

Your Wedding at...



Speedway Christian Church

Dear Almost Newlyweds,

Did you know that as far as the State of Indiana is concerned, if you are over the age of 18, a resident of the state and you have 18 dollars, you have what it takes to be legally married?

At Speedway Christian Church, we believe a wedding is a sacred covenant that binds two people together in the eyes of God. A lasting and satisfying marriage takes work, patience, love and most of all, commitment. When two people promise to be faithful to each other for the rest of their lives, they are writing a blank check of sorts. A couple bound together in marriage promises to stay committed to each other even though they do not know what the future will hold, how their feelings will change or what fortunate or unfortunate surprises may unfold.

A covenant, or sacred promise, is a firm foundation on which to build a relationship that can endure and celebrate the changes of so many seasons.

While you may have great hopes about the flowers, reception, music and the aesthetics of your wedding day, our first priority at Speedway Christian Church is to make your wedding day an occasion on which you can both celebrate your love and make a sacred promise to one another. This promise will not be defined by your signatures on a certificate provided by the state of Indiana. We will articulate this promise in the strongest possible terms: with family and in the presence of God.

The first priority of the marriage ministry at Speedway Christian Church is to create a service of worship during which two people can enter into a covenant that binds them together in the eyes of God. While we encourage you to be creative and make this service everything you have dreamed it will be, we will always advise (and in some cases insist) that the final choices reflect the sacred nature of the event.

Inside this booklet you will find the description of a typical wedding service at Speedway Christian Church. Most people find this service to be everything they are looking for; however, we frequently make changes, add or adjust parts of the service. I offer this as an outline or a starting point for our conversation. Take a look, make some notes, and feel free to ask questions or suggest a change.

You will also find a list of frequently asked questions and an outline of our policies and procedures. Some people choose to have their wedding at a hotel, banquet hall or another venue; however, by choosing to have your wedding in a church, we hope you will respect the church not only as a building, but as a place of worship.

It is a joy to open our church to you on this special occasion. Take some time to read this book over and schedule a time to meet with me and the Director of Worship and Fine Arts to discuss your service. We will look forward to hearing from you.

Peace in Christ,
Speedway Christian Church

A Sample Order of Worship for a Christian Wedding

This is a typical order of worship for a wedding service at Speedway Christian Church, and is a starting point for our discussion about your wedding. We strive to craft your wedding service to be significant and enjoyable for you. If you would like to add, adjust or remove parts of the service, please speak to the minister.

Procession

Prior to the beginning of the formal worship service, all the members of the wedding party process into the sanctuary and assume their positions near the chancel, or the front of the sanctuary. The process can be simple and understated or big and spectacular. Most of your music choices will be played during the processional.

The Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose marks the beginning of the wedding ceremony. Usually this portion of the wedding states clearly the nature and purpose of the occasion as well as the solemnity and sacredness of the marriage covenant.

The Declaration of Intent

Following the opening statement of purpose, the bride and groom are given an opportunity to state their intent to enter into a marriage covenant. This simple question and the minimal response of “I do” or “I will” sets the worship service in motion.

Presentation of the Bride and Affirmation of the Families

Many brides are escorted down the aisle, by the bride’s father or a significant family member, but some brides choose to walk down the aisle with both of their parents. After the declaration of intent, the minister asks, “who presents this woman to be married?” The father, or other escort, responds, “her mother and I,” or a similar appropriate response. The presentation of the bride is a traditional component of most wedding services, but we prefer to provide both families an opportunity to affirm the impending union. Therefore, the Affirmation of the Families immediately follows the Presentation of the Bride. All family members are asked to stand and offer their affirmation and blessing to the bride and groom.

Opening Prayer

A brief prayer is offered, asking God’s presence and blessing during worship. Thanks is offered for the relationship, the families, and the gifts God has offered.

Scripture and/or Other Readings

During all services of worship, it is proper to read words of scripture. Frequently, scripture from the 13th chapter of I Corinthians is read. This is also an appropriate time for a friend or family member to share additional scripture, a poem or other reading.

The Vows

The covenant is the heart of the wedding service. The bride and groom covenant to live together faithfully as husband and wife. In the wedding covenant, the bride and groom promise to respect, cherish, and love one another in all life's challenges and to nurture their relationship with understanding, honesty and trust. Through this promise, the bride and groom become husband and wife.

The Exchanging of the Rings

The ring is a non-verbal, tangible symbol of the covenant. The maid/matron of honor usually carries the groom's ring, and the best man usually carries the bride's ring. If there is a ring bearer, who is old enough, the rings may be carefully tied to his pillow in such a fashion that the rings are secure and can be easily untied. If a ring should be dropped during the ceremony, it is the best man's responsibility to retrieve it.

The Unity Candle

Sometimes, following the exchange of rings, the bride and groom will light a unity candle. This is usually a three-candle candelabrum, in which the two outside candles, representing the separate families, are lit prior to the beginning of the wedding. The bride and groom light the middle candle together symbolizing the formation of their new life and new family.

The Prayer of Blessing

This prayer usually invokes the blessing of God upon the marriage, calls for their home to be blessed, and gives voice to our collective hope for a healthy and happy future together.

The Pronouncement of the Marriage

The minister traditionally pronounces the bride and groom to be husband and wife at the end of the service. The pronouncement is merely recognition of the vows that the bride and groom have made. The minister does not "marry" the couple. The bride and groom "marry" each other. The minister serves only to preside over the covenant that the bride and groom make with one another.

The Benediction

After the pronouncement, the minister offers a benediction. A benediction is a short blessing offered as words of parting. Immediately following the benediction, the husband and wife are invited to kiss.

The Kiss

We truly hope no explanation is needed here.

The Introduction and Recessional

Immediately following the kiss, the husband and wife are introduced to the gathered family and friends. Some thought should be given to how this announcement might be worded (Mr. and Mrs. Doe, Mr. and Mrs. John Doe or Mr. and Mrs. John and Jane Doe...). After the announcement, the bride and groom exit, followed by the bridal party in the reverse order of their entering. It is customary for the parents of the bride, followed by the parents of the groom, to be escorted out by an usher(s).

Following the service

As the service ends, those who are seated will have an inevitable “now what” moment. Do we get up and leave? Do we find a receiving line? Do we head out to the reception? Do we need to get ready for the bride and groom’s exit from the building? Give some thought as to how your guests’ time and movement will be managed. Make decisions about how the guests will be dismissed. Decide how you will communicate your expectations to them. Will there be a receiving line at the church? At the reception? At all? These decisions are best made in advance as a part of the big picture of your wedding day.

Music

As an integral part of the wedding ceremony, appropriate musical selections can help to place the wedding in the proper context of worship and give meaningful expression to God’s place in this event. The program of wedding music usually begins 20 or 30 minutes prior to the appointed hour for the wedding.

The musical selections should be of good quality, and if vocal solos are to be used, their texts must correspond to the themes inherent in a Christian marriage, which are God’s love for the church displayed through Christ forming the foundation for the love a man and woman share and God’s blessing on the marriage. A pre-service program of organ music is typically used; however, if a soloist or instrumentalists are desired, they should be chosen in consultation with the organist. If a vocal soloist has been selected to sing, that person should contact the organist six weeks in advance to schedule a rehearsal time.

All music must be planned in consultation with our Director of Worship and Fine Arts. Most secular or popular love songs are not suitable for worship.

It is a policy of Speedway Christian Church that NO taped music or track accompaniments may be used either during the service or the pre-service music. The Director of Worship and Fine Arts should be contacted at least six weeks prior to the date of the wedding so that an appointment for a music consultation can be scheduled. This consultation need not be lengthy, but will assist in making the musical portion of the ceremony go more smoothly.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Must the groom's friends sit on the right and bride's friends on the left?

A: No. In fact, it would look better if the sides were fairly evenly divided.

Q: Must the bride wear white? Should the bride wear off-white if she has been previously married?

A: No. The bride can wear whatever she likes and can afford.

Q: Must there be a wedding rehearsal?

A: Yes. A wedding rehearsal is necessary for weddings taking place in the sanctuary. All participants in the wedding party, including parents, should be present if at all possible. While it may seem like a hassle in some cases, it is time well spent and it greatly increases your ability to enjoy the day of your wedding.

Q: Can someone other than a minister participate in the wedding service?

A: Yes. Often laypersons will be readers, singers, or worship leaders.

Q: Where do I get the marriage license and who signs it?

A: The couple is responsible for securing the license from the County Clerk's Office. In Indiana, the minister, the bride, and the groom sign the marriage license. The minister is responsible for mailing the official copy to the county seat. The minister and the witnesses, often the maid of honor and best man, sign the marriage certificate. This certificate is then returned to the couple on the day of the wedding. Both the certificate and the license should be brought to the officiating minister at the rehearsal.

Q: What are the rules about taking photographs during the wedding?

A: Our guiding principle is that the wedding service is a service of worship. As such, it should be a sacred occasion free of disruptive events. Flash photography during the procession and recession is permitted. However, photographers are to refrain from jumping in front of the procession or recession or walking in the front of the sanctuary during the service. Sometimes the photographer will have the bridal party re-enact the ceremony for the purpose of recording it on film.

Q: Can a video be taken of the wedding?

A: Basically, the same rules apply here; namely, care must be taken that the filming does not disrupt the sacred nature of the occasion. Good videographers will be able to capture your wedding with a minimal footprint in the service. If you or

your videographer has any questions about what is appropriate, please contact the presiding minister. We can also recommend videographers who have worked well in our sanctuary in the past.

Q: Should a bulletin be printed?

A: A bulletin containing the wedding service and a record of all the participants can be a cherished keepsake for those who attend the wedding. Printing a bulletin can also enable the congregation to take a more active part in the service. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to print bulletins.

Q: Can we decorate the church any way we like?

A: Yes, with certain restrictions. No flowers may be placed on the communion table, but greenery is fine. No adhesives may be used on any wood (floors, doors, pews, etc.). We ask that existing flowers, wreaths and plants be left in place unless approved by a minister.

Q: We are using an aisle runner. How long should it be?

A: The aisle is 63 feet long. A longer aisle runner is preferable to one that is too short.

Q: When can I decorate the church?

A: On most occasions it is possible to decorate the church on the day of your rehearsal. You may also wait until the morning of your wedding. If your wedding is being held on the same day as another wedding, special arrangements must be made with the minister.

Q: Is there an age restriction on children who are involved in weddings as flower girls or ring bearers?

A: As a rule of thumb, children over the age of five are generally able to participate appropriately in a wedding service. If you wish for a younger child to participate in the wedding, please discuss their role with the minister. With a little creativity, a good solution usually presents itself.

Q: Can we throw _____ at the bride and groom as they leave the church?

A: In the interest of safety and the preservation of our place of worship, we ask that you throw nothing during or following your wedding that lands on the ground. Rose petals, rice, bird seed and other thrown decorations leave a mess and sometimes a hazard inside or on the front steps of the church. An exception to this rule is made for flower petals dropped during the procession. Bubbles are a great alternative to thrown items.

Q: Can we hire our own wedding coordinator?

A: While you may choose to use a wedding coordinator for the events surrounding your wedding, an outside wedding coordinator typically does not help and in many cases can be an unnecessary distraction during the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony itself. The minister, the musicians, and the assistants employed by the church work well together and have a common understanding of

what needs to be done and when. The leaders and participants of the wedding ministry at Speedway Christian Church are in the best position to answer your questions, find what you need and make your wedding service everything you dream it could be. An outside wedding coordinator is usually not familiar with our practices and procedures and at times they can create a “too many cooks in the kitchen” atmosphere.

Q: What time can we gain access to the church on the day of our wedding?

A: We are committed to giving you plenty of time to get dressed, take pictures and get ready for your wedding day. We are happy to accommodate a reasonable period of time in the building before the wedding.

Q: Can the bride and groom invite another pastor to perform the ceremony?

A: Yes, another minister can perform the ceremony.

General Wedding Information

All scheduling of weddings is to be made through the church office (244-7656). The couple should contact the office as early as possible to secure the chosen date. At this time, the date and time for both rehearsal and wedding should be determined. Numerous weddings are conducted at the church throughout the year; the staff will strive to be flexible in coordinating the arrangements if multiple ceremonies are scheduled for the same day.

The Wedding Interview

The couple is responsible for contacting the appropriate minister and Director of Worship and Fine Arts six weeks prior to the wedding to schedule an interview. This is an important requirement of the staff for the purpose of becoming acquainted with both people and establishing a rapport, which will aid in any future relationship. During the interview, the marriage relationship and the wedding service will be discussed. All the ministers are committed to maintaining good communications in marriage and are available if counseling is desired during any stage of the new relationship.

Church Facilities

The following church facilities are offered as needed:

- dressing rooms for bride and attendants with full-length three-way mirror
- dressing room for groom and groomsmen
- use of either the sanctuary or the Bethany Room
- two brass candelabra in the sanctuary (seven branch)
- sconces on the side walls (nine on each side)
- custodial service

Arrangements for flowers, kneeling bench, and/or aisle runner should be made with the florist. The sanctuary aisle is 63 feet long, with 38 pews, 19 on each side. While flowers may be used during the service, the wedding guests should not be instructed to throw rice, birdseed, flowers, confetti or other similar items inside the church building or on the steps.

When you leave, please make sure the church is in the same condition in which you found it. Refrain from leaving items to be picked up on another day. If something is left by accident and it is found, the item will be held for up to two weeks before it is thrown away.

Wedding Fees

Wedding fees include the non-refundable deposit, minister, organist, use of the building, custodial and administrative fees.

A non-refundable deposit (which is part of the total) is required before the wedding can be put on the church calendar.

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