

River City Church Wedding Policy



Introduction

The elders of River City Church welcome the privilege afforded us by our respective civil governments (States) to serve as legal officiants of civil marriage as part of our Christian ministry to solemnize marriage as a covenant before God. However, the same Biblical authority that shapes our understanding of authority given by God and distributed to human institutions, also governs our convictions and our practices relating to the nature of marriage. Therefore, the elders of River City Church will in good conscience only perform weddings consistent with the view of marriage described and outlined below. We pray this is both informative and helpful as a clear outline of our convictions relating to marriage.

Our convictions stream from the Scriptures (the Bible) and from the Bible we believe...

That God's intention for marriage is clearly established throughout the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments:

This is expressed in creation and the creation story,¹ the Law of Moses,² the wisdom literature,³ and in the prophetic tradition.⁴ The Divine establishment of marriage is confirmed by the words of Jesus⁵ and the New Testament Authors.⁶ They provide guidance for perfecting marriage, and affirm its spiritual significance. Chaste singleness and marriage are both honored as faithful and holy lifestyles ordained by God.⁷

That God ordained marriage as a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman
Our creation as man and women, who are complementary to one another,⁸ has significance in revealing aspects of the image of God⁹ and His relationship to humanity.¹⁰ The permanence of the marital bond¹¹ mirrors God's faithfulness, just as its monogamy reflects God's singular devotion to His people¹² and His people's singular devotion to Him.¹³

As a matter of belief, doctrine, and religious practice, River City Church reserves the term "marriage" for the covenant relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

1 Genesis 1-2

2 Exodus 20:14,17; Leviticus 18; Deuteronomy 5:18, 21

3 Proverbs 5; Proverbs 12:4; Proverbs 13:22; Proverbs 17:6; Proverbs 19:13-14; Proverbs 31:10-31; Song of Solomon

4 Malachi 2:14-15

5 Matthew 19:1-9; Mark 10:6-9

6 Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7

7 Matthew 19:10-13; 1 Corinthians 7

8 Genesis 2:7, 18-23

9 Genesis 1:27

10 1 Corinthians 11:11-12

11 Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:7-9

12 Ephesians 5:25

13 Deuteronomy 6:13; Joshua 24:24; Matthew 4:10

That sexual intimacy is legitimate only within the bounds of marriage

The commands of God are clear.¹⁴ Sexual activity profoundly affects people emotionally and spiritually.¹⁵ Sexual intercourse (and other physical/sexual activity) outside of marriage, promiscuity, common law relationships, adultery, homosexual acts, exploitation, incest and sexual perversion, contradict God's purpose for human sexuality.¹⁶

That marriage is more than a contract between two persons—It is a covenant before God

God is committed to every marriage between a man and a woman.¹⁷ In the covenant of marriage, God joins a man and a woman together “in one flesh,” and forbids anyone to break it.¹⁸ This covenant is unique among human relationships.¹⁹ God intends the married couple to recognize and celebrate His call to an irrevocable commitment to love, to cherish and remain faithful which transcends the quid pro quo of contracts.²⁰ **

That in Christian Marriage, the Church acts as an agent of God's blessing, as a primary witness, and as a supportive community

The Church declares the blessing of God but does not create that benefit.²¹ Therefore, the church cannot confer the spiritual blessing of marriage on any other types or forms of relationship.²²

That a healthy marriage is the best foundation for families and the raising of children

The practical benefits of marriage are inherent. A healthy marriage is a unique source of benefits for children including the stability of the family and the access of children to a mother and a father.²³ God intended that children should receive nature from male and female parents, and in turn learn to honor both.²⁴ Neither the church nor anyone else can confer the innate benefits of marriage on other forms of relationships or unions.²⁵

¹⁴ 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7-8

¹⁵ Proverbs 6:32; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 4:19-24

¹⁶ Leviticus 18:6-18; Matthew 5:27-32; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 7:1-2, 9; Colossians 3:5; 1 Timothy 1:8-11

¹⁷ Malachi 2:14-15

¹⁸ Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 11:12

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; Ephesians 5:21-33;

***“Quid Pro Quo” is a Latin term meaning “something for something.” Each side only holds to the agreement as long as the other side holds up their end of the bargain.

²¹ Ephesians 1:22-23

²² 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Timothy 1:6-11

²³ Proverbs 6:20-23; Colossians 3:18-21

²⁴ Deuteronomy 5:16; Ephesians 6:1-3

²⁵ Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9

Based on our convictions as outlined above—we conclude...

That the Bible teaches (with clarity) that marriage, (designed by God,) is between one man and one woman only, and to recognize other unions as legitimate marriages would be contrary to our understanding of Scripture — and affirms the statement on marriage within the North American Baptist Conference.

We affirm, in accordance with the North American Baptist Conference Statement of faith, that each person is unique, possesses dignity, and is worthy of respect.

We also affirm that we are called to introduce each person to the loving, reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ and the life-changing transformation described in the Scriptures.

As Christians we seek to demonstrate God's love to all people, but we will not compromise our convictions on marriage as defined by scripture.

Our Hope...

- ❖ That we would honor the imago Dei (The Image of God) that is imprinted on every human being bestowing both value and dignity in life.
- ❖ That we would uphold the historic confession and conviction of the Christian Church, established by Jesus Christ, according to the Scriptures, of the design of God of humanity, both male and female, and of the union of male and female, being the only definition of marriage.
- ❖ That we would celebrate marriages, with weddings, in such a way as to worship God together, and view marriage as a shadow and illustration of Christ's love for His Church.

Thank you for taking the time to review our convictions and position on marriage.

Thanks!

River City

Wedding Ceremony Policy and Expectations

Introduction to Wedding Ceremonies

We are glad that you are pursuing God's design for marriage. It is our hope at River City Church to help you not only in planning a great celebration but preparing for a lifetime of God-honoring marriage.

Before any wedding preparations are made, the River City Wedding Application must be completed and an initial visit must be held with one of River City's Pastors or Elders. Upon the approval of the Pastor/Elder, a requested wedding date will be reviewed against the building/activities calendar for weddings and other building events. With Pastor/Elder approval and an open date a wedding and rehearsal date will be reserved on the church calendar. For Members and regular attenders, dates can be approved and reserved at any time. For non-members at River City, the date will not be approved more than six (6) months before the date desired and only after the approval of the Pastor/Elder.

Final decisions about wedding dates as well as personnel for both officiating and pre-marriage counseling will be made by the team of Pastors and Elders at River City Church.

Pre-Marriage Counseling

All couples preparing for marriage are required to participate in pre-marriage counseling sessions with one of the Pastors or Elders or someone designated by the Elders. With the approval of the Pastor/Elder, the counseling may be done by a Pastor from outside River City. River City Church will provide the counseling material. Counseling may consist of a mixture of group classes and individual sessions (the couple with Elder/Pastor) and will be scheduled by the Pastor/Elder performing the counseling.

Marriage License

Weddings are regulated by the state and a marriage license application must be filled out in North Dakota for a wedding at the church. For a wedding in another state you'll need to check on the requirements of that state and the officiating Pastor/Elder must have his credentials registered in that state. It is your responsibility to get your license process completed before the wedding day. Please include your legal married names and the names of your two witnesses and your new address. This is important as no wedding can proceed without the license. After the wedding, the pastor will register your wedding with the state and give you a copy of the signed license.

Wedding Coordinator

Couples getting married at River City Church will be required to meet with a Wedding Coordinator provided by River City Church. This coordinator will provide information on facilities, equipment, and supplies that are available at the church and supervise the use of them. The coordinator will be available to assist with planning and implementation of the wedding to the extent the bridal couple desires. The coordinator will be present at the rehearsal and the wedding to offer assistance and guidance as needed.

Wedding Fees

Weddings are a part of the outflow of church family care and love so our prioritized pricing reflects the best use of our time, energy, and space in carrying out the mission to which we are called. There are two separate fees for weddings: one fee is for use of the space for the wedding ceremony. The other fee

is a suggested honorarium for the Pastor/Elder who does the pre-marriage counseling and officiates the ceremony.

The suggested honorarium for the Pastor/Elder is between \$175 and \$325. \$100-200 for the pre-marriage counseling and \$75-125 for the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. These are guidelines but are suggested based on the time spent in preparation for and participation in the counseling appointments as well as the time set aside for both rehearsal and ceremony. This is a suggested donation and we want to be sensitive to financial constraints of the couple as well. If there are questions please feel free to speak with the pastor who will be doing the counseling.

The fees for use of River City for the wedding ceremony are separate from any honorarium to the pastor/elder doing the counseling/ceremony.

Payment of the River City Church Wedding Fees (as listed below) will be made one month before the wedding date. River City will pay the wedding Coordinator and the Sound/Audio engineer from this fee as well as any money needed to pay for custodial or setup help.

The fee for **River City Covenant Members** is: \$200.

The fee is \$500 for **non-member, regular attenders of River City** or for *special circumstances* approved by the Elders. Regular attendance means regular participation in worship and/or missional communities for at least three months prior to the wedding date.

For couples not associated with River City Church the fee is \$1,000. A \$200 deposit is required at the time the wedding is placed on the calendar and after approval is given by the officiating Pastor/Elder either officiating or directing the wedding process. The wedding date is not confirmed earlier than six (6) months before the requested date as priority is given to River City members and events.

Reception/Grooms Dinner

At this time River City Church does not have the space available for a rehearsal dinner nor wedding reception. There may be options for a very small wedding but those will have to be discussed with the officiating Pastor/Elder and approved by the Pastoral staff.

Other Costs/Fees ²⁶

On top of the fee for the use of River City for the ceremony and the honorarium for the Pastor/Elder for counseling and ceremony there may be other costs to consider.

The couple is responsible to give gifts or honorariums to any musicians, hosts, and other helpers as they deem appropriate. River City Church is not responsible for these costs. Make sure to ask what fees they have just like you would a photographer or the cake decorator. Remember to consider the time they spend in preparation for both the rehearsal and wedding day.

²⁶ Please See Complete Fee Schedule

Facility & Equipment Usage²⁷

Tables - Tables will be available for gifts, candles, and other ceremony needs. The couple should prepare to provide their own linens.

Stage Setup - We will make reasonable accommodations for stage setup. If that includes removing of equipment (drums, sound, etc.) the removal and resetting must be cleared through the Wedding Coordinator.

Decorations - River City has limited decorations available. The Wedding Coordinator will work with you to help coordinate decorations.

Rice/Confetti - Use of rice and/or confetti either inside or outside the building is not permitted.

Damages - The couple is responsible for the conduct of their guests and for any damages to church property and equipment.

Dressing rooms - Limited changing/dressing space will be made available for the wedding party.

Wedding Rehearsal

All weddings will have a rehearsal preferably the day before the wedding so that people involved will be comfortable with the order of service. The rehearsal will take about one hour. The sound technician will make sound checks during rehearsal, so musicians are strongly encouraged to be present at the rehearsal. Other practice time can be made available and can be coordinated with the wedding coordinator and sound technician. Bring the programs to the rehearsal, so the sound technician/musicians/and others have copies before the wedding.

This is the time to give honorariums and any gifts to those participating in the wedding.

The rehearsal dinner usually follows the rehearsal. Since the groom and his parents are usually responsible, the place and type of meal are up to their discretion. A written invitation should be sent two weeks in advance to the bridal party, both bride and groom's families and everyone at the rehearsal. If you wish to include the pastor, musicians, spouses, dates or others, make sure they get an invitation.

Wedding Day

Your wedding coordinator will make sure you can get into the building with plenty of time for photos and any other last-minute preparation. You are invited/encouraged to bring in snacks and light refreshments for your wedding party during the time of picture taking before the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator will let you know what facilities are available for this. Then the ceremony begins. The Wedding Coordinator will help with the flow of the ceremony and work with the Officiating Pastor/Elder to make sure the ceremony runs smoothly.

Thanks for considering River City Church!

If you have other questions feel free to talk to a Pastor/Elder or contact us at info@rivercityfargo.org.

²⁷All decoration plans and equipment needs should be handled through the assigned River City Wedding Coordinator.