

Wedding Guidelines

Welfare Baptist Church is a “House of Prayer for All People.” The church is happy to accommodate couples who seek God’s blessings on their marriage in God’s beautiful sanctuary. We take our role as a living Christian community seriously and invite couples who wish to wed here to explore the spiritual dimensions of marriage.

Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God. The pastor requires that the couple be baptized Christians; that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conforms to the laws of the State of South Carolina.

God established the bond of the covenant of marriage in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and the Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purpose for which God instituted it.

Marriage in the church is a religious ceremony, and all the elements of the service should be significant. It is a holy time, the birth of a new family through the union of two individuals. You are urged to make thorough preparation, both spiritual and temporal. The administration of the church takes the sacramental rite of marriage very seriously so we request you carefully consider these guidelines.

A. Making Arrangements

1. No wedding date is confirmed until after a personal interview with the pastor. An “Application for Scheduling Wedding” form must be filled out and returned to the pastor along with \$200, nonrefundable deposit before an official confirmation date is given. The pastor will officially confirm the date in a letter to the bride. Call the church office to arrange this interview.
2. No ceremonies will be scheduled on major holidays (New Year’s, ML King, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas).
3. Marriages are held no earlier than 11 a.m. and no later than 7 p.m. The ceremony must begin at the designated time and end promptly.
4. Unless the bride or the groom is an active and financial (have given **over \$300 or more during the last 12 months from date of request**) member of Welfare, the wedding will be classified as non-member.
5. At least three pre-marital counseling sessions are required with the pastor in which Christian marriage is discussed and details of the service are planned. Counseling is required before all ceremonies, regardless of minister officiating. It is required that both bride and groom are available for pre-marital counseling.

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B. Building Restrictions/Policies

Welfare Baptist Church is a religious institution, and as such, we seek to maintain a general attitude of reverence in the facility and on the property.

1. The bride and groom are ultimately responsible for damages to the building and for any charges due to damages.
2. No smoking.
3. No alcoholic beverages of any kind.
4. No profanity.
5. Please refrain from throwing confetti. Rice, birdseeds, and bubbles are acceptable **OUTSIDE** of the building.
6. For those services where communion will be served, white grape juice is to be used. The church does not supply common emblems (bread and juice).
7. The party and guests are not allowed in areas of the building which are not utilized by your wedding. In addition, unauthorized persons are not to play or have access to musical instruments. We ask that you treat the building with and its contents with respect and reverence.

C. Cancellation and/or Rescheduling Policies

1. Deposits are non-refundable.
2. Couples who cancel their wedding and desire to reschedule will be charged a new deposit. The couple will also be subject to any change in fees.
3. Should the couple not carry through with the outlined counseling requirements (MAKING ARRANGEMENTS section), the pastor reserves the right to cancel your ceremony and retain your deposit.

D. Rehearsal

1. The rehearsal should begin promptly at the time scheduled. A large number of people are involved and delays consume the time of everyone involved. Please insist that everyone be on time.
2. You may schedule the rehearsal for whatever time is convenient for the couple and for the pastor.
3. The pastor will be in charge of the rehearsal unless prior arrangements have been made.
4. Each rehearsal, unless otherwise agreed upon, will be the evening before the wedding.
5. Every one in the wedding party (including parents, soloist, ushers, etc.) should be present.
6. **Do not forget to bring the license to the rehearsal.**

E. Music

A wedding is a service of divine worship in which two persons are joined together in holy wedlock. As soon as the pastor and the couple set the date of the marriage, they should choose a musician. All music selections must be reviewed and approved by the pastor. It is inappropriate to use any music that can not be used in the Sunday morning worship service. Because weddings are solemn and religious worship services, secular music and sentimental lyrics are inappropriate.

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It is not required that couples use the church musicians, however it will be helpful to consult them before meeting with the pastor. **AT NO TIME WILL MUSIC BE USED THAT IS CONSIDERED INAPPROPRIATE.**

F. Photographs/Videotapes

1. No flash photographs will be permitted from the time the processional begins until the benediction.
2. If video cameras are to be utilized, they must be placed in stationary positions:
 - a. not to obstruct the view of the congregation
 - b. not to be a distraction to the congregation
 - c. no lights shall be used
3. Ushers and groomsmen should be instructed to politely ask guests who arrive with cameras not to use them during the service.
4. Posed photographs may be taken in the sanctuary before the ceremony. However, the photography must be completed forty-five minutes before the ceremony is to begin.

G. Flowers/Candles

Because we serve a risen Savior, live plants and cut flowers are always preferred. **Artificial flowers are allowed.**

1. Flowers or decorations are not to be placed in the pulpit area.
2. Should you wish to have a plant or floral decorations adorning the pews or windows, please make sure that the fasteners do not deface the pews or windows in any way.
3. All candles must be dripleless.
4. Polyethylene material must be used under each candelabrum to protect the carpet.
5. All decorations are to be removed promptly following the ceremony.
6. **NO FURNITURE WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE SANCTUARY**

H. Very Young Children in the Wedding Party

Couples who are considering very young children to be in the wedding party need to be aware that their involvement brings a large dimension to the proceedings. Children younger than five years of age rarely have the maturity to participate without disrupting the service. Please consider this matter to avoid unnecessary strain on the children, their parents, the pastor, and the congregation.

H. Receptions

1. Music for the reception should be appropriate for church worship. **Dancing is not allowed at the reception, with exception of the traditional waltz for the bride and groom.** Nothing deemed profane or vulgar will be permitted.
2. It is the responsibility of the caterer to leave the premises clean and orderly. The caterer must provide trash bags, remove all trash from the building, and leave the kitchen clean. The kitchen shall serve as a warming kitchen, not for the preparation of food. The refrigerator and freezer are not to be utilized. There is a large ice bin available for use should you need it.

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3. Only light colored beverages (punch) are to be served (exceptions: coffee and tea).

J. Financial Considerations

There is no rental charge if one of the couple is an active and financial member of the Welfare Baptist Church. The members are already supporting the church with their time and money; it is appropriate that, whenever possible, services is extended to them at a lower cost.

The pastor feels it is appropriate to extend his time and service to those who are members of the Welfare Baptist Family as a part of the his ministry to them. He does not expect any fee or honorarium unless for some reason unusual travel or expenses are involved. In that case, he should be reimbursed for those expenses. However, if neither party is a member of his congregation, an honorarium is appropriate.

For non-members, there is a charge to reimburse the church for the wedding and rehearsal. For members and non-members alike, the current schedule of costs for weddings and receptions is attached.

AND FINALLY

We wish you a long happy marriage! The pastor would be happy to meet with you again for further martial counseling to follow up on the premarital sessions. Many couples appreciate talking with the pastor again three to six months after the wedding to discuss their concerns and adjustments to married life. Feel free to call on the pastor any time.

Revised 2/10



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APPLICATION FOR SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING FORM

Wedding Date _____ Hour _____

Rehearsal Date _____ Hour _____

Wedding Cleared on Church Calendar: _____ By: _____

Conference with Pastor: Date _____ Hour _____

Follow-up Conference with Pastor to be: Date _____ Hour _____

Bride - Elect

Groom - Elect

Name _____

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

Home Phone _____

Business/Work Phone _____

Business/Work Phone _____

Church Membership:

Church Membership:

Parents _____

Parents _____

If known, address after marriage _____

Name of Minister that Will Perform the ceremony _____

List Assisting Ministers _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

Musician(s)_____ Vocalist (s)_____

Florist_____ Phone No._____

Caterer_____ Phone No._____

Address_____

Photographer_____ Degree of Formality_____

Wedding to be held in Sanctuary_____ Pastor's Office_____

Number of Guest Expected to Attend_____

Wedding Party

Bridal Attendants (Number)_____

Groom's Attendants (Number)_____

****For Saturday Weddings Only**

(Will flowers be left in Sanctuary for Sunday ?)_____

Director/Directress_____ Phone_____