

# The Christian Wedding at Benson Baptist Church

Christian marriage is a beautiful event, ordained by God, whereby a couple in love pledge their devotion to one another before God and those assembled as witnesses before God. At Benson Baptist Church, we take seriously that a wedding is not a ceremony; instead, it is worship. Its aim is ultimately to glorify God, and all who enter the wedding covenant in our church should understand that from the beginning. A church wedding is not a civil wedding governed by State laws; it is a sacred event governed by God's laws.

Our desire for you is for your wedding to be beautiful, meaningful and, most of all, worshipful. As you say your wedding vows in our sanctuary with that great frame of stained glass that reminds you that our Lord is the Good Shepherd that will guide you and is the Savior that poured out his life for you, we pray that you will be reminded of the need of our Lord if you are to remain true to the vows you pledge in that service.

We hope these guidelines will aid you in your planning as you anticipate this wonderful day in your life. Please feel free to call us if you have questions.

Grace and peace,

Dr. Andrew Wakefield, Interim Pastor  
Mr. Todd Johnson, Music Director  
Mrs. Debbie Champagne, Church Secretary  
Mrs. Joanna Capps, Minister of Children and Youth  
Mrs. Sonja Lee, Church Custodian

## General Guidelines

1. Please make reservations for wedding and rehearsal dates and times with the church secretary. The enclosed application form must be turned into the church office. The dates and times will be confirmed and are final after return of the application and approval of the appropriate body of the church, e.g., weddings of non-church members must be approved by the Diaconate of the church.
2. The facilities of the Benson Baptist Church are not available for ceremonies uniting persons of the same gender.
3. Weddings requested for holiday weekends will be scheduled based on the availability of necessary church staff. The staff fees will be doubled for holiday weddings, i.e. on the holiday or in the holiday weekend.
4. Weddings scheduled during the Advent and Christmas seasons or the Lent and Easter seasons are subject to the following conditions:
  - A. all church functions will have priority of scheduling with the church calendar,
  - B. any decorations, e.g., Chrismon tree, poinsettias, etc., will not be removed or altered in any way, and
5. You may request one of the ministers of Benson Baptist Church to officiate the wedding, or you may use a minister of your choice. If you choose to use a minister not affiliated with Benson Baptist Church, the pastor of our church must approve that minister. If you choose a minister of Benson Baptist Church, you must arrange with that minister a premarital consultation at least six weeks before the wedding. Please do not assume that reservation of the church sanctuary means that a member of our staff will be available for the wedding; you must also ask that minister to officiate the wedding. (Please also see the section entitled **Ministers**.)
6. You may request the church organist (Please also see the section entitled **Organist**.), or an organist/instrumentalist of your choice to provide music for the ceremony. All service music must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the wedding for approval by the Music Director. The Music Director will take any to the Music Committee of the church.
7. You must have an approved contact person of Benson Baptist Church. That person will arrange to lock/unlock doors, to ensure correct temperature for the sanctuary, to set the lighting, to assist photographers, to aid the wedding party with finding needed items, etc. It is permissible for this person to handle this with other responsibilities, e.g., wedding director.
8. Please provide all vendors with the appropriate set of attached guidelines related to their service. It is your responsibility to make all arrangements for payments of these vendors.
9. Smoking will not be allowed in the church building at any time. Alcoholic beverages or illegal substances will not be permitted on church property.
10. Throwing of rice, confetti or other messy items will not be permitted on church property. Birdseed and bubbles are permissible outside the buildings on church grounds.
11. Except for stationary video cameras, the use of cameras, video or flash, by friends and family attending the wedding is not permitted during the service.
12. All children should be supervised during the rehearsal and wedding. Children are not permitted to wander the building or play on church property unsupervised.
13. No food or drink without adult supervision in any part of the facility.
14. Fees for the services of Benson Baptist Church are due to the church in full two weeks prior to the wedding. Please pay by check made payable to Benson Baptist Church.

15. The marriage license should be brought to the church the night of the rehearsal. Remember the license must be obtained in the Register of Deeds office in the county in which the wedding takes place, regardless of where the couple resides. In Johnston County, the marriage license may be obtained at the Register of Deeds office in Smithfield anytime up to 60 days before the wedding. For verification, you both must show them a valid Driver's License or Birth Certificate and a Social Security Card. You may call their office at 989-5160 for more info.

### **General information and Staff Services**

1. The sanctuary and two dressing/waiting rooms are available for use when one reserves the sanctuary. The fellowship hall is available if reserved. The church nursery is available for rental for ages birth to three years if the wedding party provides adequate adult supervision for the nursery. This is completely the responsibility of the wedding party.
2. It is permissible to move the altar table and the pulpit furniture with proper care.
3. Those in charge of wedding decorations shall be responsible for protecting the carpet, window ledges and other areas from candle drippings and other soils.
4. No decorations or materials may be nailed, stuck, taped or otherwise affixed in any to pews, walls or other furnishings.
5. No pews or other permanently attached furnishings may be removed.
6. Vendors (caterers, florists, etc.) or wedding participants should make arrangements before the day of the rehearsal for entry to the church with the church secretary.
7. The church sound system may be utilized if trained personnel approved by the Sound Committee of Benson Baptist Church are present to operate the system.
8. Personnel of Benson Baptist Church necessary to the rehearsal, e.g., pastor, organist, will be available for one hour beginning at the scheduled time for the rehearsal to start.

### **Ministers** (if you use one of our church staff)

If you use a minister from our church staff, the minister will make every effort to assist you in having a beautiful and meaningful wedding. We will be open to creative and innovative suggestions you have for the service provided that they are in good taste and theologically appropriate.

Please note that we take weddings very seriously, and we are especially concerned about the language of a wedding and what it might communicate. For instance, our pastor will not have the wife alone promise to "obey" her husband because of its patriarchal and misogynist undertones. Also, the pastor refuses to ask, "Who gives away the bride?" The bride is not property to be peddled, as was the case in centuries past. However, the pastor is happy to ask, "Who presents this bride to be married?" While this may seem nitpicky to some, we take very seriously that the service is worship before God, and our language in worship ultimately reflects on God.

It is your responsibility to schedule a premarital counseling session(s) with the minister. Our pastor requires at least three for any wedding he performs. The first is to plan the service, and the other two are meant to raise issues for the couple to contemplate as they begin their married life together.

### **Contact person**

You must have a person, approved by the church, to serve as a contact. This person is vital to you, as she or he will take care of necessary questions which will allow you to relax. This person will arrange to lock/unlock doors, to ensure correct temperature for the sanctuary, to set the lighting, to assist photographers, to aid the wedding party with finding needed items, etc. It is permissible for this person to handle this with other responsibilities, e.g., wedding director, sound system operator, etc. If this person does not serve in another capacity for you, see the **Fees** section for compensation information.

### **Custodian**

The custodian will prepare the service area for the rehearsal and the wedding as specified on the application form. After the service, she will clean the church in a timely fashion. The custodian is not responsible for unlocking the building for the rehearsal, wedding or vendors, and arrangements should be made through the contact person to ensure the church is locked and unlocked.

To pay the custodian, you should write a separate check payable to Benson Baptist Church for the appropriate amount (For that amount, see the section entitled **Fees**.) and submit that check to the church secretary, along with any other church fees, two weeks prior to the wedding.

### **Music**

It is important to keep in mind that a church wedding is a service of the church, and the music should be in keeping with the reverence that is customarily observed in worship. All service music must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the wedding for approval by the Music Director.

All texts, lyrical and narrative, in worship must honor God. They should be carefully chosen to compliment the written and spoken proclamation of God in worship. Casual love songs and “favorite” popular songs are appropriate for wedding times, but they are inappropriate for services that worship the Almighty God. It is suggested that such “non-sacred” texts be used at receptions, bridal dinners, etc. However, any texts used in worship should honor God and God alone.

### **Organist**

The church organist is Todd Johnson. If you desire for him to play for the wedding, you need to contact him individually about his availability, level of commitment and compensation. His phone number is 919-720-8605. If he is unavailable, you may consult him about other possibilities. If you choose a guest organist, we recommend he or she meet with the Music Director and practice on our organ prior to the rehearsal. You will need to make all financial arrangements with your organist.

### **Soloist/Instrumentalist**

If you are having a vocalist or instrumentalist, you will need to make all financial arrangements with that person. It is your responsibility to see that the musicians for the wedding arrange a time to practice together.

### **Sound System**

Because of our sanctuary’s acoustics, you may want to use the church’s sound system. Please see the **Fees** section for compensation information regarding your sound system operator. The operator should be here for the rehearsal and wedding. A CD recording of the service can be provided if you provide a CD to the operator or if you pay the church a small fee for one of our CD’s. When you request the sound system on your application, a member

of the sound committee will call you about your service. We strongly urge you to arrange all your sound system needs with the system operator prior to the rehearsal, e.g., microphone needs of instrumentalists, soloists, Scripture readers, etc., so that the rehearsal itself can be greatly shortened.

### **Fees**

The following are the fees for services at Benson Baptist Church. Note that church member herein is defined as someone who has been an active church member of Benson Baptist Church for at least six months prior to the wedding.

Deposit (must accompany application) \$100

Use of Sanctuary: \$200/day\*

Seating Capacity: 312 (Approx. 265 in the sanctuary, 33 in the classroom in the rear and another 14 in a side classroom. 14 of these seats are on the front rows, and 16 on the second rows)

Note: Use of sanctuary fee includes two dressing rooms for the wedding party.

Use of Fellowship Hall: \$400/day\*

Seating Capacity: 300

Use of Fellowship Hall & Kitchen: \$600/day\*

Use of Parlor \$100/day\*

Use of Nursery \$25/day\*

Custodial fees: \$75 (check made payable to Benson Baptist Church) This is for cleaning the sanctuary. There is a separate fee for cleaning the Fellowship Hall.

Sound System Operator \$100 made payable by check in the name of the Sound System Operator.

CD fee \$2

Contact person \$100 made payable by check in the name of the contact person (This is if he or she is not serving in another capacity for you. If she or he is, you can make compensation arrangements with him or her.)

Note you are responsible for making compensation arrangements with the minister(s) and musician(s).

\* These fees are waived for church members.

**Wedding Application**

**Name of Couple:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rehearsal Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Wedding Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bride's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: H) \_\_\_\_\_ W) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: H) \_\_\_\_\_ W) \_\_\_\_\_

**Presiding Minister:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: H) \_\_\_\_\_ W) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: W) \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facilities Needed:**

Deposit (must accompany application) \$100 #

Sanctuary

\_\_\_\_\_ day(s)

Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

Fellowship Hall

day(s)

Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

Fellowship Hall & Kitchen \_\_\_\_\_ day(s)

Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

Parlor

\_\_\_\_\_ day(s)

Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

Nursery

\_\_\_\_\_ day(s)

Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Due to Benson Baptist Church:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Will be returned if building is properly cleaned.

Do you wish to have a sound system operator available? (Circle)

Yes

No

We understand the above named fees as well as fees for certain services of Benson Baptist Church, e.g., custodial, etc., are due two weeks prior to the wedding and must be brought to the church secretary. Furthermore, in consideration of the services and facilities provided by Benson Baptist Church, we do hereby remise, release and forever discharge Benson Baptist Church, its officers, directors, servants, employees and agents from any and all claims, demands, rights, damages and causes of action of whatsoever kind of nature, whether in law

or equity, arising from, or by any reason and all known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen bodily or personal injuries, damage to personal property, and the consequences thereof, which may arise out of the use of the facility as herein permitted and the services provided.

Furthermore, if we are utilizing child care facilities, we will ensure that proper adult supervision is available for such a service and that patrons of that service will understand that the staff of this child care, and any actions on their part, are not done as a service of Benson Baptist Church.

We further hereby expressly stipulate and agree, in consideration of the use of the facility and services provided, to indemnify and hold forever harmless Benson Baptist Church, its officers, directors, servants, employees, agents and members against loss from any and all claims, demands, or actions in law or in equity that may at any time be made or brought by the undersigned, family, friends, vendors and guests of the wedding party, for any injury or damage arising from the use of the facility and the services provided.

This \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***Benson Baptist Church  
Florist Information***

1. Flowers should be delivered at least two hours prior to the wedding.
2. Kneeling benches, candelabra and unity candle settings should be at the church for the rehearsal so that the wedding party has a sense of where different elements will be for the wedding. The candles themselves can be brought with the flowers the day of the wedding, but we appreciate having the candelabra for the rehearsal.
3. The florist should arrange with the church secretary a way to enter/leave the church.
4. The florist shall be responsible for protecting the carpet, window ledges and other areas from candle drippings and other soils.
5. No decorations or materials may be nailed, stuck, taped or otherwise affixed in any to pews, walls or other furnishings.
6. No pews or other permanently attached furnishings may be removed.
7. Aisle and window candles should have hurricane globe covers.
8. Flowers must be in containers so that no water damage results. No decorations may be placed on the organ or piano.
9. All floral decorations must be removed immediately unless previous arrangements are made with the church secretary.
10. If the wedding is to occur during a special season the church year, e.g., Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, the florist may want to call the church to note the types of decorations that will already be present in the sanctuary

If you have any questions, please feel free to call our church office at 919-894-4777.

***Benson Baptist Church***  
***Photographer and Videographer Information***

1. Only flashless cameras shall be allowed during the wedding ceremony.
2. With appropriate worshipful and professional decorum, pictures may be taken during the processional and recessional.
3. Pre-wedding photographs should be completed 15 minutes before the wedding.
4. Kindly refrain from damaging the finish of church pews caused by cameras or other abrasive equipment placed on the pews in careless ways.
5. Please be sure to remove any photography-related refuse materials.
6. No extra lighting is permissible during the service.
7. Videotaping is permissible from stationary cameras as long as they do not interfere with a sense of reverence and worship.
8. Video equipment should be set up at least one hour prior to the wedding.
9. The photographer and the couple should be clear before the rehearsal about the time that pictures will begin on the day of the wedding so that the couple can inform the wedding party about the time to appear at the church.
10. Please inform the minister if you would like a picture of the signing of the marriage license.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call our church office at 919-894-4777.

***Benson Baptist Church  
Caterer Information***

1. Please call the church office and schedule ways to enter/leave the building.
2. If set up of chairs and tables is required, a diagram should be submitted to the church office a week prior to the event.
3. If the cooking and cleaning facilities or the dishes and utensils of the church are to be used, it must be approved by our Kitchen Committee. Please call the church office to make such a request of this committee.
4. The kitchen should be left “broom clean” with all the dishes washed.
5. No alcoholic beverages may be served under any circumstances.
6. No rice or confetti may be used for the exit of the couple.
7. All silverware, glassware and decorations brought to the church should be removed immediately following use.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call our church office at 919-894-4777.