

## **Bethlehem Steltz Reformed Church**

### **Marriage and Wedding Policy and Procedure**

Planning your wedding? Congratulations! We pray God's blessing upon your union together. Bethlehem Steltz Reformed Church has established the following policy and procedure for use of the church facilities.

**Governing Body;** The Elders of Bethlehem Steltz Reformed Church, an Evangelical Presbyterian Church, begin with the proposition that marriage is a holy institution, ordained by God from the beginning in the garden. Its purpose, its sanctity, and the depth of the required commitment were reemphasized by Jesus Christ, who instructed that the two, who become one flesh, are never supposed to be divorced, and that adultery is a destructive sin to the marriage relationship. We believe that Christian marriage is a commitment between one man and one woman, founded on your commitment to Jesus Christ. Therefore, those joined in this union are ones who have professed Christ. We consider wedding services to be worship services before God, conducted in His honor according to His Word. We seek to please Him in these services, both for the joy of worshiping Him in celebration, and in order to be able to ask Him to bless the marriage.

A Marriage and Wedding Policy and Procedure, including fees applicable to the type of service you choose, is available from the pastor or church secretary. Weddings need to be scheduled as far in advance as possible

1. Please contact the pastor first for an initial meeting at least four (4) months in advance of your wedding date. Upon the pastor's recommendation the Elders must approve the use of the church facilities. After their approval, your date will be reserved on the church calendar. All scheduling will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. Generally, the church will schedule only one wedding on any given date.
2. In coming to the pastor to be married in the church, you should understand that you have chosen a Christian church wedding. A minimum of six one-hour pre-marital counseling sessions is required with the pastor or his designee. These sessions are not just to make plans for your wedding day and ceremony, but also to prayerfully discuss issues regarding the life you have ahead as a couple. If the pastor believes he cannot in good conscience preside over your wedding service, he reserves the right to cancel the ceremony no later than the second counseling session.
3. In keeping with the worship atmosphere of the wedding service, we ask you to discuss the selection of appropriate music with the pastor. If you want to use an organist, it should be the current church organist. A substitute organist may play only upon the approval of the pastor and the organist to ensure the organ is properly protected and cared for.
4. If you would like to use a pastor or minister other than the pastor of Bethlehem Steltz Reformed Church in the wedding ceremony, you will need approval from the Session in advance. The visiting pastor must indicate his agreement with the "Essentials of the Faith" of the Evangelical Presbyterian Faith by signing and submitting to Session a copy of the document before proceeding with further planning for the wedding.
5. Church members have the privilege of using the church, facilities, and pastoral services without additional charge as a ministry provided by the church. Non-members will be charged a fee of \$300, payable to Bethlehem Steltz Reformed Church in advance, for the use of the Church facility and staff.

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6. Wedding bulletins are available at actual cost of their purchase and printing. See the pastor for details. Bulletin information is to be given to the church secretary two (2) weeks in advance of the wedding.
7. If your guests are going to throw anything at the couple following the wedding ceremony, it needs to be birdseed, instead of rice. The use of birdseed is restricted to the exterior of the church. Any organic items (such as rose petals) to be used for the wedding, or afterward, are to be kept off of the hardwood floors and pews.
8. Still pictures by amateurs or professionals are prohibited following the Invocation and until after the Benediction in the service of Holy Matrimony. Any poses or pictures can be reposed following the service. Professional, or hired, photographers need to consult with the pastor prior to the wedding service.
9. Videotaping of the service is allowed. The videographers must consult with the pastor beforehand. The position of the videographer is at the discretion of the pastor alone.
10. A CD of your service can be made for you without cost, as a ministry of the church. See the pastor for details.

If you are planning to use the fellowship building for a reception refer to the “Building and Property use, Rules and Regulations”

Amended on: 00/00/2015