

# CELEBRATION BAPTIST CHURCH WEDDING HANDBOOK

## INTRODUCTION

Your marriage will be one of the most important events in your life- a joyous and memorable occasion that you will cherish for years to come.

The marriage ceremony performed in the church is considered a worship service. It is one of the most sacred rites performed by the pastor under the authority of the church. We are honored to have the opportunity of sharing this event with you and our church staff is ready to assist you in every way possible.

Celebration Baptist has established the following guidelines and policies regarding weddings held in our facilities. We do ask that you comply with these so that no detail may be overlooked in making your wedding one of the happiest and holiest moments in your life. Careful and cooperative planning, beginning as soon as the wedding date is contemplated, will enable the preplanning as well as the wedding to be a joy to all.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Worship Center at Celebration Baptist Church has seating capacity for 650. The Family Activities Building, adjacent to our Worship Center, may be used for your wedding reception. The FAB has a kitchen, which may be used for heating or warming foods. A limited number of tables and chairs are available for use in the FAB at no charge, however linens are not provided.

Weddings may be scheduled for Monday- Saturdays on a date and time that do not conflict with the church calendar. No weddings will be scheduled on Sunday or on the days or weekends pertaining to or connected with Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day or New Year's Day.

Sunday school rooms may be used as dressing areas for the bridal party. No food or beverages are to be brought into the dressing rooms, waiting rooms, or Worship Center. Attendants should be discouraged from leaving valuables unattended. The Church will not be held responsible for any personal items, reception or wedding items, lost, stolen or damaged. However, every effort will be made to protect such property. It is strongly suggested that someone be assigned for the responsibility of these items.

The Worship Center will be open two hours before the wedding. Rehearsal time is one hour in length and is generally scheduled for the evening before the wedding. Please ensure that the entire wedding party is in attendance for the rehearsal and arrive on time.

The marriage license should be given to the pastor when you arrive for the rehearsal.

## **SCHEDULING THE WEDDING**

It is recommended that you secure the wedding date on the church calendar as far in advance as possible. Before the date is confirmed, the Bride and Groom will need to complete the following:

1. Make an appointment with the Pastor to obtain approval of your plans and select an appropriate date.
2. After meeting with the Pastor, confirm with the church secretary that the church and/or reception area is available on the date requested at which time your name will be penciled in.\*\*
3. Meet with the Wedding Director, fill out the Wedding Planning form, and submit required deposits.

\*\* Please note - The wedding date will not be confirmed until the couple has met with both the Pastor and Wedding Director and the date and time for your wedding is agreeable with the church calendar and the parties involved. As such, we ask that you refrain from ordering invitations, scheduling caterers, photographers, etc. until arrangements with the church are complete.

## **THE PASTOR**

The Celebration pastoral staff will guide you in any way possible as you prepare for this lifetime commitment to each other. It is the policy of the Pastor to guide the couple in a series of pre-marriage sessions in order to ensure that the Christian meaning of marriage is fully understood, as well as the significance of the ceremony. As a church body, we believe that the biblical view of marriage should be followed. We share this view of marriage with all prospective couples and require them to make the following commitment in regard to their marriage:

1. Marriage requires commitment. The Bible teaches us that this is a lifetime commitment. You must be ready to make a lifetime commitment to your spouse before entering into the marriage covenant.
2. Marriage requires fidelity. We believe this is a high and noble gift of God. Prospective couples need to understand the necessity of committing themselves to be faithful to each other for life.
3. When couples are spiritually, biblically and morally qualified to be married, they are much more likely to enjoy a healthy and happy marriage. Experience has proven that persons who are not qualified in the following ways to be married are more likely to have a marriage that does not succeed.
4. We will marry only couples where both partners have made a Christian commitment. If you are unsure about your Christian commitment, or desire to make a commitment to

follow Christ, please meet with our pastor and/or staff to discuss this. Persons unwilling to make a commitment to Christ will not be married by our pastor or staff.

5. While we do not require that every marriage partner be a member of Celebration Baptist Church, we do require that both prospective partners be involved in church somewhere and both plan to continue involvement after their wedding.
6. We also ask that each couple make a commitment to moral, sexual purity during their engagement and during the premarital preparation period. We will be unable to marry persons unwilling to make this commitment.

If you do not understand or agree with these guidelines we have proposed, we urge you to discuss this with the Pastor. These guidelines have been set to help people effectively prepare for marriage.

Customarily, one of the Pastors of Celebration Baptist Church will have the privilege of officiating in weddings held in the Worship Center. If you would like to have a guest pastor officiate in your wedding ceremony, wholly or in part, please discuss this request with the Pastor at your first meeting so that he can be approved and invited by the Senior Pastor of Celebration. Couples should not invite other clergy to take part in the service before receiving the Senior Pastor's approval. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage ceremony is under the direction of the Pastor. All parts of the ceremony should be appropriate to Christian worship and acceptable offerings to God. It is understood that any guest Pastor will abide by the wedding policies of Celebration Baptist church.

## **WEDDING DIRECTOR**

Celebration Baptist provides an experienced Wedding Director to help and advise you. While you are required to use the services of our Wedding Director; you may request the services of an outside wedding coordinator to work in association with them if you wish. When you schedule your wedding, the Wedding Director will help you complete the necessary forms and answer questions about the church and the wedding ceremony. If necessary, they can meet with you again closer to your wedding date. The Director will answer questions about the order of service, open and close the building for the rehearsal, wedding, reception, and will also open the building for the photographer, florist and caterer. The Director will direct both the wedding rehearsal and the ceremony, assisting you with the many decisions involved in such an event.

## **DECORATIONS**

The interior of our Worship Center is both dignified and beautiful. We advise simple decorations which enhance the beauty rather than attract unusual attention. A few regulations have been made to preserve the spiritual atmosphere and to safeguard the furnishings.

- It is suggested that a professional florist be used who is expected to clean up immediately after the service is complete. Flower arrangements are to be prepared outside of the Worship Center. It is recommended that a suitable container be used. The florist will need to contact the Wedding Director to determine a mutually agreed upon time to arrive at the church for decorating.
- No tacks, pins, nails or tape, adhesive or glue may be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture, building or carpet.
- Pew holders may be used to hold ribbons, which mark the reserved sections.
- The furniture, floor and carpet must be fully protected at all times.
- Mats should be placed under all containers, potted palms or greenery to protect the woodwork and carpet.
- It is important the florist carefully check the candles to ensure they are properly fit into the candelabra to avoid the potential for fire.
- Candelabras should have sufficient coverings under them to prevent any wax from dripping on the carpet.
- If fresh flower petals are to be scattered by the flower girl, a protective runner is to be placed over the carpet.
- For safety reasons, candles may not be used on the pews, choir area or in the windows.
- At various times during the year, the Worship Center is decorated for special church services and it is understood that these special decorations will not be removed or disturbed for weddings.
- Prior arrangements must be made to remove the worship banners if desired.
- The pulpit, alter table, choir chairs, musical instruments and music stands will be removed for the wedding.
- For safety reasons, the use of birdseed, rice, confetti or bubbles is strictly prohibited inside the church building. Bubbles and birdseed are permitted in designated outside areas and should be discussed in advance with the Wedding Director.

## **THE WEDDING MUSIC/SOUND TECHNOLOGY**

Proper music selections are an important decision concerning a wedding. This is a sacred moment and should set the mood of the service. The Worship and Creative Arts Pastor will be invaluable in helping you in your selection of music and instruments to use and must approve all music selections. Please schedule an appointment well in advance of the wedding to discuss this.

Because Celebration Baptist only has a grand piano, recorded music or other musical instruments may be acceptable. The Sound/Lighting Technician will be present during the rehearsal and prior to the beginning of the wedding to ensure that all equipment is in proper working order. If you are not having soloists and/or do not feel the need for microphones and sound amplification, you are not required to have a sound technician.

While the Worship and Creative Arts Pastor can provide you with a list of available instrumentalists and fees, the couple or their families will directly engage and pay these musicians for performing during the wedding and/or reception.

## **WEDDING REHEARSAL**

Wedding rehearsals are normally scheduled for the evening preceding the wedding if the building is available. The rehearsal should not take longer than an hour. This rehearsal is a time of careful planning for the worship experience. Please encourage your participants to conduct themselves with proper decorum and to arrive on time. It is essential that all members of the wedding party including musical accompanists and soloists be present for this rehearsal.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY**

We recommend that most photography be completed before the actual ceremony. No photographs are permitted during the wedding ceremony. Please alert any “camera bugs” of this rule. The only exception is that the official photographer may take a picture of the bride and her escort just as the procession starts down the aisle. The focus at this point turns to the bride and groom so nothing should be done to detract from the wedding service. Limited non-flash photography may be taken from the balcony. Flash photos of the recessional are permissible if the photographer stands in the rear of the worship center. If photos at the altar are desired, these may be re-created after the ceremony. Pictures may be made before and immediately following the ceremony. All photography is to be completed in the worship center at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the ceremony.

An unmanned video camera may be used. Please advise your family and friends that no roaming photography or videographers are allowed. You may discuss the placement of the stationary video camera may be discussed with the Wedding Director during the planning phase of your wedding.

## **INFORMAL WEDDINGS**

A wedding is considered informal when:

- No rehearsal is required.
- Only church decorations are used.
- When the bride and groom and possibly one attendant each walk into the Worship Center and stand before the minister for the wedding ceremony.
- When the wedding guests are limited to family and a few close friends.
- There is no need for sound and lighting.

A church staff person will be assigned to unlock the church and secure it after the wedding for a

minimal charge. Should an “informal” wedding at any point during the planning stage become larger than the above stated guidelines, full fees will apply.

### **THE RECEPTION**

The Family Activity Building is available for wedding receptions. Details of the reception with regard to set-up (i.e. tables/chairs) should be scheduled with the Wedding Director no later than one month prior to your wedding to allow the custodian time to make necessary arrangements.

The caterer and/or florist must provide everything else necessary for a complete reception and is required to leave the facilities in the condition they were found. Arrangements made in advance with the Wedding Director to open the building and/or arrange for a key to be checked out.

Strict compliance with the following rules is required as a provision of holding receptions in the church:

- No alcoholic beverages are permitted in any form in any of the church buildings or on the grounds.
- No smoking is allowed in any of the facilities
- For safety reasons, the use of birdseed, rice, confetti or bubbles are not allowed inside the building. Birdseed or bubbles may be used at select locations outside of the building only.
- Appropriate background music may be acceptable to use for the reception area and should be discussed in advance with your Wedding Director.
- All receptions must be completed by 8:00pm to allow for a two-hour window for the cleaning of the premises by the custodian. If not completed by 8:00pm, additional fees need to be negotiated with our janitorial services.

### **CUSTODIAL AND USAGE FEES Church Members**

- A. Deposit.....\$100.00**
- B. Worship Center.....No charge**
- C. Family Activity Building.....No charge**
- D. Custodian.....\$20.00 per hour**
- E. Wedding Director.....\$25.00 per hour**
- F. Lighting/Sound Technician....\$25.00 per hour**

**Pastor’s Fees:** Although there is no set fee for the pastor, a suitable honorarium is appropriate.

To receive the membership rates for a wedding at Celebration, the wedding party (bride, groom or parents) must have been active members for at least six months prior to the wedding.

**CUSTODIAL AND USAGE FEES  
Non-Church Members**

- A. Deposit.....\$200.00**
- B. Worship Center.....\$300.00**
- C. Family Activity Building.....\$250.00**
- D. Custodian.....\$20.00 per hour**
- E. Wedding Director.....\$25.00 per hour**
- F. Lighting/Sound Technician.....\$25.00 per hour**

**Additional Fees (Members/non-members)**

**Pastor’s Fees:** Although there is no set fee for the pastor, a suitable honorarium is appropriate.

**Pianists/Accompanist-**It is the responsibility of the wedding party to negotiate the fee for these services. The Music and Creative Arts Pastor can provide the wedding couple with a list of available musicians if desired.

**Deposit Fee**

A refundable deposit is required at the time the wedding application is submitted. The entire deposit will be returned if the wedding is cancelled at least 14 days before the scheduled wedding. If the wedding policies as outlined have been followed and if no damage or extra clean up is required, the deposit will be refunded in full within two weeks following the wedding. If there are extra charges deducted from the deposit check, the person who made the deposit will receive a written explanation of charges along with the balance of the deposit check.

**Possible reasons for withholding all or part of the deposit:**

- Damage to the building or furnishings
- Rice thrown anywhere
- Birdseed thrown inside the building
- Smoking or alcohol on church property
- Candle wax or stains on carpet or furnishings
- Excessive time in the building (one hour allocated for the wedding rehearsal and four hours for the wedding including picture taking)
- Failure to notify the wedding director of any cancellations of plans at least 14 days prior to the wedding
- Decorations/rental equipment not being removed promptly.

**Unless otherwise noted, the fees are normally the responsibility of the bride or the bride’s family. All fees must be paid at least two weeks in advance of the wedding and are payable to Celebration Baptist church.**

**Statement to be signed after wedding date is set**

I have received a copy of the Wedding Policies for Celebration Baptist Church. I understand that it is my responsibility to read through the contents and direct any questions that I may have to the Wedding Director, Pastor, or church office. I will provide a copy of these guidelines as it pertains to florists, caterers, photographers, etc so as not to encounter conflicts.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bride

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Groom

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Received in office

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## WEDDING RESERVATION AND PROCEDURES

### Celebration Baptist Church Tallahassee, Florida

We welcome the opportunity to serve you, your family and friends on this very special occasion. In order for all concerned with your wedding to be informed and well prepared, we request the following information be completed and returned to the Church office as soon as possible.

BRIDE:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Street/Apt. No)                      City                      State                      Zip Code  
 Phone: ( Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Business) \_\_\_\_\_

Church Membership \_\_\_\_\_

GROOM: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Street/Apt. No)                      City                      State                      Zip Code

Church Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Couple's Mailing Address after Marriage:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

( Street/Apt. No)                      City                      State                      Zip Code

REHEARSAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

WEDDING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

MINISTER: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone( home) \_\_\_\_\_ (business) \_\_\_\_\_

SOLOIST(S) \_\_\_\_\_

PIANIST: \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUMENTALISTS: \_\_\_\_\_

CATERER: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

FLORIST; \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

PHOTOGRAPHER: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

FACILITIES NEEDED: ( CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

\_\_\_\_ Worship Center    \_\_\_\_ Family Activity Building    \_\_\_\_ Kitchen:    \_\_\_\_ Classroom

What furniture will you need removed from the pulpit area? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We, the undersigned, agree to comply with the policies and procedures of Celebration Baptist Church and agree to inform those in our wedding party of the same.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bride's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Groom's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE ( for office use only)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date deposit paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Date fees paid \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_