

WEDDING GUIDE



WATERMARK
COMMUNITY CHURCH

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LETTER FROM WATERMARK COMMUNITY CHURCH

Congratulations on the decision you have made to enter into the covenant of marriage! We believe marriage is a gift from the Lord, given to us in order to put His greatness on display for the world (James 1:17, Matthew 5:14-16). Our desire at Watermark Community Church (WCC) is to help in any way we can to get you ready for your wedding day. More importantly, while we desire couples to have a wonderful wedding day, our greatest passion is for your marriage to bring God the glory He deserves.

Whether we are providing you a location to get married and/or a pastor to officiate your ceremony, as the body of Christ, we are primarily concerned with God being honored in the process. Since marriage is one of the most important decisions you will ever make, we see it as our responsibility to help best prepare you for marriage. To that end, we have put together this wedding policy guide to help assist you in the process. In the following pages you will find all the information you need in order to use our facility, as well as pricing, policies, procedures, requirements/qualifications, and much more.

We hope that our website, as well as this wedding policy guide will be a great help to you. The first step in the process will be for you to become familiar with our policies and procedures as related to using our facilities by reading over this policy guide. The second step will be for you to contact our Wedding Assistant, Melissa McKee, at 214-393-3043, or at mmckee@watermark.org. Ian will help you get the process started.

May God bless you as you prepare for both your marriage and wedding day!

In Christ,

Marriage Ministry Team
Watermark Community Church
214.361.2275

OVERVIEW

Please note all necessary documents and fees must be turned in before your event date and venue is finalized (wedding application, premarried wedding agreement, event agreement, along with said fees).

Membership

Facilities are available for weddings and receptions exclusively to members of WCC who are actively serving in an area of ministry, children of active members, or to non-members who are actively pursuing membership at WCC. All events must be scheduled through the Wedding Assistant.

- To become a member at WCC, an individual must:
 - Attend the Connecting Point membership class (offered four times throughout the year)
 - Sign a Membership Covenant
 - Share their testimony with a member of the Believe Team
 - Become part of a Community Group
 - Choose and Commit to an Area of Service
- Actively pursuing membership is defined as someone who has attended both Connecting Point (CP) classes, and starting to complete the membership requirements stated above.
 - If you have not attended CP, you must agree to attend the next class.
 - If you are not a member of a community group, then you must agree to join a married Foundation Group (community group for newly married couples) or a Community Group at the next possible GroupLink (offered four times throughout the year to connect people in groups).
 - If you have questions on the membership process or your membership status, please contact Amanda Marley, at 214-393-3054 or amarley@watermark.org.
- Couples must also complete the premarital preparation process at WCC.
 - Couples must attend the WCC Premarital Class (offered several times throughout the year), as well as go through two-to-two premarital counseling with a married mentor couple.
 - If you are unable to complete the process, please contact the marriage ministry, at 214-361-2275 or marriage@watermark.org.
- Adult children of WCC members may use the facilities for wedding ceremonies if at least one parent is an active member of WCC.
 - If a parent is not a member of WCC, then the individual desiring to be married must either be a member or actively pursuing membership.
 - In addition, the couple must either go through the WCC premarital process or will need to discuss their marriage preparation with the marriage ministry, at 214-361-2275 or marriage@watermark.org.
 - The premarital process is further discussed on pages 23-25.

SCHEDULING

General

- Your event date will be confirmed by the Wedding Assistant
- Weddings may not be scheduled more than 9 months in advance
- Receptions may not be scheduled more than 9 months in advance and are given a 7 hour time slot
- All facility rental charges must be paid in full to the Events Coordinator one month prior to event
- WCC only performs weddings on Saturdays
- Weddings dates are unavailable during the following times:
 - Easter weekend
 - Memorial Day weekend
 - Independence Day (if it falls on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or Monday)
 - Labor Day weekend
 - Thanksgiving weekend
 - Christmas / New Years weeks (Dec 23 – Jan 2)

Rehearsal

- Rehearsals are scheduled for the Friday before the wedding for 1 hour time slots at 4:00pm, 5:00pm or 6:00pm. We are unable to provide AV for the rehearsals.

Ceremony

- There are two available time slots for the ceremony: 9:00am – 3:00pm and 3:00pm – 9:00pm. In order to be consistent with all couples that get married in the chapel, we will be unable to accommodate any requests to change the aforementioned time slots, even in the case that there is not a wedding before or after your time slot.
- The earliest a ceremony can begin is 1 ½ hours after your time slot begins, and the latest a ceremony can begin is 1 ½ hours before your time slot is over.

LIVING TOGETHER

The Scriptures teach that cohabitating couples fall short of God's standard for premarried couples. Please see the Appendix for the WCC Statement on Cohabitation (pages 43-44).

Despite growing popularity and practice within the church and culture, we desire to submit to scripture in regards to cohabitation prior to marriage. The finding of secular research notwithstanding, it is WCC's conviction that cohabitation is a biblically sinful decision for couples. If a couple decides to continue cohabitating, WCC will decline the use of a staff pastor for the marriage ceremony and will not host a wedding in our facilities.

We also ask couples who are living together but not having sex move into separate homes. Scripture tells us to "flee sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18) and to place yourself in a living situation that you have the best chance for purity and separation from temptation (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; Ephesians 5:3; Hebrews 13:4). It is our observation that couples that honor the Lord in every aspect of their relationship, experience greater oneness, peace, and joy in marriage.

If you are currently cohabitating or have questions about cohabitation, we would like to have the opportunity in which to discuss further with you.

WCC FACILITIES

Ceremony

Chapel

- Our chapel will seat up to 350 people
- All seating will be on wooden pews with cushions
- The center isle is 6 feet wide
- The Chapel may be decorated only with flowers and candles after prior approval (see page 15 for flower and candle requirements)
- All candles **MUST** be drip less and must be in an approved holder
- The grass fixtures in the chapel cannot be removed
- It is the responsibility of the wedding party to remove all decorations prior to leaving the reception

Reception

2nd and 3rd floor assembly rooms

- The 2nd floor assembly room will seat a maximum of 20 round tables
- The 3rd floor assembly room will seat a maximum of 23 round tables
- 8 chairs per table is recommended, however up to 10 chairs per table will fit
 - $8 * 20 = 160$ $8 * 23 = 184$
 - $9 * 20 = 180$ $9 * 23 = 207$
 - $10 * 20 = 200$ $10 * 23 = 230$

3rd banquet room

- This room will seat a maximum of 15 round tables
- 8 chairs per table is recommended, however up to 10 chairs per table will fit
 - $8 * 15 = 120$
 - $9 * 15 = 135$
 - $10 * 15 = 150$

Loft

- If the Loft is available one month prior to the wedding day, the couple that contacted us the earliest is eligible to use the facility.
- The Loft will seat a maximum of 32-34 round tables depending on dance floor and layout
- 8 chairs per table is recommended, however up to 10 chairs per table will fit
 - $8 * 30 = 240$
 - $9 * 30 = 270$
 - $10 * 30 = 300$

**Important Note: these are rough numbers and depending upon how the room is set up, they are subject to change. **

Custodial Services/Clean Up

Custodial services are provided to assure clean, ready-to-use facilities; however, the wedding party is responsible for kitchen clean up done according to cleaning checklist on page 65 and fee schedule on page 19.

BEFORE THE WEDDING

WCC Premarital Class

All couples are required to attend and complete the Premarital Class at WCC. This eight-session class is offered 4 times a year. You can sign-up or find more information on this class at watermark.org. The cost of the class is \$60/couple. If for some reason you are unable to attend one of WCC's classes, you may take a different class after approval from the WCC marriage ministry.

Premarital Counseling

In addition to completing the 8-session WCC Premarital Class, all couples are required to complete premarital counseling with either the pastor who will officiate the ceremony or a staff-approved mentor couple. Couples are required to take the PREPARE inventory, which provides specific feedback (both strengths and growth areas). Results of the PREPARE will be discussed and reviewed with either the mentor couple and/or officiating pastor. The cost of the inventory is \$25/couple. If a mentor couple is meeting with you instead of the officiating pastor, you may be asked to meet with the officiating pastor 1-2 times, in order to discuss your service/ceremony as well as to give the pastor the opportunity to know you as a couple.

The Wedding Coordinator

A Wedding Coordinator will be assigned to you by the WCC Events Coordinator after approval of your wedding date and finalization of reservations. He / She will meet with you one month prior to your wedding. He / She will help ensure that you have all areas covered, including: florists, food, decorations, room layout, etc. The Wedding Coordinator is the representative of WCC, and will be responsible for total adherence to WCC wedding policies. In addition, you may use your wedding planner if you already have one; however, that person must meet with the WCC Wedding Coordinator and inform WCC of all plans for the wedding. Everything must be approved by WCC Wedding Assistant. Also, please note that the WCC Wedding Coordinator will be responsible for running all wedding related events on WCC campus.

The Marriage License

In order to officiate a ceremonial wedding, a marriage license issued by the State of Texas is required. A wedding will not take place without a valid marriage license.

- More information on obtaining a Texas marriage license can be found at this website:
<http://www.dallascounty.org/department/countyclerk/marriage-license.html>
- Licenses are valid for a period of 30 days from issue date.
- Please discuss with your officiating pastor their process for obtaining and signing the license.

Ceremony Rehearsal

Rehearsals are scheduled for the Friday before the wedding for 1 hour time slots at 4:00pm, 5:00pm or 6:00pm and will be directed by the officiating pastor and the Wedding Coordinator. The rehearsal time slot will be arranged through the Wedding Assistant. The entire wedding party should attend, including, ushers and immediate family members. Rehearsals will begin on time and will last no longer than one hour. Participants should arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of the scheduled start time. Any changes must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator by the end of the rehearsal. There will be no changes on the day of the ceremony.

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The Officiating Pastor

Whenever possible, we encourage you to select a pastor with whom you have a personal relationship. You will have the opportunity on your Wedding Application form to request a specific WCC pastor to officiate your ceremony. We will do our best to accommodate your requests; please note that the senior pastor is rarely available to officiate ceremonies. If you do not have a relationship with a pastor or if you do not have a preference of your wedding officiant, we will assign one of our pastors to officiate the ceremony. Pastors from outside of WCC with whom you have a prior relationship are welcome to officiate ceremonies at WCC; however, you must fill out an Outside Officiant Form (page 69), and he must be approved by the WCC Premarital Director. Please discuss this option with the WCC Wedding Assistant as soon as possible so we may begin the approval process. Kindly note, WCC adheres to 1 Timothy 2:12 regarding the use of female officiants.

WCC maintains the right to back out of a ceremony at any time in the process if we do not believe the couple should be married. While we do not desire to see this ever happen, if a couple has not conducted themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel, or if there are concerns about the potential health of the marriage, difficult conversations will be had with the couple.

Officiating Pastor's Fee

WCC does not have a set fee for the officiating pastor, and there is no fee allocated in the cost of the facility for the pastor. You may consult the officiating pastor to see if he has a set fee, but our suggested honorarium for the pastor is \$300.

The Service

For a document outlining Order of Ceremony, see page 29 in the Appendix for couples to review together. The Wedding Coordinator and the officiating pastor will be able to help you establish your ceremony's order and answer any questions you might have. Please select music that is in good taste and appropriate for a Christian wedding service. All music selections will be reviewed and approved by the WCC Wedding Assistant (see sample music for us on page 33).

Vows

The wedding vows provide the opportunity for the two of you in the ceremony to express your lifelong commitment to one another. Please choose your words carefully and consider the weight of the commitment you are making. For instance, if you say that you are committing to stay married 'in sickness and in health, for better for worse, for richer for poorer', before you agree to get married, you must be willing to speak these words and live them out with integrity.

There are two primary choices you will need to make with your vows: you can either use standard vows (several different options for you in the Appendix on pages 31-32), or you may choose to write your own vows. If you choose to write your own vows, you will be asked to submit them to your officiating pastor one week prior to your wedding date so that he may review them before they are read publicly. We would suggest that you read your written vows (the pastor will hold your copy) and not try to memorize them. Please let your officiating pastor know which option you choose.

Wedding Scriptures for Reading

You are encouraged to choose the readings for your wedding. A suggested Scripture reading list is located in the Appendix on pages 35-40. The Officiating Pastor and/or Wedding Coordinator will assist you in placing your reading(s) at the proper place(s) in the ceremony.

GENERAL POLICIES

Security

Please ensure the Wedding Assistant knows the names and expected times of arrival of all wedding vendors that will need access to the building ahead of the wedding ceremony. An extra security officer is required for all weddings; this is included in the price of the wedding.

Audio/Visual (A/V) and Music (see pages 45-51 for guidelines and agreement and page 33 for sample music)

- **A/V Technician**

Due to the complexity of the church's sound equipment, only a trained approved church A/V Technician may operate the system. No exceptions will be made. He or she will attend a rehearsal, if necessary. A/V Tech will not be required to perform sound checks more than 45 minutes prior to event start time.

- **Vocalists, Pianists and Musicians**

These services may be requested through the Wedding Assistant. Vocalists' and musicians' fees may vary based on time requirements and music selections. It is your responsibility to see to it that payment arrangements are made for the musicians.

Please keep all music tasteful and appropriate for a Christian church event. All music will be approved by the Wedding Assistant, see page 45-47 for the music approval form.

Floral and Décor (see pages 53-55 for guidelines and agreement)

- The Chapel may be decorated with flowers or preapproved candles **ONLY**.
- The grass fixtures in the chapel cannot be removed.
- Confetti, rice, birdseed, and like materials may **NOT** be thrown inside or outside the building
- Rose petals, sparklers, and bubbles are permitted for send off outside the building only
- WCC staff will **NOT** be responsible for helping decorate, deliver or move rented equipment and/or set-up for any other ancillary function related to your event

Candles

- All candles must be **smokeless, dripless**, in an **approved glass container** in which the candle is fully covered
- No open flames, no space heaters, no candles without approved glass holders. Use of candles requires approval in advance
- Absolutely no candles along the aisle, stairways, exits or in front of fire extinguishers.

Catering (see pages 57-59 for guidelines and agreement)

- All Caterers must be approved by Wedding Assistant at least one month prior to your event
- All Caterers must submit proof of insurance with signed agreement
- We do not have a kitchen that can be used for the reception in the loft. Our only kitchen is located on the 3rd floor of the Tower. If no other event is taking place, this kitchen may only be used for keeping and storing food. Cooking is not permitted.
- The kitchen must be cleaned according to the cleaning checklist (see page 65).

Liability and Responsibility

- Absolutely no alcoholic beverages are allowed on WCC premises. Drunkenness will not be tolerated and is cause for the event to be cancelled
- Wine is permitted if the couple chooses to include communion in their ceremony. We do not include any of the elements for communion – i.e. bread, grape juice, a plate, napkin, etc.
- Smoking is not permitted in the building
- Neither coordinators nor WCC are responsible for any lost or stolen items
- WCC will not be liable for injuries to those attending your event

Miscellaneous and Property

- Rehearsal dinners may not be held at WCC.
- Set up and breakdown of **tables and chairs only** is provided by WCC (unless notified to the contrary). Set-up requirements must be specified on Event Detail sheet (in the Wedding Coordinator packet), scheduled with the Wedding Assistant and diagramed on appropriate floor plan, two weeks prior to the event.
- All WCC items will be cleared from the floor, and tables and chairs will be set up for the event. After the event, items will be reset on floor and church owned items returned to storage.
- Items included in your rental of the facility include banquet round and rectangular tables and the coordinating chairs. You are responsible for renting and returning all other items such as linens. White round and rectangular linens may be rented from WCC for \$5 per linen.
- There will be no moving of permanent WCC furniture such as sofas, lounge chairs and decorative tables. Only the event furniture (banquet rounds, rectangle tables and coordinating chairs) is available for use. The 2nd and 3rd floor assembly room stages cannot / will not be moved for any reason.
- The proper use of equipment is required at all times. Any breakage or damage to church equipment must be reimbursed at replacement cost.

- No childcare or nursery facilities will be available.
- Reservations may be cancelled; however the original \$500 deposit becomes non-refundable 90 days out from the wedding date.
- Decorations cannot be hung from light/conduits, sprinkler pipe or sprinkler heads.
- The grass fixtures in the chapel cannot be removed.
- The following are mandatory services when getting married at WCC: wedding coordinator, facilities coordinator, utilities, security guard, set-up, cleaning and A/V staff.

Custodial services are provided to assure clean, ready-to-use facilities. However, the Wedding Party is responsible for kitchen clean up done according to cleaning checklist.

SERVICES OF WCC WEDDING COORDINATOR *Required for all weddings*

Serving as your WCC liaison for your event, the Wedding Coordinator will be the main contact for any questions and assistance pertaining to your event. The coordinator's responsibilities include two pre-event planning meetings, the event timeframe and the post event clean-up timeframe.

Please note that if you plan on having an outside Wedding Planner, the WCC Wedding Coordinator will be responsible for running all wedding related events on WCC campus.

Specific services provided to you by the church Wedding Coordinator:

- Meet with you to discuss the process and review all details and plans for the event
- Assure that all policies are understood and followed
- Assist with approving type of event, florists, caterers and entertainment
- Direct vendors and help with time management of the celebration

SERVICES OF A/V TECHNICIANS *Required for all weddings*

Services available are as follows:

- Resources available include – video projection, CD players, PowerPoint, DVD players, live band support (per prior arrangements with the Technical Resources Coordinator)
- No AV will be used at the rehearsal
- We cannot accommodate lowering the stage from the 2nd and 3rd Floor assembly rooms to function as a dance floor. Dance floors must be rented from and assembled by an outside vendor. Arrangements for delivery and set-up of the dance floor are the responsibility of the user, in coordination with the Wedding Assistant or representative.
- Due to the nature of the audio system installation in the 3rd floor banquet room, we cannot relocate any staging into the room.
- Outside groups are required to supply their own musical instruments; we will supply only appropriate microphones and input points.

- Outside parties are responsible for bringing their own source media (i.e. videos, music compilations)
- Media to be used by outside parties must be in the following formats only:
 - Audio* – Finalized/Closed CD, mp3 Player
 - Video* – MPEG file, AVI file, Finalized/Closed DVD, Microsoft PowerPoint (.ppt)
- Outside groups are solely responsible for any pre or post production of media (i.e. source material, video or audio editing, etc.)
- The rates for A/V team will be compiled based upon the needs by the Technical Director and Technical Resources Coordinator (i.e. set-up, rehearsals, event, and tear-down) – please see fee schedule
- Live music may incur an additional fee depending on the needs of the band. This will be decided prior to the wedding ceremony, and you will be informed of any price change
- If changes are made two weeks out from the wedding date we may not be able to accommodate the changes

NOTE: Outside groups are required to use in-house A/V team unless an outside operator has been previously approved by the Technical Director or Technical Resources Coordinator.

FEE SCHEDULE

Use of facilities enlists standard contract hourly expectations. Rehearsal dinners may not be held at WCC.

STANDARD CONTRACT HOURLY EXPECTATIONS

	Rehearsal	Ceremony	Reception*
Event Hours Allowed Under Contract	1	1	4
Facility Use Hours Allowed Under Contract	2	6	7

*** everything must be cleaned up & moving out by 11pm**

Costs

Chapel Ceremony only (350 people) \$1300

Reception in the Tower building/The Loft \$600

Worship Center Ceremony (400+ people) \$1500

Audio / Visual is included for the following:

Ceremony – 1 hour

Reception – 1 hour

Coffee service at the Reception \$10 per 25 people plus \$60 charge for brewer

FEE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING SERVICES

- WCC Wedding Coordinator
- Utilities
- Security guard
- Set-up
- Cleaning
- A/V staff

A \$500 deposit will be collected no later than 2 weeks after the Wedding Policy Meeting. This will be deducted from the total rental fee. The deposit is refundable up to 90 days prior to the wedding date at which point it becomes non-refundable.

IMPORTANT DATES

- 50% of the remaining fee is due two months prior to the wedding.
- The final 50% is due one month prior to the wedding.
- Please make checks payable to: WATERMARK COMMUNITY CHURCH
- Payments should be sent to:
 - WCC
 - Attn: Ian Daniels
 - 7540 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, Texas 75251

Please include “Watermark Weddings” along with your first/last name in the notes section on your check

WCC PROCESS CHECKLIST

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Paid Deposit (due within two weeks of the initial meeting) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Complete WCC Premarital Class or recommended retreat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Contact Marriage Team Assistant for 2-on-2 Documents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | premarital counseling with mentor couple (4-6 sessions) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | 1 st meeting with Pastor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | 2 nd meeting with Pastor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | 1 st meeting with Wedding Coordinator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Submit Music/AV Form (due 1 month prior to the ceremony) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Submit Musicians/DJ Form (due 1 month prior to ceremony) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Submit Floral/Décor Form (due 1 month prior to ceremony) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Submit Catering/Bakery Form (due 1 month prior to ceremony) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Submit Photographer/Videographer Form (due 1 month prior to ceremony) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Submit WCC Event Agreement (due 1 month prior to ceremony) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Paid 2 nd payment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed by: _____ | Paid final payment |

WCC PREMARRIED WEDDING AGREEMENT

Congratulations on your decision to get married! Please take some time to read over the following information about the biblical, lifelong marital commitment you are about to make, as well as WCC's requirements related to preparing for marriage.

Many couples work very hard at putting together a beautiful wedding day, but most couples do not put time into preparing for the realities of marriage and do not consider the implications of entering into a covenant relationship with one another. For this reason, at WCC, we see premarital preparation as being an integral part of the wedding/marriage process, and for this reason will not allow couples to use our facilities unless they have taken steps to prepare for marriage.

While premarital education and mentoring is not biblically mandated per se, we believe premarital preparation would fall in line with seeking wisdom from the counsel of others (see Proverbs 9:1-12, 11:14, 15:22, 24:6). As a result, we require all couples who desire the use of our facility or a WCC pastor to officiate a ceremony, to complete the WCC premarital process. Specifically, we require couples to take and complete the WCC premarital class (8 session class), as well as 4-6 sessions premarital counseling with a staff member, an approved WCC mentor couple, or your officiating pastor. If, for some reason, you are unable to complete WCC's premarried class, you may be eligible to take another class (as approved by WCC marriage ministry).

Qualifications

NOTE: The following qualifications will be assessed throughout the premarital process. The officiating pastor or the premarried pastor will determine whether or not the qualifications have been met by the individuals and couple. We will seek to determine whether or not the qualifications have been met as soon as possible in the premarried process. There are occasions where the premarried couple may not agree with the WCC pastoral assessment, but WCC staff will hold the final authority in the decision making process of whether or not a couple has qualified for facility usage.

Spiritual Qualifications:

- Both male and female must be believers in Christ who are able to testify to their faith in the Triune God. At WCC, we believe salvation is a sovereign gift of God and is received by man through personal faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sin. We believe man is justified by grace through faith apart from works (Acts 13:38-39; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 1:4-5 & 2:8-10). We believe all true believers elect of God, once saved, are kept secure in Christ forever (Romans 8:1, 29-30, 38-39; John 10:27-30).
 - A believer is not permitted to marry a non-believer (2 Corinthians 6:14).
 - You each will be asked to share your testimony throughout the premarital process.
- Both must be free to marry:
 - Never married before
 - Widowed
 - Divorced upon biblical grounds (see pages 41-42 for WCC's statement on Divorce & Remarriage)

- In the case of divorced persons, we reserve the right, after discussion of relevant details, to determine whether we feel free to perform the wedding. It is our policy to decline to perform a wedding when Biblical principles are violated or in cases where we are in doubt as to the permissibility of remarriage. Again, our decision is an expression of our conscience before God as we examine His word. It is not the last word. There is a possibility that we would not feel free to marry you and you are free before God to marry. It is possible that the opposite is true.
- Both must understand and be committed to the Biblical pattern of permanence in the one-flesh union that marriage creates (Matthew 19:6).
- Marriages will be officiated and hosted for only heterosexual couples – marriage is a covenant relationship established by God between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:3-6, Ephesians 5:21-33, among many other passages). This will hold true for WCC pastoral staff regardless of Texas state law.

Relational Qualifications:

- Each individual must be able to understand and accept the responsibility and commitment of marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33, Matthew 19:6)
- Each must have a realistic view of and an appreciation for marriage and the other person (1 Peter 3:7, Philippians 2:1-4)
- Each must agree to pursue biblical community both before and after marriage (Hebrews 10:24-25, Proverbs 11:14, 12:15, 13:10, 15:22, 16:25, 19:20, 20:18)

Requirements

1. You must attend the WCC premarital class (or a WCC marriage ministry approved equivalent marriage preparation class). If any sessions are missed, you must agree to listen to the audio of the class.
2. You must commit to a minimum of four premarital counseling sessions with either a staff-approved mentor couple or the officiating pastor.
3. You will be expected to complete all assignments from the class and counseling, which have been designed to best prepare you for marriage. In addition, you will take the PREPARE inventory to help assist your mentor couple or officiating pastor in helping you best prepare for marriage. You may also be given a book(s) to read as part of your marriage preparation.
4. For those previously married, it may be necessary and prudent for the officiating pastor to verify the circumstances of the divorce before proceeding in premarital counseling (Proverbs 18:17). We ask that you grant us permission to contact the ex-spouse, a pastor, friend, or some other individual who was acquainted with your first marriage in order to verify the circumstances of the divorce. This will be discussed on an individual level with each couple whenever one or both individuals have been previously married (see above, under spiritual qualifications). You may be asked to contact this individual and inform them that we will be contacting them in order to verify circumstances of the divorce.

Agreement

Having read the previous pages, we commit ourselves to comply with the requirements set forth in this Covenant. We desire that our marriage be for life and be all that God wants it to be. Consequently we are willing to prepare ourselves to that end.

Signed: _____
(Prospective Groom)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Prospective Bride)

Date: _____

APPENDIX

SAMPLE ORDER OF SERVICE

1. Seating of Grandparents
2. Seating of Parents
3. Processional
4. Welcome
5. Giving of the Bride
6. Scripture Reading
7. Song
8. Message
9. Exchange of Vows
10. Giving of Rings
11. Lighting of Unity Candle
12. Communion
13. Prayer
14. Pronouncement of marriage

NOTE: if officiating pastor is not from Watermark, please note on your ceremony program what church or organization he is representing

SAMPLE VOWS

Option #1

Do you, [groom], take [bride], to be your wife, according to God's holy decree; do you promise to be to her a loving and loyal husband, to cherish and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful only to her as long as you both shall live? [I do.]

Do you, [bride], take [groom], to be your husband, according to God's holy decree; do you promise to be to him a loving and loyal wife, to cherish and keep him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful only to him as long as you both shall live? [I do.]

Option #2

[Bride], will you have this man to be your husband; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live? [I will.]

[Groom], will you have this woman to be your wife; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live? [I will.]

Option #3

[Groom], the command of God to husbands is, "Husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave His own life for it." Loving as Christ is the key to the enjoyment of all that God has designed marriage to be. Therefore, do you willingly express your desire and intent to fulfill God's command to husbands and do you now commit to 'Wife' to be her husband? [I do.]

[Bride], the Scriptures teach that wives are to honor and respect their husbands, just as the church honors and respects Christ. To the wives God says, "Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church." 'Wife', this command of God is His word designed to make your marriage relationship a thing of beauty and joy. So in acceptance of this principle of God's word, do you now commit yourself to 'Husband' to be his wife, to join your lives together in living, permanent union as Christ to His church? [I do.]

Option #4

I, [groom], take you [bride], to be my wedded wife. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love and to cherish 'till death do us part. (or as long as we both shall live) And hereto I pledge you my faithfulness.

I, [bride], take you [groom], to be my wedded husband. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, 'till death do us part. (or as long as we both shall live) And hereto I pledge you my faithfulness.

Option #5

I, [groom], take you [bride], to be my wedded wife, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses, to be thy loving and faithful husband; in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

I, [bride], take you [groom], to be my wedded husband, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses, to be thy loving and faithful wife; in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

Option #6

I do commit myself to you, [bride], before God, to be your faithful and loving husband for all the years of our earthly life, to seek to love you even as Christ loves the Church, which is His bride.

I do commit myself to you, [groom], before God to be your faithful and loving wife for all the years of our earthly life to cherish our relationship in Christ and God's order for the family.

Option #7

I, [groom], created in God's image solely for His glory, saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, promise to love you, [bride], not only with words, but with actions and truth so that God's love is brought to full expression through us. I promise to be considerate and treat you with respect, to feed, care for, and manage our family well. Not to be harsh, quick-tempered, or overbearing. I will keep myself only unto you. I will put God first and you second, striving to love you better each day as your husband and your best friend. As Christ taught us to love by laying down His life I too will gladly lay down my life to protect you. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates us.

I, [bride], created in God's image solely for His glory, saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, promise to love you, [groom], not only with words, but with actions and trust so that God's love is brought to full expression through us. I promise to submit to you as you submit to Christ, to bring you good, not harm, to honor you with the dignity and reverence of my life keeping myself only unto you. I will put God first and you second, serving alongside you as your helper. I will strive to love you better each day as your wife and your best friend. Where you go, I will go and your God will be my God. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates us.

Option #8

I [groom] / [bride] take you [bride] / [groom] as my wedding wife / husband to have to and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love and to cherish, 'til death do us part, for as long as we both shall live

SAMPLE MUSIC FOR THE CEREMONY

Pre-Ceremony Worship or Communion / Prayer Songs

Made to Worship

Mighty to Save

Here is Our King

Oh Praise Him

Unfailing Love

How Great is Our God

Cannons

Blessed Be Your Name

Here I am to Worship

Everything Glorious

Kindness

Glory to God Forever

Processional or Recessional Songs

Cannon in D

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Ode to Joy

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Be Thou My Vision

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Trumpet Voluntary

Bridal Chorus

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE READINGS (all listed in English Standard Version)**Old Testament:****Genesis 2:18-24**

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him. Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature that was its name. The man gave names to all the livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Ruth 1:16-17

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."

Isaiah 55:12-13

For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Isaiah 63:7

I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

Psalm 33

Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts. For the word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD. By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. The LORD brings

the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds. The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

Psalm 34:1-3

I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!

Psalm 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are His; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 150

Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

Proverbs 18:22

He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.

Song of Solomon 2:10-13

My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away, for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree ripens its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

New Testament:**Matthew 5:13-16**

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 7:24-27

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

Matthew 19:4-6

He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

Mark 10:6-9

But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let not man separate.

John 15:9-15

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Romans 12:9-18

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

I Corinthians 13:1-8

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Ephesians 3:17b-20

...that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us...

Ephesians 4:1-6, 20-32

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But that is not the way you learned Christ! — assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 5:21-33

...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Philippians 2:1-4

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Colossians 3:12-17

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Hebrews 13:4-6

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

I Peter 4:8

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

I John 3:18

Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

I John 4:7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

STATEMENT ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Marriage

1. Marriage is not a human institution, but a divine one, initiated by God at creation and deemed good by Him along with all of God's creation (Genesis 2:18-24)
2. God's perfect plan for marriage is that it be a life-long pursuit of intimacy between a man and a woman and that it never be ended by anything but death (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6). He desires that two people would not merely live together, but that they would pursue oneness within their marriage relationship. Being “undivorced” and yet ignoring this call to oneness, mutual submission, and love is also a violation of His intention for marriage.
3. Marriage is an illustration of the covenant relationship between God and believers. Where Christ is the head of His bride the church, husbands are to follow His example in his sacrificial love for His bride. Where the church is to lovingly submit to the authority of Christ as the head, wives are to lovingly submit to the authority of their husband which has been established by God (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Divorce

1. It is true that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:15-16). It is NOT true that God hates the divorced person. He hates divorce, not only because it distorts the picture of His unending love for His bride (mentioned above), but He also hates divorce because it is devastating to children, society, and the individuals themselves.
2. **BIBLICAL TOLERANCE OF DIVORCE** -- Because of the sinful nature of this world and the hardness of the human heart (Matthew 19:8), God tolerates divorce in three cases. ***This allowance is NEVER to be confused with His preference.*** These are not commandments and divorce should always be viewed as the last step in lovingly disciplining a rebellious and unrepentant spouse. It should be noted that the biblical toleration of divorce does NOT answer the question of God's position on remarriage after divorce takes place. God tolerates divorce in the cases of:
 - a. **ADULTERY** – Where there has been sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9).
 - b. **ABANDONMENT** – Where a believing spouse has been deserted by an unbelieving spouse. Note that this must be the choice of the unbeliever and not by the initiative of the believer (1 Corinthians 7:12-16).
 - c. **ABUSE** – Where there is danger to the spouse or children due to physical or sexual abuse, separation may be advisable. Should the offending party remain unrepentant in this sin (see #4 and 5 below), divorce *may* be the end result of this separation.
3. Therefore, divorce is always the result of sin, but is not always itself a sin (Matthew 19:7-8).
4. Openness to reconciliation is always preferred to divorce (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). In the case of adultery, abandonment, or abuse, the unrepentant spouse should be pursued by the offended spouse and the community of faith in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 and Ephesians 4:32.
5. In the case of an unrepentant spouse, Matthew 18:17 instructs us to treat them as an unbeliever, in which case the instructions in 1 Peter 3:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 would apply.
6. In cases of a marital relationship that is destructive to either the spouse or the children by means of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, there is room for separation that does not require divorce. Again, the offending individual should be handled according to the guidelines of Matthew 18:15-17 and reconciliation should be pursued.

Remarriage

1. As followers of Jesus Christ, we have been called to a “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:16-20), calling all people to be reconciled to God. Though consistently unfaithful to our Creator, our Bride Groom, He has faithfully pursued all people that they might be reconciled to Him. As those who have been reconciled, believers have been given this message and this ministry to call unfaithful lovers back to reconciliation with God. A believer who is divorced has this ministry in a unique way with their former spouse and should view the issue of remarriage in light of this higher calling.
2. Remarriage is permitted when the former spouse is deceased (Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39).
3. The remarriage of one’s divorced spouse may be viewed as severing the former marriage so that the unmarried spouse may be free to remarry a believer (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)
4. Where the former spouse has not remarried, absolute dogma is more difficult to establish in the Scriptures.

NOTE: Remarriage after a divorced spouse marries again (see #3) at least has in its favor that reconciliation was decisively cut off before. However, while the spouse is still unmarried and alive reconciliation is still Biblically possible, and preferable. This makes it very difficult and raises great concern that counsel would be given that would condone a step that decisively ends what God meant to be permanent and which could yet be potentially restored (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). Others believe that 1 Corinthians 7:15 (“Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.”) gives freedom to a Christian to remarry if abandoned by an unbeliever. Since it cannot be absolutely established that this position is incorrect, we extend grace to those who hold this position even as those who hold to it should see the basis for and extend grace to those who hold to the other position. It should be noted that in either case all agree that every effort should be made at reconciliation and much time and counsel in community given before any new relationship should be considered.

5. Where divorce has occurred prior to conversion, the new believer should own their part in the dissolution of the marriage and seek forgiveness and reconciliation in accordance with the warnings and admonitions given in Scripture (1 Corinthians 7:11; James 5:16, 2 Corinthians 6:14).

For more insight into these topics, please see “*Why Marriage is a Big Deal to God*”, specifically part 4 <http://www.watermarkradio.com/index.php?id=153&channel=237&series=32&message=0> and “*Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage: The Ordeal and the Ideal*” <http://www.watermarkradio.com/index.php?id=153&channel=237&series=32&message=0>

STATEMENT ON COHABITATION

Biblical Marriage Relationship

The biblical picture of marriage is a formal commitment and covenant resulting in two people becoming one family that can only be separated by death (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6). This act of publicly leaving one's family (ceremony) and becoming "one flesh" involves sexual intercourse (1 Corinthians 6:12). Sex is intended to be enjoyed only within the marriage covenant. From an Old Testament perspective, scripture speaks out against sex outside of marriage 93 times, primarily ending with severe consequences (Leviticus 20:10-21; Exodus 20:14).

Similarly, in John 4:16-18 Jesus speaks of the issue of cohabitation directly. As Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman, he referenced the fact that the man she lived with was not her husband. Based on his interaction with the woman, Jesus clearly did not approve of her living situation.

The theme of sexual purity is also repeated throughout Acts and the Epistles. In Acts 15:20, the apostle James instructs new believers to abstain from sexual immorality. Similarly, the author of Hebrews states that marriage must be honored among all and a person's sexual life should be kept pure (Hebrews 13:4). For further support, see Galatians 5:19, 1 Corinthians 6:13,18; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3.

Cohabitation in our Society

Webster's Dictionary defines a cohabitating couple as one that lives together and is sexually active.¹ Both the percentage of couples living together and moral acceptance of cohabitation are increasing among evangelical Christians.² The primary reason is fear, derived from a divorce rate that has more than tripled in the last 50 years leaving two generations with a very real fear of broken homes and broken marriages.³ This leads couples to want to "test drive" living together without any formal commitment.

While on the surface it sounds like a good idea, the negative consequences of cohabitation are validated in secular studies. The Center for Disease Control indicates that 80% of all couples who live together and get married will end up divorced⁴. Couples that cohabitated before marriage were found to have less positive interactions (higher levels of unresolved conflict)⁵, which is a reliable predictor of the relationship's future success or failure.⁶ Among cohabitating couples domestic violence increases by five times the amount of

¹ Merriam-Webster Inc., *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 2007).

² The Barna Group, *The Buster Report: A New Generation of Adults Bends Moral and Sexual Rules to Their Liking*, Oct. 31, 2006.

³ Bramlett MD and Mosher WD. Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the United States. National Center for Health Statistics. *Vital Health Stat.* 23(22). 2002. 26.

⁴ *ibid*, 56.

⁵ Kline, Stanley, Markman, Olmos-Gallo, St. Peters, Whitton and Prado, Timing is Everything: Pre-Engagement Cohabitation and Increased Risk for Poor Marital Outcomes. *Journal of Family Psychology*, Vol. 18. (2), 2004. 311-318.

⁶ John Mordechai Gottman and Nan Silver, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail: What You Can Learn from the Breakthrough Research to Make Your Marriage Last* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 28.

married couples, as well as abuse, depression, financial hardship, and infidelity of partners greatly increase.⁷ Practically, an individual must be willing to invest a great amount of time, money, and other resources in a relationship that statistically only has a 20% chance of surviving.

Conclusion

Despite growing popularity and practice within the church and culture, we desire to submit to scripture. The findings of secular research notwithstanding, it is WCC's conviction that cohabitation is a biblically sinful decision for individuals and couples. If a couple decides to continue cohabitating, WCC will decline the use of a staff pastor for the marriage ceremony. We also ask that couples who are living together but not having sex to move into separate homes from one another. Scripture tells us to "flee sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18) and to place yourself in a living situation that you have the best chance for purity and separation from temptation (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; Ephesians 5:3; Hebrews 13:4).

It is our observation that couples that honor the Lord in every aspect of their relationship, experience greater oneness, peace, and joy in marriage. If you are currently cohabitating or have questions about cohabitation, the following steps are available at WCC:

- 1) Participation in premarital class
- 2) Completion of the PREPARE inventory
- 3) Sessions with a mentor couple for premarital counseling

⁷ McManus, Michael and Harriet. Living Together: Myths, Risks & Answers. Howard Books, New York, NY, 2008, 41-57.

MUSICIAN(S) / DJ GUIDELINES

Please make sure your Musician(s)/DJ is aware of and has a copy of these guidelines. The Musician/DJ must sign and return the attached agreement at least one month before the event.

- The Musician/DJ must contact the Wedding Assistant at least one month before the event to make arrangements for set-up and location information. The facilities will be made available for set-up two hours before the event start time. If this creates a conflict with another scheduled event, the Coordinator will set another time for set-up. If the room is not occupied for another event earlier access may be available.
- Musicians & DJs are required to supply all their own equipment and will not be allowed to use any WCC A/V equipment.
- Any equipment used must not deface the church furniture or building property.
- Musicians & DJs are responsible for removal all equipment immediately following the event.

MUSICIAN(S) / DJ GUIDELINES AND AGREEMENT

Bride / Groom:	Event Date:
WCC Wedding Assistant:	Phone: (214) 393-3043
Vendor:	Phone:

Thank you for helping to make this a joyous occasion. WCC is happy to assist you in creating a worshipful atmosphere for the event. We ask that you read, sign, and return this agreement at least one month prior to the event. If you have questions or need assistance, please call the Wedding Assistant.

The following guidelines are furnished so that we may work together as smoothly as possible:

- Return signed Agreement to Wedding Assistant one month prior to event.
- The Musicians/DJ should contact the Wedding Assistant at least one month before the event to make arrangements for set-up and location information.
- The facilities will be made available according to the agreed upon time slot.
- Musicians & DJ are required to supply all their own equipment and will not be allowed to use any WCC A/V equipment.
- Any equipment used must not deface the church furniture or building property.
- **Musicians & DJ are responsible for removal of all their equipment immediately following the event.**

Acceptance:

Vendor

Wedding Assistant

Date

Date

Please make a copy for your records and return this signed form at least one month before the event to: WCC, Attn: Wedding Assistant, 7540 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75251

FLORAL / DÉCOR GUIDELINES

Please make sure your florist is aware of and has a copy of these guidelines. The decorator/florist must sign and return the attached agreement at least one month before the event.

- The florist must contact the Wedding Assistant at least one month before the event to make arrangements for decorating. The facilities will be made available for decorating according previously agreed upon time slot. Earlier access to decorate is not available.
- Please have the florist provide the final floral order to the Wedding Assistant as soon as it is complete.
- Florists are expected to provide their own plants and decorations for the event.
- Real flower petals **may not** be scattered on the carpet.
- The placing of decorations must not deface the church furniture or building property. This prohibits the use of nails, tacks, screws, staples, pins or most kinds of tape in any part of the building or on any furniture. There can be nothing hanging from the ceiling.
- Smokeless and dripless candles are permitted in approved glass holders only.
- The chapel may only be decorated with flowers.
- Decorators must strike all decorations immediately following the event.
- If church staff is being used for set up and breakdown then room arrangements must be communicated in the event detail page

FLORAL / DÉCOR GUIDELINES AND AGREEMENT

Bride / Groom:	Event Date:
WCC Wedding Assistant:	Phone: (214) 393-3043
Vendor:	Phone:

Thank you for helping to make this a joyous occasion. WCC is happy to assist you in creating a worshipful atmosphere for the event. We ask that you read, sign, and return this agreement at least one month prior to the event. If you have questions or need assistance, please call the Wedding Assistant.

The following guidelines are furnished so that we may work together as smoothly as possible:

- Return signed Agreement to Wedding Assistant one month prior to event. Include copy of complete Floral Order with signed Agreement.
- The facilities will be made available according to the agreed upon time slot.
- Florists are expected to provide their own plants and decorations for the event.
- Real flower petals **may not** be scattered on the carpet.
- The placing of decorations must not deface the church furniture or building property.
- Smokeless and driplless candles are permissible only when used in approved glass container.
- **Decorators must strike all decorations immediately following the event.**
- If church staff is being used for set up and breakdown then room arrangements must be discussed with the Wedding Assistant at least one month before the event and must be detailed in this Agreement.

Acceptance:

Vendor

Wedding Assistant

Date

Date

Please make a copy for your records and return this signed form at least one month before the event to: WCC, Attn: Wedding Assistant, 7540 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75251

CATERER / BAKERY GUIDELINES

Please make sure your caterer and/or bakery is aware of and has a copy of these guidelines. The caterer/bakery must read, sign, and return the attached agreement and guidelines, along with proof of insurance and a copy of the Banquet Event Order (BEO) at least one month before the event.

Caterers/bakeries must adhere to the following guidelines:

- **The caterer/bakery must contact the Wedding Assistant at least one month before the event to make arrangements for set-up.**
- Bring his / her own equipment and staff for serving and cleaning at the event.
- Follow the below cleaning checklist. The cleaning standards should be posted in the kitchen as well.
- **The kitchen may not be used for food preparation** but simply as a place from which to serve during the event. Food should be prepared off-site and delivered to the Tower or Loft for the reception. A refrigerator and microwave are in the kitchens. Preparation of the meal and cleanup of the kitchen is the responsibility of the event host. They should appoint someone in advance of the event day to assure that cleanup is done and trash is left in appropriate containers.
- The caterer is responsible for any damage to property, equipment, carpets, etc. beyond reasonable wear.

Cleaning Checklist:

- _____ Remove all decorations and personal items
- _____ Empty refrigerator
- _____ Bag all trash
- _____ Empty coffeemaker filter
- _____ Clean, dry and put away coffee pots
- _____ Wipe down cutting boards
- _____ Wash, dry and put away all dishes
- _____ Put all items in the appropriate labeled areas

CATERING / BAKERY GUIDELINES AND AGREEMENT

Bride / Groom:	Event Date:
WCC Wedding Assistant:	Phone: (214) 393-3043
Vendor:	Phone:

Thank you for helping to make this a joyous occasion. WCC is happy to assist you in creating a worshipful atmosphere for the event. We ask that you read, sign, and return this agreement at least one month prior to the event. If you have questions or need assistance, please call the Wedding Assistant.

The following guidelines are furnished so that we may work together as smoothly as possible:

- Return signed Agreement to Wedding Assistant one month prior to event. Include copy of Banquet Event Order (BEO) or Event Menu and proof of insurance with signed Agreement.
- The facilities will be made available according to the agreed upon time slot.
- Must provide his / her own equipment and staff for serving and cleaning before, during, and after the event.
- Follow the list of cleaning standards per attached checklist.
- **The church kitchen may not be used for food preparation** but simply as a place from which to serve during the reception.
- The caterer is responsible for any damage to property, equipment, carpets, etc. beyond reasonable wear.

Acceptance:

Vendor

Wedding Assistant

Date

Date

Please make a copy for your records and return this signed form at least one month before the event to: WCC, Attn: Wedding Assistant, 7540 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75251

RENTAL COMPANY GUIDELINES

Please make sure your Rental Company is aware of and has a copy of these guidelines. The company must sign and return the attached agreement at least one month before the event.

- The Rental Company must contact the Wedding Assistant at least one month before the event to make arrangements for set-up and location information. The facilities will be made available for set-up two hours before the event start time. If this creates a conflict with another scheduled event, the Coordinator will set another time for set-up. If the room is not occupied for another event earlier access may be available.
- The rented equipment – linens, tables, dance floor, etc. – must be removed immediately after the event. We do not permit overnight storage.
- Any equipment used must not deface the church furniture or building property.

RENTAL COMPANY GUIDELINES AND AGREEMENT

Bride / Groom:	Event Date:
WCC Wedding Assistant:	Phone: (214) 393-3043
Vendor:	Phone:

Thank you for helping to make this a joyous occasion. WCC is happy to assist you in creating a worshipful atmosphere for the event. We ask that you read, sign, and return this agreement at least one month prior to the event. If you have questions or need assistance, please call the Wedding Assistant.

The following guidelines are furnished so that we may work together as smoothly as possible:

- Return signed Agreement to Wedding Assistant one month prior to event.
- The Rental Company should contact the Wedding Assistant at least one month before the event to make arrangements for set-up and location information.
- The facilities will be made available according to the agreed upon time slot.
- Any equipment used must not deface the church furniture or building property.
- **The Rental Company is responsible for removal of all their equipment immediately following the event. There will be no overnight storage.**

Acceptance:

Vendor

Wedding Assistant

Date

Date

Please make a copy for your records and return this signed form at least one month before the event to: WCC, Attn: Wedding Assistant, 7540 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75251

PHOTOGRAPHER / VIDEOGRAPHER GUIDELINES

Please make sure your photographer and/or videographer is aware of and has a copy of these guidelines. We believe marriage is a great gift from the Lord, given to us in order to put His greatness on display for the world. The majority of couples want to remember this great day with photos and/or videos. We ask that all Photographers and Videographers respect the guidelines below:

- The photographer may take pictures before or after the ceremony in several areas of the building: The Brides Room, The Groom's Room, Atrium, The Loft, The Chapel. You can also use outside of the building if desired.
- All pre-wedding photos must be completed 30 minutes prior to the start of the Ceremony
- Flash photography is not allowed during the wedding ceremony.
- Movement allowed near the altar will be communicated by the WCC Wedding Coordinator.
- If you move furniture, we ask that you please return it to its original position.
- If the photographer is present at rehearsal, we ask that they do not disrupt the flow of the rehearsal because there is a one hour time limit
- After ceremony photo's must be completed within one hour
- Lighting will be arranged with the Bride, Groom and A/V individual prior to the wedding.
- Please remember this is a Wedding and we request that you dress appropriately for the occasion. Comfortable business casual would be considered appropriate.
- A video may be set stationery and may not be moving around during the ceremony.
- All photographers/videographers must use their own equipment. No WCC equipment is available for use.

PHOTOGRAPHER / VIDEOGRAPHER AGREEMENT AND GUIDELINES

Bride / Groom:	Event Date:
WCC Wedding Assistant:	Phone: (214) 393-3043
Vendor:	Phone:

Thank you for helping to make this a joyous occasion. WCC is happy to assist you in creating a worshipful atmosphere for the event. We ask that you read, sign, and return this agreement at least one month prior to the event. If you have questions or need assistance, please call the Wedding Assistant.

The following guidelines are furnished so that we may work together as smoothly as possible:

- The photographer may take pictures before or after the ceremony in several areas of the building: The Brides Room, The Groom’s Room, Atrium, The Loft, The Chapel. You can also use outside of the building if desired.
- All pre-wedding photo’s must be completed 30 minutes prior to the start of the Ceremony
- Flash photography is not allowed during the wedding ceremony.
- Movement allowed near the altar will be communicated by the WCC Wedding Coordinator.
- If you move furniture, we ask that you please return it to its original position.
- If the photographer is present at rehearsal, we ask that they do not disrupt the flow of the rehearsal because there is a one hour time limit
- After ceremony photo’s must be completed within one hour
- Lighting will be arranged with the Bride, Groom and A/V individual prior to the wedding.
- Please remember this is a Wedding and we request that you dress appropriately for the occasion. Comfortable business casual would be considered appropriate.
- A video may be set stationery and may not be moving around during the ceremony.
- All photographers/videographers must use their own equipment. No WCC equipment is available for use.

Acceptance:

Vendor

Wedding Assistant

Date

Date

Please make a copy for your records and return this signed form at least one month before the event to: WCC, Attn: Wedding Assistant, 7540 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75251

OUTSIDE OFFICIANT FORM

Please Print

Name: _____

Title: _____

Church or Ministry: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone of church/ministry: _____ Home: _____ Cell: _____

E-Mail: _____

Web Address: _____

Your services have been requested by (please list the names of both bride and groom)

_____ to officiate their wedding at WCC.

In order to help us respond to this request, please answer the following questions: Yes or No.

I believe in the deity of Jesus Christ. Y / N

I believe eternal salvation is available only through Jesus Christ. Y / N

I accept the Bible as the authoritative Word of God. Y / N

To the best of my knowledge, the person(s) who has requested my pastoral services for the above ministry is a professed and practicing follower of Jesus Christ. Y / N

During the wedding ceremony, I am committed to giving a clear presentation of the Gospel. Y / N

I am licensed or ordained under the authority of the following church/ministry:

Signature: _____

Please fax or mail this completed form at least one month before the event to:

WCC, Attn: Wedding Assistant at 214.361.6519 or 7540 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75251

MUSIC/AUDIO VISUAL FORM (Rev. 10/2011)

DATE OF CEREMONY: _____

START TIME OF CEREMONY: _____

MUSIC:

Please whether the music will be:

a.) Tracks (if Tracks, please see the NOTE below)

b.) Live Accompaniment (if Live Accompaniment, please list all instruments and/or vocals)

c.) Both

* NOTE: WCC requires all music/media/tracks to be provided by the wedding party and given to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal. Approved methods of music/media/tracks include:

- CD with tracks in correct order as well as edits (song starts at a certain time)\
- Mp3 player with playlist entitled "Wedding Ceremony"

SET-UP LOCATION:

Location of Instrument(s) and/or Singer(s):

_____ Stage Right (Facing out from the stage, the RIGHT side (Traditionally the BRIDE'S SIDE)

_____ Stage Left (Facing out from the stage, the LEFT side (traditionally the GROOM'S SIDE)

_____ Balcony

OFFICIANT/READERS

Please indicate how many people will be speaking during the ceremony:

_____ Pastor

_____ Scripture Reader

_____ Other (please clarify) _____

VIDEO:

Please indicate if there are any video requirements during the service:

RECEPTION:

(If applicable)

_____ iPod

_____ DJ

_____ Band

Approved By: _____ Date: _____

*Due ONE MONTH prior to the ceremony

**WCC
EVENT AGREEMENT**

Bride / Groom:	Event Date:
Phone:	Alternate Phone:
WCC Wedding Assistant	Phone: (214) 393-3043

WCC is happy to assist you in creating a worshipful atmosphere for the Event. This Agreement is entered into by you and WCC. The policies in this document are furnished so that we may work together as seamlessly as possible: By signing this Agreement, you agree to adhere to all WCC Event policies as outlined in this document and pay all related WCC fees. If you have questions or need assistance, please call the Wedding Assistant.

In exchange for WCC permitting use of its facilities, Host hereby assumes all liability for, and shall indemnify, defend, protect, save and hold harmless, WCC, its affiliates, officers, agents, subcontractors and employees from and against any and all liabilities, claims, judgments, damages and losses, including all costs, attorneys' fees and expenses incidental thereto, caused by or arising out of the negligence, gross negligence and/or willful misconduct of the Host and Host's respective guests and/or agents. The Host shall give WCC, prompt written notice of any claim made or suit instituted against the Host arising out of or related to the Event and WCC shall have the right to control the defense of same with counsel of its choosing.

WCC disclaims all, responsibility and liability for the damage or loss of any items, effects, merchandise or articles on WCC's premises prior to, during or following the Event. WCC reserves the right to inspect and regulate all Events. Host shall pay WCC for all damages incurred during the Event to the WCC premises, furniture, fixtures and equipment. Host has been informed of and understands the possibility of other WCC ministry events occurring on the wedding day. There may be other people or events on campus, but we will do our best to prevent any interference or distraction.

Acceptance:

Host/WCC member

Date

Wedding Assistant

Date

Please make a copy for your records and return this signed form two weeks after the Wedding Policy Meeting: WCC, Attn: Wedding Assistant 7540 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75251