

Prairie Ridge Church
Wedding Policies and Fees
Updated May 2018

Marriage Matters

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming wedding! Next to accepting Jesus Christ into your life as Lord and becoming a part of His Body, the church, this event will have the greatest impact upon your future. Marriage matters. At Prairie Ridge Church we take your decision to move toward marriage very seriously and desire to give you every opportunity to succeed. As such, we have entered into a partnership with nearly 100 other churches in the Des Moines area committing to a Central Iowa Marriage Matters Agreement. This agreement is designed to raise the standard of marriage enriching practices that have been proven to be effective in over 100 communities across our nation with results such as:

- Overland Park and Kansas City, Kansas: The divorce rate has declined by 35% since the Marriage Matters agreement.
- El Paso, Texas: The divorce rate is down 50% in the first three years of the Marriage Matters agreement.
- Modesto County, CA: In 13 years of Marriage Matters agreement, the divorce rate has declined by over 30% while the surrounding counties have remained at the national norm.
- Peoria, Ill: The divorce rate has declined 22% in the past ten years of the Marriage Matters agreement.

Marriage matters. Your marriage matters. We desire to give you every opportunity to succeed in marriage. As such, we have agreed to the following requirements for those being married through Prairie Ridge Church:

1. Marriage must be accompanied by an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord of your life and a commitment to him through the local body at Prairie Ridge Church.

Faith: When a couple requests to be married through Prairie Ridge Church, they are not only asking for a legal service to be performed, they are also desiring God to bless and be present in their marriage by being at the center of their lives and their vows. Having accepted Jesus as Savior and committing to following Him as the leader of your life is the most important aspect of a healthy marriage.

Connection: It is our policy that the bride, the groom, or a parent of the bridal couple be recognized as regular attendees of Prairie Ridge Church. Regular attendees are defined as individuals who have attended at least 60% of the regularly scheduled Sunday services over the past three months and who consider Prairie Ridge Church to be their church home.

2. We expect at least a four month period from the wedding date reservation form until the wedding date and encourage a dating / engaged relationship of at least one year.

It takes time to plan a wedding...to order a dress, to reserve a reception hall, to invite guests. It also takes time for the more important matter of preparing for a marriage. It is vital to allow couples space to assess their own readiness without the pressure of a rapidly approaching wedding date. Marriage matters.

3. We encourage all singles regardless of age and experience to practice sexual abstinence and not to live together before marriage.

Living together before marriage is often economically beneficial, logistically convenient, and socially acceptable. People innocently think, “I should live with this person before committing to marry this person. How else can I fully test out this relationship?” Sounds logical, but proves to be destructive.

- Psychology Today documented the findings of Yale University sociologist Neil Bennett that cohabitating women are 80% more likely to separate or divorce than women who had not lived with their spouses before marriage.
- The National Survey of Families and Households reports that “Union begun by cohabitation are almost twice as likely to dissolve within 10 years compared to first marriages: 57% to 30%.
- Those who have had premarital sex are more likely to have extramarital sex. Research indicates that if a person is open to experience sex before marriage, a higher level of probability exists that they will do the same afterward. Women who engaged in sex before marriage are more than twice as likely to have extramarital affairs as those who did not have premarital sex.

If you have already engaged in sexual intercourse, now is not too late. Honor your spouse and prepare for marriage by committing to a season of abstinence until your marriage. If you are already living together, explore other temporary housing options...a small investment for a lifetime of marriage. Marriage matters.

4. We require pre-marriage preparation.

Couples typically invest hundreds of dollars and countless hours into food, flowers, dresses, and receptions. As meaningful as these things are, we believe that the most important investment is the investment into the marriage relationship. See item #4 under the “Your Wedding” section of this policy for details.

We are excited about your upcoming wedding. But more significantly, we are eager to prepare you for a happy and healthy life-long marriage. We desire to give you every opportunity to succeed in marriage because marriage matters. Your marriage matters to us.

Interested in more? We encourage you to put more energy into your marriage relationship than into your wedding day. Many resources are available through the local Christian bookstores.

Some of these include:

Saving Your Marriage Before it Starts by Les and Leslie Parrott

Before You Say I Do or Before You Remarry by H. Norman Wright

Preparing for Marriage (Family Life Materials), General Editor- Dennis Rainey

Preparing for Marriage God's Way by Wayne Mack

Preparing for Marriage, General Editor- Donald J. Luther

Money Before Marriage by Larry Burkett

Intended for Pleasure by Ed Wheat

Your Wedding

1. The Date Reservation Request Form: Please fill out this form and return it to the church office within two weeks of receiving it. You will be contacted once the form is received and the information is approved and confirmed.

- We request that every couple set a date on the church calendar at least four months in advance. This gives both you and the church sufficient time to make your wedding plans. The Date Reservation Form asks you to indicate the date, time, and the facilities that you desire.
- Because of the set-up and rehearsal required for certain seasonal events, weddings **cannot** be booked for the following times: the weekend of Palm Sunday and Easter; the weekend before, the week of, and the week after Christmas.

2. The Pastor: Given the variable demands upon individual pastor(s) at Prairie Ridge Church, we cannot guarantee a particular pastor to perform your ceremony. Please understand that we have many weddings on the calendar, especially during the typical wedding months, and the availability of specific pastor(s) cannot be committed. Instead, once your wedding is confirmed, we can guarantee you the availability of one of a team of pastors who have been approved by The Ridge. We are most certainly committed to providing the pastoral service for your wedding. You will know who will officiate your wedding within four months of your wedding date.

Visiting pastors other than pastors from Prairie Ridge Church are allowed to officiate weddings at The Ridge if given prior approval through the lead pastor of Prairie Ridge Church. Compensation for outside pastors is not included in the fee schedule. The fee schedule does not change if an outside pastor is approved to officiate.

3. The Location: There are special occasions where off-site weddings are allowed. These requests must be approved through the pastor and Wedding Coordinator. These weddings are subject to a special off-site wedding fee schedule and a Wedding Coordinator is required.

4. The Counseling: Each couple is responsible to make their own arrangements for counseling.

We are in partnership with **Team Restoration Ministries**. We are confident with the relational expertise they bring to the marriage process. We require 4 hours of pre-marriage counseling spread through four counseling sessions. The normal rate for such service would be \$500. Marriages through Prairie Ridge have a reduced rate of \$360. After your wedding request form has been completed, you are responsible for contacting Team Restoration Ministries to arrange the initial appointment (515-238-9010 or www.team-restoration.org). Costs are to be paid directly to Team Restoration Ministries. If the counselors feel you are not ready for marriage, we reserve the right for the counselor to ask for a release form to give to the pastor at Prairie Ridge Church.

Prairie Ridge Church offers an alternative option to formal counseling. It is called **Marriage Mentoring**. The engaged couple would be paired with a specially trained couple who volunteer to walk alongside them through a curriculum to complete prior to the wedding date. This option is subject to mentor availability and would involve material costs (\$65).

5. The Wedding Coordinator: A Prairie Ridge Wedding Coordinator will be available to help you navigate the details of your wedding in respect to the Prairie Ridge Church facility, the pastor, & the ceremony. The Wedding Coordinator will make the necessary arrangements between the engaged couple, the facility, and the pastor, and will be present at your wedding rehearsal and ceremony to help everything run smoothly. The pastor will not attend the rehearsal.

6. Remember! There is a 3-day waiting period in the State of Iowa between the time application is made and a marriage license is issued. Please call 515-286-3771 to learn what you must do to apply for the required license. Bring the license to the wedding rehearsal and give it to the Wedding Coordinator.

Your Wedding Coordinator

You will have approximately three meetings with the Wedding Coordinator.

- The first will be to gather basic information, to go over the Prairie Ridge Church Wedding Policy and fee schedules, and to anticipate potential service needs.
- The second meeting is to plan the order of service for your wedding.
- The last is also your wedding rehearsal. The marriage license is to be given to the Wedding Coordinator at this time.

Your Wedding Coordinator will conduct your wedding rehearsal on behalf of the minister marrying you, and will facilitate the ceremony on your wedding day. Our ministers do not attend rehearsals.

Your Wedding Coordinator will be your primary contact for your wedding needs. Your wedding Coordinator is gifted and skilled in meeting your needs.

The Rehearsal

Your wedding rehearsal will be scheduled for one hour on the evening before your wedding date and will be conducted by the Wedding Coordinator. In some instances your rehearsal may be moved due to previously scheduled events at the church. If this is the case a date will be chosen as close to your ceremony as possible.

Your rehearsal must begin and end on time. **We request that the bride and groom arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the rehearsal start time.**

Please give your marriage license to the Wedding Coordinator on the night of the rehearsal.

It is very important that all members of your wedding party attend the rehearsal and that they arrive on time. If you have ushers in addition to groomsmen, please ask them to be present at the rehearsal. Parents of the Bride and Groom are also encouraged to attend.

Since time is limited, vocalists and instrumentalists may rehearse for 30 minutes immediately **prior** the rehearsal only. This rehearsal is designed to allow the musicians to acclimate to the facility. It should not be seen as a practice session.

The church will provide a sound technician for 30 minutes prior to the rehearsal, and the day of the wedding. Final run-throughs may be done on the day of the wedding prior to the wedding if needed and if time allows.

Prairie Ridge Church Wedding Policies

- Because of the number of weddings booked annually and our convictions, we are unable to accommodate non-member weddings.
- Any seasonal decorations, including large set pieces, used regularly in worship may NOT be removed from the stage for a wedding. The stage area will be cleared of musical equipment and small set pieces and/or props; and black curtains will be hung in front of any large set pieces. Additional lighting may be available upon request.
- No rice or confetti may be used. Birdseed may be thrown OUTSIDE THE CHURCH BUILDING ONLY and should be handed out after the ceremony and outside the building just before it is to be used.
- Fire code prevents the use of candles from being used along the aisles. Candelabras and other candles may be used on the stage area only but must be dripleless candles. The use of candles in pews and chairs by audience is not allowed.
- No candles, tape or metal attaching equipment may be used directly on the chairs in the sanctuary. Do not use pins or any potential choking hazards for putting up decorations in any room of the building.
- No tape or adhesive may be used on the walls or metal door frames. Tape is allowed on GLASS surfaces only. Use ONLY green or blue painters tape.
- Due to the request of most hired photographers, any photos taken **during** the wedding ceremony must be **non-flash** only. Flash photography will be allowed during the processional and recessional.
- All wedding related activities must be FINISHED by 7:00pm on Saturdays. This includes removal of wedding decorations, restoration of the worship center to its original state, etc. This is the responsibility of the wedding party or designated point person chosen by the bride and groom from among their guests.

Receptions may be held at The Ridge and are subject to the building rental policy & fees, which can be obtained when the couple is in the wedding booking process. The areas that are allowed for these small receptions are as follows:

- The front gathering space (directly outside worship center)
- The square
- The basement

It is the responsibility of the bride and/or groom to communicate the following to their families and the wedding party:

- No food or drinks are allowed in the worship center at any time.
- No smoking anywhere in the church building, including e-cigarettes.
- No alcoholic beverages anywhere on church property...including the parking lots.
- Do not leave purses or other valuables unattended in dressing rooms.
- Do not leave wedding dress, tuxes, etc...overnight before the wedding.
- Do not leave gifts and cards unattended at any time. Please make arrangements for someone to watch them and to transfer them to a safe location. You are encouraged to have someone responsible for removing gifts and decorations after the service.
- Children must be supervised in all parts of the building.
- Please leave the worship center as specified on the worship center set up map immediately following the wedding. *Failure to do so will result in a \$100 cleaning fee.*
- You are responsible for any breakage or damage that occurs during use of The Ridge Facility. Please report any damages immediately to the wedding coordinator.

Prairie Ridge Audio/Visual Requirements

We trust you'll select songs with positive, God-honoring, & family-friendly lyrics. The wedding music and any DVD/video slideshows must be appropriate for a Christian environment. Worship songs and hymns are typically most appropriate.

Audio/Visual materials must be handed to the coordinator two weeks prior to the wedding in order to get them to the Ridge production staff in a timely manner to ensure compatibility and appropriateness of content.

Music

- We use Spotify for all music playlists. We prefer that you provide your wedding songs on a Spotify playlist. If you are not able to create your own playlist, you may provide the wedding coordinator with a list of songs, including artist and album, and our Sound engineer will put together your playlist
- If it is not possible to use Spotify for your wedding music, you may provide an iPod/MP3 device with a playlist ready for the Sound engineer. You are responsible to disable any ringtones or notifications that may interrupt your ceremony. No CD's please unless you bring the CD player too.
- We can accommodate musicians/soloists also as supplied by the wedding couple.

Video

- Slideshows/DVD's (or movie file) created by you or a family member - please format/export in .MOV or .MP4 (H.264) video codec, in widescreen (16x9). 720p or higher resolution is best. We prefer you supply the movie file(s) saved on a flash drive. We suggest keeping the length at 4 min or less if you want to feature it during the ceremony. Prelude or postlude slideshows can be longer.
- We are able to put photo slideshows on our lobby screens. You may submit photos two weeks prior for us to create a custom slideshow – maximum of 25 photos allowed.

Thank you for your cooperation in these matters!

Our Fees

Standard Wedding Package

The *standard wedding package* at Prairie Ridge Church is \$700. This includes the services of/for:

- Pastor
- Wedding Coordinator
- Sound Technician (plus all basic sound equipment)
- Stage audio setup / tear down
- Lighting & Projection Technician
- Facility Rental Fees

*Due to the complexity of the equipment in our facility, only a Prairie Ridge Church technician can operate the sound, lighting, and projection equipment.

The \$700 does not include the pre-marriage counseling sessions which are paid directly to Team Restoration Ministries or any material fees through Marriage Mentoring.

A non-refundable deposit of half of the total fee is due within six months of the wedding date. The remainder is due at least TWO WEEKS prior to the wedding and can be sent to the church office. Make checks payable to Prairie Ridge Church. Write “wedding” in memo line along with bride/groom names.

Informal Wedding Package

The *informal wedding package* at Prairie Ridge Church is \$300. This is an opportunity to have a lower cost wedding that is still conducted through the local church. The vast majority of the wedding fee goes to provide services for the wedding ceremony; consequently, the lower cost of an informal wedding is a direct reflection of fewer services provided. The services provided for an informal wedding include:

- Pastor
- Wedding Coordinator

The informal wedding will **NOT include**:

- sound system
- clearing of the Worship Center stage
- rehearsal
- decorations
- food
- custodial services

This option is only available for weddings with a maximum of 30 guests and one hour in the building. Pre-marriage counseling sessions are still required.

A non-refundable deposit of half of the total fee is due six weeks prior to the wedding. The remainder is due at least TWO WEEKS prior to the wedding and can be sent to the church office. Make checks payable to Prairie Ridge Church. Write “wedding” in memo line along with bride/groom names.