



WEDDING PROCEDURES



First Baptist Church, Mt. Washington, KY

Church Operations Manual

WEDDING PROCEDURES

Welcome! Whether you are a life-long member or someone who has no previous relationship to our family of faith, we are glad that you have inquired into the possibility of making your marriage covenant in our church.

We have no greater joy or privilege than sharing in the union of two unique individuals into, as the Bible says, *one flesh*. So great does God view this union of husband and wife that He uses it as an illustration of the union between Jesus Christ and His Church on earth. Marriage is, in fact, the highest expression of physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual union this side of heaven!

Since God is the author of marriage, we at First Baptist Church Mt. Washington, KY take marriage very seriously. We want to do everything in our power to help you achieve a mutually enriching relationship expressed in a lifelong, constantly deepening commitment to each other. For us to do anything less would be to shirk our responsibility to our Lord.

This packet describes the means by which we as a church try to fulfill this high and holy responsibility.

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN WEDDING?

That is the first question to ask yourselves. Perhaps another way to say it is, “Why do I want to be married at First Baptist Church? Why not simply have a civil ceremony?” All of the attire, pageantry and festivity which we normally associate with weddings can be present without the wedding actually being part of a worship service officiated by a minister of the Gospel.

Obviously, there is a difference between Christian and civil ceremonies. What is the difference to you?

A Christian wedding involves:

- The uniting of one man and one woman as husband and wife
- Vows taken before God
- Scriptural teaching and references which pertain to Christians
- A blessing and benediction from God upon the husband and wife
- A time of testimony to their faith in Christ
- A commitment to build their marriage upon biblical teachings
- A time of celebration and praise

Two things become immediately obvious. In a Christian wedding, the vows and covenant a couple makes to God are as important as the vows and covenant they make to each other. Just as we believers try to live out our faith in all aspects of life, in a Christian wedding, a couple must have the intentional desire to build their marriage on their personal faith in God and upon the teachings of His Word. We hope that you are approaching your future marriage in this way and with this spiritual motivation.

If you are confused or uncertain as to what a personal faith commitment to Jesus Christ really means, the pastor will be eager to talk about these things with you. All of us are growing in our faith commitments. None of us have “arrived.” The key question is, “Have you begun, or are you willing to begin, the journey of faith?” If not, then a civil ceremony might be every bit as meaningful for you as a religious ceremony.

If you have or are now willing to begin the journey of faith in Jesus Christ, we look forward to joining you on this part of your journey. If at present you do not have a church home, we extend a warm invitation to you to join our family of faith.

THE PASTOR’S RESPONSIBILITY TO YOU

Upon being asked to marry a man and woman, a minister will participate in the instruction and discussion of the privileges and obligations they will assume in Christian marriage. He bears responsibility for providing education and counsel in preparation for marriage. If this minister is convinced that Christian commitment and responsibility are lacking, and the marriage is not one which offers promise of being blessed by God, he will not perform the ceremony.

Obviously, this pastor needs to know you well. We also feel that there are certain crucial issues each couple should discuss as they approach this most solemn commitment of their lives. Consideration of these issues now, before the marriage, increases the potential for building a strong foundation that will last a lifetime. Some of the issues are:

Spiritual Foundation for Marriage
Becoming One Flesh
Communication: Listening, Expressing Yourselves and Resolving Conflict
Roles and Responsibilities in Marriage: Moving Beyond the Cultural Stereotype
Financial Aspects of Marriage
Intimacy: Sexual Communication in Marriage

We have found that to discuss adequately these and other concerns that you might raise ordinarily requires five or six counseling sessions, each approximately one hour in length. In this process, each couple will have opportunities to tailor-make the counseling so that it will be most beneficial to their individual needs. Some areas may consequently receive more than the usual treatment while others receive less. Please ask the Church Receptionist for a list of qualified Biblical Counselors.

WHO CAN BE MARRIED ON CAMPUS AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH?

At First Baptist Church, we hold weddings on our campus for active church members and their immediate families, including children/stepchildren, grandchildren/step-grandchildren, parents/step-parents. However, because of our deep beliefs regarding the spiritual foundation of a distinctively Christian marriage as outlined above, we want to do all we can to encourage couples to be spiritually grounded before and after their wedding ceremony. **We do require both parties join us in worship regularly in the six months prior to the wedding date.**

If you are not currently an active church member, we want to encourage you to become one during the time leading up to your wedding. We hope that you may ultimately choose to join our fellowship. We simply want to encourage you to begin your life together as part of a community of faith, centered on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

What if you are not a member of First Baptist Church, but a regular attender? When a person requests to use the church campus for a wedding, and they are not a listed member, it will be necessary for the attendance secretary and/or a member of the pastoral staff to identify and approve by signature that they are in fact a regular attender.

What if one or both of you are members of another congregation, but want to be married at First Baptist Church? We are not in the business of “renting out” our sanctuary for the use of other religious groups. We are not able to approve requests for marriage simply because our sanctuary is larger, nicer, etc., than the campus of your congregation. While we welcome those who currently have no church home, we respectfully encourage those who do have a church home to hold their wedding within the context of that church family. The one exception to this policy is that we do allow Christian weddings to be performed in our sanctuary if your congregation does not have a sanctuary. If any minister other than an ordained minister of First Baptist Church is to officiate, approval must be obtained from the pastor.

What about children of current members who are no longer members themselves? We are glad to hold the weddings for children who grew up in this church but since that time have become inactive or moved away from the Mt. Washington area.

However, we make the same stipulation that you either worship at First Baptist Church on a regular basis leading up to your wedding, or that you worship regularly in the church of your choice where you are currently residing.

What about individuals on our membership role who have become inactive? Again, because you have a relationship with First Baptist Church, we are glad to have your marriage here. There may be many reasons why you have not been involved over the recent past. The pastor will want to discuss this with you during your first meeting together. Because of our beliefs about Christian marriage, we would ask you to fulfill the same requirement to worship at First Baptist Church regularly during the six months preceding your wedding date.

All couples married at First Baptist Church are required to attend premarital counseling. In rare cases where distance makes this impossible, couples will be required to participate in a premarital counseling process with someone approved by the pastor where they reside.

PROCESS FOR SECURING A WEDDING DATE ON THE CHURCH CALENDAR

The procedure is as follows for *non-members*:

1. Obtain this packet from the church office.
2. Read it carefully and consider if our church's desires, motivations, and expectations regarding marriage match your own.
3. Come and worship with us to explore if our fellowship may be "right" for you. Also, explore other churches in town.
4. If you conclude that our church could become your church home, complete the form on page twelve and return it to the church office. The secretary will call to set up an appointment with a Pastor.
5. Ordinarily after meeting with a Pastor, if both of you concur, you may pick up the Wedding Reservation Packet from the Church Receptionist.
6. Return the Wedding Reservation Packet Forms and deposit to the Church Receptionist or Financial Administrator to reserve your wedding and rehearsal.

For *members* of First Baptist Church, the procedure is:

1. Obtain this packet from the church office.
2. Read this booklet carefully and consider if our church's desires, motivations, and expectations regarding marriage match your own.
3. Assuming they do, complete the form on page twelve and return it to the church office. The Church Receptionist will call to set up an appointment with a Pastor.
4. Ordinarily after meeting with a Pastor, if both of you concur, you may pick up the Wedding Reservation Packet from the Church Receptionist.
5. Return the Wedding Reservation Packet Forms and deposit to the Church Receptionist or Financial Administrator to reserve your wedding and rehearsal dates.

Obviously, the earlier you begin this process, the better! In most cases we suggest that you contact the church a minimum of six months before your anticipated wedding date. Dates will be entered in the church calendar on a first come, first served basis, and only by following the procedures above.

SOME SPECIAL CONCERNS

1. Couples where one or both are not Christians:

From a biblical viewpoint, Christian marriage is a celebration for one man and one woman that are followers of Jesus. In our view, when one or both members of the couple are not Christians, then a Christian wedding ceremony is not appropriate.

(See 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:22-33)

2. Pastors other than those on our staff officiating:

In most cases, we welcome *sharing* the leadership of your marriage service with another Christian minister if this person's presence would make the service more meaningful to you. However, our pastoral staff must retain the right to lead you (or must approve any other minister that may lead you) through your covenant vows and pronounce you husband and wife.

3. Biblical Witness and Human Sexuality:

Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. In our view, premarital sexual activity is a serious breach of Biblical ethics regardless of the norms of behavior in our secular society. *(See Genesis 2:23-24; I Corinthians 7:1-9)* Such an ongoing sexual relationship raises questions about a couple's sincerity to enter into a solemn covenant with God as described previously. Couples living together before marriage will not be married on our campus unless they move apart immediately and until their wedding date. The pastor will discuss with you your current lifestyle as he determines whether he can proceed with your marriage. Ordinarily, some kind of expression of your commitment to view marriage as outlined here will be required. It should be noted that First Baptist Church recognizes marriage as exclusively the legal union of one man and one woman. *(See Romans 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22)*

4. Couples where one or both have been previously divorced:

From a biblical viewpoint, divorce may or may not be an impediment to remarriage depending on the particular circumstances. The pastor will want to discuss these very important concerns with you at your first meeting.

LEGAL DETAILS

The state, as well as the church, is interested in your marriage. Since the Wedding Service is binding in the eyes of civil as well as ecclesiastical law, there are certain legal requirements with which you must comply.

You must apply for a marriage license at the office of a County Clerk-Recorder. Marriage licenses in the state of Kentucky are valid for 30 days from the date of issuance. You must be married on or after the issuance date, and on or before the expiration date. With a valid marriage license issued by any of the Kentucky counties, you may be married anywhere in Kentucky in the presence of at least one witness, and your marriage must be solemnized by a person authorized to perform marriages in Kentucky.

You should bring your marriage license to the minister before the day of the wedding, preferably at the time of rehearsal, if possible.

DETAILS REGARDING THE CEREMONY ITSELF

ORDER OF SERVICE

The pastor will review the form of service he ordinarily uses at weddings in order to familiarize you with the promises to be made and the vows to be taken. This is *your* wedding service and your input is welcomed.

CHURCH CAMPUS

Our Church campus is defined by any property owned by the church. This includes but is not limited to: any and all buildings, grounds, and parking lots. You may be married in either the Sanctuary or the Chapel depending upon the type of wedding desired and the number of people likely to attend. Our Chapel is adequate for a wedding of up to 125 guests. A bridal party of four or six may use the Chapel. For larger weddings, the Sanctuary, with a seating capacity of 675, is advised. Your service may be formal or informal and simple.

There is to be no smoking and no drinking of alcoholic beverages on the church premises, inside or outside. Please instruct ushers and attendants to help carry out these requests so that your guests do not violate the rules set by the church. No rehearsal or wedding will be conducted when any member of the wedding party is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. No dances are permitted.

Please care for and leave the church campus in the best possible condition and have your guests do so also. It is best to ask your parents, ushers, or best man to see to these details for you. Remember, others will be using the church campus for worship services, prayer meetings, etc. Help us to keep it presentable for them. Rice or confetti are not permitted on the church campus. Birdseed may be used only outside the building.

Fees charged for campus use are listed on page ten; said fees cover operational costs of the campus, including utilities and janitorial services, as well as staffing provided by individuals. The request form and the deposit should be turned into the church office as soon as possible, preferably a minimum of six months before your wedding. The fees, as calculated by the Church Receptionist, will be due no later than two weeks prior to the wedding.

On the day of the ceremony, we understand that the bride and groom—as well as their attendants—will need private rooms for preparation, changing, and rest. For weddings in the Sanctuary, a choice of two of the following are designated as these private rooms: Romans Hall Room S60 (Bride) and Rehearsal Room 3 (Groomsmen). For weddings in the Chapel, the Fireside Room (Bride) and the Rehearsal Room 3 (Groomsmen) are designated as these private rooms.

MUSIC IN THE SERVICE

If you have music that you would like played either before, during or after the service, please discuss your selections with the Sound Technician. Since the wedding ceremony is a Christian Worship Service, it is most important that the words do not contradict or appear out of place with the Christian message of faith and practice.

If you prefer to use live church-staff musicians, please discuss this with the Sound Technician. Should the church-staff musicians be used, their fees would be paid directly to the church, then the church would pay the musicians.

The use of all church-owned musical instruments and special sound equipment by anyone other than church-staff musicians and authorized church personnel must be approved by the Minister of Music, or in his absence, by the Media Director. The Church Receptionist will assist you with requests for approval.

SOUND SYSTEM & STAGE EQUIPMENT

It is required that you use the Sound Technician from First Baptist Church. The Church Receptionist will contact the technician to make arrangements with him concerning rehearsal times, etc. Fees for the Sound Technician's services must be paid directly to the church, then the church will pay the Sound Technician. An audio CD recording of the ceremony is included in the cost of the Sound Technician.

Our Worship Center/Sanctuary is set up for the primary purpose of Sunday Worship Services. If you would like to rearrange the stage area (limited to rearranging/removing choir chairs, musical instruments (except pianos), or orchestra area items), inform the Church Receptionist and she will make arrangements with the Sound Technician for the set up/tear down of the requested items. The fee for the Sound Technician will be increased according to the fee table for this service.

PHOTOGRAPHS

We request that the Photographer (or family or friends) not in any way detract from the sacredness of the ceremony in their effort to get the perfect shot. The Photographer should perform his or her services with professionalism and discretion. Please advise your guests, particularly family members, that guests are asked **not** to take pictures during the service. We ask that no one be permitted to stand on the pews or furniture.

DECORATIONS

It is best to keep your floral arrangements simple. Decorations used by your Florist or someone helping you may not be attached to any part of the building in a way that will mar the finish or leave a lasting mark of any kind. No tacks, pins, nails, scotch tape or glue may be used. Pew bows may be attached to the pews along the aisles with command hooks. All floral arrangements must be in place no later than one and one-half hours preceding the service. Plants in the platform area of the Sanctuary are not to be moved without the prior authorization of the Church Receptionist.

*Only dripless candles may be used to prevent the spilling of wax on the carpet. Please note that dripless candles can be rented from your florist or party rental supply; they are not the same as those sold at craft stores or discount stores. **Any wax on carpet will forfeit damage deposit.***

The bridal party is responsible for making arrangements for the removal of all floral decorations after the ceremony. All rented equipment must be removed following the ceremony. The church does own candelabras that may be used for weddings at no charge that the Church Receptionist can arrange for use on your wedding day.

REHEARSAL

A rehearsal is usually held the day before the wedding. All members of the wedding party should be present. If everyone is aware in advance of their place in the wedding, it will save last minute directions.

REHEARSAL DINNERS/RECEPTIONS IN THE CHURCH

The church campus is available for rehearsal dinners and/or receptions of weddings that are held at our church or officiated by one of our pastors according to the standards for Christian marriage as outlined above. The Fellowship Hall will comfortably seat approximately 180 guests for meals. We ask that refreshments be handled by a professional caterer or a person responsible for the overall coordination of the reception. **There is absolutely no smoking or drinking on the church premises; this includes champagne toasts.**

Use of our kitchen facilities and equipment is not allowed. Due to the nature of the equipment and materials in the kitchen, only the ice machine, refrigerator and countertops may be used.

The Fellowship Hall is outfitted with a sound system, so parties will not need to make their own arrangements for sound equipment (No DJ's), as the Sound Technician will assist with this. As previously stated, no dances are permitted on the church campus. Appropriate music for a church environment is all that is permitted.

Nineteen rectangular banquet tables (96x30) and six round tables are available for your use, as are approximately 180 chairs. Wedding parties are expected to set up the tables and chairs, and to return them to their proper place at the conclusion of the reception/rehearsal dinner. Those using the church campus must accept full responsibility for any damage incurred to the building, campus, or equipment during that use.

RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER CAMPUS USE

It is the responsibility of those using the campus to set up, clean up and return the campus to the normal setup after the wedding.

With regard to the reception:

- Collect all garbage into bags and place them in the dumpster.
- Wipe off tables. If food or drink is involved, wipe all tables clean using a mild soap and water solution. If stains occur, please notify the Church Receptionist as soon as possible so correct cleaning solutions can be used to remove stains.
- Return all tables, chairs, and other equipment to their proper places after the reception. Return all rooms used to their normal setup.
- If using the kitchen, please remember all kitchen equipment is off limits. Take all extra food and beverage items with you unless specific plans for usage have been made. Wipe counters and leave kitchen clean and ready for the next use. Leave used dish cloths and towels in the marked container. They will be picked up and laundered.
- Sweep floors and wipe up all spills. Report any damage to equipment or property promptly to the Church Receptionist. All decorations should be removed after your event.
- Janitorial services will vacuum the sanctuary or chapel, their respective lobby areas, and any dressing areas used, and will empty trash cans in said areas. Janitorial services will clean the restrooms and will mop the Fellowship Hall.

FEE SCHEDULE**FBC Church Members**

Rehearsal & Wedding	Location: Coakley Chapel	\$ 185
Rehearsal & Wedding	Location: Sanctuary	\$ 300

Rehearsal/Receptions Dinners

Rehearsal Dinner		\$ 100
Reception		\$ 125

Hall Rental (Fellowship or Romans)

50 or Less		\$ 75
51 or More		\$ 100

Non-Church Members (must be immediate family)

Rehearsal & Wedding	Location: Coakley Chapel	\$ 400
Rehearsal & Wedding	Location: Sanctuary	\$ 650

Rehearsal/Receptions Dinners

Rehearsal Dinner		\$ 225
Reception		\$ 275

Hall Rental (Fellowship or Romans)

50 or Less		\$ 100
51 or More		\$ 125

Deposit required to secure date* (refundable) \$100

**Required for weddings held at First Baptist Church (Due at the time of reservation.)*

All monies are due and payable to First Baptist Church Mt. Washington, KY.

Payment should be made in full two weeks before the wedding. Please give to the Church Receptionist or the Church Financial Administrator.

Saturday weddings should begin no later than 4pm, to permit campus to be restored to order for Sunday Worship Services. A maximum of 4 hours is allowed for your event. The church campus is not available on Sundays or Holiday weekends.

Your security deposit will be returned to the person in charge of the wedding no later than two weeks following the wedding, if the church is left in good condition. In the event

of property damages, should costs exceed the amount of the security deposit, you will be responsible for paying any additional charges.

To prevent scheduling conflicts, the Wedding Request form should be completed and returned to the church with your deposit as soon as possible.

QUESTIONS

Should you have any questions, please contact the Church Receptionist (502) 538-7361 or e-mail hannah.dickerson@fbcmw.org.

Pre- Marriage/Wedding Agreement



- Both parties must be Christians. (First meeting, the Pastor will ask for a clear conversion testimony from both candidates).
- At least one person should be a member of First Baptist Church Mt. Washington or an immediate family member of a church member.
- A Pastor will not agree to a wedding date until he has met with the couple together one-on-one.
- A Pastor will expect both participants to do (5-6) pre-marital counseling sessions before the wedding. Both must attend each session.
- A Pastor will not marry couples that are living in blatant sin (i.e. living with one another, sexual promiscuity, etc.).
- A Pastor reserves the right not to marry the couple if he feels they are not prepared to be married.
- The couple agrees they have read and will abide by all terms set forth in the First Baptist Church Mt. Washington's Wedding Procedures booklet.

Husband-to-be Signature

Wife-to-be Signature

Date

Date

Church Receptionist Signature

Pastor, Officiant Signature