



Community Reformed Church

Helping all people find and follow Jesus.

WEDDING GUIDE

So you're getting married.

Congratulations!

Marriage is one of God's best gifts to us and worth celebrating in special ways. This brochure will help you plan those important aspects of your wedding, involving the ceremony, pastor, and church facility.



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Details, Details, Details

Dave Barry looks at weddings:

Wedding season is again upon us, and you brides-to-be are busy as bees, finalizing arrangements for your dress, flowers, catering, clergyperson, shower curtain pattern selection, eyebrow-tweezing appointment, and the 17 million other details that make planning a modern wedding far more complex than building a space station. Meanwhile your grooms, for your part, have been entrusted with the responsibility of locating a pair of dark socks.

GENERAL REMARKS

1. A wedding is a worship service. Its goals are to express gratitude to God for his gifts and to celebrate the promises of marriage as an expression of Christian commitment and faith.
2. A wedding has a corporate component. It should recognize and respect the presence of family and friends. It also has a personal component and may reflect the unique interests and needs of the couple involved.
3. A wedding is for a few minutes; a marriage is for life. Planning the details of the ceremony, reception, and surrounding events should not be allowed to hinder the development of a relationship as an engaged couple that will lay a good foundation for life together as husband and wife.

Community Reformed Church is prepared to help you in planning a meaningful wedding ceremony and in getting off to a good start in your life as a married couple. Here are the details:

1. Call the church office to make a reservation for the use of the facility for the wedding and rehearsal. (The sanctuary is not available during the week immediately preceding Christmas). This reservation will be confirmed after a completed request form is received. This form is available in the church office.
2. Before the wedding date can be confirmed you must also secure the services of a pastor for the date in mind. You may call our pastors yourself or ask office staff to refer your request, but it is your responsibility to be sure a pastor has been assigned. Involvement of any outside clergy in your wedding is definitely welcomed but must be approved by the Senior Pastor and elder board of CRC.
3. Personal consultations with the officiating pastor will be required prior to the wedding, as explained elsewhere in this brochure.
4. A Wedding Coordinator is available to assist you with your planning. They are intimately aware of the church's facility, equipment, and policies regarding weddings and will be present to give assistance during rehearsal and, if requested, on the wedding day. If you choose to use our wedding coordinator you will call to arrange an appointment about 1-2 months prior to the wedding. This meeting will include detailed scheduling for the rehearsal and wedding (for the wedding party, florist, photographer, musicians, etc.), a tour of the church facility, seating requirements, a review of church use policies affecting your party and guests, and other "behind the scenes" details related to the success of your wedding. At that meeting you will be asked to provide times for floral delivery and pick up, photographer setup and start time, as well as phone numbers for those involved. You are free to call the coordinator at any time for information or with questions.
5. The church custodian is responsible for preparing the church for the wedding and for cleanup afterwards. The wedding coordinator can arrange for his services. If you are not using our coordinator, you are responsible for getting in touch with him to facilitate his work. Unless special arrangements are made, all activities in the church must be completed by 8:00 PM on weekdays and 5:00 PM on Saturdays which includes the removal of all items related to the wedding..

CHURCH POLICIES

1. The Wedding Coordinator, and the pastor (if from CRC) represent the church and are the interpreter of its policies for guests, florists, photographers, etc. using the facility for a wedding. The Wedding Coordinator should be your first phone call with questions. If appropriate she will contact the pastor and/or staff to answer your questions.
2. Flowers and other decorations cannot use tacks, nails, wire, string, glue or defacing tape on the furnishings or woodwork of the church. All candles must have a plastic liner under them. Church furniture or decorations should be moved either by church personnel or after permission by the Wedding Coordinator/Pastor. All decorations and equipment should be in place before pictures are taken and must be removed immediately following the service. These arrangements may be handled either by the florist or other responsible persons. It is not the Wedding Coordinators responsibility to set up or take down flowers and decorations. Lenten and Advent Season sanctuary decorations may not be moved for wedding set-up without special permission.
3. Photographs may be taken during the ceremony in an unobtrusive manner. Sanctuary decorations or flowers should not be moved by photographers or video persons. Photographers and video personnel must be dressed and conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to a worship service.
4. Use of the church facility includes just those rooms designated for changing clothes, photos, snacks, etc. The rest of the facility (kitchens, nursery, etc.) is not available except by specific request and permission.
5. Smoking is not permitted in the building. Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed anywhere on church property.
6. The sound systems and video may be operated by Community Reformed Church trained operators only.
7. Food & beverages must be consumed in designated areas.
8. Rice, birdseed, and confetti may not be thrown on church property. Bubbles may be used outside only.

PLEASE NOTE: These policies augment the general policies regarding church weddings as found in the rest of this brochure. All questions may be referred to the Wedding Coordinator or Pastor.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING

1. The bride and groom are required to meet with the pastor both to plan the ceremony and to work on relational issues for engaged couples. Typically this involves three 90 minute sessions and some homework in between. These are scheduled at mutually convenient times and should begin no later than three months prior to the wedding. Couples are responsible to make the contacts necessary to arrange these meetings.
2. The relational work will involve the use of a nationally-recognized pre-marriage inventory, "Prepare/Enrich." Most couples find this to be an interesting and helpful tool for better understanding themselves and for exploring the important issues related to building a solid marriage. The goal is not counseling per se, but direction for strengthening a couple's relationship before and after the wedding ceremony itself.
3. Couples who are involved in premarital sexual intercourse and cohabitation are advised that this is a very serious impediment to a successful marriage relationship and that this will be a matter for discussion in the consultation sessions. Our goal in this and other issues is not to preach at people but to help a couple begin their marriage with the best possible chance for success.

SCHEDULING SUMMARY

- Church facility - up to one year prior to wedding. Wedding ceremonies typically take 30 minutes plus time for receiving lines, photos, etc. Rehearsals, required for most weddings, are usually scheduled for the evening prior to the wedding, and are 45 - 60 minutes in length. It is best if all participants are present for the rehearsal. Soloists should arrange practice times outside of the rehearsal itself.
- The Pastor - his services are arranged in conjunction with scheduling the facility
- Meeting with the pastor - at least three months prior to the wedding

costs above. Questions, talk with the pastor.

- *Soloists and musicians typically receive \$75—\$100. This is NOT included in the costs above.*

WEDDING CEREMONY WORKSHEET

1. With respect to the order of worship, here are the important parts and areas for conversation. You are free to offer suggestions or ask questions about any part of the order.
 - a. The Call to Worship *Examples:* Psalm 118:24; Psalm 100
 - b. The Explanation of Christian Marriage

The following is usually read: “We are gathered in the presence of God to give thanks for the gift of marriage, to witness the joining together of _____ and _____, to surround them with our prayers, and to ask God’s blessing upon them, so that they may be strengthened for their life together and nurtured in their love for God.

God gave us marriage for the full expression of the love between a man and a woman. In marriage, a woman and a man belong to each other, and with affection and tenderness, freely give themselves to each other.

In marriage, husband and wife are called to a new way of life; created, ordered and blessed by God. This way of life must not be entered into carelessly, or from selfish motives, but responsibly and prayerfully.”

- c. The Personal Statements of Purpose

Two questions are addressed to both the bride and groom:

Do you, _____, take _____, before God and these witnesses to be your wedded wife/husband? Answer: “I do.” Will you

love her/him, comfort her/him, honor and keep her/him in all circumstances, and forsaking every other, keep to her/him only so long as you both shall live? Answer: "I will."

d. The Affirmation of Family Roles

The support of the couple's families is traditionally expressed by asking the bride's father: "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?" This can be augmented by other ways of involving family members and/or expressing appreciation to them. The congregation as a whole could also be asked to express their support in some verbal response.

e. The Vows - see in the back of this brochure

f. The Exchange of Rings

This is accompanied by the bride and groom repeating these words: "This ring I give to you, as a sign of our covenant and abiding love, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

g. The Declaration of Marriage - you are pronounced "husband and wife"

h. The Scripture Reading and Homily

The Pastor will read a scripture selection and make brief, personal comments applying it to your marriage and life. We are open to your suggestions regarding passages to read. I. Corinthians 13:4-7 is an example of such a passage, but other examples would be Proverbs 3:3-6; I. John 4:7-12; Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 5:1-10 or 3-16.

i. The Prayers

This may include The Lord's Prayer (as a solo or recited) and it may include the use of a kneeling bench by the bride and groom.

j. The Benediction

This scriptural blessing is usually followed by the kiss.

2. Other items related to the order of worship:

- a. The Processional - participants may enter either as couples from the narthex, or separately, with the men coming in from the side of the chancel and the women down the aisle from the narthex. Or you may have another idea.
- b. The Recessional - this is usually done in pairs. It typically begins with a "presentation" of the couple to the congregation as "Mr. and Mrs. ____" or by first names.
- c. The Unity Candle - if you wish to use this symbol, it is usually done just before the Benediction.
- d. Music - at a minimum you should work with the organist/pianist to choose music for the processional and recessional. If you wish to include other solos or music in the ceremony, we will discuss together their placement in the order.
- e. Other people can have a role in the service (as a reader, for example). Let us know if this is an interest.

3. Arrangements - before the rehearsal you must make the following decisions:

a. Ushering:

How will people be ushered in? Bride's side/groom's side or evenly as they arrive? Who will usher in the parents? What about grandparents or other "special" people? How will people be ushered out? Will there be a receiving line? Where? Are there any handicapped persons to be accommodated?

- b. Candle lighting - who will do this, if required? When?
- c. Children - if there are some in the wedding party, will they stand for part or all of the ceremony, or be seated at the end of the processional?
- d. Arrival times for the bride (and party), florist, photographer.

4. Other Matters

- a. Do you want a printed order of worship? If so, you should do this entirely on your own (with help from us on the order to be printed).
- b. Do not hesitate to ask questions or make suggestions about any aspect of your wedding. Every couple is different in terms of how much they wish to be involved in the planning. Our only goal is to serve your individual needs so as to plan a ceremony that will be meaningful to you and be expressive of the joy inherent in Christian marriage.

WEDDING VOWS

Your vows are the most important part of the wedding ceremony. They have two characteristics that give them meaning:

First, they are open-ended statements of commitment.

Second, they are made before God and your family and friends.

So, these are important words that really count for something. That “something” is your life together in the future, as well as the lives of others, especially your children if God should give them to you.

Here are three sample vows, quite similar but differing somewhat in length and language. You are free to choose one and/or to suggest modifications. Some couples may also wish to write their own, in keeping with the characteristics outlined above. What counts is that you understand the commitments being made and that you can make them without reservation.

- a. "I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's Holy Word; and thereto I pledge myself to you, truly with all my heart."
- b. "I, _____, solemnly swear by the living God, that I do love this woman, whose hand I am now holding. Out of love, do I take her for my wedded wife, according to the ordinance of God. I shall be faithful to her, satisfied

with her, live with her in the fear of God; bear with her, suffer with her and whether she be in health or in sickness, in plenty or in want, until her death or my death, I shall not leave her, but shall be her faithful husband, during the full course of my life, so help me God."

Woman: Same, except change "Woman whose hand I am now holding" to Man on whose hand I am now depending." Change "her" to "him" and change "faithful husband" to "faithful helpmate."

or

- c. "I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband; and I promise, before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful husband/wife; in plenty and in want; in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in health; as long as we both shall live."

Usually, these vows are said by repeating phrases voiced by the pastor. Some couples may wish to say them from memory - a risky but permissible option!

The exact vows to be used must be chosen prior to the rehearsal.

OFFICE HOURS

Church office hours are Monday through Thursday 8:00 - 4:00 p.m.
and Friday 8:00 - 12:00 p.m.

Please have all bulletin material turned in to the office by 11:00 a.m. each Thursday.
(during holiday weeks the deadlines are subject to change)

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