



If you are considering marriage at Lakeshore Community Church and/or by one of the Lakeshore Pastors, there are steps for you and your fiancé to take that are aimed at helping you have the healthiest relationship possible. And there are guidelines that we use to determine our ability to serve you in this important pursuit.

First, we require each couple attend Sunday morning services consistently for six months prior to getting married unless geographically impossible.

Second, review the attached Marriage Policy. If there is anything that you want to discuss further, feel free to contact the office and leave a message with your questions and contact information and your call will be returned.

Third, there is a Marriage Workshop to help you understand what a healthy marriage is. We meet at the church for five consecutive Sunday mornings. Your children are invited to attend Lakeshore Kids or Lakeshore Students Ministry during this time. You can find out more about the schedule and costs at Next Steps.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office at 585-392-5253. Please leave your question and contact information on the message.

Warmly,
Lakeshore Community Church

Marriage Policy: Weddings at Lakeshore Community Church

Marriage is an institution that was created and designed by God as an act of love and blessing for people. The Bible describes its marvelous beginning in Genesis. Since the time of Adam and Eve, however, many complexities have been added to the institution of marriage. Because God knows everything that will happen and knows all that people need, the Bible provides answers to these questions and complexities, so we might know who He permits to be married and remarried and under what circumstances it may occur.

This statement is an attempt to outline LCC's position based on the pastoral staff's understanding of the Bible's teaching on marriage/remarriage. It is the culmination of many hours of biblical research and study. Understand that our position on these matters is not universally held by all Christian religious leaders (though it is a common biblical view), but we hold them with an honest conviction that this is what the Bible teaches.

The hope is that this will lead to God's will being revealed for this potential wedding. If it should turn out that one of the requirements would cause the LCC pastoral staff to not be able to (in good conscience) officiate the wedding ceremony, that does not in any way indicate that we do not value the individuals considering being married, nor does it intend to say that the pastoral staff's understanding of Scripture is guaranteed to be perfect. It is hoped that godly and Bible-based convictions held by everyone would be respected, even when differences exist.

Marriage: For Whom?

1. Spiritual Requirements

The Bible says that spiritually, to get the most from marriage, the two people being married should be Christians and have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This comes by placing exclusive trust in Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior by asking Him to forgive your sins and become the director of your life as individuals (Romans 10:9-10,13, Ephesians 2:8-9). It is strongly urged that both parties either make sure or initiate a faith-commitment to Jesus Christ for their eternal destiny first and foremost (this will be explained as needed). Two people who have not trusted Christ personally as their Lord and Savior may be married in certain circumstances. These can be discussed as needed. However, because 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 forbids mixed spiritual marriages (citing the vast differences that exist), LCC's pastoral staff will not marry a mixed spiritual relationship where one party is a born-again Christian and one is not. This would violate the standard that God has set to unite people as one and raise a family united in Christ.

2. Spiritual Commitment

Attending church regularly is a big part of the Christian life (Hebrews 10:25, Matthew 16:18). If you are a member of Lakeshore, you're given highest priority in marriage consideration (as you've met the spiritual commitment requirements). If you have another church home that you are or have been attending, please provide that information to the LCC pastoral staff member. Regardless, if an LCC pastoral staff member will officiate your wedding, it is expected that you'll faithfully attend Lakeshore

on a weekly basis for six months prior to your wedding ceremony. Whether you are a member, regular attendee, or a non-member of Lakeshore, approval for marriage by an LCC pastoral staff member is not guaranteed.

All couples who are to be married will be expected to take part in pre-marital counseling and purchase (at their own expense) reasonably priced materials to use during counseling sessions. They will also be expected to do assignments together as a couple to build communication on their own. Studies show that every pre-marital counseling session improves the subsequent quality of every marriage.

Because the Bible teaches that sexual intercourse is reserved only for those who are married, pre-marital sex is not acceptable to God before marriage (1 Corinthians 6:18-20). For those who have violated this standard, a commitment before God to abstain for the remainder of the time between now and the marriage day may be accepted at the LCC pastoral staff's discretion. In addition, cohabitation (or living together) is not an accepted state as it allows the potential of premarital sexual temptation, presents an appearance of sin, and causes the added strain of making too much of a spiritual commitment before the wedding bells have rung (Ephesians 5:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:22 KJV). Again, for those who have violated this standard, a commitment before God not to live together for the remainder of the time between now and the wedding may be accepted at the LCC pastoral staff's discretion.

3. When Divorce Has Occurred and Re-Marriage Is Considered

The Bible teaches that God designed marriage to be a life-long institution between a man and a woman. Yet, today, nearly half of all marriages end tragically in divorce (and percentages are higher for second time marriages). God knew that this would happen and has many instructions on this matter. It should be noted that many people who trust the Bible as the exclusive source of truth have varying views on the matter of divorce and remarriage. The purpose here is not to debate the views, or to convince others of this position, but to spell out the position and conviction that the LCC pastoral staff hold, based on objective and careful study of over 100 hours of research and reading of the key verses involved.

When the death of a spouse occurs, there is total freedom for remarriage (Romans 7:1-3). If the previous mate(s) are deceased, remarriage is allowed. When divorce has occurred, remarriage is also allowed in three circumstances: repeated adultery by the ex-spouse, blatant desertion by the ex-spouse, or your own conversion to Christ after the divorce.

The first exception is when repeated adultery has taken place and the partner has divorced for reason of this repeated violation of the marriage trust. Matthew 19:1-12 (especially verse 9) teaches that "adultery", meaning "repeated sexual unfaithfulness", (not a "one-night stand") is grounds for divorce and remarriage.

The second exception is when a person was deserted by their spouse (in other words, they have left you without any notice, warning or assistance and did not return). 1 Corinthians 7:10-15 (especially verse 15) explains divorce and remarriage as an option. However, it must be pointed out that desertion is by the other person and is not desired or prompted by the suggestions or actions of the one deserted.

The third exception is when a person has become a new Christian (a first-time faith commitment) after divorce was finalized or irreversible. 2 Corinthians 5:17 teaches that when a person becomes a Christian, "all things become new". It suggests an application to the divorce condition of the past.

If one of these exceptions occurred, there is freedom for remarriage. If the circumstances that led to the divorce did not fall into any of these exceptions, the LCC pastoral staff could not (in good conscience) officiate the marriage because they could not violate what they understand the Bible to teach on this subject (see Romans 14:5).

4. Same Sex Marriages

The Bible is very clear that marriage is only for a man and a woman (Genesis 1-3). The use of sexuality between the same genders is a violation of God's natural order of creation (Romans 1:26-27). Therefore, the LCC Pastoral staff could not, in good conscience, officiate a same-sex marriage or recognize a same-sex marriage.

Marriage: When?

The choice of dates may depend on the needs and background of the couple being married. If the above requirements are met, you will be required to attend pre-marital counseling sessions which include a personality/compatibility survey. These tools will be used to determine if the wedding date is too premature or unadvised. If they work out, the date can be set at anytime as schedules permit.

The goal of this whole policy is to make the best effort at ensuring that your wedding will meet God's perfect standards and requirements. May He guide you in your search for His will. (Romans 12:1-2).