁴

Decorations and Floral Arrangements:

Decorations are welcome and the pulpit and similar items that are located on the sanctuary stage can be moved into the church office if needed at the direction of the Wedding Coordinator. The Florist or decorator must consult with the Wedding Coordinator prior to the event. Please note that the church sanctuary is not air conditioned, so if flowers are being dropped off the day before during seasons of warm weather, they may need to be stored in the church office. Also, if flowers are being dropped off the day before in the wintertime, they should likewise be kept in the church office so they are not harmed by the cold at night.

Photography/Videography:

Photographs and Videos are welcomed at St. John's (Burry's) Church, before, after, and during the wedding service. The only restriction is that photos taken during the service should be taken without the use of a flash. The Photographer and/or Videographer should plan on attending the rehearsal so that they can be oriented as to where they can be when shooting pictures.

Sound:

St. John's (Burry's) Church does have a sound system and two (2) lapel microphones if desired. The officiating pastor will normally have a mic as will an assisting pastor if appropriate. Where only one mic is needed, the second mic may be worn by the groom if desired. If there are soloists performing at the wedding, they should plan to attend the rehearsal so that they can do a sound-check with the audio technician.

Sexton:

The sexton is responsible for having the Church Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall clean prior to the rehearsal and then doing a simple touching up of bathrooms and the above areas between the rehearsal and wedding and then again between the wedding and Sunday morning's worship. The sexton *is not* responsible for cleaning up decorations from the wedding or rehearsal nor is the sexton responsible for taking down the risers and putting the furniture of the sanctuary back in its proper positions. It is the responsibility of the family to arrange for a group of people who are familiar with the church to remove decorations, take down risers, and to return the sanctuary into the condition in which it was found.

Receptions:

If desired, receptions may be held at St. John's (Burry's) Church. As with the wedding, this is subject to the approval of the Church Council. The following restrictions apply:

1. Users of the Fellowship Hall are expected to return it to the condition it was found in after the reception has completed.
2. No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs are permitted on church grounds. No smoking is permitted on church grounds.
3. Only contemporary or traditional Christian music is to be played.

⁴ In some circumstances, our Church Council may give permission to an outside organist to play for the wedding, but this can only take place with prior approval.

4. No open-floor dancing.⁵
5. Users are responsible for hauling away their own garbage as our church dumpster will not be adequate to accommodate all of the wedding garbage along with the garbage generated in church weekly.
6. Users will be asked to confine their activities to approved areas.
7. Non-Members using the Fellowship Hall for a reception must have a church member sponsoring them and present at the event,
8. Caterers should be approved by the Wedding Coordinator and are allowed to heat up food in the church kitchen, but not to prepare food.

Fees:

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>
Sanctuary Use:*	no charge	\$350
Wedding Coordinator:*	\$125	\$125
Sexton:*	\$125	\$175
Sound Technician:*	\$ 75	\$ 75
Video Technician:	\$ 75	\$ 75
Organist/Pianist:	\$100	\$100
Pastor:	no charge	not applicable

* Designates mandatory fees. Other fees are to be paid if said services are used. A single check for the total above should be made out to St. John's (Burry's) Church and presented no less than two weeks prior to the wedding. The church Bursar will disperse funds as appropriate. If you would like to make an additional gift to any of the above participants, said gift should be made directly to the individual.

⁵ Note that a specifically planned first dance, Father-Daughter Dance, etc... may be acceptable if approved by the Pastor and Elders.

General Guide to the Order of Worship

As noted above, variations and personalizations are welcome, though they must be approved by the Officiating Pastor. Below is a typical order of service at St. John's (Burry's) Church. The language below is basic and meant to be traditional. When the couple meets with the pastor for the premarital counseling sessions, he will offer suggestions and alternate language if that is desired. Explanations of each stage of the service are also included in the description below. The Officiating Pastor will typically intersperse elements with times of directed prayer. Also, special music, unity candles, mixing of the sands, tying of the knot, etc... can be inserted where appropriate and with the permission of the Officiating Pastor.

Prelude: *This is typically background music or instrumentation to set the mood for the beginning of the service. It is during the playing of the prelude that the family is seated, any candles are lit, and the Pastor leads the Groom and Groomsmen into the sanctuary.*

Processional: *Here the Bridesmaids and then the Bride comes down the aisle, the bride typically being escorted by her father.*

Call to Worship: *Here the pastor calls the worship service to begin and typically also gives instructions to the guests about photographs and cell phones.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, so they are no longer two but one flesh." We have been gathered here today to worship God and to witness the joining of (Groom) to (Bride) in holy matrimony. Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship. Because this is a worship service, we ask that you turn off or silence your cell phones and refrain from using flash photography.

Charge and Presentation: *Here the Pastor charges the couple and the gathered guests regarding the significance of marriage and the father of the bride presents his daughter for marriage. Typically the father will remove his daughter's veil and kiss her cheek or show an appropriate sign of affection.*

Dearly beloved, marriage is an honorable estate which was established by God through bond and covenant in creation and is to be cherished and protected by His church. Our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this holy estate with his blessing by his presence and the working of his first recorded miracle at the wedding of Cana. Scripture also uses marriage to symbolize the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, commending it to be honored amongst all people.

Therefore, no one should enter into this estate lightly, unadvisedly, or wantonly, but reverently, advisedly, and soberly in the fear of God and considering the purposes for which God ordained marriage. You should recognize Jesus Christ as the head of your household as well as the head of your individual lives.

Who presents this woman to be married to this man?

The Father Responds: Her mother and I do.

Scripture Readings: *There are 31,154 verses in the Bible that can be chosen to be read during a wedding ceremony. The Officiating Pastor will offer some suggestions during premarital*

counseling to help the couple choose passages that will be meaningful to them and to their guests.

Homily: *The Officiating Pastor will typically expound on one or more of the passages that are chosen by the couple as well as give thoughts and guidance as to the significance of marriage in the eyes of God and in the Christian life.*

Declaration of Intent: *This is where the Groom and Bride respectively publicly declare their intent to commit themselves to marriage.*

(Groom) *will you have this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for her, so long as you both shall live?*

The Groom Responds: I will.

(Bride) *will you have this man to be your wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for him, so long as you both shall live?*

The Bride Responds: I will.

Exchange of Vows: *It has become popular to write one's own vows and that is permissible at St. John's (Burry's) Church. The stipulations are that the vows must include language that communicates the perpetual nature of marriage in life and it must be reverent in its spirit. If the Triune Name is employed, the traditional God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit must be used, we do not permit more generic uses like "Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" or the like.*

The Pastor States: Please repeat after me:

The Groom Responds after the Pastor: I, (Groom), take you, (Bride), to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.

The Bride Responds after the Pastor: I, (Bride), take you, (Groom), to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.

Exchange of Rings: *The Pastor will then ask the Groom, "What symbol do you present of your love?" The Groom will respond: **These Rings**. Typically the pastor will speak of the importance of the symbol of the ring as a reminder of this union and will then offer a blessing over the rings themselves.*

The Pastor then states: Please repeat after me:

The Groom Responds after the Pastor: (Bride), this ring is the sign of my love and faithfulness and I give it to you in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

The Bride Responds after the Pastor: (Groom), this ring is the sign of my love and faithfulness and I give it to you in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Prayer of Blessing: Here the pastor offers a blessing upon the new marriage, their future family, and their Christian witness in life and in death.

Pronouncement of Marriage: The pastor officially and publicly pronounces the couple to married in the eyes of God as well as in the eyes of the State of Pennsylvania.

Benediction: The pastor will pronounce the benediction and here will give any instructions that are necessary to give to the guests as to what will follow (Reception, Receiving line, Pictures, etc...).

The Kiss and the Recessional followed by the Postlude

Wedding Reservation Form

Name of Bride: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Are you a member of St. John's (Burry's) Church? Yes No

If not, where is your church membership?

Church Name: _____

Church Address: _____

Church Phone Number: _____

Name of Groom: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Are you a member of St. John's (Burry's) Church? Yes No

If not, where is your church membership?

Church Name: _____

Church Address: _____

Church Phone Number: _____

Name of Officiant(s): _____

If Officiant is not a pastor at St. John's (Burry's) Church, where is he pastor?

Church Name: _____

Church Address: _____

Church Phone Number: _____

Date & Time Requested for the Wedding: _____

Date & Time Requested for the Rehearsal: _____

Are there any other dates/times when you will need to access the building? Yes No

If so, when: _____

Are you requesting to have the Reception at St. John's (Burry's) Church? Yes No

If so, when: _____

Are you requesting to have the Rehearsal Dinner at the church? Yes No

If so, when: _____

To the Church Council:

We have read the Wedding Policy Statement provided along with this application and believe that we meet the expectations of the Church with respect to our faith, chastity, and Christian witness to be married at St. John's (Burry's) Church. We will also adhere to the guidelines set down in this Wedding Policy Statement and abide by its conditions. If we are requesting an exception to any of the above-noted items, we have attached them in writing on a separate piece of paper. We will also make every effort to insure that our guests abide by these policies.

Groom's Signature

Bride's Signature