

# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH WEDDING POLICY

## **INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION:**

At First Baptist Church we believe that it is our responsibility before God to help people form Christian marriages, not just to perform weddings. It is that understanding that shapes our wedding policy. Those who do not intend to form a marriage and build a home where Jesus Christ is Lord would be better served by secular officials such as judges or other representatives of the state who have the legal authority to perform weddings.

As part of this understanding and purpose based on our interpretation of Scripture, there are some instances when we must decline allowing wedding ceremonies to be held in our church facilities. Included in these are the following:

1. When both individuals are not Christ-followers.
2. When one or both of the individuals have been previously married and the former spouse is still living.
3. When neither of the individuals is an active member of the First Baptist Church of Petal.
4. When individuals are living together prior to marriage.
5. When the individuals have conceived a child together prior to marriage.
6. When both individuals are not active participants in a Christian church (at least one of which is active in FBC Petal).

We want to work with those individuals who genuinely want to develop a Christian marriage. We believe God has ordained that the church play an active role in this process. Therefore, we require that couples go through pre-marriage counseling with our pastoral staff. Usually, this counseling will require several months to complete, so it is imperative that this begins well in advance of the desired wedding date. (Details of this counseling will be discussed with you by our Wedding Coordinator and/or or pastoral staff.)

We also require that couples make a commitment to refrain from sex until after marriage. The Bible makes it clear that sex outside of marriage is a sin. It would be hypocritical for us, and dishonoring to God, to ask God in the wedding ceremony to bless your marriage if you are violating His clearly revealed will in this area. It would also be detrimental to the long-term spiritual health of your marriage to go into it living in disobedience to God. In light of this, you will be asked to indicate on the Wedding Application a commitment to abstain from sex until after marriage if you want to pursue having your wedding at First Baptist Church.

## **PROCEDURE:**

If you are interested in pursuing pre-marital preparation, and a wedding at First Baptist Church, contact the church office (601-545-3198) to request a Wedding Application form. Our pastoral staff will review this completed form in order to determine if we can officiate at

the wedding and/or if the wedding can be held at FBC Petal. It will include questions regarding the details of your spiritual background, including your willingness to do premarital preparation to build a Christian marriage. These details will be kept confidential, and decisions will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

## **COSTS:**

Weddings can be costly events for families, and we do not want to add to that burden in ways that are unnecessary. For that reason, there is **no charge for using the building**. The added energy costs that are incurred for heating or cooling during rehearsals, weddings, and dinners will be absorbed as a service to the families of FBC Petal.

Our experience, along with the experience of hundreds of other churches, shows that there are three individuals whose presence is required to make a wedding run smoothly, both for the wedding party and for the church. They are the Wedding Coordinator, the Sound Technician and the Custodian. There is a charge for the services of these individuals. Below are the services that each of these individuals will provide with the costs.

1. **Wedding Coordinator:** The Wedding Coordinator will be a member of the staff and will aid in the planning and execution of weddings. Responsibilities will include, but not be limited to, the initial interview, communication of wedding policies and expenses, and coordination and completion of decorating, rehearsal and wedding day events. She will provide information about weddings and will assist in recommended services (including sound technicians from the church) and outside services (including florists, printers, photographers/videographers, caterers, and musicians). The Wedding Coordinator will supervise and work with each of these individuals, as well as the appropriate church staff in order to coordinate all details of the wedding. She will also provide a "presence" for the church in the building during the day of the rehearsal and the wedding, and be the contact person for the church for all wedding details. **Cost for the wedding Coordinator is \$100.**

2. **Sound Technician:** The Sound Technician must be selected from a church-provided list. He/she will be present at both the rehearsal and the wedding, and will supply the standard use of the church's sound board. All movable equipment on the platform must be moved by the Sound Technician only. The grand piano and organ must remain in place. **Note: We do not allow people who are not on our list to run the church's sound board or move any equipment. Cost for Sound Technician is \$100.**

3. **Custodian:** It is expected that the church building will be left in good order after the wedding. In other words, the family is responsible to pick up and remove all decorations and trash left over after the event. However, there will be those areas that are not expected to be completed by the wedding family. These items, besides church set up, include but are not limited to, cleaning and re-stocking bathrooms, damp mopping and vacuuming floors, and general readying of the building for worship on Sunday morning. **Cost for the custodial services is \$50.** (The Custodian will determine the standard of cleanliness. Excessive clean-up required on the part of the Custodian will require an extra fee at the rate of \$25/hour.)

These fees are used to reimburse these individuals for their necessary and invaluable service. Together, they put in many hours of labor, plus the commitment of their weekend (typically Friday evening and much of the day on Saturday) to make a wedding run well. First Baptist Church does not gain any money through this—we simply seek to provide a fair compensation for their necessary services.

**WHEN THE FEE IS DUE:** The total of fees (\$250) must be paid at the time the wedding is booked on the church calendar. Checks should be made payable to First Baptist Church Petal, with "wedding fees" noted in the memo section of the check.

#### **REGARDING VIDEO and TECHNOLOGY:**

Slideshows need to be in DVD format (DVD is the ONLY option!), and need to be provided at least **two weeks** in advance of the wedding. Words for worship must be formatted on the church's computer—by church staff—also at least two weeks in advance of the wedding date. Any other use of the church's computers is PROHIBITED! The Wedding Coordinator will be the FINAL "say" for any issue related to the above.

#### **REGARDING FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS:**

The Wedding Coordinator should be notified concerning the time when the florist will decorate. If the florist plans to decorate after church hours, the Wedding Coordinator will open the facility. Whenever candles are used, they **MUST** be driplless. In addition they must be in candelabras which will contain any drippings that may occur. The carpet under the candelabras will need to be covered with clear plastic, provided by the wedding family. No rice is allowed in the church facilities. If rice is to be used, it should be used outside since removal of rice from carpets and hallways is very difficult.

#### **REGARDING MUSIC:**

All music planned to be used in the ceremony must be submitted to our Worship Pastor (or his designate) at least four weeks prior to the wedding date. (This will allow adequate time for any changes that may be necessary.) He will have the final say on what is and is not appropriate for the ceremony.

#### **REGARDING RECEPTIONS AND REHEARSAL DINNERS:**

At this time the fact that our facility is incomplete prohibits its use for rehearsal dinners and receptions. These events must be held elsewhere. The Wedding Coordinator will provide a list of available places for these events if you need help in this area.

#### **RESPECT FOR THE CHURCH FACILITY AND STAFF:**

It is expected that all members of the wedding party will conduct themselves with reverence and respect for the church facility and its furnishings. We ask that members of the wedding party respect the facility by refraining from smoking and using alcoholic beverages both in and outside the facility.

It is expected that all members of the wedding party will be respectful of the church staff involved in the wedding. We request that the event end by **8:00 PM** in order to allow the church custodian ample time to complete his/her duties. Should any damage be done to the building and/or its contents, the cost of repair and/or replacement will also be incurred.

# Wedding Application Form

## **BRIDE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## **GROOM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## **AFTER MARRIAGE**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ARRANGEMENTS**

Wedding rehearsal date \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_

Is the officiating pastor and his wife invited to rehearsal dinner? \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding ceremony date \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_

## **REQUIREMENTS**

- We require pre-marital counseling for all couples. This may include additional fees for a workbook or other materials.
- We require at least four months notice of the wedding date to have adequate time for counseling sessions.
- We require you to hire and use our church Wedding Coordinator.

## **COMMITMENT TO PURITY**

*We do hereby commit to abstain from any and all sexual activity until after marriage.*

**SPIRITUAL BACKGROUND**

Please attach additional sheets that include the salvation experience and current church involvement for each person.

We have read and understand the guidelines and agree to follow them as they are written.

Bride's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_