

# Marriage Policy

**Please read, sign and return**

There are few things as joyous as celebrating a wedding! Here is what you need to know about hosting your wedding at the Church. If you have any questions, please contact Tonya Casillas at 901.347.5461.

## **Statement of Belief**

We believe in the beginning God created male and female in His image as a crowning act of Creation (Genesis 1:26-27); and marriage is between one male and one woman, ordered by God toward the union of the spouses, the means of procreation, formative of family, and foundational to the common good of society. All sexual relations outside of marriage is immoral. The consummation of marriage is reserved only for the union of marriage. (Genesis 1:28, 2:18-24, Hebrews 13:4, 1 Corinthians 6:18-20). Furthermore, the Church believes that sexuality is assigned by God at birth, whatever that may be, and the Holy Scripture does not permit an individual to alter their sexual identity physically or otherwise. (Mark 10:6-8, Deuteronomy 23:1).

## **Marriage Policy**

We believe that because God our Creator established marriage as a sacred institution between one (1) man and one (1) woman, the idea that marriage is a covenant only between one (1) man and one (1) woman has been the traditional definition of marriage for all of human history (“Traditional Definition of Marriage”). Because of the longstanding importance of the Traditional Definition of Marriage to humans and their relationships and communities, and, most importantly, the fact that God has ordained that marriage be between one (1) man and one (1) woman, as clearly conveyed in God’s inerrant Scriptures, including for example in *Matthew 19:4-6* where in speaking about marriage Jesus referred to the fact that “he which made them at the beginning made them male and female.” We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as either male or female, and that these two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God. We believe that God created marriage to be exclusively the union of one man and one woman, and that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that union. The Church hereby creates this policy, which shall be known as the “Marriage Policy.”

Under this Church’s Marriage Policy, the Traditional Definition of Marriage is the only definition of marriage that will be recognized or accepted. No director, pastor/elder, trustee, officer, employee, servant, agent, or any person, corporation, organization, or entity under the direction or control of this Church shall commit any act or omission, or make any decision whatever, that would be inconsistent with, or that could be perceived by any person to be inconsistent with, full support of this Church’s Marriage Policy and strict adherence to the Traditional Definition of Marriage rather than any alternative to the Traditional Definition of Marriage.

This Church’s Marriage Policy specifically prohibits acts or omissions including but not limited to permitting any Church assets or property, whether real property, personal property, intangible property, or any property or asset of any kind that is subject to the direction or control of the Church, to be used in any manner that would be or could be perceived by any person to be inconsistent with this Church’s Marriage Policy or the Traditional

Definition of Marriage, or our Church's beliefs as expressed in the Southern Baptist Convention's statement of faith, adopted on June 14, 2000. (A copy of the Baptist Faith and Message will be provided on request or can be accessed online at [sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp](http://sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp).), including but not limited to permitting any church facilities to be used by any person, organization, corporation, or group that would or might use such facilities to convey, intentionally or by implication, what might be perceived as a favorable impression about any definition of marriage other than the Traditional Definition of Marriage.

We believe this Church's Marriage Policy is based upon God's will for human life as conveyed to us through the Holy Scriptures, upon which this Church has been founded and anchored, and this Marriage Policy shall not be subject to change through popular vote; referendum; prevailing opinion of members or the general public; influence of or interpretation by any government authority, agency, or official action; or legal developments on the local, state, or federal level.

**Faith**– Both bride and groom must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 6:14).

**Celibacy** – The engaged couple must live separately before their wedding day. Sexual intimacy is to be celebrated exclusively within marriage (1 Thess. 4:3).

The bride, the groom, or one of their parents must be an active Bellevue member.

Confirmation of your wedding is tentative until calendar and ministerial approval is received.

Weddings and rehearsals will not be scheduled to conflict with other church-wide events, on Sundays, holidays, or holiday weekends.

Only Bellevue staff may direct weddings, receptions, and rehearsals at Bellevue Baptist Church.

Couple is required to meet with an Ordained Minister on staff, a minimum of four (4) hours of pre-marital counseling, to get approval (his blessing) for the wedding to take place here. Once the couple has arranged a time with an ordained minister, please contact the Director of Hospitality to let them know who the Minister is so that they can follow-up with him. Once approval is received from the minister the wedding dates are submitted to calendar committee to see if space and date are available.

Couple is also required to counsel with Officiating minister for one (1) hour of pre-marital counseling.

If you would like a non-Bellevue staff minister to marry you, we require the guest minister to complete our Guest Minister Form for the Wedding Council to review and approve. The deadline to turn in the Guest Minister Form is two (2) weeks after final calendar approval. It is the responsibility of the Bride/Groom to hire, coordinate and provide honorarium to the minister they choose.

All Bellevue weddings include a personal Wedding Coordinator, who will help you coordinate the direction of your rehearsal, wedding and reception, full access to our Bride's Room and Groom's Room, and access to our wedding planning resources and decorations. Wedding Coordinators will be assigned six (6) months prior to your wedding.

█ The bride and family are responsible for all personal belongings. If rented or borrowed property/decorations are used, it is the bride's family responsibility to see that it is returned immediately after the wedding. They will be responsible for gathering all decorations and placing them on a cart and returning them to a designated location.

█ The Church shall not be liable for anything lost, stolen, or damaged. Equipment not owned by the church must be removed from the building immediately after the wedding ceremony or reception, and all areas used for the wedding returned to their normal condition one (1) hour after the end of the wedding or wedding and reception.

█ Weddings at Bellevue are sacred occasions taking place in God's house; therefore, it is expected that each bride select attire for herself and her attendants, as well as the Mother of the Bride and Mother of the Groom, which is both tasteful and modest.

█ Church promotional materials, decorations, furniture, and other church signage may not be removed or moved unless approved by the Director of Hospitality.

█ All wedding decorations must be approved by the Director of Hospitality.

█ You will be guaranteed access to decorate the wedding venue the day of the wedding. Additional time for decorating should be discussed with Director of Hospitality.

█ Due to staining, please refrain from using red punch or liquids made with artificial red coloring.

█ The only live flame candles that are permitted are the Unity Candle and floating candles. Any wax or damage caused by the candles is the responsibility of the bride. Battery operated candles may be used in place of real candles.

█ All music must be approved by the Music Department and by the Director of Hospitality a minimum of four (4) weeks out from the wedding.

█ Sheet music, CD's, flash drives must be obtained and provided by the Bride or Groom two (2) weeks out from the wedding. All music must be worshipful-appropriate for a worship service.

█ Full payment is to be given to the Director of Hospitality two (2) weeks prior to your wedding.

█ Photographers, florists, and other outside vendors must be approved by the Director of Hospitality. These outside vendors will be required to sign a vendor appropriate permit, which will be provided by the Church.

█ Streaming can be a good way of having those who cannot attend participate in your special day. Internet streaming of your wedding is available for an additional fee and is available for the ceremony only.

█ If you would like to play a DVD slideshow during the rehearsal dinner, ceremony, or reception, we must have a copy of it two (2) weeks prior to your wedding to test it out on our equipment.

All equipment is man-made and therefore subject to breakdowns. All our operators for weddings are human and make mistakes. Since the wedding is live, no guarantee can be made that audio or video will be error-free. Every effort is made to provide you and your family with ministry excellence.

The Director of Hospitality will discuss catering and setup options. Rehearsal Dinners and receptions can be catered by Bellevue, or an outside caterer can be used for an additional fee.

Caterers will be required to meet with the Director of Hospitality four (4) weeks prior to discuss vendor needs.

Alcoholic beverages are not permitted to be served, nor are they allowed on the church premises. Any wedding party member found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be permitted to participate in the rehearsal or wedding. If alcohol or drugs are found on the premises, Bellevue reserves the right to cancel the wedding.

Bellevue is tobacco-free. Smoking or any use of tobacco is not permitted anywhere on Bellevue's campus.

Use of illegal drugs are not permitted.

Dancing is not permitted at the wedding ceremony or reception.

Breakage and damage of any kind to any Church equipment must be reimbursed at replacement cost.

Nails, tacks, pins, wire, etc. are not permitted to be used for supporting any types of decorations. Command strips are permissible when hanging decorations. Only Gaffer tape may be used to secure cords to carpet. All Graff tape and command strips must be removed at the end of the wedding and/or reception.

Floral arrangements must be in water-proof containers with oasis secured.

Bubbles and streamers on a stick are allowed to be used outside the building as the couple departs. Rice, confetti, silly string, tinsel, sparklers, any type of flower petals, and liquids containing coloring dye are not permitted. Please confirm with the Director of Hospitality what items will be used.

During holidays, please do not remove any decorations that are already in place.

If flower petals will be dropped in the ceremony, they must be silk or paper. No fresh petals may be dropped.

The bridal couple's car should not have offensive words or statements written on it.

We affirm that:

1. We understand that the Church does not allow its facilities to be used in a way that materially conflicts with its faith.
2. To the best of our knowledge, the purpose for which we are requesting use of the Church's facilities will not contradict the Church's faith, and we commit to promptly disclose any potential conflict of which we are aware or become aware of to Church staff.
3. We understand that the Church does not allow its facilities to be generally available to the public, and that our use of these facilities is subject to Office of the Pastor approval, which is conditioned in part on our agreement to the requirements in the Marriage and Wedding Policy, a copy of which we have read and understood. All fees charged are for the express purpose of recovering costs associated with the wedding by making our church facility available and not for the intent of making a profit. Please note the Church does not rent its facilities.
4. We understand that upon approval of our facilities use request, we will need to provide a security deposit, and any other fees required by the Church.
5. We understand that we will be responsible for any damages to the Church facilities resulting from this proposed use of facilities.
6. We understand that the Church believes disputes are to be worked out between parties pursuant to Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 6, without recourse to the courts. Accordingly, we agree to attempt resolution of any disputes through Christian mediation.

To protect our Christian witness to a lost world, Bellevue Baptist Church has a continuing long-standing practice of striving to conduct only ceremonies, expecting only employee conduct, and allowing only facility uses which are in harmony with our doctrinal beliefs as expressed in the Southern Baptist Convention's, statement of faith, adopted on June 14, 2000.

*We have read the information packet and understand the guidelines. We agree to abide by the conditions stated therein. We will make every effort to ensure that our guests do likewise.*

**Bride Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_