

Wedding Policy

Arrowsmith Baptist Church

INTRODUCTION

This is an exciting time in your life and we want you to enjoy it. A Christian wedding is more than just a legal contract - it is a permanent commitment. Your wedding ceremony is a public statement before God and all witnessing it that you are pledging your love and faithfulness to each other until do death you part. It is a solemn, yet joyful observance. The marriage service ought to be carefully planned, not simply as display of pageantry and beauty, but as a significant and holy celebration of spiritual commitment.

We at Arrowsmith Baptist want you to have a very special wedding with the freedom to use creative and traditional elements to enhance the beauty and significance of this occasion. This book has been prepared to guide you in what might seem like formidable tasks in the planning of your wedding.

Please read every page carefully. You will find answers to commonly asked questions, procedures necessary to the fulfillment of your plans and suggestions for the use of facilities and equipment.

HOW DO WE SCHEDULE OUR WEDDING PLANS?

The initial scheduling must be made in consultation with one of the pastoral staff. An initial appointment should be made well ahead of the desired date (6 months is preferable) to avoid disappointment and to allow adequate time for pre-marital preparation.

Weddings may be scheduled at any time which does not interfere with regular scheduled services and responsibilities of the church.

The specific scheduling procedure is:

1. Obtain a Wedding Policy from the church office, check church calendar for wedding date availability, complete a background questionnaire, wedding ceremony questionnaire, and facility use application.
2. Once the completed forms are returned to the church office and the wedding date is secured with a deposit, a time will be scheduled to meet and discuss the propriety of the wedding with a pastor from Arrowsmith Baptist..
3. The pastor and couple will schedule the first of the pre-marital preparation sessions. The preparation will be done by the pastor performing the wedding and/or a qualified counselor, or by a qualified pastor/counselor with the prior approval of a pastor from Arrowsmith Baptist.

IS PRE-MARITAL PREPARATION REQUIRED?

As pastors we are given the privilege of joining two people in marriage. Our objective is not to simply go through a wedding ceremony but to prepare a foundation for a stable Christian home. Every ceremony we perform will receive our full commitment.

All persons to be married at Arrowsmith Baptist Church are required to participate in a conscientious program of preparation with a pastor, or by a qualified pastor/counselor with the prior approval of a pastor from Arrowsmith Baptist. This will include at least six pre-marital counseling sessions with both the bride and groom present. Assignments will be given for a personal study and evaluation. You are expected to carefully complete them as requested. **No couple anticipating marriage at Arrowsmith Baptist may waive this requirement.** We feel this is a necessary part of the marriage commitment that will be immeasurable value as you begin your life together. Consider it an investment in your marriage rather than an obligation.

The Bible is the standard for determining the propriety of marriage. The pastor whom you contact will review the biblical prerequisites with you if the wedding may be performed at Arrowsmith Baptist Church.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN PRE-MARITAL PREPARATION?

In an effort to guide each couple in meaningful communication about the most important elements of a marriage relationship, the following items are generally included as part of the preparations:

- * A minimum of six pre-marital counseling sessions (total time of 6 to 10 hours)
- * Completing pre-marital worksheet assignments
- * Reading assigned books/articles/materials
- * Completing wedding worksheets
- * Discussion of assignments and materials

Topics discussed as part of this preparation are:

- * Your relationship with God
- * Roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives
- * Communication skills
- * Sexual relationship
- * Biblical design and purpose for marriage
- * Problem areas of marriage
- * Decision making and problem solving
- * Wedding ceremony details

WHO MAY PERFORM OUR WEDDING?

It is customary for a pastor of Arrowsmith Baptist to officiate at weddings held in the church building; weddings taking place at the church are generally performed by one of its pastors. It is possible to arrange for another pastor or minister of the Gospel provided he shares the same statement of faith/Biblical principles of Arrowsmith Baptist Church. It is also permissible for another Minister of the Gospel to assist in the ceremony.

If a pastor or minister of the Gospel from outside Arrowsmith Baptist is used, he is responsible for the pre-marital counseling; the same equivalent pre-marital preparation must be done as required by Arrowsmith Baptist. The couple must also have at least one session with a pastor of Arrowsmith Baptist Church.

Wedding ceremonies in the church building not performed by the staff of Arrowsmith Baptist Church must be reviewed and pre-approved by the Elders of Arrowsmith Baptist Church, and must be done under the direct supervision of one of the pastoral staff of Arrowsmith Baptist.

We strongly encourage counseling and/or officiating by a pastor who is currently in a ministry relationship with the couple, and therefore can continue to provide counsel and support. The use of former pastoral staff of the church to officiate weddings at Arrowsmith Baptist is discouraged; the Pastor's Code of Ethics adopted by the Baptist General Conference of Canada states that any pastor who has departed from a congregation agrees to sever their pastoral relations from that church.

WHAT EQUIPMENT FOR USE IN THE CEREMONY IS AVAILABLE AT THE CHURCH BUILDING?

Many of the decorator items and much of the equipment you may want for your wedding will be furnished by your florist. Arrowsmith Baptist Church does not keep an assortment of items since most couples prefer adding their own personal touch. Desires and tastes differ greatly from wedding to wedding.

The following items are available at the church building:

- The church musical instruments may be used for your ceremony. You are responsible for making arrangements with competent musicians to play them, with the approval of the church; musicians may be available for weddings from within the church.
- Every wedding or reception held within the building of Arrowsmith Baptist Church will require a sound technician. Only qualified sound/light technicians from within the church may operate the sound system and/or clear or move sound equipment.

Please call the church office at 250-724-7272 to set up approved sound/light technicians or musicians for your wedding.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE WEDDING CEREMONY?

There are essential ingredients in any Christian wedding ceremony that should be a part of your format. The processions, the charge to the couple, prayer, vows and the exchange of rings and pronouncements should all be included. These are customary and fixed elements of the service.

The use and the meaning of these elements are limited only by your own creativity and appropriateness. The pastor who officiates will probably have a basic ceremony he frequently uses. It is only a guideline and will allow you to shape your ceremony so that it is personally meaningful and beautiful. The details of the ceremony will be discussed during the pre-marital preparation sessions.

WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN CHOOSING MUSIC FOR OUR WEDDING?

Music is a very significant part of the wedding service. Care should be exercised to avoid trite and irrelevant music selections.

The music you select should be in keeping with the purpose and nature of the wedding ceremony. Remember this is a worship service. The music should lead us beyond mere sentimentalism to a deeper understanding of marriage and God's faithful love. His love compels us to obey and submit to Him as Lord and provides us with a model to follow in our relationship to each other.

Don't yield to the temptation of selecting your music because it is a "sentimental favorite" or because it has always been used at weddings. Don't select a song merely for its beautiful melody. There are many "beautiful" songs that are being used which are inappropriate for the Christian weddings. There are also many new and traditional songs that are both beautiful and appropriate. Use wisdom and discretion as you select your music. Here are some guidelines to help you make your selections:

1. Examine the **text** of the song carefully. Does it say anything significant, or is it trite, sentimental or obscure? Is it doctrinally and biblically sound? Is it in keeping With the purpose of this occasion? A quick test for the appropriateness of vocal music is to ask if the text could be read from the pulpit during a service?
2. Is the music appropriate for this occasion considering who will be witnessing this ceremony? Select music that is meaningful to you, but also to the congregation and your wedding party.
3. Does the music enhance or distract from the text? Select music you feel will enhance and clearly communicate or express the meaning of the text.
4. Select music that honors God and exalts Him as Master of your lives. Let the music express the centrality of Christ in your marriage.
5. The reception is an excellent place to use some of the sentimental favorites which are romantic, yet still in keeping with Christian principles.

ARE RECEPTION FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE?

Arrowsmith Baptist Church is happy to make its facilities and equipment available for the wedding reception. If you are planning your wedding reception at the church, please contact the church office as soon as possible.

Neither alcoholic beverages nor smoking are permitted in the church building; the wedding party is responsible for communicating this to their guests. While Arrowsmith Baptist Church has no policy against dancing, our facilities are not conducive for dancing - and therefore it is not permitted.

Specific guidelines for building use are listed on the Facility Use Policy. If there are any questions concerning any of these areas or matters not covered, they should be directed to a pastor of the church.

WHEN MAY PICTURES BE TAKEN?

You may choose to take your wedding pictures before or after your wedding. Flash pictures are not permitted during the wedding service. Flashes distract from the solemn and worshipful nature of the service. Please advise your guests and photographer to take their pictures before or after the ceremony.

The assigned wedding photographer must visit with the minister/pastor performing the wedding service for guidelines. Video taping during the service is permissible; placement of cameras must be approved by the Pastor.

IS THERE A PLACE OUR WEDDING PARTY CAN GET DRESSED AT CHURCH?

Rooms are available for the men and women in your wedding party for final preparations before the service. Specific rooms will be assigned by the Trustees before the wedding. Please only use those rooms that are assigned to you on the day of the wedding. Other rooms may be available as needed.

WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT AT THE WEDDING REHEARSAL?

The wedding rehearsal is an important part of the preparation for your wedding. The wedding ceremony itself is generally simple so by paying careful attention to details at the rehearsal you will feel much more at ease when the wedding actually takes place. Relax and enjoy this special time together.

The wedding rehearsal usually takes about an hour depending upon the number of participants and the complexity of the service. Usually it is held the evening prior to the day of the wedding. Please attempt to have as many of the participants present as possible.

WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST AS A WEDDING SERVICE ORDER?

The following is only a suggested order. You may want to change or rearrange it in consultation with the pastor. We do ask that every aspect of the wedding service be reverent and honoring to God.

Prelude
Candle lighting
Seating of: Guests
 Grandparents
 Groom's mother and father
 Bride's mother
Aisle runner unrolled.
Processional
Bridal Procession
Statement of Purpose
Giving of the Bride
Scripture reading
Solo (if desired)
Wedding message
Prayer
Exchange of Vows
Exchange of Rings
Lighting of the unity candle (if used)
Signing of the Wedding Register
Wedding prayer
Pronouncement of husband and wife
Wedding Kiss
Presentation of the couple
Benediction
Recessional

WHAT WILL OUR WEDDING COST?

Only you can determine the total cost of your wedding. Weddings vary from simple to elaborate as expressions of couples' tastes, convictions and personalities. The costs for the building and staff are as follows:

A. Building Usage: (See Facility Use Policy)

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| 1. Security Deposit | \$200 |
| 2. Custodian | \$100 |
| 3. Luncheon crew | \$300 (if needed) |
| 4. Ushers/hosts | \$25 each (if needed) |
| 5. Sound/Light Tech. | \$100 |

Payment for building usage is to be received before the date is secured on the church calendar.

B. Staff

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| 1. Pianist/keyboard | \$50.00 (if needed) |
| 2. Soloist | \$35.00 (if needed) |
| 3. Pastor | \$300.00 |

Arrowsmith Baptist pastor's honorarium includes pre-marital counseling, message preparation, leading the rehearsal, and officiating the wedding. If two or more pastors are involved each should be considered individually for their part, and honorarium amounts agreed upon beforehand.

All fees for staff are payable at the church office on the day of the rehearsal.