

# **Bethel Community Church**

**Wedding Procedures Form**

**Bethel Community Church  
7601 W. Foster Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60656**

## **General Guidelines and Requirements for Weddings through Bethel Community Church**

The purpose of this policy is to provide the general guidelines for people who are requesting to be married by a pastor of Bethel Community Church (BCC).

### **General guidelines**

1. A wedded couple as defined by Scripture is the marriage of one man to one woman. (Genesis 2:18-25)
2. A wedding can be scheduled by the office administrator only after the couple has had an orientation meeting with a Bethel pastor and the Wedding Procedures Form has been signed by the prospective bride and groom and the orienting pastor.
3. Only pastors who are credentialed through Bethel Community Church as a staff pastor or the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) with at least a pastor's license are permitted to marry couples through or at BCC. Other officiants must be approved by the pastoral staff of BCC to perform weddings through or at BCC.

### **Requirements for all Weddings through Bethel Community Church**

1. The couple must both be born again believers and committed followers of Jesus Christ.
2. The couple must not be currently living together, will not live together prior to the wedding, are not sexually active, and are committed to sexual purity.<sup>1</sup>
3. The couple must complete the entire block of premarital counseling including an initial orientation meeting, counseling sessions, and homework to the satisfaction of the facilitating pastor.
4. If one or both parties have been previously divorced the couple must be free to marry biblically. That is, if one or both parties are divorced they must have been divorced biblically<sup>2</sup>.
5. The wedding reception needs to reflect joyful and sober Christian celebration. Therefore, the use of alcoholic beverages at the reception should be used in great moderation. Alcoholic beverages (champagne and wine) in limited amounts for toasts and tributes will be accommodated.<sup>3</sup> No alcoholic beverages are permitted on church property.
6. The couple will also be expected to attend Bethel Community Church or another Christ-centered and biblically-based church regularly during the premarital counseling period leading up to the wedding.

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<sup>1</sup> There is an exception to this criteria when the couple has been already living together for several years and there are already children in the household. But otherwise in general the couple should demonstrate restraint, purity and obedience through living in separate households until the wedding.

<sup>2</sup> The only two grounds for biblical divorce for believers is ongoing unfaithfulness/adultery or desertion by an unbelieving spouse. If the divorce or divorces took place prior to faith in Christ, each situation will be independently evaluated. The bottom line is if there is any room for reconciliation with a former spouse, that should be sought out before another relationship with a new spouse is pursued. The ultimate goal is to eliminate ongoing adultery in the lives of God's people.

<sup>3</sup> Other accommodations concerning alcohol may be made by the officiating pastor depending on the cultural situation and request.

Membership with Bethel is not a requirement. After the wedding the couple is certainly encouraged to attend BCC or any other Christ-centered and biblically-based church for ongoing Christian growth and maturity in their walk together with Christ.

7. Your responsibilities include:
  - a. You will need to provide your own instrumentalists, soloists, CDs, videos, and or music flash drives. All music used is to be God honoring. Music does not have to be all Christian music, but the lyrics should reflect biblical and Christ-centered values.
  - b. Church and/or fellowship hall decoration.
  - c. General clean up of all rooms used for the wedding including the sanctuary, dressing areas at the church, and fellowship hall and kitchen if applicable after the wedding.
  - d. Unity candle set, runner, kneeler, and other wedding utensils.
  - e. Acquiring of marriage license.
8. Facility usage and fee schedule: The use of the facility must be approved by the trustees including the payment of all relevant fees for the use of the facility as determined by the trustees. See separate facility request form.
9. Pastoral Services Suggested Honorarium: \$200-\$500 to be paid on or before the day of the wedding.
10. We the undersigned agree to the above requirements and will freely abide by them:

Future Bride & Groom \_\_\_\_\_

Officiating/Orientation Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_