

FRIENDSHIP CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

OUR INTEREST:

We care about marriage and the future success of those married within our church or by our pastors. We desire that marriages either held within the church sanctuary, or officiated by our pastors, be in harmony with God's Word and be those on which His blessing can be given.

OUR UNDERSTANDING:

We believe marriage to be a sacred covenant entered into by two persons in the presence of God, thus a holy triangle. God is party to those who covenant to marry in such a way that He unites those who give themselves to each other as husband and wife. The marriage relationship in Scripture is characterized:

- as **exclusive** (forsaking all others),
- as **mutual** (becoming one flesh),
- and as **permanent** (till death do us part).

Christians are called in marriage not to become unequally yoked (or joined) to unbelievers.

A wedding service is a worship service. Its goals are to express gratitude to God

for His gifts, and to celebrate the promises of marriage as an expression of Christian commitment and faith.

OUR EXPECTATION:

- a. A minimal time of four months is to be allowed between the marriage appointment and the wedding date.
- b. Marriage preparation classes shall be held between the pastor officiating and the engaged couple. Included in pre-marriage classes will be the use of the Prepare/Enrich Inventory and appropriate review by a staff member with the couple.
- c. Both husband-to-be and wife-to-be shall have a faith commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and have an active relationship in a Christian church.
- d. You must desire to have a Christian wedding ceremony and marriage; therefore, the ceremony held in the church and/or undertaken by one of our pastors shall be distinctively Christian. The music desired and the vows to be used shall be submitted to the pastor, or if a guest minister is con-

ducting the wedding, to the elders, for approval. Receptions and/or rehearsal dinners held in church shall also have music and activity appropriate to a church environment.

- e. Believing that God calls men and women to a marriage relationship that honors God and conforms to His Word, the pastors of Friendship Christian Reformed Church will not conduct weddings for ...
 - Couples where one person is a believer and the other is not a believer in Jesus Christ.
 - Couples who are living together or who are sexually active. (It is our expectation that, during the engagement period, the couple will live at separate residencies and will commit themselves to celibacy prior to actual marriage).
 - Same sex couples.
- f. Exceptions to the above expectations are to be submitted to the church elders for consideration. Exceptions to c, d, and e should not be considered.