
Wedding Policy of Summit Ridge Church

Summit Ridge Church views marriage as a sacred covenant ordained by God, reflecting the relationship between Christ and His Church. It is a lifelong union between one man and one woman, designed for their mutual good, the procreation of godly offspring, and the display of God's glory. Our wedding policies are established to uphold the sanctity of marriage, ensure proper pastoral care, and maintain the decorum of our sanctuary as a house of worship.

I. Theological Foundation of Marriage

- We believe marriage is instituted by God as described in Holy Scripture (Genesis 2:18-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4).
- Marriage is an exclusive covenantal union between one man and one woman, publicly entered into, and intended for life.
- The purpose of marriage includes companionship, mutual help, the procreation and godly upbringing of children, and the prevention of sexual immorality.
- Marriage is a picture of the gospel, illustrating the unbreakable bond between Christ and His Church.

II. Eligibility for Weddings at Summit Ridge Church

1. Membership Requirement:

- At least one person in the marrying couple must be a confessing member in good standing of Summit Ridge Church for a wedding to be officiated by a pastor of Summit Ridge Church and/or held in our sanctuary.
- Exceptions for two non-members may be granted by the Eldership in extraordinary circumstances, provided the couple demonstrates a clear understanding and respect for the church's theological convictions regarding marriage and is actively seeking pastoral guidance from a Summit Ridge Church pastor.

2. Confession of Faith:

- We will not perform a wedding for one Believer to an unbeliever.
- The church reserves the right to decline to perform or host a wedding if the couple's beliefs or lifestyle are in direct conflict with the fundamental tenets of our faith and the biblical understanding of marriage.

3. Prior Marriages:

- For individuals who have been previously married, the pastor will require a thorough discussion regarding the circumstances of the previous marriage's dissolution.
- The church adheres to the biblical teaching on divorce and remarriage (Matthew 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16). Remarriage is generally permitted for the innocent party in cases of unfaithfulness or abandonment by an unbelieving spouse.
- Each situation will be prayerfully considered on a case-by-case basis by the officiating pastor and, if necessary, with the guidance of the Elder team.

III. Pastoral Expectations of Performing the Wedding

1. Pre-Marital Counseling (Mandatory):

- Couples desiring to be married by a pastor of Summit Ridge Church are required to complete a comprehensive pre-marital counseling program, typically consisting of 6 to 8 sessions.
- Counseling topics will include, but are not limited to: the biblical understanding of marriage, communication, conflict resolution, finances, intimacy, roles within marriage, family of origin, and spiritual unity.
- The pastor reserves the right to postpone or decline to officiate a wedding if, in his professional judgment and prayerful discernment, the couple is not adequately prepared for marriage or demonstrates significant unresolved issues that would hinder a healthy marriage.

2. Officiating Pastor:

- Weddings at Summit Ridge Church are typically officiated by the Senior Pastor or another Elder (Pastor) on staff.
- In specific circumstances, and with the permission of the Senior Pastor and Eldership, a guest pastor may be invited to co-officiate or officiate, provided they are in good standing with the church and uphold theological views consistent with Summit Ridge Church.

3. Wedding Ceremony Content:

- The wedding ceremony will be conducted in a manner consistent with Biblical worship principles.
- The pastor will guide the couple in planning the ceremony, ensuring that it honors God and reflects the sanctity of marriage.
- All readings, vows, music, and other elements of the ceremony must be approved by the officiating pastor in advance.
- The Gospel of Jesus Christ will be clearly proclaimed during the ceremony.

4. Pastoral Availability:

- Pastors will strive to be reasonably available for pre-marital counseling, rehearsal, and the wedding ceremony. Couples are encouraged to schedule their wedding well in advance.
- Pastors will not perform weddings on Sundays or other days that conflict with regular church services or major church events.

IV. Expectations for Holding the Wedding in Our Sanctuary (and other Church Facilities)

1. Sanctuary as a Place of Worship:

- The sanctuary of Summit Ridge Church is set apart for the worship of God. All activities within the sanctuary, including weddings, must reflect reverence and respect for its sacred purpose.
- The use of the sanctuary is at the discretion of the Elder team and the officiating pastor.

2. Scheduling:

- All wedding dates and times for the sanctuary must be scheduled through the Church Administrator.
- A wedding will only be confirmed after the initial meeting with the pastor and acceptance into the pre-marital counseling program.
- Priority for scheduling will be given to members of Summit Ridge Church.

3. Decorations:

- Decorations should be tasteful, reverent, and appropriate for a church sanctuary. Decorating will need to be approved and arranged beforehand with the administration.
- No permanent alterations or damage to church property are permitted.
- Decorations must not obstruct the aisles or exits, violate fire codes, or pose a safety hazard.
- Candles with open flames are generally permitted only with appropriate safeguards (e.g., drip-less candles, protective coverings), and their use must be approved in advance by the Church Administrator.
- No glitter, confetti, rice, birdseed, or similar materials are permitted inside or outside the building. Bubbles are often an acceptable alternative outside.
- All decorations must be removed immediately following the ceremony, or at a pre-arranged time, by the wedding party or their designated coordinator.
- The clearing of the stage of musical instruments will need to be approved at the time of confirming the wedding.

4. Music:

- All music selections for the ceremony must be approved by the officiating pastor.
- Music should be sacred or classical in nature, reflecting the reverence of the occasion and appropriate for a worship setting.
- Recorded music should be of high quality and played discreetly.
- The church's audio-visual equipment use must be coordinated with the Church Administrator or designated AV volunteer.

5. Photography and Videography:

- Photographers and videographers are welcome, but they must conduct their work discreetly and respectfully.
- During the ceremony, photographers should remain as unobtrusive as possible, avoiding flash photography during key moments (e.g., vows, prayers) and refraining from moving around excessively.
- Photographers should consult with the officiating pastor prior to the ceremony to understand any specific restrictions.

6. Receptions:

- If the couple wishes to hold a reception at the church, this must be arranged separately with the Church Administrator and may involve additional fees and policies (e.g., cleanup).

- Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited anywhere on church property, including during receptions. Smoking/vaping is also prohibited inside all church buildings.

7. Custodial and Fees:

- A fee of \$400 will be applied for custodial services, and sound/AV technician.
- A fee of \$300.00 will be applied to all non-members for use of the church facilities.
- An honorarium will be applied for all non-members of \$300.00.
- Additional fees may apply for special requests or extended use of facilities.
- Payment of all fees is required in advance of the wedding date.

8. Damages:

- The wedding party is responsible for any damage incurred to church property during the wedding or related activities.

9. Compliance with Church Authority:

- The officiating pastor and church staff have the final authority on all matters pertaining to the wedding ceremony and the use of church facilities. All instructions and policies must be followed.
- Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the cancellation of the wedding at Summit Ridge Church.

V. Review and Approval

This Wedding Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Elder team of Summit Ridge Church and may be amended as deemed necessary.

By signing below, the undersigned couple acknowledges that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by all the terms and conditions outlined in the Wedding Policy of Summit Ridge Church.

Bride's Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Groom's Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Officiating Pastor: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Effective Date: September 23, 2025