

Church of the Redeemer // Wedding Policy

Church of the Redeemer believes that marriage is a calling from the Lord and a sacred commitment between a man and a woman, a decision second in importance only to their personal decision to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord. In preparing for this important event in your life, Church of the Redeemer has three requirements in place for couples to complete before a pastor will be secured for a wedding: completing the Living Stones membership process, completing the Preparation for Marriage study and pre-marital assessment, and committing to sexual purity as defined below.

MEMBERSHIP

Weddings are performed at Church of the Redeemer for regular attendees. This is defined by attendance at Church of the Redeemer on an average of at least three times per month continuously for the past six months. Both the bride and groom should have taken, or have plans to complete, Living Stones (our membership class).

BIBLICAL STANDARDS OF MARRIAGE

We believe that God ordained marriage as a sacred union and commitment for life between one man and one woman. This conviction about the nature and definition of marriage comes from the same biblical authority that informs all our teaching and ministry—the unchangeable and enduring truth of God’s Word. Jesus confirmed this in Matthew 19:4b-5, quoting from the Book of Genesis: “At the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’” These and other Scriptures clearly identify one biological male and one biological female coming together as God’s design for marriage and exclude the possibility that marriage can be defined in any other way (Genesis 1:27; 2:24; Matthew 19:4-5; Ephesians 5:31-32). This has been the Traditional Definition of Marriage.

Under this Church’s Marriage Policy, the Traditional Definition of Marriage is the only definition of marriage that will be recognized or accepted. No elder, officer, employee, servant, agent, or any person, corporation, organization, or entity under the direction or control of this Church shall commit any act or omission, or make any decision whatever, that would be inconsistent with, or that could be perceived by any person to be inconsistent with, full support of this Church’s Marriage Policy and strict adherence to The Traditional Definition of Marriage rather than any alternative to the Traditional Definition of Marriage.

This Church’s Marriage Policy specifically prohibits acts or omissions including but not limited to permitting any Church assets or property, whether real property, personal property, intangible property, or any property or asset of any kind that is subject to the direction or control of the Church, to be used in any manner, including marriage ceremonies, that would be or could be perceived by any person to be inconsistent with this Church’s Marriage Policy or the Traditional Definition of Marriage, including but not limited to permitting any church facilities to be used by any person, organization, corporation, or group that would or might use such facilities to convey, intentionally or by implication, what might be perceived as a favorable impression about any definition of marriage other than the Traditional Definition of Marriage.

PRE-MARITAL REQUIREMENTS

Everyone who would like to be married at Church of the Redeemer, or by a pastor of Church of the Redeemer at an offsite location, must complete the Preparation for Marriage study. This study is offered several times each year through our Groups ministry.

In Preparation for Marriage, couples look at issues they need to understand before getting married, like the biblical marriage commitment, communication, in-laws, intimacy, blended families, resolving conflict, finances and planning a Christian wedding.

There is a fee of \$15 per couple for materials which is paid during the first session. A \$35 fee per couple is required for the online assessment during the course of the study and is paid directly to the company that administers the assessment (SYMBIS).

Each couple needs to complete the study. Completion is defined by the following:

- Weekly attendance with no more than two absences.
- Arriving late twice counts as one absence.
- Each couple must complete the online assessment followed by pastoral input at Church of the Redeemer upon receipt of the assessment results.

The couple must be a man and a woman and they must not be cohabitating or engaging in sexual conduct. If they are engaging sexually, they should agree to separate living arrangements for a continuous period, starting immediately and at least three months prior to their wedding day.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

Church of the Redeemer employs a Wedding Coordinator (WC) who will coordinate all of the details regarding your wedding at Church of the Redeemer. She will work alongside the bride and/or the bride's wedding planner. It's not the responsibility of the WC to plan your wedding, but rather to coordinate your plans with a Church of the Redeemer pastor as well as arrange the use of the church's facilities for your wedding. The WC will provide you with guidance and information regarding plans for your wedding and will access a timeline of your preparations to ensure secure plans for your wedding.

After completion of the Preparation for Marriage study, you may call or email the wedding coordinator at 240.238.1554 or weddingcoordinator@church-redeemer.org to set up an appointment for an initial meeting. A reservation in your name must be made at least two months prior to your wedding day and will be guaranteed upon receipt of a signed application and deposit. This deposit may be given to the WC at your initial meeting.

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

The local church is called "The Bride of Christ" in the Bible and the church must be treated with reverence and respect. Accordingly, we ask that members of the wedding party and their guests abide by the following guidelines:

- Language should be appropriate and respectful.
- Dress should be modest and proper for a church setting at both the rehearsal and wedding. No plunging necklines or provocative dress.
- Alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and drugs are strictly prohibited on the premises. (These apply to any vendors you have hired to be at the wedding or reception).

WEDDING DATE AND TIME

During your initial planning meeting with the WC, you will be asked to fill out a wedding reservation form. Select your wedding date with the following guidelines in mind:

- Weddings will not be scheduled during the month of December, during the month prior to Easter Weekend nor the weekend after Easter, or on national holidays or holiday weekends, which include New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving.
- The church's facilities will not be scheduled more than 6 months in advance. The scheduling of the ceremony will not conflict with Church of the Redeemer's other ministry activities.
- Off-site ceremonies are to be within 45 minutes of the church.

Until your wedding date has been confirmed, **please remember that it is a tentative date**. Please don't make any plans or take any steps that can't be changed or cancelled, such as printing invitations or purchasing non-refundable airline tickets.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

A one-hour wedding rehearsal will be scheduled during the week prior to the wedding. Everyone in the wedding party should be present, and it must begin and end on time. The date set must correspond with the officiating Pastor and the WC's availability and it will not conflict with any other scheduled church event. A copy of the wedding program must be supplied to the WC one month prior to the rehearsal date, including a copy for each person involved in the ceremony.

WEDDING CEREMONY

The officiating Pastor will review all of the particulars regarding the wedding ceremony and has final authority on anything regarding the ceremony. All Scripture readings, poems, music, changes to vows, additional speakers, etc., must be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator one month prior to the ceremony, and before the couple meets with the officiating Pastor. There will be no changes to the order of the ceremony or to any part of the ceremony after meeting with the officiating Pastor. The appropriate time for a video or slideshow is during the rehearsal dinner or the reception.

DECORATIONS

It is the couple's responsibility to decorate prior to the ceremony, and to remove all décor immediately following the ceremony. Please note that Church of the Redeemer can't store any wedding decorations and is not responsible for any items left behind by any vendors or the wedding party. All wedding décor, including flowers and candles, should enhance the beauty of our church worship center rather than to hide it. Candles must be drip-less and smokeless. Please note that Church of the Redeemer does not supply any wedding decorations.

If flowers in containers holding water are used, the carpet underneath them is to be covered with plastic. Flower petals (fresh or silk) may be strewn in the aisles only if an aisle runner is used.

Florists and decorators may have access to the location of the wedding ceremony two hours prior to the wedding. When the ceremony is concluded and photography completed, we ask that all areas be cleaned and all flower and decorations be removed immediately. No decoration of any kind is to be applied to walls, ceilings or glass. Florist wire, ribbon or pipe cleaners may be used when necessary, but nails, staples and adhesives of any kind are not permitted. Clean up time of ceremony and reception locations is one hour and is factored into the time for the building use for weddings. Church of the Redeemer furniture may not be moved.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING

Because the wedding ceremony is a sacred occasion, flash photographs or special lighting is not permitted from the time the bride enters the altar area until the bride and groom kiss at the end of the ceremony. Other photos, such as time exposures, may be made during the ceremony from the rear or side seating area. At no time during the ceremony should the photographer enter the altar area or place himself in such a position that would distract from the sacredness of the ceremony.

Videotaping is not provided by Church of the Redeemer. Videotaping is permitted provided the equipment does not distract from the sacredness of the ceremony, impede the movement of the guests, or cause damage to the facility. Videotaping must be done without the addition of special lighting. At no time during the ceremony should the camera operator enter the altar area.

Photographers and video camera operators are cautioned about marring furniture by standing on or placing equipment on chairs or furniture. They will be held responsible for any damages resulting from their actions.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform the photographer, video photographer, family, and wedding party of these policies.

MUSIC

Due to the sophisticated nature of the sound and lighting system in our worship center, only a Church of the Redeemer Sound and Light Technician may operate this equipment. The Wedding Coordinator will schedule the technician needed for your wedding ceremony.

The music, songs and media (CD's, iPod, MP3 etc.) you wish to use at your wedding must be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator a minimum of four weeks prior to the ceremony for approval. Media should be labeled with your name before submitting it to the Wedding Coordinator. After they are approved, the Wedding Coordinator will forward them to the Technician for use during the ceremony. We are happy to include wedding music that reflects the sacredness of the commitments being made to each other and to God. Sacred, contemporary Christian music, hymns, and classical instrumental music are appropriate. Some secular wedding and love songs are permissible after receiving approval by the officiating pastor.

RECEPTION

Following is a list of items that are the responsibility of the couple and their families. This is not an exhaustive list and may be altered depending on the particulars of your wedding.

- Scheduling all vendors. Decorating of reception site.
- Catering of food, beverages, wedding cake, etc.
- Purchasing or rental, delivery, and pick-up of any items needed for the reception.
- Extra tables and chairs, lighting equipment.
- Floral arrangements, greenery or trees.
- Punch fountain, coffee urns, chocolate fountains.
- Extra sound or video equipment (CD's, iPod, MP3, DVD's, instruments)
- Tablecloths, linens, silverware, tableware, chafing dishes, serving dishes and utensils, glasses, cups, and other utensils or dining ware.
- Removing all items belonging to guests and the couple (including food, décor, gifts, etc.) immediately after the reception.
- Returning the facilities back to the condition it was in prior to reception.

The following are not permitted:

- Dancing.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Use of any tobacco products.

The person scheduling the wedding will be responsible for any damage to carpets, furniture, parts of building, etc. Therefore, it's important that you carefully note the guidelines included herein and make certain that your suppliers and guests are so informed and act in a responsible manner. Church of the Redeemer reserves the right to restrict the privileges of any outside vendor/supplier who violates the Wedding Policy of the church.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to take the necessary steps to obtain their marriage license from the courthouse in the county your ceremony is performed. The officiating pastor of the wedding must sign this license. Please give your marriage license to the WC one month prior to the ceremony. She will be responsible for getting the document signed and returned to the county office after your wedding.

AGREEMENT

We have read Church of the Redeemer’s wedding policy and discussed them with a representative of Church of the Redeemer. We understand the policies and conditions set forth above and agree to abide by and communicate them to all members of the wedding party, as well as our suppliers.

We, _____

and _____

agree to take full responsibility for any damages that may occur to the property of Church of the Redeemer, either by ourselves, our guests or by our suppliers during the use of the church building. We release Church of the Redeemer and its Board, Trustees, and staff from any liabilities of accidents that occur while on the church property.

We are enclosing a Security Deposit of \$50 and agree to pay the balance of the Wedding Charges one month prior to our ceremony date.

By signing below, you both agree to abide by Church of the Redeemer’s Wedding Policy.

Bride Date

Groom Date

Date received by the Wedding Coordinator _____

Initials _____