

Wedding Officiant Guidelines  
Houghton Wesleyan Church  
Houghton, NY

Weddings in the Houghton Wesleyan Church are intended primarily for people who regularly attend the church and the officiants are therefore, typically pastors of the church or ministers in the congregation. We do permit visiting ministers to officiate but only after agreeing to the following guidelines.

1. Because weddings in the Houghton Wesleyan Church represent the Houghton Wesleyan Church, we respectfully ask that all officiants be sensitive to the general theological perspectives of the Houghton Wesleyan Church.
2. We expect the officiating minister to conduct or assure that the couple receives appropriate marriage preparation. The church offers an engaged couples' retreat in the spring and the local pastors are typically available for pre-marital counseling.
3. The marriage service is to be planned with the officiating pastor, keeping in mind these guidelines:
  - a. A wedding is not typically a private ceremony or a spectacle but a corporate worship service. Meaningful creativity in the elements of the service is encouraged, but the service is subject to the Houghton Wesleyan Church Senior Pastor's approval.
  - b. Since we believe that Holy Communion is a public event, if it is included in the service, it must be made available to all present who come in openness to God, not just the bride and groom.
4. The music of the service should primarily point toward God and offer praise to Him or offer prayer for the couple. It is the responsibility of the officiant to make sure that the music is appropriate and that the necessary arrangements have been made by the couple regarding sound and instrumental needs.
5. Photography should be done in good taste to avoid disruption in the worshipful atmosphere of the ceremony. Flash photography, if used at all during the ceremony, should be at a minimum. The minister should discourage the photographer from excessive, obtrusive movement during the ceremony.
6. The officiating minister is responsible for directing the rehearsal and ceremony.
  - a. This includes proper preparation, storage and replacement of all church furniture and/or worship supplies, including but not limited to, pulpit, communion table, candles, paraments and platform furniture.
  - b. Furniture may be carefully moved as needed and must be returned to its original location. Please pick up—not drag—the furniture. The sanctuary piano may not be moved.
  - c. No tape of any kind may be used to hang decorations on the church sanctuary furniture (pews etc.) Masking tape or sticky tack may be used to hang decorations on walls but must be removed after event. Nothing on the Communion table or pulpit should be moved without permission of one of the Houghton Wesleyan Church pastors.

- d. Birdseed or bubbles, in lieu of rice or confetti, is preferred for wedding celebrations and then only used outdoors. These items are to be distributed as guests leave the building.
  - e. If candles are used, they must be purchased from the church office as the current cost to the church. The church governs the type of candles used. No oil lamps are allowed. Candle holders available are:
    - i. Two 7-candelabra, adjustable for full horizontal, slat, or inverted-V formations;
    - ii. Two single-candle holders on the communion table;
    - iii. Sixteen single-candle holders, @ 5 feet tall, that fit into brackets on the pew middle aisle sides (alternating pews) These must be used with the drip catcher disks and, as all decorations, must be removed before Sunday services. Note: ceiling fans will accelerate the burning of the aisle candles;
    - iv. Two brass candle lighters.
  - f. All candles, pew decorations aisle runner, and other decorations must be removed.
7. It is suggested that the bride and her attendants use one of the rooms below the sanctuary, while the groom and his attendants use one of the rooms in the Christian Educational building.
8. Only qualified musicians may play the sanctuary piano and/or the pipe organ.
9. No floral arrangements or other decorations are to be placed on the piano, organ or pipe casework.

We pray that God will use you as a means of blessing this couple as they venture forth together in the grace and peace of Christ.

I have read the Wedding Officiant Guidelines and will adhere to them to the best of my ability.

---

Officiant's Name (Please print)

---

Officiant's Signature