

Marriage Policy

Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids

Adopted 04/25/2025

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to define marriage as understood from the Scriptures by Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids. Beyond the defining of marriage, this policy also endeavors to set forth guidelines for weddings and related activities at Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids. This policy reflects the beliefs of Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids and will govern all marriage related activities that are requested and/or take place at Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids as well as the involvement of any staff, elders or other leaders of Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids in any marriage related activities.

What is Marriage?

- 1) We believe, based on the teaching of the Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments, that marriage is an institution ordained by God from the foundation of the world, and intended as a lifelong union of one man and one woman. This idea is supported by the account of creation in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Genesis 1:26-28 provides that God created man in His own image, both male and female. This passage makes it clear that God created each person in His image and He created them the sex they were when they were born, either male or female. Therefore, we reject any efforts to identify as or alter the body to another sex other than that which was clearly identified at birth.

Genesis chapter 2 provides a more detailed account in which God created the first man, Adam, and decided that it was not good for him to be alone. (Genesis 2:18). God indicated that He would make "a suitable helper for him." God brought all of the animals to Adam, but none of them was a suitable helper for him, so God then created Eve, the first woman, from part of Adam himself. God did not create a second man to be Adam's helpmate, or an assortment of multiple women, but rather one woman. Together they were man and wife and had "no shame" or sin in their union with each other. (Genesis 2:15-25).

Jesus, the fully divine and fully human incarnation of God, reaffirmed the teaching of the Old Testament (Genesis 2:24) when He said, as recorded in Matthew 19:4-6, "Haven't you read, he replied, that at the beginning the creator made them male and female and said for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

The Apostle Paul, writing authoritatively under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, states in Ephesians 5:22-32 that marriage is not merely a human institution, but is a special divine metaphor that is supposed to illustrate the union of Christ and the church. For this reason

also, only a union between a man and a woman can be a proper marriage, because a union between two men, two women, or one man and multiple women or any collection of people could not properly reflect the relationship between Christ and His church.

I Corinthians 6:9-11 condemns a variety of lifestyles including those associated with adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality. The Bible condemns all forms of sexual immorality and encourages Christians to flee from it because of its destructive effects, and because the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 6:12-20). Romans 1:18-32 makes it clear that it is not only sinful to engage in homosexual unions, but also to approve of such sins in others or encourage their practice. As a result, in order to maintain our consistent Christian witness, we cannot sanction, approve, or promote in any way adultery, fornication, pornography, pedophilia, polyamory, polygamy, bestiality, or homosexual or transgender unions. This is made clear also by countless other verses throughout the Old Testament as well as by these and other passages in the New Testament.

Our church follows what the Bible reveals as the "sure foundation" of the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles (Matthew 7:24-29 and I Corinthians 14:37). The church is called to teach and practice those teachings and is not at liberty to depart from them for a different authority if it is to authentically bear the name "Christian." Though we strive to live peaceably with all people and to obey legitimate government authority, in instances involving matters as foundational as marriage we must ultimately obey God rather than man if the two come into conflict (Acts 4:18-22).

Sexual activities outside of marriage, including but not limited to fornication, adultery, incest, homosexuality, pedophilia and bestiality are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the church. Lewd conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation or distribution or viewing of pornography are incompatible with God's intention.

Our Faith-Based Policy on Marriage and Human Sexuality

- 1) As a result of these above described religious beliefs and our belief in the need for a practice of fidelity to these beliefs, it is our policy that the facilities of this church may not be used for any ceremony that in any way approves of, solemnizes, supports or allows any union between two living or inanimate beings or objects that do not agree with the mandates that are laid out in the Bible. Such unions would include but are not limited to same-sex union or a polygamist or polyamorist union, a union where one or both of the parties are professing a gender that is different than that at birth, a union which is of too close an affiliation of blood according to biblical standards (Leviticus 18:1-18), a union between a human and an animal, a union between a human and a machine or object, or any union which, in the judgment of the Elders, in some way constitutes child abuse. It is also the policy of the church that no pastor or member of the church staff shall officiate at any ceremony designed to solemnize, promote, create, or approve of such a union. Nor may any member of the church enter into such a union without being subject to church discipline.

A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the church only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of marriage found in this Policy Statement.

Who can be married at Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids?

- 1) Typically, only those who attend this church regularly and at least six months. This may be reviewed by the board of Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids at any time.
- 2) Both the man and the woman must have a consistent testimony of true conversion and continual living faith in Christ. (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).
- 3) Both the man and the woman must agree to and sign Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids' statement of faith.
- 4) The couple must remain sexually abstinent and live separately until marriage.
 - a) A couple that is "living together" will be required to move out of that living arrangement and practice sexual abstinence from the time of the request to be married until after the wedding ceremony.

Remarriage

- 1) Who, if they were once married and now are not, can Biblically be remarried? We believe the Bible gives us four situations where this may be allowed.
 - a) Where adultery has led to divorce, the offended party is free to remarry. Where divorce has been enacted on unbiblical grounds, that freedom is not present. (Matthew 19:9)
 - b) Where a couple has divorced, but later have reconciled, they may remarry one another. (1 Corinthians 7:10-11)
 - c) Where an unbelieving spouse has left a believing spouse, the believing spouse may remarry. Where a believing spouse has left an unbelieving spouse, the believing spouse may not remarry unless there are extenuating circumstances such as abuse or neglect that caused the believing spouse to leave the relationship. (1 Corinthians 7:15)
 - d) Where a spouse has died, the widow or widower may remarry if they so desire. (1 Corinthians 7:39-40)

What is required to be married at Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids?

- 1) All of the above conditions must be met.
- 2) Pre-marital counseling, as determined by the Senior Pastor, with the Senior Pastor or other leadership member of Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids as designated by the Senior Pastor.

- 3) Rehearsal or final meeting with the Pastor to go over the details of the wedding ceremony itself.
- 4) All music, readings, and activities for the rehearsal, wedding, reception and other related functions that take place at the church must be approved by the church leadership prior to the events taking place.
- 5) All guest musicians, photographers, DJ's or any other outside participants in the rehearsal, wedding ceremony or reception must be approved by church officials.
- 6) All of the items in this section must be completed prior to the final meeting to go over the details of the wedding or prior to the rehearsal itself.
- 7) No real open flame candles will be used in the church building without prior approval from the church leadership. Any approved candles will be drip-less, have proper wax collecting safeguards and have proper, sturdy holders. Any approved candles will be placed where they will not be easily knocked over or provide any hazard to any persons or the facilities of Calvary Chapel.
- 8) If applicable, the Building Use Policy will be agreed upon and strictly adhered to during the entirety of the Wedding event, i.e. rehearsal, wedding ceremony, dinner, and reception.

Who Can Officiate a Wedding Service?

- 1) Only the Pastoral staff of Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids or a Pastor or other Minister who is approved by the Pastoral Staff of Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids may perform a wedding service in this church.
- 2) Any visiting Pastors or other Ministers who participate in a wedding service must be pre-approved by the Pastoral staff of Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids.

Scheduling

- 1) The wedding date should be scheduled far enough in advance to comfortably accommodate any pre-marital counseling, including time for missed sessions due to holidays, illness or vacations if any.
- 2) A wedding will not be scheduled at a date or time that interferes with any regular worship service or other church event.

Use of the facilities for showers, rehearsal dinners, luncheons or receptions.

- 1) No alcohol or other intoxicating substances are allowed on the church property.

- a) Anyone under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances will be asked to leave the property.
- 2) There will be no irreverent language or discourteous actions from the wedding party, others involved in the wedding in any way or from guests.
 - a) Anyone using irreverent language or acting in a discourteous manner will be asked to leave the church property.
- 3) Dates for weddings are on a first come first served basis.
- 4) The church sound systems will only be operated by trained personal that are part of the Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids Sound Ministry.
 - a) Set up and take down of such equipment will be done by those personnel only.
 - i) Need for this equipment and the services of a sound technician will be made known well in advance of the wedding date.
- 5) Decorating:
 - a) Without prior board approval, nothing may be attached to the walls of any rooms in the church building.
 - b) Without prior board approval, there will be no decorations on the walls or ceilings of the sanctuary.
 - i) Only the stage and seating areas of the sanctuary may be decorated.
 - c) All decorations will be put up on the day of the wedding unless prior permission has been given by the church leadership.
 - d) All decorations must be removed on the day of the wedding unless prior permission has been given by the church leadership.
 - e) Any decorations not removed as required will be taken down by church personal and disposed of and a cleaning fee will be assessed. Any decorations removed by church personnel will be discarded.
- 6) Use of the fellowship hall:
 - a) The fellowship hall may be used for rehearsal dinners and/or receptions.
 - b) The fellowship hall must be cleaned and returned to its original condition immediately after each event.
 - c) All cooking and serving items must be washed; sinks, tables, and counter tops must be washed and wiped down; trash removal will be the responsibility of members of the wedding party; floors must be mopped, carpet must be vacuumed; and tables and chairs must be returned to their original positions.
 - d) Any damaged items must be reported to a church representative. Any spills on the carpet must be cleaned up and reported to a church representative.
 - e) No food will be left at Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids after any of the events.
- 7) Cleaning:

- a) Please make sure all trash is picked up and disposed of throughout the building, all items returned to their original places, and that there are no damages done to any portion of the facilities. Damages can include candle wax on the floors (all candles and candelabras should have plastic underneath them and only drip-less candles should be used), stains on carpets or walls, dressing areas not cleaned up and returned to original condition, etc.
 - b) Also, you must have all of your items cleared out of all areas by the agreed upon time. Not having your items and all members of the wedding party off the premises puts a greater stress on our facilities crew to have the church ready for services.
- 8) The nursery areas are not available for use during rehearsals, wedding ceremonies or receptions due to liability issues.
 - 9) The church officials will identify and provide changing areas for the wedding party.
 - a) Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids will make every reasonable effort to assist the wedding party in protecting their personal items, however, Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids is not responsible for such items that are lost, damaged or stolen during these events.
 - 10) Without prior board approval, there will be no rice, confetti, birdseed, bubbles or any other such celebratory items used in the buildings or on the property of Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids.
 - 11) Unless prior other board approval, all rehearsals and receptions must be completed, cleaned up with personal belongings removed and all non-Calvary Chapel personnel off the premises by 10:00 PM the day of the event.

Fees and other charges

- 1) Extra tables, chairs, etc. will be acquired by and at the expense of the wedding party.
- 2) Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids has limited items for the ceremony. If you desire fixtures of furnishing that we do not have, it is your responsibility to rent or purchase them.
- 3) None of Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapid's tables or chairs will be used outdoors. If you desire an outdoor ceremony and/or reception, it will be your responsibility to acquire the necessary tables and chairs.
- 4) Any damage to the facilities including broken items, carpet stains, or areas not being properly cleaned after the events will incur an appropriate charge.
- 5) Any decorations that are left up will be taken down by church officials and a charge for their time will be incurred.

- 6) Any food or other items left behind for the church to clean up will incur a cleaning fee.
- 7) A deposit may be required for all rehearsal dinners, wedding ceremonies and receptions held at Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids.
 - a) The requirement for a deposit and the amount of the deposit will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
 - b) Any such deposits will be made known to the Bride and Groom well in advance of the scheduled events and must be paid prior to the events taking place.
 - c) If there is any damage to the facilities or equipment belonging to Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids and/or cleaning that is required due to the events, the appropriate amount of monies will be withheld from deposit to cover the costs of repair, replacement and/or cleaning.
 - d) The remainder of the deposit will be returned to the Bride and Groom after the events are over and the Church officials have had opportunity to inspect the facilities.

Photographers and Videographers

- 1) The photographer and/or videographer must be courteous, professional, display proper conduct for a solemn Christian service, use appropriate language and must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating substance.
- 2) Any photographer and/or videographer who violates the conditions in this policy will be escorted off the premises by church personnel.
- 3) Photos of the wedding party coming down the aisle may be taken from the front of the church sanctuary as long as the photographer and/or videographer does not interfere with the wedding party or guests.
- 4) Once the wedding party is in place in the front of the church, the photographer and/or videographer may not come forward into the front of the sanctuary so they do not interfere with the view of the guests nor distract from the ceremony.

Legal Obligations

- 1) The party being married must acquire the proper licenses and present them to the church prior to the wedding.
- 2) The Officiating Pastor will submit completed marriage licenses to the proper municipal official within 3 days of the wedding as the law requires.

Exceptions

- 1) Any exceptions to this policy must be discussed and mutually agreed upon by the Senior Pastor and Leadership of Calvary Chapel of Wisconsin Rapids and the Bride and Groom being married.