



Guide for Weddings

This booklet contains information you will need as you plan your wedding at Hope Community Church. It provides some helpful background information as well as a guideline and checklist. Please read it carefully.



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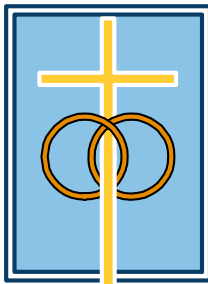
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Introduction

If you are reading this, it is most likely because you have decided to be married. Perhaps you already have a wedding date in mind and maybe you have even made some honeymoon plans. But before you go any further with your planning, it is important to stop and think about the marriage for which you are preparing as well as your wedding day.

Your marriage and your wedding day are really two different events. The wedding day is a one day event. Whether it is a large wedding or small, with a formal reception or informal, the wedding itself will only encompass a few hours of time. But a marriage, from the Christian point of view, is a covenant which is fulfilled over the lifetime of a couple.

Though you will hear many people tell you to choose or do whatever you want for your wedding because, "After all, it is your day!," this booklet looks upon marriage in a different way. In the Christian church the wedding is not a show arranged by the bride and groom. While it is a special day you will always remember, it is not your day alone. Marriage is a sacred event which affects the whole Christian community. Your marriage is important to you and to all who are members of the Christian community. This booklet has, therefore, been written from that perspective.



Preparation for marriage

We believe that marriage must be entered into reverently, prayerfully and thoughtfully. Preparation for marriage is absolutely essential. During the months of your courtship, time should be given to plan for and to discuss what is going to be important to you in your marriage. Time should be given to such topics as these:

- ≡ our faith story
- ≡ our family histories
- ≡ how well we communicate & resolve differences
- ≡ affection and sexual intimacy
- ≡ children
- ≡ our future in-laws
- ≡ our goals and our values
- ≡ our faith and how we will practice it
- ≡ our financial goals and priorities
- ≡ our employment and career plans
- ≡ our friends
- ≡ how we will spend our leisure time/recreation

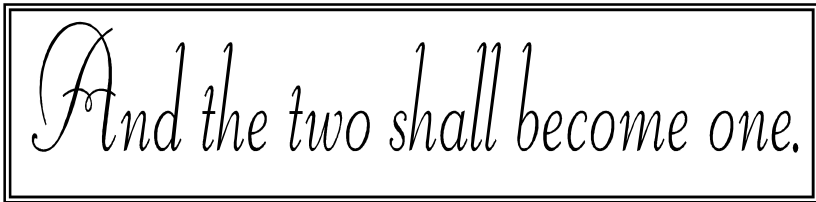
The pastor will require several sessions with you in preparation for marriage. These sessions will focus on the topics listed above and, usually, the feedback provided from a pre-marriage inventory. There is a fee required by the company which provides the pre-marriage inventory materials, does the scoring and provides the report.

The pastor will also discuss with you the Christian marriage service, some options which you may choose within the service, and the meaning of the Christian marriage service.

The pre-marriage counseling should begin three months before your wedding day to allow time for the pre-marriage inventory to be taken and scored, and for the additional sessions to be scheduled. It is the responsibility of the couple to contact the church office to arrange for the pre-marriage counseling sessions, which is lead by Hope's pastor. To be married at Hope, normally either the bride or groom must be an active member, part of a member family, or active and proceeding toward membership. As an important part of preparation for marriage, a

couple is encouraged to be worshipping regularly and especially during the counseling time.

The pastor reserves the right to use pastoral discretion in unusual circumstances or to refer the matter to Hope's Church Council for guidance. The pastor further reserves the right not to marry those who demonstrate immaturity, insincerity toward marriage or the Christian faith, and/or lack of preparation for marriage.



Planning for your wedding day

SET THE WEDDING DATE

Once you have chosen a date for your wedding, check with the church office and the pastor as soon as possible to see if that date is available on the church calendar. It is a good idea to have an alternate date in mind in the event that the use of the worship center has already been scheduled for that day or in case the pastor is not available. Only Hope's pastor officiates at the weddings at Hope Community Church unless the pastor has made other arrangements for an officiating minister in his or her absence or as part of a marriage service with multiple ministers.

Some helpful hints for choosing a date:

- The church is not available for weddings during Holy Week (the week from Palm Sunday to Easter), Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.
- Weddings during the week prior to or during Vacation Bible School are strongly discouraged.

ESTABLISH A WEDDING BUDGET

The wedding day is obviously the focus of a great deal of excitement and anticipation. But please remember that it is only one day. It is the first day of something which is far more important - your marriage. Keep your perspective. Salespeople will try to sell you the best and the most expensive items they have to offer because, "you'll only have one wedding day." Don't let them influence you into spending more than you and/or your parents can afford. Plan a wedding budget and stick to it.

Some helpful hints for your wedding budget:

- You may find the budget checklist on page 17 to be helpful in planning for your wedding expenses.

CHOOSING YOUR KEYBOARDIST AND/OR MUSICIANS

Your keyboardist and/or other musicians should be selected and contacted soon after the wedding date has been determined to see if they are available. It is your responsibility to contact your keyboardist and/or musicians, whether or not from Hope.

In the event that you would wish to use a keyboardist outside the congregation, please notify the pastor. Keyboardists from outside Hope Community Church congregation must arrange for an appointment with Hope's keyboardist for instruction and/or coordination on the use of our keyboard and sound system.

While live music is preferred, pre-recorded music may also be chosen for the wedding, in which case arrangements need to be made for someone to assist in operating the sound system and playing the selected songs.

MUSIC LIST SELECTED AND SUBMITTED (6 WEEKS)

The wedding service is a worship service. The music which is chosen therefore must be suitable for a worship setting. The music and texts should:

- ≡ reflect the praise of God,
- ≡ call upon God's presence and blessing,
- ≡ celebrate the steadfast love of Christ for his church,
- ≡ and proclaim Christ's love as the foundation and model for love and fidelity in marriage.

All music will be evaluated on the basis of its religious content and suitability for a worship service. If it does not meet the above criteria, the church holds the right to refuse its use in the service and will assist you in choosing another to be used in its place.

The musicians of Hope have many pieces of music suitable for weddings and can help you in selecting music from their repertoire if requested.

The invited guests are not mere spectators but are also participants in the service. The use of hymns and congregational responses are therefore encouraged.

We strongly encourage, when possible, that soloists use instrumental accompaniments rather than pre-recorded music. Please inform any soloist that it is their responsibility to arrange rehearsal times with the musicians.

After your appointment and consultation with the musicians, please submit a list of the music you have chosen to the church office, as well as any selections which will be sung by a soloist. This must be done **six weeks** before the date of your wedding. Because of practice time, Hope's keyboardist and/or musicians will not guarantee your selections will be used if this deadline is not observed.

Some helpful hints and suggestions to consider:

♪♪ Vocal solos are best suited as music chosen for the prelude prior to the wedding service, though they may appear elsewhere. The members of the congregation should be invited to sing hymns during the service.

♪♪ If a vocal version of the "Lord's Prayer" has been chosen, it is suggested that it be sung during the prelude and not placed within the service so that the members of the congregation may have the opportunity to pray this important prayer together as a part of the wedding worship service.

♪♪ There are many choices available for the wedding processional other than the traditional "Wedding March" by Mendelssohn.

Possibilities include a number of trumpet voluntaries and other stately compositions which have been written especially for weddings. In keeping with the spirit of a worship service, you may wish to choose a hymn for the congregation to sing as your processional.

❑ WEDDING BULLETIN (TWO WEEKS)

Wedding bulletins are also available from many printers and most Christian bookstores. Hope's office staff may be able to assist in copying the bulletins. Please coordinate this with the office, and be aware that some expense for materials and duplication would be incurred.

Whether the bulletin is to be printed by the church secretary or another source, the information needs to be given to the church office **two weeks** before the wedding date and before it is printed elsewhere. If it is not submitted, it is possible it will not be used at your wedding.

❑ PLANNING FOR FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Those who are planning the decorations should remember that the wedding is a worship service. The congregation has been invited and gathered to worship God who is the source of love, and in that service, to witness the marriage of two persons.

All floral decorations are provided by the bridal party through the florist of their choice. Aisle runners are discouraged due to the danger of tripping. Hope provides and uses standard altar candles. Any other candles and candle holders are provided by the bridal party. When and how they are lighted needs to be coordinated with the pastor as part of planning the wedding service.

The color of the paraments on the altar, pulpit and lectern will be the appropriate liturgical color for the season and are not subject to change for a wedding. Those who want to coordinate their wedding colors with the liturgical color for the season may check with the church office or pastor.

Decorations are the responsibility of the florist and/or wedding party. The week before the wedding, it is strongly recommended that

you check back with your florist, photographer and any involved people to confirm plans. The decorations are ordinarily not put in place until the day before the wedding, and all decorating should be completed at least two hours before the wedding begins or before pictures are scheduled to be taken. The wedding coordinator will assist with these arrangements. You should arrange to have the decorations removed as soon as possible after the completion of the wedding service so as to coordinate with the custodian's schedule and ensure the worship space is ready for services as normal.

The use of a "unity candle" or "wedding candle" is optional. If you choose to purchase a unity candle a suitable candle-holder will also be required. The church office keeps catalogs of candle suppliers, and there are other local suppliers from which you may choose to place your order. Couples should remember that the exchange of wedding promises and the giving and receiving of their rings is far more important within the wedding service than lighting a candle. An option to consider would be to light the "unity candle" during the reception as a part of the cake cutting ceremony.

Some helpful hints and guidelines to remember:

- ⊗ Decorations and flowers placed in the nave and chancel should be appropriate for a worship service. The decorations should not hinder the mobility of the guests.
- ⊗ Theatrical, "storybook" or extensive thematic decorating schemes should be reserved for the reception hall.
- ⊗ Chancel (altar area) decorations are limited to cut flowers (no silk or artificial flowers), white candles, ribbons and palms. No draping or decorations of any kind on the altar or altar candles are permitted.

*Your wedding coordinator will assist you with any other concerns. Decorating plans should be given to and discussed with your wedding coordinator **a month** before the wedding.*

PHOTOGRAPHER (IF DESIRED) SELECTED

The choice of a photographer or videographer is the responsibility of the wedding party.

“In order to avoid distractions, flash photography (by photographer or guests) is strongly discouraged during the wedding service.”

Please include the above announcement in the wedding bulletin.

Pictures of the bridesmaids and bride may be taken during the processional prior to the invocation as long as the pictures do not interfere with the timing of the processional. Pictures of the bridal couple and wedding party may also be taken during the recessional after the service has been completed. Available light photography (without flash) and videotaping (photographers and guests) may be done during the service if it is done silently and unobtrusively, and not in the area around the altar or in front of the guests.

Please ask your photographer to take some of the family pictures prior to the service if possible in order to avoid a long delay before the start of the reception. (This is especially important if the reception will be held somewhere other than at the church.) If the reception is being held at the church, posed pictures in the chancel should be taken after the bride and groom have had an opportunity to greet their guests and begin the reception.

Please advise the pastor if you want them included in the posed pictures after the wedding service. Otherwise, they will assume that they are not needed and will remove their vestments.

Helpful hints and guidelines:



Please have your photographer check with the pastor or wedding coordinator before the wedding service to make sure he or she understands these guidelines and procedures.



Plan on remembering to sign your marriage license immediately after your wedding and prior to other pictures. You may wish your photographer to capture this event as well.

Wedding Rehearsal

The date of the wedding rehearsal should be set as soon as possible after the wedding date has been determined to make sure there are no conflicts on the church calendar. The wedding rehearsal is normally held on the evening before the date of the wedding.

The purpose of the wedding rehearsal is to enable each participant in the wedding party to perform his or her role properly and in a comfortable manner.

Promptness at the rehearsal is important. The rehearsal will begin at the designated time.

All the members of the wedding party should be present. This includes the bride and groom, the father and mother of the bride, the father and mother of the groom, the best man and maid/matron of honor, the bridesmaids, groomsmen, ring bearer, flower girl and ushers. Although other persons are welcome to attend, their presence is not required.

The bride and groom are requested to bring the wedding license to the rehearsal so that it may be filled out prior to the service.



Wedding Order of Service

The wedding service typically follows this order:

- ✦ Organ prelude (and/or other music)
- ✦ Seating of the groom's parent(s)
- ✦ Seating of the bride's parent(s)
- ✦ Entrance of the pastor, groom, best man and groomsmen
- ✦ Procession of the bridesmaids and maid of honor
- ✦ Procession of the bride
- ✦ Greeting and Introduction
- ✦ Presentation of the bride and declaration of intentions
- ✦ Invocation, prayer and scripture lessons
- ✦ A brief sermon by the pastor (optional)
- ✦ The exchange of wedding promises and rings
- ✦ Acclamation
- ✦ Optional symbol(s) of marriage, such as unity candle
- ✦ The blessing and wedding prayers (concluding with the Lord's Prayer, if Holy Communion is not celebrated)
- ✦ Holy Communion (optional)
- ✦ Benediction
- ✦ Recessional

Some weddings include dedicated ushers, others have groomsmen serve in the role of ushers prior to and after the service. Consider how this choice would effect your wedding flow.

After the groom and groomsmen have entered from the sacristy, the bridesmaids enter one at a time in time with the music and assume their places at the chancel step.

The use of very young children in the processional is generally discouraged because their behavior is unpredictable and often distracting. The flower girl and/or ring bearer, if included, should be old enough to fulfill their part in the service without causing a disturbance.

If a flower girl is used in the processional, she follows the maid/matron of honor and precedes the bride. If a ring bearer will be included in the processional, he may process with the flower girl or he may enter with the groomsmen from the sacristy.

There are some options to the traditional processional order. There is symbolism and meaning in each of these which you may want to consider:

- In some weddings the bride and groom have chosen to have the bridesmaids escorted by the groomsmen in the procession.
- In other weddings the bride and groom have chosen to walk down the aisle together to the altar.
- In some weddings, the bride and groom were each escorted down the aisle by their parents.

The congregation stands when the bride enters the sanctuary.

The wedding party faces the altar during the service. At the conclusion of the service the bride and groom lead the recessional of the wedding party.

After the service two of the ushers return to escort the parents from the sanctuary, and then return again to pull the aisle runner (if one has been used) out of the sanctuary aisle. Following the parents, the grandparents are escorted from the sanctuary, and then the congregation is dismissed pew by pew.

Some additional helps and hints:

- The bride should bring a ribbon "bouquet" to the rehearsal so that she can accustom herself to handling it during the wedding service.
- If the bride plans to wear a long wedding dress, it is helpful to wear a long skirt for the wedding rehearsal in order to get used to walking, kneeling, and ascending and descending the steps in the chancel area.
- Although the throwing of rice, confetti or birdseed is a common practice in many places, it is a pagan custom signifying fertility which is not compatible with a Christian wedding service. Uncooked rice is also dangerous to birds, and confetti is very difficult to clean up. Many do not realize this, and so your help in conveying this to family members and friends is appreciated.

The wedding day

WHAT TIME TO ARRIVE

On the day of the wedding, the members of the wedding party should arrive in plenty of time in order to be ready for any pre-wedding pictures and the beginning of the service. The ushers should be ready at least 45 minutes before the service is scheduled to begin. The bride and groom should be ready at least one-half hour before the service begins. Prepare and place decorations if they are not already completed.

DRESSING AT HOME OR AT THE CHURCH?

If you will be dressing at church, a room will be assigned to you. Although the doors to the pastor's office locked, the other doors do not have locks. It is strongly suggested that members of the wedding party not leave any valuable items in the dressing rooms.

Smoking is prohibited in the building. We request that you eat only in the Fellowship Hall, if possible.

DUTIES OF THE USHERS

A. Before the service

1. Light all candles 30 minutes before the wedding service begins.
2. Greet and seat the guests as they arrive with the usher always on the right of the guest.
3. Immediately before the start of the service, escort the groom's parents and then the bride's mother to their seats in the front pew. Late arriving guests seat themselves.
4. Pull the aisle runner, if used, into position.

B. Following the service

1. Escort the bride's parents and then the groom's parents from the sanctuary.
2. Pull the aisle runner, if used, back to the chancel steps and escort the grandparents, if they are present, from the sanctuary.
3. Dismiss the guests pew by pew, beginning at the front unless the bride and groom choose to do this.
2. If it will be some time before pictures are taken, extinguish the candles.

WHO WILL BE IN THE RECEIVING LINE

The usual order is:

- Mother of the bride
- Father of the groom
- Mother of the groom
- Father of the bride
- Groom
- Bride
- Maid/Matron of honor (optional)
- Best man (optional)
- Bridesmaids (optional)
- Groomsmen (optional)

Step-parents may be included in the reception line if it is comfortable for the wedding party and also for them.

AFTER THE SERVICE

Remove all decorations and restore the sanctuary and fellowship hall as appropriate for worship services.



Submit a Facility Use Request

The use of Hope’s building and property is reserved by submitting and having approved a Facility Use Request (provided separately) which addresses general issues of using the property, a waiver of legal liability, certain restrictions such as drugs and alcohol, etc. There is a fee for non-members use of the facility, independent of the services provided by keyboardist, pastor, coordinator, etc.

Fees for Wedding Services

There is a \$100 fee for weddings at Hope Community Church, which includes the time and assistance of the wedding coordinator and basic custodian services. Custodian services do not include major furniture rearrangement/replacement or removal of decorations, which are your responsibility.

The following personal stipends are suggested as fair remuneration for those who will provide special services for you. Your monetary appreciation should be paid directly to these people at the time of rehearsal:

Keyboardist\$100+
(depending on the number of songs and rehearsals required.)

An honorarium to the pastor.....\$100-150*

*- suggested amounts

A personal word from the pastor

It is our joy and honor to participate in your wedding and join you in holy matrimony. We pray that God may bless your marriage, and that as you walk in faithful discipleship your love may grow and be a witness to others.

The pastor and spouse are honored to attend any rehearsal dinner, wedding, and wedding reception of members of Hope Community Church. However, we do not presume that we are invited, and if invited may not be able to attend. If you would like us to attend, please invite us as you would any other guest.

WEDDING BUDGET CHECKLIST

\$_____ Amount available to spend

(Use pencil to allow for changes)

- Rental of Reception Hall\$_____
- Bride's dress\$_____
- Groom's tuxedo\$_____
- Rental of male attendants' clothing\$_____
- Rental/purchase of female attendants' clothing.....\$_____
- Pre-marriage counseling inventory\$_____
- Keyboardist fee \$_____
- Vocalist(s) fee\$_____
- Instrumentalist(s) fee\$_____
- Florist charges\$_____
- Photographer charges\$_____
- Catering charge or food for reception\$_____
- Wedding cake\$_____
- Printer's charges (for invitations, napkins, etc.).....\$_____
- Hope Community Church Facility Use (if applicable) \$_____
- Hope Community Church Wedding Fee \$_____
- Wedding rings\$_____
- Marriage license\$_____
- Gifts for attendants\$_____
- Honeymoon (transportation, lodging, meals, etc.)\$_____
- Other\$_____
- Other\$_____
- Total cost \$_____

WEDDING TIMELINE COUNTDOWN

Dates

- ASAP _____ Set the date with the church & pastor and submit a Facility Use Request (remember both rehearsal and service!)
- ASAP _____ Check date with the musicians
- Three Months _____ Conversations with pastor
- Two months _____ Wedding service complete, including scriptures and choices for optional elements.
- Six Weeks _____ Music lists submitted
- Five Weeks _____ Wedding bulletin information submitted
- Four Weeks _____ Order wedding bulletin
- Four Weeks _____ Decorating plans submitted
- One Week _____ Check with florist, photographer, and all involved people to reconfirm arrangements
- Rehearsal Night _____ Remember marriage license
- Rehearsal Night _____ Deliver appreciation remembrances, and fees/honorariums for those assisting you.

_____ (wedding date)

***GOD BLESS YOU ON THIS,
YOUR WEDDING DAY!!***

QUESTIONS TO ASK???

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____