

Central Baptist Church

L A W T O N , O K L A H O M A



Dear prospective newlyweds:

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming marriage! God designed marriage to be our most important human commitment, so I am honored that you would ask me to be part of your ceremony.

My ability to participate is subject to a few conditions taken from the Bible and the policies of Central Baptist Church. So, before we proceed, let me share with you a few of my convictions about marriage.

- 1.) A mutual commitment to Jesus Christ is a critical building block of a Christian marriage.** As a pastor, I do not merely perform ceremonies for “church weddings.” Instead, I oversee worship services to mark the beginnings of Christian marriages. If either of you is unsure about your relationship with Jesus Christ, I would love to talk with you about what it means to be a Christian.
- 2.) God designed marriage to be a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman.** Out of respect for God’s authority, I cannot participate in ceremonies that do not reflect the Bible’s teaching on this subject. Again, I would be glad to discuss this with you as it applies to your specific situation.
- 3.) God calls us to practice purity before marriage and faithfulness within marriage.** Therefore, I would expect a couple to commit themselves to this Biblical standard throughout this process and practice abstinence from all sexual activity.
- 4.) Couples must prepare themselves well for this important step.** Therefore, I require couples to complete a premarital counseling program before I can officiate a ceremony. If, for some reason, it is not feasible for me to lead you through the counseling process, it may be conducted by another pastor or Christian counselor recommended by me. (I may, in some cases, waive the counseling requirement when both parties are remarrying after being widowed.)

If you are in agreement with these expectations, please contact my office to make an appointment to discuss the next steps in person.

Yours, in His service,

Jared Byrns,
Pastor

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Instructions

1. Read our church's *Wedding Policies* (pgs. 2-5).
2. Review our *Fee Schedule* (pg. 6).
3. Keep the *Wedding Policies* and *Fee Schedule* for your records (pgs. 2-6).
4. Complete the *Pre-Wedding Questionnaire*, along with any requested attachments (pgs. 7-9).
5. Complete the *Wedding Application* (pg. 10).
6. Return the completed *Pre-Wedding Questionnaire*, *Wedding Application*, and the blank *Wedding Preparation Record* to our office (pgs. 7-12).
7. You may also pay the fees and deposits when you submit your paperwork, though this is not required. (If your application is declined, this money will be refunded to you in full.)
8. The church office will contact you to schedule a visit with the pastor.
9. Once you have the pastor's approval for your application and your financial obligations to the church have been met, we will contact you about scheduling your ceremony and any required counseling. **The ceremony will not be scheduled until any necessary deposits and fees have been paid.**

Wedding Policies

Your ceremony should be both a beautiful and worshipful event. The following policies have been developed to assist you and our staff in making your special event as spiritually significant and logistically trouble-free as possible.

I. Biblical Foundations

Central Baptist Church recognizes the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and we regard its authority as final and non-negotiable in all matters. The Bible teaches that God designed marriage, and it reveals His requirements for how marriage is supposed to function. On this issue, an unbroken line of clear and consistent teaching is established in Eden, codified through Moses, affirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and amplified through the Apostle Paul.

Consequently, Central views marriage as a sacred covenant and the wedding ceremony as a sacred event—a worship service. All elements of the ceremony have religious significance as you invoke the blessing of God on your union. Therefore, we reserve the right not to participate—either through the use of our facilities or the services of our ministers—in ceremonies where couples openly reject Biblical teachings on salvation, marriage, sexuality, or Christian living.

Our statement of beliefs, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (2000), summarizes what we believe the Bible teaches about marriage:

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

II. Reservations and Arrangements

Our facilities are used daily to support the ministries of Central Baptist Church and Trinity Christian Academy. Because the needs of these ministries take precedence, it may not be possible to accommodate every wedding request outside our membership. We will do our best to accommodate events that comply with our policies, but each application must be evaluated by church leadership on a case-by-case basis.

1. No weddings or rehearsals will be scheduled that will conflict with any worship service or event involving the membership as a whole.
2. No weddings or rehearsals will be scheduled on Sundays or holidays.
3. All Saturday events must be finished, and the church's facilities vacated no later than 8 pm to allow the church to prepare for Sunday.
4. The church's facilities may not be reserved until the wedding information sheet and deposit have been received.
5. The use of the Sanctuary for your wedding should be arranged through the church office as far in advance as possible to ensure availability. **Due to the difficulties involved in**

accommodating last-minute requests, please submit your application no less than three months prior to your anticipated wedding date.

6. Custodial arrangements should also be made well in advance. (This includes the dates and times for opening, the rehearsal and reception arrangements, etc.) We contract with an outside company for custodial services, and we will need to schedule their cleaning of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall accordingly.

III. Pastoral Involvement

Arrangements to visit with the pastor should be made through the church office well in advance of the wedding date. This visit is for the purpose of discussing wedding plans, counseling, adherence to Biblical criteria for marriage, etc.

1. The pastor's participation is governed by his understanding of Biblical teachings on marriage and is subject to his availability, so he may be unable to accept some invitations to officiate wedding ceremonies.
2. Because of Oklahoma state law (43 Okla. Stat. § 4) and the Bible's commands to obey the law where it does not conflict with God's Law (e.g., Romans 13), our pastor is unable to officiate ceremonies for any couple who does not possess a valid marriage license in this state.
3. If someone other than Central's pastor is to officiate the wedding, he must be licensed or ordained by a Church of similar beliefs. If this person is unknown to the pastor, he must furnish the pastor with documentation verifying his ministry license or ordination and his legal authorization to perform weddings in the State of Oklahoma. (Please note that we do not recognize online ordinations or other ordinations from churches not of similar beliefs for this purpose.)
4. Our pastor requires couples, with limited exceptions, to undergo premarital counseling conducted by him. He may approve another minister to conduct the counseling at his sole discretion. This counseling program will require a minimum of six (6) hours to complete over the course of at least four (4) sessions, though more may be required at the pastor's discretion. This program will meet the State requirements for premarital counseling that will entitle the couple to a discounted license (43 Okla. Stat. §5.1).

IV. Wedding Ceremony

Since the wedding ceremony is a religious service, every member of the wedding party is expected to act with reverence and dignity, and elements of the ceremony should be consistent with its Christian nature.

1. The wedding party's attire should be characterized by dignity suitable to the occasion.
2. Any music or media should reflect the God-honoring nature of the ceremony.
3. Any elements of the service that are inconsistent with the teachings of Central Baptist Church may not be used.

V. Decorations

1. All decorating must be done during regular office hours on the day before the wedding.
2. If florists or other third-party decorators plan to decorate any portion of the church's facilities, they must schedule this in advance with the church office.
3. If damage should occur to the church's facilities, furnishings, carpets, etc., the bride and groom will be responsible for the actual cost of repairing or replacing the damaged items.
4. All furniture will be removed from the Sanctuary platform, including choir chairs and pulpit.
5. There will be no moving of church furnishings by the wedding party. If you require special arrangements for tables or seating, it must be requested through the office before the wedding. Please make these decisions well in advance so that we may accommodate your needs.
6. Under no circumstances should the decorative trees or plants within the church building be moved and used as wedding decorations.
7. All rules that apply to the Sanctuary apply to the entire building—except that encased candles and real flowers may be used in the Fellowship Hall.
8. All decorations must be removed from the church's facilities immediately following the wedding and reception. Since most weddings are on Friday or Saturday, this is necessary for Sunday worship setup.

VI. Use of Facilities

The following guidelines are provided for use by individuals or professional decorators in preparing the church's facilities for the wedding and/or reception.

1. No nails, tape, chalk, or glue will be used in any part of the church's facilities. However, florist tape, pew clips, and tacky tack may be used.
2. No rice may be thrown outside, according to City Ordinance. No rice, birdseed, wheat, or confetti will be thrown inside the church building.
3. Encased candles such as votive cups may be used as long as plastic is placed under them to avoid getting wax on the carpet and the pews. Otherwise, only dripless candles may be used in the Sanctuary.
4. Flower girls may not use fresh petals, as oil from the petals can stain the carpet. Silk petals should be used instead.
5. The church sound system will only be operated and adjusted by authorized church personnel. The church will secure a sound technician to attend the rehearsal and the ceremony. (The cost of this is covered in your required fees).
6. If audio or visual media are to be used in the ceremony, the pastor should be informed well before the rehearsal and wedding day. The church reserves the right not to approve any media that does not reflect the nature of the occasion as a worship service.

7. All decorations must be removed from the church's facilities immediately following the wedding and reception.
8. When the reception is held at the church, facilities used will be left in the condition in which they were found; this includes the Fellowship Hall, the kitchen, restrooms, dressing rooms, etc.
9. No cooking is allowed in the kitchen—stoves, ovens, or other cooking appliances will not be used on site to prepare for the wedding or reception.
10. Smoking is not permitted anywhere within the building. This rule includes dressing areas, restrooms, the Fellowship Hall, and the Sanctuary, and it applies to all persons involved in or attending the rehearsal, reception, or ceremony.
11. No alcoholic beverages are permitted anywhere on the church premises. There are no exceptions to this policy.
12. No food or drink is to be taken into the church Sanctuary at any time.
13. Dancing is not permitted in the church's facilities.
14. Animals are not permitted in the church's facilities, except for service animals.
15. The bride and groom assume full responsibility for all items, property, and equipment brought into the church's facilities in connection with the wedding. **Central Baptist Church is not responsible for any of the following:** (a) any equipment of any kind that the wedding party or their agents bring in, including silver, table arrangements, flower containers, candelabras, tablecloths, etc.; (b) personal items such as wedding dresses, wraps, clothes, shoes, jewelry, purses, etc.; (c) items lost, stolen, or damaged

VII. Additional Information

1. Central Baptist Church reserves the right to amend its wedding policies at any time and for any reason.
2. **Failure to agree or adhere to these policies may result in denial or cancellation of your reservation or forfeiture of your deposit.**

Fee Schedule

I. Fees for Church Members

1. To qualify for the reduced fee for members, at least **one of the following people must have been an active member of Central Baptist Church for six (6) months or more** before the application for a reservation is submitted: the bride, the groom, or a parent of the bridal couple.
2. A **member** is someone who has 1) met with the pastor and been recommended by him for church membership and 2) been approved by a vote of the congregation to join the church by baptism, by statement, by transfer of membership from another church of similar beliefs, or under the watch care of our church while temporarily absent from another church of similar beliefs.
3. An **active member** is a member who regularly and faithfully participates in the worship and ministries of this church unless providentially hindered by circumstances outside their control.

The fee schedule for members is for services beyond the use of the building:

- Deposit (\$0.00)
- Building Use Fee (\$0.00)
- *Sound Engineer Fee (\$60.00 for wedding and rehearsal)
- *Custodial Fee (\$65.00)

*These items should be paid for by check payable to Central Baptist Church. The church will then be responsible for disbursing the funds.

II. Fees for Non Members

- §Deposit (\$150.00)
- Building Use Fee (\$200.00 for Sanctuary only; \$400.00 for Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall)
- *Sound Engineer Fee (\$120.00 for wedding and rehearsal)
- *Custodial Fee (\$100.00 for Sanctuary only; \$200.00 for Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall)

§This deposit should be paid by check payable to Central Baptist Church. The check will immediately be cashed, and the funds will be held until after the wedding. Refunds will be made available on the financial secretary's first work day following the wedding, provided that the church's policies have been followed and there is no damage to its facilities. Your reservation will not be confirmed until this deposit has been received.

*These items should be paid for by check payable to Central Baptist Church. The church will then be responsible for disbursing the funds.

III. Consideration of Honorariums

Compensation for any minister(s) or musician(s) participating in the ceremony is separate from the fees listed above. We suggest \$200.00 each, plus travel expenses for any coming from out of town. The bride and groom are responsible for making these arrangements.

Pre-Wedding Questionnaire

When our office has received your completed questionnaire, we will contact you to schedule a visit.

I. Bride's Information

1. Name: _____
2. Address: _____
3. Phone #: _____
4. Email: _____
5. What is your current church and level of involvement?

6. Are your parents members of CBC? Yes _____ No _____
7. Is this your first marriage? Yes _____ No _____

II. Groom's Information

8. Name: _____
9. Address: _____
10. Phone #: _____
11. Email: _____
12. What is your current church and level of involvement?

13. Are your parents members of CBC? Yes _____ No _____
14. Is this your first marriage? Yes _____ No _____

III. General Background Information

15. Describe your current spiritual status. (The bride and groom should each provide their answers on separate sheets of paper and return them to the church with this questionnaire.)

16. Why are you interested in having your wedding ceremony at Central Baptist Church?

17. How long have you known each other? _____

18. How long have you been engaged? _____

19. What drew you to each other? _____

20. How supportive are your families of your intentions to marry?

21. If either of you has been married previously, please explain the circumstances on another sheet of paper.

22. Are you currently living together, or have you been in the past?

IV. Ceremony Planning Information

23. Who would you like to officiate your wedding service?

Central's Pastor (Jared Byrns) _____ *Other officiant (additional information needed) _____

*If you desire another officiant, please give us his name and either his current congregation or the congregation that ordained/licensed him: _____

24. What date and time do you have in mind for your ceremony? _____

25. What facilities at Central do you intend to use? (Church offices and school facilities are not available.)

Sanctuary _____ Fellowship Hall _____ Dressing Room(s) _____

Other (please specify) _____

Wedding Application

By my signature below, I certify that the following statements are true.

- I have read Central Baptist Church’s policies on weddings. I understand them and agree that my wedding participants and I will abide by them.
- I understand that weddings at Central Baptist Church are considered worship services, that, as such, they are conducted at the pastor’s discretion, and that the agreement for the use of the church’s facilities can be withdrawn at any time.
- I understand that merely submitting this application to the church does not guarantee the pastor’s participation or the facilities’ availability, and I recognize that the church reserves the right to decline to participate in my ceremony.
- I have completed the attached Wedding Questionnaire thoroughly and accurately to the best of my ability. I understand that church staff, including the pastor, will want to have follow-up discussions about this questionnaire.

_____	_____	_____
Bride’s Name	Bride’s Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Groom’s Name	Groom’s Signature	Date

Wedding Preparation Record

For Office Use Only

Name of Bride: _____

Name of Groom: _____

Initial Meeting

The couple has met with me, and I have approved their request to schedule their ceremony at Central, contingent on their fulfillment of the other requirements in our church's *Wedding Policies*.

Jared Byrns, Pastor

Date

Financial Information

	Amount Due	Date Paid
Deposit		
• Members: \$0		
• Non-Members: \$150	\$ _____	_____/_____/_____
Building Use		
• Members: \$0		
• Non-Members: \$200 for Sanctuary + \$200 for Fellowship Hall	\$ _____	_____/_____/_____
Sound Engineer Fee		
(includes wedding and rehearsal)		
• Members: \$60		
• Non-Members: \$120	\$ _____	_____/_____/_____
Custodial Fee		
• Members: \$65		
• Non-Members: \$100 for Sanctuary + \$100 for Fellowship Hall	\$ _____	_____/_____/_____
Total Due	\$ _____	_____/_____/_____

All financial obligations to the church have been met in order to proceed with scheduling the ceremony.

Signature of Financial Secretary or
Finance Committee representative

Date

Pastoral Counseling

This couple has completed the following pastoral counseling.

Session 1 _____

Session 2 _____

Session 3 _____

Session 4 _____

Additional Sessions: _____

This couple is exempt from the counseling requirement.

This couple has met my pastoral counseling requirements, and they are free to proceed with preparations for holding their ceremony at Central, contingent on their fulfillment of the other requirements in our church's *Wedding Policies*.

Jared Byrns, Pastor

Date