

# *Marriage and Wedding 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 Debbie Campbell at 901.347.5441.

## **Statement of Belief**

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.

## **Statement on Marriage and Sexuality**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that marriage between one man and one woman, for life, uniquely reflects Christ's relationship with His Church (Eph. 5:21-33). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, or use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

\_\_\_\_\_ Bellevue Baptist Church believes marriage to be a religious institution. All weddings held on Church property must conform to the Church's Marriage and Wedding Policy. The Church's facilities may not be used for activities that contradict, or are inconsistent with the Church's beliefs, as expressed in the Southern Baptist Convention's most recently adopted statement of faith. A copy of the Baptist Faith and Message will be provided on request or can be accessed online at <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp> . This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two reasons. First, the Church may not in good conscience materially

cooperate in activities or promote beliefs that are contrary to its faith (2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Thess. 5:22). Second, the Church must present a consistent public witness to the community through its stewardship of its property. Allowing facilities to be used in a way that contradicts the Church's statement of faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that the Church strives to promote and could cause confusion and scandal to Church members and the community. Therefore, only events that are consistent with the Church's religious beliefs, as determined by the Office of the Pastor, shall be permitted.

\_\_\_ God established marriage as a sacred covenant between one man and one woman to reflect Christ's relationship with His Church (Eph. 5:21-23). In keeping with biblical teaching, the Church requires the following for any couple seeking to celebrate a marriage at the Church:

- 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).
- Man / Woman Monogamy – Marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman. Bellevue does not recognize, nor will it take part in, any ceremony that does not meet this basic criteria (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-5).

\_\_\_ The bride, the groom, or one of their parents must be a 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, or holidays.

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

\_\_\_ Couple is required to meet with a Minister on staff to get approval (his blessing) for the wedding to take place here. Once the couple has arranged a time with a 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 Minister the wedding dates are submitted to calendar committee to see if space and date are available.

\_\_\_ 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 marriage counsel 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.

\_\_\_ Couple is required to have a minimum of four (4) hours of pre-marital counseling performed by a Bellevue minister (preferred) or a minister from another "like minded" church, who has been approved by our Marriage Counsel after completing the Guest Minister form. The Hospitality Department will need communication from him that counseling has been completed before the week of the wedding.

\_\_\_ 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 Coordinator's 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 your responsibility to see that it is returned immediately after the wedding. 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.

\_\_\_\_ 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, or 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 more than three (3) hours prior to the wedding.

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

\_\_\_\_ The floor under all candles must be fully protected from potential damage. Any wax or damage caused by the candles is the responsibility of the bride. Candles must be lit by a fuse other than another candle. Candles should be kept well away from hanging microphones. Care should be taken to avoid hitting stabilizing wires overhead when placing flowers, greenery, candelabra, etc.

\_\_\_\_ 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.

\_\_\_\_ For video recording, taping begins just before the seating of the mothers and grandmothers. If you have special music that begins before this time, please let your Coordinator know.

\_\_\_\_ 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, as specified on the *Price List* and is available for the ceremony only. If you select this option, your wedding will be available live at [bellevuelive.org](http://bellevuelive.org).

\_\_\_ If a DVD slideshow would like to be played 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 of 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. The good news is that errors are rare, and every effort is made to provide you and your family with ministry excellence.

\_\_\_ The Director of Hospitality will discuss catering and setup options. Rehearsal and receptions are commonly catered by Bellevue. However, outside caterers may be used for an additional fee.

\_\_\_ Bellevue can assist with special request. The Director of Hospitality and the Wedding Coordinator may discuss options with you.

\_\_\_ 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.

\_\_\_ 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.

\_\_\_ Smashing of cake in the couple's faces is not permitted at Bellevue receptions.

\_\_\_ 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.

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

\_\_\_ Birdseed, bubbles and flower petals may be thrown outside the building as the couple departs. Rice, confetti, silly string, tinsel, sparklers and liquids containing coloring dye are not permitted.

\_\_\_ The use of helium balloons must be approved by the Director of Hospitality.

\_\_\_ During holidays, please do not remove any decorations.

\_\_\_ 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.

\_\_\_\_ For any weddings celebrated outside the Church, the Minister on staff shall only officiate weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman.

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 my 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.

*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 \_\_\_\_\_