

○ WEDDING MANUAL



1 John 4:19

“We love because he first loved us.”

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OUR COMMITMENT TO MARRIAGE

Note: It is recommended that you start your wedding planning process a minimum of six months before your actual wedding date.

Congratulations on your engagement and your desire to be married. We believe marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman offer vows before God to live out their lives together as followers of Jesus and in faithfulness to one another. Our policies about weddings emerge from this conviction.

ELIGIBILITY

WHO WILL WE MARRY?

Since our purpose is to establish Christian marriages within the context of family and our church as community, weddings at City Church are reserved only for individuals who are followers of Jesus and who have been regularly attending City Church for at least three months prior to applying to be married here. The Bible teaches that believers should only marry believers. For this reason, we perform ceremonies only for couples who have made a commitment to Christ. If you have not made that commitment yet, we would be happy to discuss this with you.

HONORING THE MARRIAGE BED

Hebrews 13:4 says that “*marriage should be honored by all and the marriage bed kept pure.*” That means, to honor marriage, a couple needs to guard the sacredness of their sexual intimacy. We believe abstinence before marriage is God’s design for each couple. We also believe living separately from each other until the wedding day is important as well. We realize there are many societal and financial pressures to ignore these mandates, but scripture is clear that Christians should avoid all sexual immorality and honor God, as well as their future spouse, by making the commitment to remain pure (see I Thess. 4:1-4).

Therefore, to stand before God and ask for His blessings upon your marriage, we ask that, as a couple (regardless of your history), you make an agreement with each other to abstain sexually until you are married and to

live separately from each other until your wedding day. If there are circumstances that you think merit special consideration, please explain on the marriage application.

What if I am divorced? It is not unusual for people to marry again after divorce. We will sit down with you and listen to your story of your previous marriage and give you biblical counsel to help you discover God's purposes in your present situation. You will find the pastoral staff to be gracious in listening and helpful in sorting through the options relating to the past, as well as to the future.

PRE-MARRIAGE MENTORING

In place of traditional marriage counseling or classes, City Church makes use of a team of dedicated and trained mentors. The mentors will meet with you for six sessions (meeting every other week for three months) using an online inventory and a series of discussion questions in preparation for marriage. The advantage of working with a mentoring couple is the personal interaction, personalized attention, and the benefit of learning from the mentors' experiences. The mentoring relationship often continues beyond the wedding day, and may be a helpful marriage resource in the future.

HOW DO WE BEGIN?

1. Go to www.citychurchonline.org and locate the Marriage Application form which may be filled in online and, upon completion, sent directly to the church where the application will be reviewed by the marriage facilitator. If you prefer a hard copy of the marriage application form, it is available by contacting our marriage ministry facilitator at dwright@citychurchonline.org.
2. After the application has been reviewed, the marriage facilitator will contact you to let you know of City Church's availability (if applicable) and will **tentatively** reserve the church. If you have a specific pastor in mind to officiate your wedding (preference for a pastor may be indicated on the application), you will be instructed to schedule a meeting with him/her. If you do not have a specific pastor in mind, the marriage facilitator will offer suggestions.

3. After you have met with the officiating pastor and if the wedding is to be held at City Church, you should meet with the wedding coordinator to go over wedding logistics, costs, and finalize the facility reservation.
4. A mentoring couple will be assigned to you to begin the pre-marriage preparation.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

The wedding coordinator will assist you with the details of your wedding. Her primary purpose is to make your wedding preparations as complete as possible before the rehearsal date to allow you to be able to enjoy your wedding day stress free. The Wedding Coordinator's duties include but are not limited to the following:

1. Meet with the bride and groom to discuss the wedding plans.
2. Inform you of City Church's wedding guidelines and fees for the use of the sanctuary and/or Family Room.
3. Oversee and direct the rehearsal.
4. Oversee the activities of the wedding day, making sure everything is in place, and relieving the bride and groom of decisions, where possible.

As the wedding coordinator's primary task is to be a blessing to the bride and groom, please feel free to ask any questions.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

Call the Dane County Clerk's Office at (608) 266-4124 for information regarding the issuance of a marriage license or go to their website – clerk.countyofdane.com/marriage. Once a license is obtained, it needs to be turned in to the Wedding Coordinator at least one week prior to the wedding.

THE REHEARSAL

Unless the wedding is very small, a rehearsal normally will be held the day before the wedding. It is important that all participants in the ceremony (bride, groom, attendants, ushers, parents, musicians, etc.) be present. It is imperative that everyone arrives on time so the rehearsal may begin promptly when scheduled. The soloists or other musicians may wish to schedule a time for practice immediately before or after the rehearsal.

The wedding coordinator is in charge of the rehearsal, and will have consulted with the bride and groom for complete details of the ceremony, bridal party arrangements, etc. Any comments, suggestions or questions raised during the rehearsal should be addressed to the wedding coordinator, thus saving the bride and groom from any stress or indecisions on the eve of their wedding.

THE CEREMONY

The purpose of a wedding in the church is to record your vows of faithfulness to one another before the Lord; to hear God's commands and blessings concerning marriage; and finally, to give opportunity to friends and relatives to join with you in seeking God's guidance and blessings for your years together. It is a time of celebration and a time of rejoicing as we seek God's blessing on your life together. The basic theme is the joyous worship of God, with the primary aim to please God. It is the overlying factor in all wedding ceremonies, including music, photography, rehearsals, ushering, etc.

It is assumed that the entire ceremony be regarded as a sacred service to God and that all facets of the ceremony will be in keeping with the dignity of the Lord's house. It is to be approached with reverence and joyous thanksgiving.

Wedding ceremonies have changed greatly over the past several years. More and more couples are now writing their own vows, speaking spontaneously with one another and the congregation, singing to one another, etc. Your wedding coordinator will offer guidance in planning your ceremony to reflect your desires and wishes, including:

1. Ceremony details: Including pre-ceremony, processional, ceremony, recessional/post-service
2. Music: Including pre-ceremony music, processional song, special songs in ceremony, recessional song, post-ceremony music
3. Technical details
4. Staging/decorations
5. Platform/stage set up
6. Flowers
7. Photography
8. Videography
9. Marriage license
10. Rehearsal schedule
11. Wedding schedule
12. Dressing rooms

FEES

Sanctuary: The wedding package fees for members and regular attenders of City Church to use the sanctuary, which is paid to the wedding coordinator at your last meeting prior to the wedding date, is \$800.00. This covers the use of the church facilities (sanctuary and dressing rooms), and honorariums for the Wedding Coordinator, sound technician, custodians, and pastor.

Family Room (*available for very small weddings*): The wedding package fees for members and regular attenders of City Church to use the Family Room, which is paid to the wedding coordinator at your last meeting prior to the wedding date is \$650. This covers the use of the church facilities

(family room and dressing rooms), and honorariums for the Wedding Coordinator, sound technician, custodians, and pastor.

Honorariums: Honorariums for individual soloists or musicians are *not* included in the wedding fee and should be paid separately.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Care should be given in keeping track of your possessions and valuables the day of your wedding. The dressing rooms will be locked during the ceremony, however, neither City Church or anyone associated with City Church can be responsible for any lost or stolen articles.
2. The City of Madison code does not allow smoking on the premises.
3. Alcoholic beverages in any form will not be permitted in any area of the church or its premises.

NOTES: