

Stonegate Wedding Procedures

Congratulations to both of you on having made one of the most significant decisions of your lives! While we believe making Jesus Christ Lord and Savior is the most important life-changing decision you can make, choosing the one with whom you will spend the rest of your life in the covenant of marriage will significantly alter the course of your life as well. We encourage you to keep Christ the center of your engagement, your marriage and your home.

Couples decide to marry for a variety of reasons, but all couples marry with hopes and dreams for the future. Unfortunately, many times these hopes are not realized, and the marriage ends in a devastating divorce. Our desire is to help you to have a successful, rewarding marriage that will last a lifetime. We ask that you carefully read this document. It will outline our view of marriage, the conditions under which a Stonegate senior pastor will perform a wedding ceremony, and the practical steps that you as a couple need to take in order to plan for the wedding and the lifetime together that follows.

Marriage

We believe that marriage is first and foremost a sacred covenant made between a man and woman to live together in an exclusively intimate relationship. This covenant is not only made with each other, but is also made with our Lord. As such, it is not a trivial decision, but the most important decision you will make, second to making Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior of your life.

We believe that marriage is to be an illustration of God's relationship with His people. Your marriage will be about more than just deriving companionship, personal happiness and satisfaction. It will principally be about showing how God loves us unconditionally and our trusting in Him.

We believe that marriage is the place where our own self-centeredness is most flagrantly revealed. As such, marriage reveals to us our need for the Lord and our absolute dependence upon Him. You are to live with each other, being transparent about your faults and choosing to love one another out of humility.

We believe that learning to walk with each other in love takes time, honesty, work and intentionality.

Requirements for A Senior Pastor to Officiate Your Wedding

We believe that the marriage relationship is a sacred relationship that has a higher calling than a civil union. Therefore, we will only perform a wedding between a man and woman who share a compelling story of individual and personal faith as a follower of Christ. Persons desiring to be married at Stonegate Fellowship must have completed our Next Steps Classes, be in the process of completing the Next Steps Classes, or be a child of a member.

We believe that the sexual relationship is the ultimate physical expression of the oneness that a married couple is to have, and that it is to only be enjoyed by a couple who has married. Therefore, we ask that a couple not be living together and that they remain committed to sexual purity in their relationship. If you as a couple have been living together for a number of years in a common law marriage and are seeking to line up biblically with the sanctity of marriage, please contact us and we can discuss the matter.

We believe that people tend to fall into repetitive patterns in relationships and therefore ask that if either one has been divorced, you complete Stonegate's DivorceCare or comparable program. We also ask that if your marriage will involve children from previous relationships that you complete a Blending Families course. Finally, we ask that the amount of time to have passed since your divorce be a minimum of 3 years.

Marriage Preparation

We believe that a godly marriage takes intentional effort. Stonegate requires that each couple complete our Marriage Preparation course or comparable course. The purpose of the Marriage Preparation course is four-fold:

- To give you the opportunity to explore your strengths
 - It is important for each of you to know your individual strengths and your strengths as a couple. Frequently remembering these will help to maintain your perspective when times are difficult. In addition, you will learn to appreciate these strengths more and more as you develop them.
- To explore your growth areas
 - In the same respect, it is important to be aware of areas in your relationship that need to be strengthened. When you can honestly look at these issues and begin to work out resolutions, your marriage will grow. It is so much better to know about these in advance than to wake up

one morning feeling resentful. The goal here is not to point out everything that is wrong, but rather to be realistic so that you can begin to make changes now.

- To teach you some basic skills that will enhance your marriage
 - Along those same lines, there are some basic skills that all couples need to know. You need to know how to resolve conflicts without hurting each other. You need to know what issues are resolvable and which ones are not. If they are not, you need to know how to get along in spite of them.
- To give you an opportunity to re-evaluate both the timing of the marriage and even the decision to marry
 - Finally, we hope that you will take this opportunity to truly evaluate your decision to marry. There is no shame in deciding to delay the wedding. In fact, it is amazing that many couples marry – knowing they should not – just to avoid the embarrassment of calling off or postponing the wedding. Somehow, they believe that the prospect of divorce is not as embarrassing. The long-lasting negative impact of divorce on children, as well as the couple, cannot be overstated. We want you to be certain that God is leading the two of you into this most sacred commitment.

The \$50 fee associated with this class covers the expense of scoring the PREPARE assessment as well as materials. It is important to know that this fee must be paid prior to or at the time the assessment is taken. Call the church office or visit our website to find out when this course is being offered.

You should plan on a marriage preparation course to take about four (4) months, so please plan accordingly. The date you request is penciled in at the time of application and confirmed upon completion of the pre-marital course.

Planning Your Wedding

We are committed to working with you to see that your wedding places God at its center and is worshipful, memorable and personal. Once the determination has been made that, as a couple, you meet Stonegate's requirements as stated on the previous pages, please contact the Stonegate wedding coordinator who will lead you through the necessary steps to prepare for your wedding.

CALENDARING

All arrangements for the wedding, the rehearsal and the reception should be scheduled a minimum of four months in advance. All of our pastors are qualified to perform the wedding ceremonies. You may request a specific pastor through the wedding coordinator who will confirm the availability or offer alternatives in case that pastor is unable to perform the ceremony. If you wish to have a guest pastor perform the ceremony, our senior pastoral staff must approve this request.

The wedding will be placed on the church calendar when the applicant has contacted the Wedding Coordinator and successfully completed a Stonegate Marriage Preparation course or comparable course. (Upon completion of the course, the date requested will be confirmed.)

In order to facilitate preparation, cleaning, etc., weddings will not be scheduled to begin later than 4:00 p.m. (on Saturday) and Stonegate Fellowship facilities must be vacated completely by 6:00 p.m. (on Saturday). Weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays, holidays or when there is a church calendar conflict. All scheduling decisions are made at the discretion of Stonegate Fellowship.

REHEARSAL

The Stonegate Fellowship Wedding Coordinator will contact the bride to arrange for a meeting before the rehearsal. A one-hour rehearsal will be scheduled during the week preceding the wedding. It must begin and end on time and should include all members of the wedding party. The Wedding Coordinator may (at the discretion of the officiating pastor) conduct the rehearsal on behalf of the officiating pastor. The Wedding Coordinator has the final authority when outside consultants are used. Please remember to give your marriage license to the Coordinator on the night of the rehearsal.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

All co-officiating or guest pastors must be approved by the Stonegate Fellowship Senior Pastoral Staff.

The sanctuary seats approximately 1300 guests.

We are stewards of the facilities God has provided. Therefore, we ask that you help us treat the church facilities with reverence and respect and abide by the following guidelines:

- Use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs or items resembling such is strictly prohibited in the buildings and on the grounds of Stonegate Fellowship.
- No one under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be allowed to participate in the rehearsal or wedding.
- Use of inappropriate language is prohibited. Proper dress is required at the rehearsal, throughout preparation and during the wedding ceremony.
- No rice, confetti, or glitter may be used on our campus, whether inside or outside. Please check with the Wedding Coordinator and get permission for items to be used for the bride and groom "send off".

The person scheduling the wedding will be held liable for any damage to the building. Please make sure you inform all vendors of our policies. Stonegate Fellowship reserves the right to restrict privileges of any outside vendor violating the wedding policies of the church. All vendors must pre-arrange times with the Wedding Coordinator for decorating, floral delivery, etc.

DECORATIONS

Florists will coordinate with the Wedding Coordinator for access to the sanctuary prior to the wedding. When the ceremony is concluded and all photography completed, we ask that all flowers and decorations be removed immediately and that the auditorium be cleaned and returned to the condition in which it was found. The church cannot and will not accommodate storage for rental equipment.

Stage decorations will not be taken down or changed for weddings. Safety issues prohibit anyone but authorized staff making unscheduled changes. No decorations of any kind are to be applied to walls or ceilings. Florist wire, ribbon or pipe cleaners may be used when necessary but nails, staples and adhesives of any kind are not permitted. Please do not use glitter of any kind.

No wax candles are to be used. Votive or driplless candles may be used in hurricane lamps. Aisle candles are permitted in hurricane lamps only.

MUSIC

The wedding is a religious service and the choice of music should be in keeping with the worship and dignity of the occasion.

The Ceremony Worksheet and Music Worksheet, both provided by Stonegate Fellowship, along with a list of songs, CD's and/or audio tapes must be turned in to the Wedding Coordinator no later than 2 weeks prior to the ceremony to be pre-approved by the Worship Pastor.

The Wedding Coordinator can assist you in obtaining instrumentalists and vocalists for your wedding; however, all financial arrangements will be negotiated by you and are your responsibility. The Wedding Check List for Sound Technicians, provided by Stonegate Fellowship, must be completed and turned in to the Wedding Coordinator no later than 2 weeks prior to the wedding date.

Because of the complexity of Stonegate Fellowship's sound and lighting system, you are required to use a Stonegate Fellowship sound/light technician. The Wedding Coordinator is responsible for booking a technician for your wedding ceremony.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to explain church policies to the photographers, family members and guests with cameras. Pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary as indicated below:

- No photographs during the ceremony except those taken by the hired, professional photographer;
- Once the ceremony begins the photographer should remain stationary to prevent any disruption to the ceremony; and
- We recommend the bulk of wedding pictures be completed before the ceremony.

You may hire an outside videographer or you may utilize Stonegate Fellowship's video package options. If you choose to use our tech services, all decisions must be submitted 2 weeks prior to the wedding. Slideshows or videos must be in CD or DVD format. Any music you want played must be on one CD clearly labeled. Video equipment should be positioned in fixed, non-distracting locations during the ceremony.

Wedding Fee Schedule

BUILDINGS

_____	Main Auditorium (C) includes building use, custodial and coordinator fee and/or reception	\$750.00
_____	Building C (Connection room)	\$200.00
_____	Building E (ceremony and/or reception) includes building use, custodial and coordinator fee	\$500.00
_____	Building F (ceremony and/or reception) includes building use, custodial and coordinator fee	\$500.00

TECH

_____	Audio/Lighting - basic white (mandatory)	\$120.00
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Optional

_____	Video or Slideshow	\$60.00
_____	Custom Lighting (color)	\$75.00
_____	Video Recording (includes static camera shots and unedited recording)	\$120.00
_____	Advanced Video Recording (\$60 director fee) (up to 6 live cameras @ \$60 each and unedited recording)	\$_____
_____	Edited Video Footage on DVD (includes Wedding and Reception footage)	\$300.00

Total _____

- All fees are to be paid in full to the church three weeks prior to the day of the wedding.

OTHER

_____	Suggested Pastor Honorarium (payable directly to pastor)	\$100.00
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For Office Use Only

Deposit (refundable - due when site is reserved)	\$500.00	Date Paid	_____
Balance Due	\$_____	Date Paid	_____

Deposit Agreement

Date: _____

Rehearsal time: _____

Wedding date: _____

Wedding time: _____

Amount of deposit: _____

I have read and understand the procedures for weddings at Stonegate Fellowship. I understand that my deposit may be partially or totally forfeited if the Stonegate Fellowship guidelines and schedule are not completely adhered to. Stonegate Fellowship reserves the right to make the final inspection of the facilities and determine the amount of the deposit refunded.

I will have all decorations and personal belongings out of Stonegate Fellowship facilities by _____ a.m./p.m. on _____. After the agreed departure time, a \$100 per hour fee will be added to my total due.

Person responsible: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____