

A GUIDELINE FOR
PREPARING YOUR CHURCH
IN THE MIDST OF
CULTURAL CHANGES



Each Baptist church is an autonomous religious and legal entity. While Baptists share core principles, individual churches have the responsibility for determining how they will function based on their theology and current law. While the law sets certain standards for operation, each church has flexibility within those standards.

Sometime this summer, the Supreme Court is expected to rule on the constitutionality of same-sex marriage. These questions and guidelines are designed to help your church think through ways to prepare for that ruling in addition to other potential religious liberty challenges.

DO JUSTICE. LOVE KINDNESS. WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD.

MICAH 6:8

I. Does your church have a Constitution and Bylaws?

1. Adopt a Constitution and Bylaws: The church constitution subjects the bylaws to Scripture and establishes the local church body's autonomy in faith and practice. Church bylaws provide stability and continuity of the church faith and practice while still allowing for amendments. These documents both provide structure for and protect the religious liberties of the church and its members.

II. Have the Constitution and Bylaws been updated recently to reflect current church practices and changes to state, federal and local laws?

1. Review your Constitution and Bylaws regularly: It is important to modify and update your church bylaws to address both changes to your church and changes in society. As new laws are enacted and then applied by courts, churches need to update their bylaws to maximize their religious liberty protections.
2. Uniformly apply church bylaws and policies: The law protects the "sincerely held" religious beliefs of churches and individuals. When churches make exceptions to their stated beliefs, the beliefs do not appear sincere. Make certain your church policies are consistent across all documents and your church practices are consistent with written policies.

III. Does your Constitution and Bylaws include a statement of religious beliefs?

1. Include a statement of religious beliefs in the church bylaws: It is important that churches include a list of their foundational doctrinal beliefs in the church bylaws. Part of the reason for reviewing church bylaws is to allow for amendments to the statement of religious beliefs.
2. Include specific statements about marriage: We recommend that every church include a definition of marriage in its statement of religious beliefs and a statement of how those beliefs will influence specific church actions in regard to marriages.* *See Appendix A for sample definitions.*

** Bylaws that affirm the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted in 1963 or 2000 will not alone protect a church. Bylaws should state the church's definition of marriage and also include language that limits the involvement of church staff and property in marriages that fall outside of the church's beliefs.*

IV. Have you established a Facility Use Policy?

1. Establish a church wedding policy: Churches need to establish a comprehensive wedding policy to work in tandem with the statement of religious beliefs found in the bylaws. The wedding policy should repeat the church's beliefs and stance on marriage and provide greater detail regarding which marriages the church pastors and staff will solemnize. A good wedding policy can reduce confusion about church beliefs and practices regarding marriage and maximize church religious liberty protections. *See Appendix B for a sample policy.*
2. Establish a broader facilities use policy: Every church that owns property and allows it to be used outside standard church operation needs a facilities policy. See Appendix C for a sample policy.
 - a. Review the ministries of your church and the manner in which the church is using its current facilities. Evaluating how the church is using its current property will assist the church in creating a policy that is customized to the church's specific ministry and mission.
 - b. Create a comprehensive facility use policy that clearly describes the religious nature of the building. This policy should work in tandem with the statement of religious beliefs in the church bylaws and restrict use of the facilities to those acting in a manner consistent with those beliefs.
 - c. The facilities use policy should repeat the church's beliefs and stance on marriage (or refer to and provide the beliefs statement) and provide greater detail on what uses of the facilities are inconsistent with the religious purpose of the building.

- d. If your church rents to outside organizations, consider renting at rates that are below market value. Whether a church's use of the facility looks more like a ministry of the church or a for-profit business engaged in commerce can be significant in determining whether the church's religious liberty is protected. By renting church facilities at less than market rate, the church indicates to courts that the renting of the facility is a ministry.

V. Do church employees and volunteers understand the church bylaws ?

1. Consider creating a comprehensive personnel policy that clearly describes how each position furthers the church's religious purpose: The personnel policy should include religious job descriptions for every employment position and religious descriptions of the responsibilities of volunteers. Connecting the work done by the employee or volunteer to the religious mission of the church will maximize the church's religious liberty when making employment decisions.
 - a. Require all employees and volunteers to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with church beliefs and practices as articulated in the church bylaws and policies. Churches should already be requiring employees and volunteers to sign agreements covering background checks, child/sexual abuse reporting, etc. Consider requiring employees and volunteers to sign an agreement to follow church beliefs and practices. Keep these agreements on file.
 - b. If the church is limiting employment opportunities based on religious grounds (e.g. choosing not to hire a minister of a different faith), clearly state the religious grounds in the job descriptions and personnel policy.
 - c. Uniformly apply all employment standards and practices as articulated in the bylaws and personnel policy.

This guideline has been provided for demonstrative purposes only. All church constitutions, bylaws, and policies should be carefully considered by church leadership to ensure it properly reflects church doctrine, practices, and beliefs. Legal documents including church bylaws should also be reviewed by an attorney.

Have more questions?

Contact:

Church Administration and Policies

David Adams, Director of Church Administration, 214.828.5253

Bylaws

John Litzler, Legal Consultant, 903.243.5576

APPENDIX A

Sample Definitions of Marriage and Sexuality

Sample Statements—Included as Examples Only*

- i. **Marriage 1)** Marriage is a biblical institution established by God as described by Scripture. We believe biblical marriage can only occur between one man and one woman. This church recognizes that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment. Accordingly, this church's pastors and staff will not officiate in same-sex unions or same-sex marriages, nor will its property or resources be used for such purposes.
- ii. **Marriage 2)** Marriage is a biblical institution established by God as described by Scripture. We believe biblical marriage can only occur between one man and one woman. This church recognizes that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. Accordingly, this church, its pastors and staff will not participate in same sex unions or same sex marriages, nor shall its property or resources be used for such purposes.
- iii. **Marriage 3)** Marriage is between one biologically born and presenting male and one biologically born and presenting female, under the Lordship of Christ for a lifetime of monogamous commitment.
- iv. **Human Sexuality)** The Bible teaches that legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage between a man and woman. Hence, this Church opposes all forms of sexual immorality, including premarital sex, extramarital behavior, homosexual behavior, and pornography.

* Carefully consider the language used in the definition of marriage, for example, using the term 'for a lifetime' could limit the pastor's ability to remarry divorced church members.

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE WEDDING POLICY MANUAL

WEDDING POLICY MANUAL

_____ Baptist Church

_____ TX _____

xxx-xxx-xxxx

You may wish to use the sample that follows as a guide in developing your church Wedding Policy Manual. This sample has been compiled from those in use by a number of churches over the past several years. Improve it, change it, and use it any way that works for your church.

You will want to pull together a committee or team to work through this process. The committee or team should be widely representative of your congregation. These policies are both a safeguard for your congregation and the facilities, but also provide groundwork for ministry to those outside your congregation who seek the ministry of a Christian marriage ceremony. Prayerful consideration should be given to what should go into this Wedding Policy and Procedures Manual, and what should be omitted.

Keep the Wedding Policy Manual up to date. Changes in facilities and costs to provide services change at least yearly. These policies should be reflective of those changes, without being restrictive to those who seek ministry.

Remember, this is only a guide! Adjust the language and content to fit your congregation.

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CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

_____ Baptist Church

_____ TX _____

Phone Number: _____

For Brides and Grooms

We are happy that you have chosen to celebrate your Wedding Day with _____ Baptist Church. The pastor and staff here at _____ Baptist Church, _____, Texas anticipate sharing your joy in this life-changing event. We are here to help you prepare a wedding that will express your love for each other and for God. In this manual, we describe our wedding policies and services to help you prepare for your wedding day.

OUR BELIEFS ABOUT MARRIAGE

Because our world changes quickly and perspectives on marriage may differ, we want to clarify what we believe about marriage.

What we call marriage today began as an act of creation. The Bible tells of God creating male and female persons, and instructing them to multiply and care for creation (Genesis 1:28). Centuries later Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament, taught exclusivity in the marriage relationship between one man and one woman (1 Corinthians 7:2). Because _____ Baptist Church believes that marriage is a biblical institution established by God as described by Scripture, we affirm the biblical ideal that marriage can only occur between one man and one woman in covenant commitment. Consistent with this belief, our pastors and staff will not officiate in same-sex unions or same-sex marriages, nor will its property or resources be used for such purposes.

Paul also spoke of how a man and a woman should relate to one another. In Ephesians 5:32-33, Paul compared the relationship of a husband and a wife to the relationship of Christ and the church. He spoke of love and submission. Specifically, he said men are to love their wives and women are to submit to their husbands, and he then adds the following: This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband (NRSV).

The writer of Hebrews expressed the value of marriage and the dangers it faces in regard to sexual matters. Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers (Hebrews 13:4, NRSV). So faithfulness and fidelity between a husband and wife are critical if the marriage is to live up to the ideal set forth in Scripture.

Marriage was and is God's plan for a man and woman to be a blessing to the world as they unite themselves in a committed relationship and live together for His purposes. _____ Baptist Church highly values marriage, and we want to help you get off to a great start!

PLANNING WITH STAFF MEMBERS

CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

You can contact the Church Business Administrator by calling xxx-xxx-xxxx, or by visiting the Church office. See “Checklist and Contacts” for the current Administrator’s email address.

PASTORS OR STAFF MEMBER

A _____ Baptist Church minister will preside at all weddings. The individual chosen to officiate at your wedding will work with you to make sure that all policies are followed.

_____ Baptist Church requires that the bride and groom meet with the Officiating Minister for pre-marital counseling at least once. These meetings are an opportunity for the pastor and couple to prepare for the wedding, so that the ceremony will truly represent God’s love and the couple’s spiritual union before Him.

HONORARIUM

Traditionally, couples give the officiating minister an honorarium, a financial gift for service provided. If you would like advice about appropriate amounts, you may discuss the honorarium with the Administrator or the Church Wedding Coordinator.

VISITING

If you would like another minister to share in the service, please clarify this in your initial meeting with the Administrator. While _____ Baptist Church welcomes clergy from other Christian denominations, we do require that the officiating minister provide a copy of their ministerial credentials, license or ordination certificate. We also request that the couple agree to pre-marital counseling with the officiating minister.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

_____ Baptist Church will provide a Wedding Coordinator, who will help you plan, conduct the rehearsal, and coordinate the wedding. As an employee of the church, the Wedding Coordinator can answer most of your questions about wedding policies and services. Please, provide your service providers such as bridal consultants, caterers, florists, and photographers with the contact information for the Wedding Coordinator. It is your responsibility to familiarize them with _____ Baptist Church Wedding Policy. As the representative of _____ Baptist Church, the Wedding Coordinator will have final approval of all aspects of the wedding service

SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING

CHOOSE DATES AND TIMES

We will schedule only one wedding per date chosen. You may schedule your ceremony and reception for times between 10:00 am and 6:00 pm. Receptions may last for two hours, so as a precaution, if you plan to host your reception at the church, your ceremony must begin by 3:00 pm. If you schedule your ceremony for a Saturday, your ceremony must end by 6:00 pm so that we can prepare the facilities for Sunday worship services. Rehearsals will be at 6:00 pm on the Friday evening before the wedding unless different arrangements are made.

Our primary commitment will always be to _____ Baptist Church ministries. As you choose a date for your wedding, please remember that seasonal decorations will not be removed, such as Christmas poinsettias or Easter banners, to accommodate wedding decorations. Also, we will schedule weddings only for dates and times when the church is officially open, when no worship services are occurring, and when other church ministries are not using the needed facilities.

We will not schedule weddings on the following days:

- Sundays
- New Year's Eve and Day
- Memorial Day weekend
- Fourth of July weekend
- Labor Day weekend
- Thanksgiving weekend
- Saturdays before Christmas programs
- Christmas Eve and Day

Please, inform caterers, musicians, florists, and other service providers about hours the church building is open.

VISIT WITH OUR STAFF

First, contact the Church Business Administrator to tentatively schedule the dates and times of your rehearsal, decoration, ceremony, and reception (if applicable). Members may schedule dates a year in advance. Non-members may schedule theirs up to nine months in advance.

The Church Business Administrator will explain the wedding policy and request that you sign the

Agreement to the Wedding Policies of _____ Baptist Church, which is at the back of this manual. If you are unfamiliar with the ministers of _____ Baptist Church, the Church Business Administrator will also direct you to one.

Second, you will have one month to meet with the officiating minister, agree on your dates, and pay a deposit equal to one-half of the projected costs up to \$500. By this time, you should also have used the fee schedule to determine the total cost of your wedding.

Please, do not formally announce your dates or order invitations until after you have met with the officiating minister and one-half of the projected costs up to \$500. Your dates are not official until you do this.

If you want to change any of your dates, you must inform the Church Business Administrator, the officiating minister, the Wedding Coordinator, and any musicians scheduled to perform to assure that the new date is not already booked. If you must cancel for any reason, _____ Baptist Church will retain \$100 and return the remainder of your deposit. If the wedding is cancelled within 10 days of the scheduled date your deposit will not be returned.

COMPLETE PAYMENTS

When you talk with the Church Business Administrator, you will be provided with a fee schedule for the Wedding Coordinator, the use of the church's facilities, and any church musicians. A deposit of up to one-half of the projected costs up to \$500 is due before your date will be added to the church calendar. The balance is due 30 days before the wedding.

CHOOSING YOUR FACILITIES

FOR THE CEREMONY

Please, designate family members or friends, such as ushers and house party members, to remove decorations and tidy the Sanctuary or Chapel after the wedding. Remember to identify them to the Wedding Coordinator before the ceremony.

SANCTUARY

Our Worship Center, seats _____ people and does (does not) have a center aisle. Brides may enter from the door at the back of the Worship Center.

CHAPEL

Our Chapel, which seats _____ people, is ideal for small wedding parties who do not need a rehearsal.

FOR THE RECEPTION

Only members may schedule the church facilities for receptions, which may last for two hours. To avoid decorating and cleaning conflicts, we allow only one reception per day. Please, designate at least three people to clean the Fellowship Hall and the kitchen after your reception.

For an additional cost, we will provide dishes, cups, silverware, punch bowls, and trays.

At no time will alcoholic beverages be allowed in the church facilities or on the grounds.

FELLOWSHIP HALL

The Fellowship Hall will accommodate _____ guests and access to a kitchen. If you want to use The Fellowship Hall, you may wish to employ a professional caterer.

PARLOR

Our Parlor has room for _____ guests. If you want to use the Parlor, you may employ a professional caterer or designate at least three family members or friends to prepare the reception and use the kitchen.

DRESSING ROOMS

During the 1.5 hours before the ceremony, the bride and her attendants may dress in the Bride's Room or a Sunday school classroom as designated by the Wedding Coordinator.

A suitable Sunday school classroom or other facility will be made available to the groom and his attendants. Please, have your attendants tidy these rooms and check out with the Wedding Coordinator before they leave the church.

PREPARING FOR THE CEREMONY

You should be prepared to discuss the following preparations with family, attendants, florist, and photographer. Please, provide notes on the following for the Wedding Coordinator before the day of the rehearsal.

All decorating, photography and set-up must be completed 30 minutes before the service.

Seating of guests will begin then.

PROCESSIONAL AND RECESSIONAL

Determine the seating of your family and the order in which your attendants will enter and stand. See “Preparing for the Rehearsal” for this, whether you plan to have a rehearsal or not.

If you would like guests to shower you with bubbles, please instruct them to wait until you are completely outside the building. The following items are not allowed outside or inside the church: rice, confetti, bird seed, and real petals. Flower girls may scatter faux (silk, organza, etc.) petals. The individuals assigned to remove decorations from the Worship Center will be responsible for picking up those petals as well as gathering any bulletins, tissues, etc. that guests leave in the pews.

Choose music appropriate for a celebration of the marriage covenant. Because weddings at _____ Baptist Church are also worship services, both music styles and texts should reflect reverence for God’s presence and for Christ’s steadfast love, the foundation and model of Christian marriage. Passages from the Bible are appropriate lyrics for the ceremony, but secular lyrics are not. Please, save secular songs with appropriate lyrics for your rehearsal dinner and/or reception. Pre-recorded music is discouraged.

APPROVAL

As soon as your dates are official, the Church Business Administrator will provide you with contact information for the Minister of Music or the Church Organist. It is your responsibility to contact this person to discuss and finalize the music for your wedding. All musical selections for the ceremony are subject to review and approval by the Minister of Music or the Church Organist. If there is a schedule conflict with our staff members, the Church Business Administrator will arrange for a qualified substitute. Please, include your payment for the Church Organist with your other payments to _____ Baptist Church. The costs for the organist’s services are \$150 for the ceremony and \$50 for the rehearsal.

OTHER

_____ Baptist Church will not arrange for other musicians. You may find musicians, vocalists and instrumentalists independently and pay them directly. If the musicians will perform with the organist, they should learn the approved music and meet with the organist before the rehearsal. (The organist is not responsible for teaching music to others.) At this meeting, musicians should provide the organist with original copies of the music in the desired key.

HYMNS

You may select hymns for your guests to sing and to enhance the worship aspect of the ceremony. We recommend these hymns:

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

DECORATIONS

We prefer decorations that preserve the simplicity and beauty of our Worship Center. Please, request that your florist, family members, and friends not hang flowers or other decorations on the walls, in the choir loft, on the piano or on the organ.

The person you designate to remove decorations and equipment from the Worship Center or Chapel must do so immediately after the ceremony and check out with the Wedding Coordinator. _____ Baptist Church is not responsible for items left in the church, and these items may be discarded at the discretion of the Wedding Coordinator or other staff.

PEWS

You may reserve family pews by securely attaching bows or flowers that will not endanger the finish. Do not use uncoated wire, nails, tacks, screws, tape, or glue.

THE ALTAR AREA

We will always keep seasonal decorations in the Worship Center but we will allow the removal of the pulpit, and other altar furniture before the rehearsal. The custodial staff will provide information about where the items removed can be stored. We encourage minimal decorations to enhance the congregation's view of the couple. You may choose to add any decorations you feel you need. It will be your responsibility to provide them or rent them from your florist and to return them immediately following the ceremony. Decorations are not to be left in the Worship Center under any circumstances.

Consider how much space the wedding dress will need in the altar area, where the bride will stand for most of the ceremony. The position of the Groom and how much room the attendants will need when planning decorations.

CANDLES

If candles are to be used, it is required that they be no-drip candles. Candelabras and tapers must be rented through your florist. If previously arranged the Wedding Coordinator can light the candles 10 minutes before the ceremony begins.

If you choose to use candles, _____ Baptist Church will require a \$200 deposit to cover carpet cleaning. We will return this payment if we do not need to clean wax from the carpet.

FLOWERS

If you plan to leave altar flowers please let the church know as soon as possible. If we do not already have flowers scheduled for the Sunday service, we will certainly use them and mention them in the Sunday bulletin.

If you want a flower girl to scatter petals on the carpet, please use faux petals. An aisle cloth may not be used.

BULLETINS

Bulletins may provide your guests with

- The order of events for your ceremony.
- The names of your attendants and guardians.
- The titles of songs.
- Congregational readings.
- A tastefully worded note requesting adherence to the photography policy outlined below:
“We respectfully ask that you honor the policy of reverence at _____ Baptist Church.
No Photography is allowed during the ceremony. Please silence all pagers and cell phones.”
- Your new address.

Before you print your bulletins, please give a copy to the Wedding Coordinator for approval.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Because the ceremony is a worship service, once the music of the ceremony begins, guests may not take pictures in the Worship Center or Chapel. Please, inform your guests of this before the wedding. Only the official photographer may take pictures during the ceremony, and during this time, he or she must

- Turn off the camera’s flash.
- Stand at the back of the room.

After the ceremony, attendants and family members may return to the altar area with the couple for pictures. We suggest this photo shoot last for only 30 minutes. If you need more time, arrange for the photographer to take some pictures during the hour before the ceremony.

VIDEO RECORDING

_____ Baptist Church will provide a DVD of the ceremony which is included in your fees.

The Sound Technician will record the ceremony and give you the DVD before you leave. Please be aware that this is from one fixed camera. You are welcome to have a professional videographer to record the ceremony, instruct him or her to:

- Attend the rehearsal to become familiar with the church’s building and policies.
- Use lighting already in the Sanctuary or Chapel. The videographer may not bring in additional lighting equipment.
- Stay in the same place during the ceremony. If he or she wants to set up a second camera, you may arrange this with the Wedding Coordinator.
- Discreetly set up and test video equipment 30 minutes before the ceremony.

PREPARING FOR THE REHEARSAL

The officiating minister and Wedding Coordinator will lead a 30- to 60-minute rehearsal for the couple, parents, grandparents, attendants, musicians, photographer, videographer, and anyone else participating in the ceremony.

The rehearsal should begin promptly at the scheduled time and proceed in a quiet, dignified, and reverent manner. The rehearsal is an integral part of the wedding preparation. Because the rehearsal is held in the Worship Center or Chapel, participants should be mindful that these are places of worship and conduct themselves accordingly.

To ensure that the rehearsal begins on time, please provide maps or directions for all participants. Warn them of potential traffic delays since the rehearsal is on Friday evening. If the rehearsal lasts for more than an hour, your wedding party may be late to the rehearsal dinner or cause problems for other church functions scheduled for that evening. Also, if the rehearsal lasts more than 90 minutes, you will be charged \$150 for the additional time.

PROCESSIONAL AND RECESSIONAL

Please, provide the Wedding Coordinator with a detailed plan for the processional, which includes the seating of parents and grandparents and the entrance of attendants. Your plan should specify who will escort each person (e.g., Will fathers or ushers escort the mothers?) and where these persons will sit or stand during the ceremony.

Here is a list of the traditional entrance order:

1. Groom's grandparents
2. Bride's grandparents
3. Groom's parents
4. Bride's parents
5. Minister, groom, best man, and groomsmen
6. Bridesmaids
7. Maid/Matron of honor
8. Ring bearer and flower girl
9. Bride

Also, decide who will participate in the recessional (i.e., who will escort whom out of the Worship or Chapel). We recommend that only the couple, the attendants, and the parents leave while music plays.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Prior to the rehearsal you should communicate to the wedding party members their responsibilities for the wedding day, such as any duties before the ceremony, where to sit and what to carry. Instruct your ushers where you want them before and during the ceremony, what they are to do (seat precisely who and exactly where), which pews are reserved, how to handle late arrivals and any tasks after the ceremony. It is a good idea to put this in writing. Please provide a copy to the Wedding Coordinator or work with the Wedding Coordinator to develop such a plan.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

The marriage license must be presented to the officiating minister at the rehearsal in a stamped pre-addressed envelope. Without the marriage license, the minister cannot perform the ceremony. The officiating minister will mail the license to the appropriate office for recording purposes.

LIABILITY CONCERNS

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

If there is a need to secure belongings in the church (e.g., decorations), you must inform the Wedding Coordinator at least a week in advance. The church staff will try their best to protect these, but they are not liable if the belongings become lost, stolen, or damaged. For this reason, we suggest that no one leave money, jewelry, or other valuables unattended in the dressing rooms during the rehearsal or wedding ceremony. Please, remove all belongings from the church immediately after the wedding.

LEGAL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

_____ Baptist Church prohibits tobacco and alcohol use in the church or on church property. The Wedding Party will be expected to follow all state and Federal laws related to other drugs, legal and Illegal. Please, inform your attendants and guests of these restrictions in advance. We wish you happiness in your life together and hope that your wedding will be a sacred and beautiful occasion.

CHECKLIST

- Contact the Executive Director to ask about available dates and times, and read the Wedding Policy Manual.
- Confirm ministers availability, and secure date and time for all wedding events that
- Will take place at _____ Baptist Church by:
 1. signing the Agreement to the Wedding Policies of _____ Baptist Church and
 2. making a deposit of at least one-half of the projected cost up to \$500.
- Make appointment with the officiating minister for pre-marital counseling.
- Make appointment with the Wedding Hostess.
- Make appointment with the Minister of Music and/or the organist.
- Order invitations.
- Arrange plans with caterer, florist, photographer, videographer, vocalists, instrumentalists, etc.
- Contact attendants and provide them with written directions concerning attire, dates, times, and the location of the church.
- Obtain a marriage license at least two days before your ceremony. (Texas licenses are valid for 31 days.)
- Check final details with the Wedding Coordinator.
- Confirm with guests the times and locations of the rehearsal, rehearsal dinner, ceremony, and reception. (Maps help.)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Church Business Administrator: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Wedding Coordinator: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Ministry Staff at _____ Baptist Church

Senior Pastor: _____

Associate Pastor: _____

Associate Pastor for Music: _____

Associate Pastor for Students: _____

Please, know that you are always welcome here. We encourage you to talk with one of our ministers about opportunities for newlywed couples in the life of our congregation.

FEE SCHEDULE FOR NON-MEMBERS

The following is a list of fees for weddings at _____ Baptist Church of _____ for non-members:

- **Weddings**
Sanctuary \$1,600.00
Chapel \$650.00
- **Receptions**
Parlor \$550.00
Fellowship Hall \$850.00

Fees include facility, minister, wedding coordinator, audio-visual technician* (not included in chapel weddings), and custodial fees for up to one hour on the day of rehearsal and up to three (3) hours on the day of the ceremony.

*Available only if the wedding is held at _____ Baptist Church of _____. Fees include up to four hours (two hours for the reception and one hour each for set-up and clean-up) and do not include audio-visual support. Use of audio-visual equipment required an AV technician at an additional cost of \$150.

OTHER FEES

- Organist \$200.00
- Dishwasher \$100.00
- Candle Deposit \$200.00
- Additional Hours \$150.00 (ea.)

WEDDING RESERVATION AND AGREEMENT

_____ Baptist Church

_____ TX _____

Phone Number: _____

Groom's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Baptist Church member? Yes No

Bride's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Baptist Church member? Yes No

Date of Wedding: _____ Time of the Wedding: _____

Ceremony Location: Worship Center Chapel

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Reception at _____ Baptist Church?

Reception Location: Fellowship Hall Parlor

Baptist Church Minister officiating: _____

Guest Minister: _____

Guest Minister Phone: _____ Email: _____

Credentials Received by Senior Pastor

Approved by Senior Pastor

Counseling Scheduled?

Wedding Coordinator: _____ Sound Tech: _____

Organist: _____ Music Approved: _____

Facility fee (ceremony): _____

Minister's fee: _____

Organist's fee: _____

Reception Hall fee: _____

Wedding Coordinator fee: _____

Sound Tech. fee: _____

Candle use fee: _____

Custodial fee: _____

Sub-total: _____

Other: _____

TOTAL: _____

Deposit: _____

Date Rec'd: _____

Balance due: _____

Date Rec'd: _____

AGREEMENT TO POLICIES

I have read the Wedding Policy Manual of _____ Church of _____ and agree to abide by the policies outlined herein and will communicate all applicable policies to the appropriate members of my wedding party and those providing services such as photography, decorations, flowers, etc. This agreement is more than a contract to "rent space" for my wedding. I understand my fiancée and I are making a covenant not only between us, but also with God and the church. Therefore, I agree that our ceremony will be a service of worship in the Worship Center or Chapel of _____ Baptist Church of _____.

_____ Baptist Church agrees to provide facilities along with the services of a Wedding Coordinator, minister, organist, audio visual technician, and custodian to facilitate a wedding that is memorable and meaningful.

Bride _____ Date _____

Groom _____ Date _____

Church Business Administrator, _____ Baptist Church

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORISTS

_____ Baptist Church
_____ TX _____
Phone Number: _____

DECORATIONS

Please complete all decorating and set-up 30 minutes before the service. Seating of guests will begin at that time.

Please do not hanging flowers or other decorations on the walls, in the choir loft, or on the organ or piano.

Please remove decorations and equipment immediately after the ceremony. _____ Baptist Church is not responsible for items left in the church, and these items may be discarded.

PEWS AND AISLES

You may reserve family pews by securely attaching bows or flowers that will not endanger the finish. Do not use nails, uncoated wire, tacks, screws, tape, or glue.

The altar area will always keep seasonal decorations. The pulpit and altar furniture may be moved to provide adequate space for the wedding party. The custodial staff will indicate where the altar furniture may be stored.

CANDLES

Candles may be used and must be lit before the ceremony. If an attendant is not being used to light the candles, the Wedding Coordinator will light the candles 10 minutes before the ceremony begins.

Candles must be dripless and must be used only in the altar area. Please, place candles in holders that catch drippings, and protect the floor from wax. If you choose to use candles, _____ Baptist Church will require \$200.00 to cover carpet cleaning. We will return this payment if we do not need to clean wax from the floor.

FLOWERS

If you plan to leave altar flowers, please let the church know as soon as possible. If we do not already have flowers scheduled for the upcoming Sunday, we will certainly use them and mention them in the Sunday bulletin.

You must check out with the Wedding Coordinator before you leave.

FLORIST AGREEMENT

I have read the "Instructions for Florist" and agree to respect them. I will be responsible for any damage to church property incurred by the use of flowers, greenery, candles or any other decoration used on this occasion.

Event: _____ Date: _____

Company Name: _____ Phone: _____

Signature of Florist: _____

Family Representative: _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO

_____ Baptist Church

_____ TX _____

Phone Number: _____

All photography and set-up must be completed 30 minutes before the service. Seating of guests will begin at that time.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Because the ceremony is a worship service, once the music of the ceremony begins, guests may not take pictures in the Worship Center or Chapel. Only the official photographer may take pictures during the ceremony and must :

- Turn off the camera's flash.
- Stand at the back of the room.
- Not take a "head-on" picture of any musician or reader.

After the ceremony, attendants and family members may return to the altar area with the couple for pictures. We suggest this photo shoot last for no more than 30 minutes. If you need more time, arrange to take some pictures during the hour before the ceremony.

VIDEOGRAPHY

- The videographer should:
- Attend the rehearsal to become familiar with the church's building and policies.
- Use lights already in the Worship Center or Chapel. You may not bring in light equipment.
- Stay in one place during the ceremony. If you want to set up a second camera, arrange this with the Wedding Coordinator.
- Discreetly set up and test video equipment 30 minutes before the ceremony.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO AGREEMENT

I have read the "Instructions for Photography/Video" and agree to follow them.

Event:

Date:

Company Name:

Phone:

Signature of Photographer:

Family Representative:

This document is provided with the understanding that the BGCT is not rendering legal, accounting, or other professional advice or service, professional advice on specific issues should be sought from a competent accountant, non-profit attorney, or other professional.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE FACILITY USE POLICY

To be good stewards of the property of _____ Baptist Church, the church has approved the following policy governing the use of _____ Baptist Church facilities:

I. Our Philosophy of Facility Usage

1. _____ Baptist Church desires that our church facilities be used for the glory of God. All facility requests should further the mission of _____ Baptist Church which is to: To share Christ with others in season and out of season, in the inner city, overseas and across the nation.
2. While _____ Baptist Church does not discriminate in the use of our facilities on the basis of race, color, sex, ethnicity or national origin, only uses consistent with _____ Baptist Church's charitable religious and educational purposes will be considered. For this reason, no profit-making organizations or political groups will be permitted to use _____ Baptist Church's facilities. Groups whose purposes or beliefs are not consistent with the bedrock beliefs of _____ Baptist Church will not be permitted to use _____ Baptist Church facilities. Regarding weddings, _____ Baptist Church regards marriage as a biblical institution established by God as described by Scripture. We believe biblical marriage can only occur between one man and one woman. This church recognizes that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment. Accordingly, this church's pastors and staff will not officiate in same-sex unions or same-sex marriages, nor will its property or resources be used for such purposes.

II. Priority of Facility Use and Procedure for Requesting Use

Requests for use of space at _____ Baptist Church will be categorized into the following order of priority:

1. _____ Baptist Church Programs and Functions. The internal programs of this church are given the highest priority in use of the facilities. This includes worship services, Sunday School classes, Wednesday evening programs, adult, youth, children's and music ministry activities, and church committee, board, and staff meeting.

TO SCHEDULE

- Complete the "Room Request Form" (available in the church office) at least one month but not more than six months in advance of the event.
- Submit the completed form to the calendaring coordinator in the church office.
- Assuming there are no conflicts in resources, the request will be approved by the coordinator of the church calendar.
- Any conflicts will be resolved by the ministerial staff.

2. _____ Baptist Church-Sponsored Ministries and Programs. The second level of priority is accorded to programs and activities formally identified by _____ Baptist Church's Church Council as ministries we support because they are consistent with the mission and vision of this church. Examples include: _____, _____, _____, _____.

TO SCHEDULE

- Complete the "Room Request Form" (available in the church office) at least one month but not more than six months in advance of the event.
- Submit the completed form to the calendaring coordinator in the church office.
- Requests will be reviewed and decided upon by the ministerial staff.

3. Member Weddings and Funeral/Memorial Services. The third level of priority goes to celebrate the marriage of _____ Baptist Church members or family members and to celebrate the lives of _____ Baptist Church members or family members who have preceded us in death.

TO SCHEDULE

_____ Baptist Church

- Contact the Church Office.

4. _____ Baptist Church -Related Events. The fourth level of priority is for activities of _____ Baptist Church members that are open to, and primarily attended by, those who attend _____ Baptist Church. Examples include church bridal or baby showers, small group or class socials, etc. Only classroom and Fellowship Hall space (not the sanctuary or gym) is available for this category of request, up to a length of four hours.

TO SCHEDULE

- Complete the “Room Request Form” (available in the church office) at least one month but not more than six months in advance of the event.
- Confirm that the event is open to _____ Baptist Church members and will be primarily attended by those who attend _____ Baptist Church.
- Submit the completed form to the calendaring coordinator in the church office.
- Requests will be reviewed and decided upon by the ministerial staff.

5. Community and Outside Organization Uses. The fifth level of priority is accorded to facility use requests by community groups, other 501 (C) 3 or other non- _____ Baptist Church organizations sponsored by an _____ Baptist Church member.

TO SCHEDULE

- Complete the “Facility Use Request Form” (available in the church office) at least one month but not more than six months in advance of the event.
- For this type of request, the following items are also required:
 - a. identification of _____ Baptist Church member sponsor who will remain on premises at all times that the building is in use for this purpose; and
 - b. signed “church usage and hold harmless agreement” and “certification of insurance coverage” (both forms provided by _____ Baptist Church);
- Submit the completed forms to the calendaring coordinator in the church office.
- The request will be reviewed and approved by the ministerial staff. If approved by the ministerial staff, the request will also be reviewed and approved by the Church Council. In its discretion and depending upon the nature of the event, the Church Council may require the user to supply proof of its own insurance coverage.

III. Guidelines Governing All Use of Facilities

- A. All requests for use of the church facilities must be made in writing and scheduled through the church office.
- B. We expect all groups who use _____ Baptist Church’s facilities to be sensitive to _____ Baptist Church’s mission and to conduct themselves in harmony with it. Vulgar or profane language and inappropriate behavior and/or dress is not acceptable.
- C. No fundraising or sales may take place on _____ Baptist Church premises without the approval of the Church Council.

- D. Users should be aware that worship accoutrements such as the drapes, banners, and staging will periodically change throughout the church year. Generally the church will not consider requests to alter or change these items for a particular event.
- E. Alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs are not permitted on church property.
- F. Smoking is not permitted in any church building.
- G. No pets, except bona fide service animals, are permitted inside church buildings.
- H. No persons except law enforcement officers may possess firearms, knives, or other weapons on _____ Baptist Church premises, pursuant to Texas Penal Code, Title 10: Chapter 46.03 (a) (1).
- I. No tacks, nails, or staples are permitted on the walls, doors, ceilings, or woodwork of the church. Adhesive gum is the preferred method of fastening.**
***Requests to post signs on/in any building should be directed to the church office. For purposes of appearance, signs should be laminated.*
- J. The use of candles or flames is prohibited except during church services. Ceremonial use of candles may be permitted on a specific occasion with the advance written approval of the Church Council or staff.
- K. If needed, building keys will be issued by the Ministry Assistant to the Pastor. Key recipients must sign for the keys they receive and agree that they will not duplicate any _____ Baptist Church keys and will return the keys when the scheduled event is concluded.
- L. All those using the facility should leave the area(s) used in the same condition as when they arrived. Tables, chairs, and other equipment should be returned to their original locations. Windows should not be opened except in an emergency; any opened windows must be closed and locked at the conclusion of the event. All trash should be placed in receptacles, not left on floors, tables, chairs, etc. Personal items or other belongings should be removed.
- M. Items that are movable (i.e. tables, chairs, coffee pots, etc.) may not be removed from the premises without the approval of the staff.
- N. All lights should be turned off and, where applicable, doors locked when use is concluded.
- O. Evening events must conclude by 9:00 p.m. weeknights and by 7:00 p.m. on Saturday nights to allow our custodial crew to perform their work. No events will be scheduled to begin after 6:00 on Saturday evenings.
- P. Users are responsible for any loss or damage to church property or facilities that occur during the time they are using the facilities. Damage to buildings or equipment should be reported to the staff as soon as possible. Users are also responsible to pay the cost of any special set-ups, take-downs, or clean-up that is not included in the cost of any fees collected.
- Q. The Church Council reserves the right to prohibit or terminate any activity or use that, in its discretion, it determines to be harmful, dangerous, or detrimental to the interests of _____ Baptist Church.
- R. Any person or organization whose facility use request is denied may appeal that decision to the Church Council, which is the final arbiter in such matters.

IV. Fees

The fee structure for the use of the facilities is established annually by the church. A fee schedule for the current year is attached hereto.

The fees assessed by the church may only be waived by the Church Council, in its discretion, upon consideration of the surrounding circumstances.

Fees will be billed by the _____ Baptist Church office upon approval of the event. Checks are to be made payable to “_____ Baptist Church.”

20 SCHEDULE OF FACILITY FEES

- A. Priority 1 requests - Baptist Church Programs: None except as may be agreed to between the church and a particular ministry.
- B. Priority 2 requests - _____ Baptist Church-Sponsored Ministries: None provided that users handle all setup, take-down, and clean-up in the room to be used and/or except as may be agreed to between the church and a particular ministry.
- C. Priority 3 requests - Member Weddings and Funerals: For weddings, see the “Christian Wedding” policy and fee schedule, which can be obtained from the Ministry Assistant to the Senior Pastor.
- D. Priority 4 requests - Member Use: None provided that users handle all set-up, take-down, and clean-up in the room to be used.
- E. Priority 5 requests - Community/Outside Use:
1. ROOM USAGE (4-hour minimum):

Small Classroom	\$ 75
Large Classroom	\$125
Sanctuary	\$200
Gym	\$300

Use in excess of four hours will be billed in additional two-hour increments.
 2. KITCHEN USAGE
For events involving food service by the _____ Baptist Church Kitchen Ministry, that ministry will establish food service/kitchen costs. For use of the kitchen where the meal is not provided by the Kitchen Ministry, the following fees apply:

Kitchen Use	\$200
Amenities Use	\$100 (linens, glassware, plates, etc.)
Staff Supervision	\$20/hour, 4-hour (\$80) minimum
 3. CUSTODIAL FEES - includes cleaning, set-up, and tear-down

Sanctuary Event	\$100
Gym Event: 1-200 attending	\$140
Gym Event, over 200 attending	\$175
Other Rooms	as billed by cleaning contractor
 4. EVENT COORDINATOR \$100
Required for large events (more than 200 in attendance) as determined solely in the discretion of the Kitchen Ministry and/or Church Council, the Event Coordinator will coordinate interaction between users of premises and various services (kitchen, technical support, etc.)
 5. TECHNICAL SUPPORT \$20/hour (3 hour minimum to include set-up and tear down.)
_____ Baptist Church trained sound technicians are required if the audio-visual system will be used. Approved sound technicians will have completed training as of September 2007 and participate in the monthly rotation as part of worship sound team. *There is a small PA system available for use for those who have been trained on it.

Please contact _____ at name@yohoo.com for sound assistance. Contact _____ at name@yohoo.com to request media support assistance.

NOTE: LOST KEY(S) CHARGE - \$15 per key

These fees are assessed by the church and may only be waived by the church, in its discretion, upon consideration of the surrounding circumstances.

Fees will be billed by the church office upon approval of the event. Checks are to be made payable to “
_____ Baptist Church.”

CERTIFICATION OF INSURANCE COVERAGE

On behalf of _____ (organization name), I certify that as of the date of the event at _____ Baptist Church our organization has the following insurance coverage and that any claims for injury or damage to person, property or equipment that occurs while our organization holds its event at _____ Baptist Church will be submitted to the below insurance company for payment:

Insurance Company: _____

Agent/Broker Name: _____

Agent/Broker Phone No.: _____

Policy Number: _____

Policy Effective Dates: _____

Liability Insur. Limits: _____

Property/Equip. Insur. Limits: _____

Workers Compensation Insur. Limits: _____

DATE

SIGNATURE

PRINTED NAME

TITLE

FACILITY RENTAL REQUEST FORM

Today's Date: _____ Rental Date(s): _____

Time Required: Set-up time _____ (am/pm)
Start time _____ (am/pm)
End time _____ (am/pm)
 (One-time) (weekly) (mthly) (other)

Purpose: _____

Number Of People Expected: _____

Room(s):

- Entire church auditorium foyer only
 Kitchen Gym conference room
 Classroom(s): _____

Equipment Request (if available): _____

Auditorium: _____

- sound system (sound personnel required)
 video projector (computer to be operated by trained personnel only)
 other _____

Other:

- chairs _____ round tables _____ rectangular tables _____
 podium easel whiteboard other

Note: There will be a custodial set-up charge if tables and chairs are needed.

Contact Person: _____

Organization: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Please read carefully

I agree to follow all guidelines and regulations for facility use of _____ Baptist Church. By signing, I agree to all rental and personnel charges and release _____ Baptist Church, its staff, trustees, and membership from any obligation or liability due to damage or loss to property or individuals while involved in this event.

DATE

SIGNATURE

OFFICE USE ONLY

Confirmation: Yes (damage deposit received) No

Authorized By:

Date:

Rental Charge (not including charges for sound, custodial, or extra time):

This document is provided with the understanding that the BGCT is not rendering legal, accounting, or other professional advice or service, professional advice on specific issues should be sought from a competent accountant, non-profit attorney, or other professional.