

Wedding Guidelines at Vineyard Northwest

Congratulations on your engagement and plans to marry! Our prayer is that God will bless you with a lifelong relationship that honors Him and releases joy into your home and family line for future generations. These guidelines are written to help you move in that direction as we answer questions about our views of marriage and the process of getting married at Vineyard Northwest.

The Importance of Marriage

Our desire is to see every couple we marry have a Christ centered, life-long and satisfying relationship that can weather the storms of life. We've developed an approach that is designed to help the couple deepen their relationship as well as identify and begin to work through potential problems prior to the wedding. We believe that good preparation before the wedding and a good support system after are keys to a happy, growing, and successful marriage.

What is Marriage?

We are a Christian church committed to the values of the Bible as we read and understand them. In line with our beliefs and with the Association of Vineyard Churches, of which we are a part, we believe the Bible teaches that marriage is a covenantal union between a man (born as an "Anatomical Male") and a woman (born as an "Anatomical Female"). As well, we believe that sexual intimacy is a gift from God intended to be experienced only within the marriage relationship. Couples being married at Vineyard Northwest will be counseled and expected to practice sexual abstinence prior to marriage. Sexual intimacy prior to marriage can sabotage a couple's growth in the areas of spiritual and emotional closeness. By choosing to abstain sexually, a couple can develop greater intimacy in emotional and spiritual ways; honor God by their lifestyle choice; and enjoy a freshness and purity in their sexual union on their wedding night.

Where Does the Church Fit In?

We believe that a meaningful church relationship is an important factor in any successful Christian marriage. So we think it's best to first find the church that works for you as a couple, and then begin the marriage preparation process in the context of that church body. When couples with little or no previous connection to Vineyard Northwest inquire about the prospect of getting married here, we ask them to first attend weekend services at Vineyard Northwest regularly for at least 2-3 months to see if this church is the right fit for them.

Weddings at the Vineyard Northwest Facility

It's important to recognize that the primary purpose for the use of the church facility is the spiritual development of the whole church body through worship, teaching, discipleship, outreach through Sunday services and planned ministry events throughout the week. Due to the number of ministry events held at the church on an ongoing basis, we've found it necessary to limit weddings to couples that are regular attenders and/or members of Vineyard Northwest.

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The Process and Other Information

1. Fill out the *Wedding Request Form* (attached) and turn it in to the church office. Or see the online form which will go to the Director of Weddings. If your request is for an onsite wedding, due to our ministry planning needs, we typically cannot approve wedding dates for building use more than nine months in advance.
2. We will respond within 2 weeks of receipt of your request, confirming the pastor(s) is availability to do the ceremony, the availability of the date requested (if onsite), and what steps you need to take to move ahead.
3. We require that each couple:
 - a. Complete an approved marriage preparation course (please provide a copy of the completion certificate). **Or**
 - b. Complete the SYMBIS pre-marital assessment and follow up counseling by a trained and certified facilitator to be completed before the wedding. The assessment fee is \$35 per couple and the counseling is typically completed in three to five - 60 minute sessions.

You will also need to meet with the Officiating Pastor at least twice. The first meeting will focus on relational and spiritual issues and is to be completed 3 months before the wedding. The second meeting will focus on planning the ceremony.

Wedding Costs

1. Weddings held onsite at the Vineyard Northwest Church building

- \$150 – Officiating Pastor
- \$100 – Wedding Coordinator
- \$ 75 – Sound technician for rehearsal and ceremony
- \$ 50 – Facility usage fee

All monies are due at the time of rehearsal, and checks should be made out to the individuals. The check for the facility usage should be made out to Vineyard Northwest. Please indicate “wedding fee” in the memo line.

*We understand that many couples would like to have a friend or family member serve as the Wedding Coordinator, however, we have not found this to be an effective approach. Our Wedding Coordination Assistant works closely with the Officiating Pastor, to help ensure that your wedding ceremony needs are coordinated with our facility guidelines. Thanks for your understanding!

Note: There may be additional fees if extra services are requested.

2. Weddings held offsite

- \$150 – Officiating Pastor

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Payment is due at the time of the rehearsal and the check should be made out to the individual. Usage of any additional church personnel for an offsite wedding should be contracted with the individuals and fees should be negotiated depending on the specific duties and needs desired.

Other Details

1. We do not provide for receptions to be held in the church facility.
2. Please ask before moving or rearranging any chairs, tables or equipment.
3. Any damage that might occur to the facility or room resources during the rehearsal or wedding ceremony, that is not due to normal wear and tear, is the responsibility of the Bride and Groom.
4. Saturday wedding clean up needs to take place after the ceremony in order for all ministry areas to be prepared for Sunday services.
5. We would like to accommodate special requests if at all possible.
6. If you have any questions during the wedding application process, or about the facility usage, please contact the Laurie Cochrane, Director of Weddings.

We pray for God's richest blessings on you and your life together!

"I pray that you may prosper and be in good health even
as your soul prospers." III John 1:2

Please keep these guidelines for your reference.

Laurie Cochrane
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