

CHATHAM BIBLE CHURCH WEDDING POLICY

Chatham Bible Church desires your wedding to be one of the most meaningful, happiest and God-honoring occasions of your lives. The marriage covenant was given by God to man and woman, representative of Jesus Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:22-33), and was meant to be a life-long bond. In Mark 10:6-9 (ESV), Jesus taught, "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

This document provides basic information regarding weddings at Chatham. Complete details are available in our Wedding Guide Booklet, which may be obtained from our wedding coordinator. Please read carefully, then contact the church office for available dates and further information.

WHO MAY BE MARRIED AT CHATHAM?

Professing Christian couples comprised of one man and one woman who are members of Chatham Bible Church or who have regularly attended for a minimum of 6 months are welcome to be married at Chatham.

If extenuating circumstances (e.g. building damage, construction, very limited seating capacity) make it impossible for a non-attending, professing Christian couple to be married in their own church, their marrying pastor may be granted permission to perform the ceremony, and he may contact the church office to discuss this possibility. A certificate of insurance from the visiting congregation is required.

If one member of a couple is a professing believer and the other is a non-believer, they may not be married at Chatham on the basis of the Biblical teaching found in 2 Corinthians 6:14, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers."

Divorced persons may only be married at Chatham if they have been the innocent party to desertion or adultery. This is based on Scriptural principles found in Matthew 19:9 and I Corinthians 7:12-15.

Couples are expected not to live together or be sexually active prior to marriage. (Hebrews 13:4)

Please refer also to [Article 6 of our Constitution](#) regarding ceremonies allowed on our premises.

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

Securing a Wedding Date

All weddings should be booked a minimum of 6 months in advance. Ceremonies should begin at 6 p.m. on Fridays and no later than 4 p.m. on Saturdays. Please **contact our church office** to discuss reserving a date on our calendar. **Your desired date will not be officially confirmed until:**

- there have been *at least four pre-marital counseling sessions*, and
- **for non-members**, a *non-refundable deposit of \$100* has been made *within 7 days* from contact with the wedding coordinator.

Once these steps have been followed, your wedding date will be confirmed, and you may begin announcing the date and sending out invitations. Please note the following:

- All weddings are scheduled on a first come, first served basis.
- Only one wedding per date is possible, and typically only one wedding per weekend scheduled.
- Weddings may not be scheduled on Easter weekend, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, or from Christmas Eve through New Year's Day.
- No wedding or rehearsal will be scheduled at a time conflicting with events already on our calendar.
- We do not recommend any wedding begin before 10 a.m.
- Time needed for rehearsal or decorating must be formally reserved on our church calendar.

It is strongly recommended that you reserve your date with us *before* booking a reception venue. Otherwise, your desired date may already be blocked by another event.

The Wedding Coordinator

All couples planning to use Chatham's facilities for their wedding are assigned to our wedding coordinator, who is aware of Chatham's wedding policies, familiar with all facilities and available equipment, and can offer advice on rules for proper etiquette.

The wedding coordinator also:

- secures and disburses checks for all related fees
- communicates set-up with the custodial staff and sound technician
- coordinates with the florist and photographer, and helps with Worship Center decorating
- supervises the wedding rehearsal
- assists with signing of the marriage license
- is the liaison for all details, such as climate control, lighting and building access
- helps coordinate use of Chatham's Activity Center for receptions if needed.

Initial Meeting With a Pastor

Your first appointment is an informal time to get acquainted. The three of you will talk over matters that relate to your marriage, the wedding and whether you meet the guidelines for being married at Chatham. This meeting should take place at least **6 months before** your wedding date.

Pre-Marital Counseling

All couples desiring to be married at Chatham must attend at least six sessions with either the marrying pastor or a trained mentor couple from the church. These sessions will help you to build a strong foundation for your life together. Each session will last approximately 90 minutes, and include assignments which you are expected to complete between sessions.

PLANNING THE WEDDING DAY

General Policies

- No alcoholic beverages are permitted in the church building or on the premises.
- Smoking is not allowed anywhere inside our church building.
- Throwing rice or confetti is not permitted. Bubbles or bird seed may be used outside.
- No food or drink is allowed in the Worship Center at any time.
- It is your responsibility to communicate Chatham's policies to your wedding party and anyone else who should be aware.

Music

You are responsible for selecting the music for your wedding, and for securing a pianist and other musicians as desired. The wedding coordinator can provide counsel on what type of music is likely to be acceptable or appropriate. The church retains the right to deny use of any inappropriate selections. All music and performers should be selected prior to your final appointment with the wedding coordinator.

Rehearsal

A rehearsal is required for all weddings, and is scheduled for the evening before the wedding. All participants in the wedding ceremony should be present and arrive on time.

WEDDING DAY DETAILS

The Marriage License

You are responsible for acquiring your marriage license from the county courthouse in Clayton, MO if you reside in St. Louis County. Otherwise, you can obtain a marriage license from any county seat in the state of Missouri. You will need to give this license to the pastor or the wedding coordinator on the night of the rehearsal. The pastor will present it for signatures following the wedding ceremony.

Photography & Videography

It is your responsibility to discuss our guidelines with your photographers, including:

- Photos may be taken before and/or after the ceremony.
- Photographers should never block any congregant's field of view during the ceremony.
- Only unobtrusive, non-flash photos are appropriate during the ceremony, with the exception of the processional and recessional.
- Video recording during the ceremony must be done from a fixed location.
- Video lamps will not be allowed during the ceremony.

WEDDING FEE SCHEDULE

	<u>Member*</u>	<u>Non-Member**</u>
Building Rental		
Worship Center	no fee	\$100 <i>(non-refundable deposit)</i>
Activity Center/Reception <i>(Set-up/tear-down of tables/chairs is the responsibility of the wedding party.)</i>	no fee	n/a
Facilities	no fee	\$125
Wedding Coordinator	\$300	\$500
Post-Wedding Cleanup Fee***	\$50	\$50
Pastor <i>(Members may give an honorarium to officiating pastor.)</i>	no fee	\$100
Sound Technician	\$150	\$250
Projectionist (optional)	\$100	\$200
Pianist, Soloists, Musicians (optional) <i>(Contact wedding coordinator for hiring information.)</i>	varies	varies

* "Members" are couples who have attended Chatham regularly for at least 6 months prior to their wedding, and who plan to join the church either before or after the ceremony. Members should give the wedding coordinator all checks at the rehearsal for distribution. Otherwise, checks must be given to all appropriate individuals at the rehearsal.

** Non-members are required to give the non-refundable deposit to the wedding coordinator within 7 days of coordinator contact. Make payable to Chatham Bible Church, attn.: wedding coordinator. All other checks are to be made payable to the appropriate individuals and given to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal.

*** Cleanup fee check to be made payable to the wedding coordinator. If a cleaning crew is assigned by the wedding party and all cleanup completed, check will be destroyed unless otherwise requested. If required cleanup is not completed, check will be cashed at coordinator's discretion.