

Planning Your Wedding at



ALTO REFORMED CHURCH

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Congratulations!

Alto Reformed Church is excited you have made a decision to enter into the covenant relationship of marriage. We are here to help you start your marriage on the right foot and establish a foundation for a successful, life-long relationship. It's vital your marriage gets a great start!

Our Beliefs Regarding Marriage

We believe God has called the church to be a voice of both grace and truth. Jesus showed both of these to the woman caught in adultery. In John 8, he said to her, *"Then neither do I condemn you [grace],.. Go now and leave your life of sin. [truth]"* (John 8:11) Jesus did not throw stones or let others throw stones, but he did call for a change in behavior. It's important to note Jesus is not just holding up some really high moral standard just because God demands it, but he is urging us toward what is best for us. While the woman in John 8 was guilty of sin, Jesus shows her the path of both grace and truth. Both work together to bring joy, peace, and life. This is our desire for you.

With this in mind, here are some key truths we see in God's Word.

Singleness is a good and honorable state. (1 Cor. 7:8)

Marriage is a sacred relationship between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:22-23; Mat. 19:5; Romans 1:26-27) where ideally the husband loves sacrificially and the wife joyfully respects and submits to her husband. (Eph. 5:21-33)

Divorce is a tragic event permitted when there is sexual infidelity, spousal abuse, or desertion. (Mat. 5:32, 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:15) God longs for us to reconcile broken relationships and desires for us to do all we can to live at peace with one another. (Rom. 12:18)

Remarriage is permitted when an innocent party has gone through a divorce (Mat. 5:32), a spouse has died (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39), the divorce took place before a salvation experience (2 Cor. 5:17), or appropriate repentance and restitution has been made (1 John 1:9; Num. 5:7).

Premarital sex does not lead to a better marriage and should be avoided.

"Unfortunately, research shows that cohabitation is correlated with greater likelihood of unhappiness and domestic violence in the relationship... If a cohabiting couple ultimately marries, they tend to report lower levels of marital satisfaction and a higher propensity to divorce." (The Problem With Living Together, By Jennifer Roback Morse, www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/preparing-for-marriage/test-driving-marriage/the-problem-with-living-together)

Biblically, God's will is for his children to live holy lives and to abstain from sex outside of marriage.

"There is no Hebrew or Greek word used in the Bible that precisely refers to sex before marriage. The Bible undeniably condemns adultery and sexual immorality, but is sex before marriage considered sexually immoral? According to 1 Corinthians 7:2, "yes" is the clear answer: "But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband." In this verse, Paul states that marriage is the "cure" for sexual immorality. 1 Corinthians 7:2 is essentially saying that, because people cannot control themselves and so many are having immoral sex outside of marriage, people should get married. Then they can fulfill their passions in a moral way." ("What does the Bible say about sex before marriage?", <http://www.gotquestions.org/sex-before-marriage.html>)

Therefore, we urge couples to abstain from physical intimacy until after their wedding. We believe living together places both parties at temptation's door and causes outsiders to question the morality of Christ's Church. Couples are urged to avoid temptation by living in separate places, inviting accountability from a trusted believer, and committing oneself to purity in all areas of life. Couples struggling with purity should consider 1. keeping their engagement very short or 2. doing a small, official wedding as soon as possible with a larger public wedding celebration later.

The pastor and elders have a moral obligation to do what they believe is best for you. Therefore, at any time, the pastor or elders can refuse wedding services to a couple. Such reasons may include physical, emotional, or spiritual abuse; incompatibility of the couple; or unrepentant sin in either individual. (see 1 Cor. 5:12) This is never our desire and be assured we wish to help you along a path that leads to great joy and a great marriage.

As you reflect on where you've been, where you are, and where you are going, remember God is for you, not against you.

God Forgives: When we confess our sin, He will not only forgive, but will cleanse us from "all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). There is no sin which the blood of Christ cannot cover.

God Restores: Joel 2:25 tells us that God is able to restore the years that the locust has eaten, and that's what premarital sex is—a locust that consumes our sense of self, our self-esteem, and our perception of forgiveness. God can restore all those things! (<http://www.gotquestions.org/premarital-sex.html>)

God Renews: As a follower of Christ, God's Spirit is at work in you. He is nudging, convicting, encouraging, and guiding you to become more and more like Jesus. Do not be discouraged; God renews.

If you have any questions or concerns, we would be happy to speak with you. Call (920)346-5505.

Planning Your Wedding

Ask a Pastor to Officiate and Oversee Pre-marriage Coaching

Guest pastors invited to officiate, assist in officiating or providing pre-marriage coaching are to be approved by our church's pastor and elders. They must be a professionally ordained Christian pastor and affirm our Statement of Faith.

Set the Wedding Date

Contact the church secretary with possible dates for the wedding and rehearsal. The secretary, the chairman of the deacons and the Pastor will review their calendars to set a tentative wedding date with you.

Begin Pre-marriage Coaching with the Pastor

A pastor and/or mentoring couple will hold at least 5 coaching sessions with the couple well in advance of the wedding in order that the Christian meaning of marriage be understood, and also to review all wedding arrangements. A marriage conference may take the place of some of the sessions with the pastor's approval.

Begin Budgeting for your Wedding

Weddings can be very expensive, but they do not need to be. You do not have to have flowers, cake, or dinner. Start saving now to cover things you believe God wants you to provide. You can download a helpful budget template at <http://brideside.com/blog/wedding-budget/>.

We do not have a set fee for the pastor. Keep in mind the hours spent in pre-marriage coaching, preparing for the wedding, the rehearsal, and the wedding service. Mileage and hotel may be necessary expenses to cover as well.

Here are fees connected with the church. Coordinate with the church secretary to make sure individuals, recordings, and spaces are lined up at least a month before the wedding. Checks should be given before the wedding.

		Members	Non-members
Pastor/Officiant	Recommended minimum	\$150	\$150
Marriage Assessment	Required at 2nd coaching	\$30	\$30
Accompanist	Recommended minimum	\$100	\$100
Soloist	Recommended minimum	\$60	\$60

		Members	Non-members
Audio Tech (4hrs)	Recommended minimum	\$60	\$60
CD (recording of service)	each	\$5	\$5
Video Tech (4hrs)	Recommended minimum	\$60	\$60
DVD (recording of service)	each	\$5	\$5
Sanctuary & Dressing Rooms		\$0	\$200
Basement for Rehearsal		\$0	\$50
Basement for Reception		\$0	\$50
Kitchen		\$0	\$100
TOTAL			

We suggest that you assign a couple of people not in the wedding party to take care of this, because the family and wedding party are busy with pictures, etc.

- If you are using the basement, you are responsible for setting up tables and chairs and returning them to their original location. Custodians will vacuum.
- Facilities are available for the wedding party to dress at the church. Upon seeing the facilities, the bride and groom may decide which rooms to use.
- The church is not responsible for the security of wedding gifts or personal items at any time before, during, or after the wedding.
- All weddings and receptions held on Saturday are to be completed by 6:00 p.m.
- Put the front of sanctuary back in place. Put all the wedding items used away in the same place and in the same condition that they were before.
- Please check all the rooms used for clothing, hangers, plastic, etc.
- If the kitchen is used, please put things away.

Decide on Music to be Played During the Service

Our accompanists will be glad to discuss your wedding music with you. All music should be appropriate for a church setting and must be approved by the pastor. While recorded music may work, it may be a challenge with timing of the events. Fill this chart out and share it with your pastor.

Event	Length	Song Title	Instrument/CD...
General seating	20min		
Seating of the grandparents	4min.		
Seating of parents	4min.		
Candle lighting	5min.		
Procession of the bridesmaids	3min.		
Procession of the bride	1min.		
Unity Candle/Sand	4min		
Special Music	4min.		
Recessional	3-5min		

Traditional Music Options:

Procession in for Bride:

Trumpet Voluntary by Jeremiah Clarke

Bridal Chorus (Here Comes the Bride) by Richard Wagner

Procession for the Bridesmaids:

Canon in D Major by Pachelbel

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring by Bach.

Options for Grandparents and Parents:

Largo by Handel

Prelude in C Major by Bach.

Recessional:

Wedding March by Mendelssohn

Hallelujah Chorus by Handel

Accompanists:

Peggy Bresser (Piano/Keyboard) 920-382-9648

Jenny Glewen (Piano/Keyboard) 346-2579

Gloria Mulder (Piano/Keyboard) 346-5343

Stephanie Van Wyk (Piano/Keyboard) 319-464-4673

Plan the service with your Pastor

Your pastor will work with you to select marital vows, parental vows (if you have kids), prayers, Scriptures, unity candle or blending sand... You should determine who will be a part of your service and share the "wedding participants" chart with the pastor.

Because the wedding service is a service of worship and dedication, it is suggested that no one under the age of five years old should participate. While the practice of a younger flower girl and ring-bearer is common, they frequently distract from the service of marriage rather than contribute to it.

Prepare Your Invitations

You should send these out at least a month before the wedding, but make sure your pastor has confirmed he will do the wedding. Do not assume because you met with him once and began pre-marriage coaching that he believes you should be married.

Prepare Your Wedding Decorations

A ribbon or simple arrangement of flowers may mark reserved pews. **It is imperative that there be no use of nails, wire, or adhesive tape on furnishings.**

A white runner may be used in the center aisle (usually provided by the florist). The church has two seven-candle candelabras and a unity candle with stand for use if so desired. Plastic must be used to protect the carpet from hot wax. Confetti, rice and/or birdseed are not to be thrown on any of the church property.

Hire a Photographer

Flash photography is permitted during the ceremony. However, it is requested that picture-taking be as unobtrusive as possible so that the service proceeds without distraction. Pictures may be taken on the church grounds and in the Sanctuary before the service or immediately following.

Determine if You Want a Video

The church does have a stationary video camera, which can record the service. The church can make a DVD for a small fee. For a better video, we recommend using video cameras in the balcony or other stationary positions. Again we ask that this be as unobtrusive as possible.

Determine Audio & Video Needs for the Service

Confirm with the church secretary that an audio tech is scheduled. If you have special needs talk with the audio tech before the rehearsal. If you wish to show a video you will need a video tech from the church. Talk with the video tech about your plans before the rehearsal. Both techs will be at rehearsal and be at the church 30 minutes before the wedding begins. Musicians may want to meet the audio tech before the rehearsal.

Get your Marriage License

Application for a marriage license must be made three weeks to four weeks prior to the date of the wedding. Check with the county you live in for information.

Plan on a Wedding Rehearsal

A rehearsal is necessary for all except the smallest informal wedding. Rehearsals are generally held the evening before the service. It is requested that the marriage license be given to the pastor no later than the day before rehearsal.

Prior to both rehearsal and wedding, **it is expected that the members of the wedding party will refrain from using alcoholic beverages or controlled substances. No alcoholic beverages may be brought on to the church property.** There will be no smoking at any time in any part of the building.