

**MIDDLETON BAPTIST CHURCH
WEDDING PREPARATION BOOK**



APRIL 2012

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Who may be married at/through Middleton Baptist Church?.....	1
Wedding Preparation.....	2
Fees.....	2
Initial Meeting.....	2
Reserving the Wedding Date.....	3
Premarital Period.....	3
Clergy Participation from Outside Middleton Baptist Church.....	3
Marriage Preparation Classes.....	4
Church Attendance.....	4
The Wedding Ceremony.....	5
Outline of the Wedding Ceremony.....	5
Wedding Ceremony Details.....	5
Decorations.....	5
Music.....	6
Unity/Family Candles.....	6
The Giving of the Bride.....	6
Scripture Readings.....	7
Couple’s Pledges.....	8
Pastoral Counsel.....	10
Exchange of Wedding Vows.....	11
Exchange of Rings.....	17
Additional Considerations.....	20
Wedding Rehearsal.....	20
Marriage License.....	20
Ushers.....	20
Bulletins.....	20
Photography.....	21
Invitations to Pastors for Receptions and Rehearsal Dinners.....	22
Building Usage Guidelines.....	23
Appendix A – Lifestyle Guidelines for Couples Being Married at MBC.....	24
Appendix B – Our Wedding Checklist.....	26
Appendix C – Important Dates and Times.....	28
Appendix D – Our Wedding Plan.....	29
Appendix E – Statement of Consent.....	33

Introduction

We rejoice that you have chosen to be married at Middleton Baptist Church. Our staff has created this booklet; to help you plan your wedding at Middleton Baptist.

People from all cultures and all religions get married. As a result, marriage is not the sole possession of the Church. That you have chosen to be married in/through a Christian Church means that your wedding at/through Middleton Baptist will be a worship service. Therefore, as is the case in all Christian worship, our primary focus is on Jesus Christ, and the Word of God will be used extensively throughout the service.

As you come before God and your guests and pledge your love and life-long faithfulness to each other, the church offers what it has been authorized by Christ to give: God's blessing. Therefore, by choosing Middleton Baptist Church to be part of your wedding preparations, we request that as a couple you do indeed desire God's blessing on your marriage and that you intend for God to be an important, ongoing part of your marriage.

Who may be married at/through Middleton Baptist Church?

In keeping with the nature of Christian marriage, it is our desire to honor what the Word of God teaches regarding marriages that are solemnized at Middleton Baptist or by our staff.

We believe that God ordained marriage as a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman and that marriage is a covenant ratified between a man and a woman in the presence of God and before a number of witnesses. We also believe that sexual intimacy is the final consummating act ratifying this covenant between a man and a woman; therefore, we believe that sexual intimacy is legitimate only within the bounds of the marriage covenant. We believe, as well, that divorce is never God's perfect will for the ending of a marriage. Finally, we believe, that due to the incompatibility of their spiritual lives, it is not God's will that someone who is a committed, professing Christian be married to someone who is a professing unbeliever.

We realize that many couples today, either willingly or out of unfamiliarity with what the scriptures teach about marriage, choose to conduct themselves differently from what God's Word has to teach in this regard. If this happens to be true in your situation and you are seeking to be married at/through Middleton Baptist Church, then you will need to discuss your circumstances with a pastor at our church to determine if the wedding will still be able to take place at/through our church. For a guide as to how your circumstances may affect being married at/through our church, please see Appendix A.

Wedding Preparation

Fees

Mandatory Fee

\$325 – This is a flat fee that all couples will pay regardless if their wedding is held on the Middleton Baptist Church premises or not. \$150 of this fee is due when you reserve your wedding date. The other \$175 is due at least one week prior to the wedding.

Optional Fees

Should you wish Middleton Baptist Church to provide these services for your wedding, the following fees will apply:

\$100 – Pianist/Organist

\$100 – Soloist

The honorarium for any other person involved in the wedding should be worked out with the officiating pastor.

Should the wedding be canceled for any reason, all fees are refundable, except in the case that the couple has completed at least one Marriage Preparation Class. When this is the case, all fees except for **\$50** are refundable.

Initial Meeting

Upon contacting Middleton Baptist Church regarding our involvement in your wedding ceremony, you will be provided with a copy of this Wedding Preparation Book, either in hard copy or by email. After reading this document, should you wish to proceed with a wedding at/through Middleton Baptist Church, please contact the church office (825-3537) and a date will be set for you to have an initial meeting with a pastor from our church. This meeting is an opportunity for you to meet one of our pastors, receive a tour of our facilities (if your wedding is to be held on the premises), and begin to prepare for your wedding ceremony.

Based on the outcome of this meeting, the pastor you meet with will give his/her initial approval for the wedding to be held at/through Middleton Baptist Church. After this approval has been received, you may go ahead with your down payment and book a date and time for your wedding and wedding rehearsal in our church calendar.

In preparation for this meeting, you must have read the Wedding Preparation Book in its entirety. This book will answer many questions you might have concerning weddings at Middleton Baptist Church.

Reserving the Wedding Date

There are a couple of important items you will need to note regarding reserving your wedding date.

1. No wedding date will be considered officially booked at MBC, unless the couple has first signed the “Statement of Consent” at the end of this document and the deposit of \$150 has been paid at the church office.
2. There will be no weddings conducted at/through Middleton Baptist Church between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. This an especially busy and sacred time in the life of our church and we want to be able to take our time to fully focus on the significance of what we are celebrating.
3. Scheduled church activities take precedence over the date you may like to reserve for your wedding. If there is already a scheduled event, generally, it will not be moved to accommodate your wedding.
4. We generally will not schedule more than one wedding per day. Rarely will exceptions be made in this regard.
5. MBC reserves the right, if, due to extenuating circumstances, the pastor you have selected to conduct your wedding becomes unavailable on the date you have selected, to provide another licensed pastor from Middleton Baptist Church to perform the ceremony.

Premarital Period

For the purposes of this document the term “premarital period” shall be used to define the time between the consensual signing of this document by the bride and groom and their wedding day.

Clergy Participation from Outside Middleton Baptist Church

All arrangements for the participation of other clergy from outside Middleton Baptist Church in your wedding ceremony are to be made through a pastor at Middleton Baptist

Church. An invitation to the outside pastor will be issued by a pastor from Middleton Baptist Church, if the involvement of the requested pastor is deemed acceptable.

Middleton Baptist Church reserves the right to decline participation by an outside member of the clergy in your wedding ceremony. All participating outside clergy members must agree to adhere to the *Middleton Baptist Church Wedding Policy (January, 2012)*.

Marriage Preparation Classes

You are required to attend Marriage Preparation Classes, in order for your wedding to be conducted at/through Middleton Baptist Church. Generally, you will need to attend four classes plus the initial meeting but, depending on your circumstances, more may be required. The exact number of classes will be left up to the discretion of the officiating pastor.

If special circumstances exist (ie. you both live away or you are not living close enough to one another to attend sessions together), alternate methods of delivery for Marriage Preparation Classes can be discussed.

Based on the outcome of these classes, the officiating pastor may find it necessary to require you to meet with a professional counselor before agreeing to perform your wedding ceremony. Middleton Baptist Church pastors reserve the right to postpone or cancel the wedding at/through Middleton Baptist Church, if serious concerns about the suitability of the couple for marriage arise.

Church Attendance

All couples being married at/through Middleton Baptist Church are required to regularly attend (at least twice per month) worship services at Middleton Baptist Church during the pre-marital period. If you are currently actively attending another church in the Middleton Area (at least twice per month) then usually this requirement can be fulfilled at that church. Please discuss this with the officiating pastor.

If you live the Middleton area, you may attend another church that has been first approved by the pastor who will be officiating at your wedding. Please discuss this with the officiating pastor, if extenuating circumstances exist where fulfilling this requirement would not be possible.

The Wedding Ceremony

Outline of the Wedding Ceremony:

You may use the following outline, in order to develop a bulletin for your wedding service. Explanation of each part of the wedding ceremony as well as options for you to consider in constructing your wedding ceremony are included below.

While the officiating pastor will seek to be as accommodating as possible in developing your wedding ceremony in consultation with you, final decisions in regards to content, music choices, order of service, etc. will be at his/her discretion.

Prelude
 Lighting of the Family Candles (optional)
 Processional
 Introduction to the Wedding Ceremony
 Invocation Prayer
 The Giving of the Bride
 Scripture Reading (one or two scriptural passages will be read here)
 Couple's Pledges
 Vocalist(s), Congregational Hymn, Musical Piece, or Recorded Music (optional)
 Pastoral Counsel
 Exchange of Wedding Vows
 Exchange of Rings
 Charge to the Couple
 Marriage Prayer & Blessing
 Declaration & Kiss
 Lighting of the Unity Candle (optional)
 Signing the Register (Vocalist(s), Congregational Hymn, Musical Piece, or Recorded Music is often appropriate at this time)
 Presentation of the Couple
 Recessional

Wedding Ceremony Details:

Decorations

The church does not provide candles, aisle cloths, pillow for ring, etc. Nails, tacks and screws are not to be used on walls, furniture or chairs. If candles are used, adequate provision must be made to protect church property from candle drippings. All decorations must be removed in time for regularly scheduled church services.

Music

Music chosen for the ceremony should reflect the sacredness of the wedding ceremony and the fact that it is a service of worship.

Our organist would be happy to assist you in choosing pieces that would be appropriate for such an occasion. If you are using recorded music or inviting vocalists/musicians to participate in your wedding ceremony, please make sure that the officiating pastor has first approved all participants and musical pieces.

Unity/Family Candles

Lighting the candle visually symbolizes the joining of two lives in marriage. You are invited to light a unity candle during your wedding ceremony, if you desire. You should also designate two representatives from your respective families to light the two family candles. This honor is usually given to the mothers of the bride and groom, if possible.

A variation of this is the sand ceremony where two vials of sand are blended together in one larger glass vase by the bride and the groom at the end of the wedding ceremony.

Note: You are responsible to provide your own unity candle along with two tapers (side candles and holders).

The Giving of the Bride

Where possible/appropriate, this should be the father of the bride; if the father is no longer living or present at the ceremony then this honor would fall to the bride's mother.

However, other appropriate choices might be the bride's father and mother together, the bride's brother, one of the bride's uncles, or adult or teen child/children of the bride.

It is also acceptable to omit this part of the service, if the bride so wishes.

Regardless of who is chosen to give the bride away, the question asked will be the same. The officiating pastor will ask:

“Who is giving this woman to this man to be joined in marriage?”

The response will be either "I do" or "We do".

Scripture Readings

Usually, two pieces of scripture are read during the wedding ceremony. The following is a list of scripture passages couples frequently ask to have read. Please choose two to be used during your ceremony. If you have a scripture passage you would like read that is not found in the list below, please talk this over with the officiating pastor so that the suitability of the passage for your ceremony can be discussed.

Old Testament Readings

General Theme

<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 1:26-31	Male and female created by God
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 2:18-24	God creates man and woman
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 24:48-51,58-67	Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruth 1:16-17	"Do not press me to leave you"
<input type="checkbox"/> Song of Solomon 2:10-13	Love in the Spring
<input type="checkbox"/> Song of Solomon 5:16	What my lover is like
<input type="checkbox"/> Song of Solomon 8:7	Unquenchable love
<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 61:10-11	I will greatly rejoice in the Lord
<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 63:7-9	The steadfast love of God
<input type="checkbox"/> Jeremiah 32:38-41	God's faithfulness
<input type="checkbox"/> Jeremiah 33:11	The voice...of gladness
<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 29	Worship
<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 33	Worship
<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 34	Worship
<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 63	Worship
<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 100	Worship
<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 117	Worship
<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 127	Unless the Lord builds the house
<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 128	Blessed is the man who fears God
<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 136	Worship
<input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 150	Worship
<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 2:19-20	"And I will take you for my wife forever"

New Testament Letters:

<input type="checkbox"/> Romans 12:1-2	A living offering
<input type="checkbox"/> I Corinthians 7:1-7	Marital duties of husband & wife
<input type="checkbox"/> I Corinthians 12:31-13:13	The song of God's love
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Corinthians 13	The love chapter
<input type="checkbox"/> Ephesians 5:21-33	Marriage and the church
<input type="checkbox"/> Colossians 3:12-17	Live in love and thanksgiving

___ Philippians 2:5-11
 ___ I John 3:16; 4:7-19

Attitudes to build a marriage
 Teaching on love

The Gospels:

___ Matthew 19:4-6
 ___ John 2:1-10
 ___ John 15:9-12
 ___ John 17:22-23

Faithfulness in marriage
 The Wedding at Cana
 Love one another
 Christ's prayer for love and unity

Couple's Pledges

The pledges are an opportunity for the bride and groom to state at the beginning of the service their intentions to be married and that they intend for this covenant of marriage they are entering into to last a lifetime. Please choose one set of pledges from the examples below.

Example #1

Pastor addresses the groom:

_____ will you receive _____ as your beloved wife, to live with her together in the holy covenant of marriage? Will you seek to attend to her needs, both physically and spiritually, and allow God to be Lord of your marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor her, and keep her, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to her so long as you both shall live? If so answer "I will"

Groom: I will.

Pastor addresses the bride:

_____ I will also ask you, will you receive _____ as your beloved husband, to live with him together in the holy covenant of marriage? Will you seek to attend to his needs, both physically and spiritually, and allow God to be Lord of your marriage? Will you love him, comfort him honor him, and keep him, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to him so long as you both shall live? If so answer "I will"

Bride: I will.

Example #2

[The questions are directed separately to, and answered separately by, the bride and groom.]

Pastor: _____, do you pledge to live with _____ in a manner consistent with God's design for marriage? Do you purpose to love [him/her], honor [him/her], and be faithful to [him/her] in times of need and blessing? Do you pledge, with God's help and to the best of your ability, to establish honest, open and loving communication between yourself and _____? Do you promise to remain faithful to _____ as long as you both shall live?

Bride/Groom: I do.

Example #3

_____ and _____, you have made a very serious and important decision in choosing to marry each other today. You are entering into a sacred covenant as life partners in God. The quality of your marriage will reflect what you put into nurturing this relationship. You have the opportunity to go forward from this day to create a faithful, kind, and tender relationship. We bless you this day. It is up to you to keep the blessings flowing each and every day of your lives together. We wish for you the wisdom, compassion, and constancy to create a peaceful sanctuary in which you can both grow in love.

_____, do you understand and accept this responsibility, and do you promise to do your very best each day to create a loving, healthy, and happy marriage until death do you part?

Groom: Yes, I do.

_____, do you understand and accept this responsibility, and do you promise to do your very best each day to create a loving, healthy, and happy marriage until death do you part?

Bride: Yes, I do.

Example #4

_____, will you have _____ to be your (wife/husband), to live together as friend and mate? Will you love (her/him) as a person, respect (her/him) as

an equal, sharing joy as well as sorrow, triumph as well as defeat. And keep (her/him) beside you as long as you both shall live?

Example #5

[The questions are directed separately to, and answered separately by, the bride and groom.]

_____, do you take _____ to be your wedded (wife/husband), and in the presence of God and these witnesses, do you vow that you will do everything in your power to make your love for (her/him) a growing part of your life? Will you continue to strengthen it from day to day and week to week with your best resources? Will you stand by (her/him) in sickness or in health, in poverty or in wealth, and will you shun all others and keep yourself to (her/him) alone as long as you both shall live? If so, answer "I do".

Example #6

[The questions are directed separately to, and answered separately by, the bride and groom.]

_____, will you have _____ to be your wedded (wife/husband), to live together in the covenant of faith, hope, and love, according to the intention of God for your lives together in Jesus Christ? Will you listen to (her/his) inmost thoughts, be considerate and tender in your care of (her/him), and stand by (her/him) faithfully in sickness and in health, and, preferring (her/him) above all others, accept full responsibility for (her/his) every necessity for as long as you both shall live?

Pastoral Counsel

This portion of the wedding ceremony is left up to the officiating pastor's discretion. The pastor's address is usually 7-10 minutes in length and will generally seek to apply a passage of scripture to the themes of love and marriage or the nature of the marriage covenant.

Every ceremony conducted at/through Middleton Baptist Church will have, as part of the ceremony, an address to the couple and congregation from the officiating pastor.

Exchange of Wedding Vows

Please choose one set of vows below as the promises you will make to one another on your wedding day.

Example #1

Groom: _____ I take you now to be my wife. I promise to love you, to trust you, and to cherish you. I will love you when we are apart as well as when we are together, in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad times. I pledge myself to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.

Bride: _____ I take you now to be my husband. I promise to love you, to trust you, and to cherish you. I will love you when we are apart as well as when we are together, in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad times. I pledge myself to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.

Example #2

Groom: I take thee _____ to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth (trust).

Bride: I take thee _____ to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.

Example #3

Groom: I take you, _____, to be my wife and I promise before God and all who are present here to be your loving and faithful husband, as long as our lives shall last. I will love you and give myself up for you, as Christ loves the Church and gave himself up for her. I will serve you with tenderness and respect, and encourage you to develop the gifts that God has given you.

Bride: I take you, _____, to be my husband and I promise before God and all who are present here to be your loving and faithful wife, as long as our lives shall last. I will love you and give myself up for you, as the Church loves

Christ. I will serve you with tenderness and respect, and encourage you to develop the gifts that God has given you.

Example #4

Bride: _____, you are my beloved, my best friend, my partner and my greatest blessing. I choose you above all others, to share my life. I, take you _____ to be my husband, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful wife in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

Groom: _____, you are my beloved, my best friend, my partner and my greatest blessing. I choose you above all others, to share my life. I, _____ take you to be my wife, and I do promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful husband in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

Example #5

Join your right hands please.

Pastor: _____, whom you hold by the hand is to be your wife. In your life, your character and conduct lies her wellbeing. She has given you one of the most sacred things under Heaven - her life and love.

It is not what you bring her in a material way that will make her happiness. Rather, it is your practice of the virtues of a godly husband that will bring her joy.

Will you repeat your vows after me please?

Groom: I _____, take you _____ to be my wedded wife. With deepest joy, I receive you into my life, that together we may be as one. As Christ is to the Church, so I will be to you, a faithful and sacrificial husband. I promise to direct our lives always into faith and hope in Christ Jesus, honoring God's guidance by His Spirit through the word. Therefore, _____ throughout life, no matter what may lie ahead of us; I pledge to you my life as a loving and faithful husband.

Pastor: _____, whom you hold by the hand is to be your husband. In your life and love lies his help and inspiration. He has given you one of the most

sacred things under Heaven - his life and love. It is your practice of the virtues of a godly wife that will bring him encouragement and joy.

Will you repeat your vows after me please?

Bride: I _____, take you _____ to be my wedded husband. With deepest joy, I come into your life that together we may be as one. As you have pledged your life to me, now I too happily give you my life, and in obedience to Christ submit myself to your headship as to the Lord. As the Church is in her relationship to Christ, so I will be to you. Therefore, _____ throughout life, no matter what may lie ahead of us; I pledge to you my life as a loving and faithful wife.

Example #6

Groom: I, _____, take you _____ to be my wedded wife. I take you according to God's will, with God's strength, and placing God first in my life above all else. I promise to be faithful to you, whether better or worse, whether richer or poorer, in sickness, in health, to love and to cherish, until separated by death

Bride: I, _____, take you _____ to be my wedded husband. I take you according to God's will, with God's strength, and placing God first in my life above all else. I promise to be faithful to you, whether better or worse, whether richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and cherish, until separated by death.

Example #7

Groom: _____, I leave what is behind me and come to you making the commitment to our future as your husband. I make this decision knowing that we will face blessings and trials, but I know that our covenant today before God, our family, and friends, will bind us forever.

_____ I make this commitment today to love you, encourage you, challenge you and share openly with you for the rest of our lives, knowing that God will do great work in and through us.

Bride: _____, I leave what is behind me and come to you, making the commitment to our future as your wife. I make this decision knowing that we will face blessings and trials, but I know that our covenant today before God, our family, and friends, will bind us forever.

_____ I make this commitment today to love you, encourage you, challenge you and share openly with you for the rest of our lives, knowing that God will do great work in and through us.

Example #8

Groom: _____, my best friend, my soul mate, and today, my wife, I love you. Now, before God and all these people, I want to promise as your husband to serve you, to support you, and to encourage you with all the beautiful things that Christ has done for you. And just as Jesus gave his whole life for me, so I will devote my life to passionately loving you.

_____ I promise to be tenderly honest and open in every way with you - weeping when you weep, rejoicing when you rejoice. I promise to be submissive to you, out of reverence and love for Christ. As I give you my heart and my trust, I promise that only death will separate us. I make these promises asking for the Lord's grace and mercy. Amen

Bride: _____, my best friend, my soul mate, and today, my husband, I love you. Now, before God and all these people, I want to promise as your wife to serve you, to support you, and to encourage you with all the beautiful things that Christ has done for you. And just as Jesus gave his whole life for me, so I will devote my life to passionately loving you.

_____ I promise to be tenderly honest and open in every way with you - weeping when you weep, rejoicing when you rejoice. I promise to be submissive to you, out of reverence and love for Christ. As I give you my heart and my trust, I promise that only death will separate us. I make these promises asking for the Lord's grace and mercy.

Example #9

Join your right hands, and let the groom say after me:

I, _____ now take you _____ to be my wife, according to God's holy ordinance; to have and to keep from this day forward, whether better or worse, whether richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until separated by death; and now, to you and to God, I make this solemn vow and promise.

Let the bride say after me:

I, _____ now take you _____ to be my husband, according to God's holy ordinance; to have and to keep from this day forward, whether better or worse, whether richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until separated by death; and now, to you and to God, I make this solemn vow and promise.

Example #10

The pastor shall say to the man, "Take _____ by the right hand and say to her:

I take you to be my wife; to laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live".

The pastor shall say to the woman, "Take _____ by the right hand and say to him:

I take you to be my husband; to laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live".

Following the vows it is appropriate for the couple to repeat to each other a scripture like the following:

Groom: "O Magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together".

Bride: "Where you go, I will go, where you lodge, I will lodge, your people shall be my people and your God, my God".

Example #11

The pastor shall say to the man, "Take _____ by the right hand and say to her:

I take you to be my wife; to laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live.

The pastor shall say to the woman, "Take _____ by the right hand and say to him:

I take you to be my husband to laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, to be faithful to you alone, as long as we both shall live.

Example #12

Groom: _____, you are my best friend and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Cherishing you above all others, I joyfully come to take you as my wife.

In the presence of God and this congregation, I promise as your husband to be loving, loyal and faithful and to devote my life to you as Christ did for the church.

It is through Christ's strength that I can keep these vows through all of life's circumstances until death separates us in this world.

Bride: _____, you are my best friend and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Cherishing you above all others, I joyfully come to take you as my husband.

In the presence of God and this congregation, I promise as your wife to be loving, loyal and faithful and to submit my life to you out of reverence and love for Christ.

It is through Christ's strength that I can keep these vows through all of life's circumstances until death separates us in this world.

Example #13

[The groom, then the bride repeat the vows to each other.]

_____, with joy I make this vow to be your [husband/wife]. I promise to love and to cherish you, no matter what life may hold for us, to laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, and to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.

Example #14:

[The groom, then the bride repeat the vows to each other.]

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my [husband/wife], to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow

Writing Your Own Vows

You may wish to write your own vows. They should be consistent with the biblical understanding of marriage and should make clear that the promises are a life-long commitment. The officiating pastor must approve the wording you choose, since it is the officiating pastor who, as a representative of the Church, must certify that a marriage has taken place.

The vows printed above may serve as a good outline for the writing of your own promises.

Exchange of Rings

Please choose one of the examples below as the words you will speak to one another as you exchange rings.

Example 1

Pastor to the groom:

_____ will you take the ring you have chosen for _____ and place it on her finger and repeat after me?

Groom:

_____, with this ring I give to you my promise, to be your faithful and loving husband, to let Christ be our guide as we establish our home, and to devote my life to caring for you. As God is my witness I give to you my promise.

Pastor to the bride:

_____ will you place the ring you have chosen for _____ on his finger and repeat after me?

Bride:

_____, with this ring I give to you my promise, to be your faithful and loving wife, to let Christ be our guide as we establish our home, and to devote my life to caring for you. As God is my witness I give to you my promise.

Example #2

Pastor:

Sanctify, O Lord, this ring that it may be to these thy servants a token of their solemn vows and a pledge of pure and endless love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
 The pastor, taking the ring, shall deliver it unto the man to put upon the fourth finger of the woman's left hand. And the man holding the ring there, shall say:
 "With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee honor, and all my worldly goods with thee I share; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Pastor:

Sanctify, O Lord, this ring that it may be to these thy servants a token of their solemn vows and a pledge of pure and endless love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
 The pastor, taking the ring, shall deliver it unto the woman to put upon the fourth finger of the man's left hand. And the woman holding the ring there, shall say:
 "With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee honor, and all my worldly goods with thee I share; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Example #3

Pastor:

The wedding ring is a symbol of which has two meanings.
 The circle has no end, so the ring is given to signify that each partner's love for the other will be unending.

As gold is a precious and pure metal, so these rings testify to each partner of the value and purity of their marriage.

_____ and _____ will now each give and receive a ring as a token and pledge of pure love and unending commitment.

Groom places ring on the fourth finger of bride's left hand and says:

"I give you this ring that you may wear it as the symbol of the vows we have taken and of the covenant we have made this day".

Bride places ring on third finger of groom's left hand and says:

"I give you this ring that you may wear it as the symbol of the vows we have taken and of the covenant we have made this day".

Example #4

The man will give the ring to the pastor who shall say:

Do you give this ring in token that you will keep this covenant and perform these vows?

The man shall answer: I do

The man shall then place the ring on the third finger of the left hand.

The woman will then give the ring to the pastor who shall say:

Do you give this ring in token that you will keep this covenant and perform these vows?

The woman shall answer: I do

The woman shall then place the ring on the third finger of the left hand.

The man and woman shall join their right hands and the pastor placing his hand over the joined hands shall say:

Let these rings continue to you both a symbol of the value, the purity, and the constancy of true wedded love, and a seal of the vows you have now made.

Example #5

Wedding rings are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual truths. Being one unbroken circle, they symbolize unending love, and as they are worn, they symbolize to others your union in marriage.

May they be a constant reminder of this sacred moment when you pledged yourselves to each other.

[As each places a ring on their partner's finger, they repeat the following words.]

Bride/Groom: _____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my unending love in sealing this vow.

Additional Considerations

Wedding Rehearsal

Generally the wedding rehearsal takes place the evening before your wedding day. However, if a church activity has been scheduled prior to booking your wedding precedence will be given to the already scheduled church activity and other arrangements for the rehearsal will need to be made.

The date and time of your wedding rehearsal should be agreed upon between you and the officiating pastor early on in your meetings together so that it can be reserved in the church calendar.

All members of the wedding party are required to attend the rehearsal so you should make them aware of the date and time as early as possible so that they can make plans to attend.

You and your wedding party are asked to abstain from alcohol completely prior to the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. While weddings are cause for celebration, they are also solemn occasions of worship, requiring a certain standard of behavior. Weddings at/through Middleton Baptist Church are a privilege; therefore, the pastors and wedding coordinator may dismiss any persons in the wedding party who appear intoxicated.

Marriage License

The marriage license should be purchased well in advance of the wedding ceremony. At the very latest it should be brought to the wedding rehearsal and given to the officiating pastor. All personal information on the license and marriage registration form should be filled in before it is given to the pastor.

After the license and certificate are signed at the wedding ceremony the officiating pastor will retain the marriage license and marriage registration form and send it in on your behalf. The pastor will give you the marriage certificate which you can have as a memento of your wedding day.

Please note that the certificate you will be given at your wedding ceremony is not legal proof of marriage. After the marriage, and following the receipt and registration of the Marriage Registration Form, you may apply to Vital Statistics for an official Marriage Certificate, which is legal proof of marriage.

Marriage Licenses in Kings and Annapolis County can be purchased from:

Shirley Mullen
Lake Pleasant, Springfield, NS B0R 1H0
Phone: (902) 547-2820

Louisa G. Cooper
11 Blossom Drive, Kentville, NS B4N 3Z1
Phone: (902) 679-0688

or at the Access Nova Scotia Building in Kentville.

Ushers

A minimum of two ushers (more if more than 150 guests) are necessary in order to seat and dismiss guests. Ushers should be mature people, as the nature of their task requires confidence and decisiveness.

Bulletins

It is helpful, but not necessary, to have printed bulletins to inform members of the congregation of the order of worship and the names of participants in the worship service. You should discuss the use of the bulletin with the pastor. Purchase of bulletin covers and printing are the responsibility of the couple. The Middleton Baptist Church does not print wedding bulletins.

Note: The bulletin is the best place to remind your guests that no pictures should be taken during the service.

Photography

Only your designated photographer will be permitted to take pictures during the wedding ceremony so please make sure your guests are informed that they will not be permitted to take pictures during the wedding ceremony.

If you intend on using the sanctuary or any other part of Middleton Baptist Church for your formal pictures before or after the ceremony please inform the officiating pastor beforehand so that the custodian can be advised as to when he/she might begin to set up for Sunday morning worship.

Video taping your ceremony is permissible, but must be done in an unobtrusive manner.

Please include the following notice in your wedding bulletin:

Please refrain from taking pictures during the wedding ceremony. Thank You.

Invitations to pastors for receptions and rehearsal dinners

Many times it is difficult for the pastor to attend either your rehearsal dinner or your wedding reception. If you would like either the Pastor or the Pastor and his/her spouse to attend such events, please invite them well in advance (at the same time you send your other invitations is customary). This will give the pastor time to respond to your invitation and avoid surprises.

Building Usage Guidelines

If your wedding will be held at Middleton Baptist Church you must adhere to the following guidelines when using our building:

- The entire old part of the church is reserved for your wedding ceremony and can be made use of including the basement. The new addition to the church is not automatically reserved and another event may be booked there if it is deemed by the officiating pastor and the facilities rental coordinator not to be too intrusive to the wedding ceremony.
- Rental requirements for other areas of the church may be discussed with the senior pastor and facilities rental coordinator.
- No food or drinks are permitted in the sanctuary.
- Smoking is prohibited within the church building at all times.
- Rice or confetti will not be thrown on the church premises.
- No alcoholic beverages will be allowed on the church premises at any time.
- All damage caused is the responsibility of the group requesting use of the facilities.

Appendix A

Lifestyle Guidelines for Couples Being Married at MBC

The Bible has much to say regarding marriage and the use of our sexuality, which is given to us as a gift from God and is to be enjoyed within the boundaries He sets for us.

At Middleton Baptist Church we take the Bible very seriously. In the Statement of Faith we have adopted as a church we state that we believe the Scriptures:

“...are the only perfect, supreme, infallible and sufficient standard of faith and practice.”

It is our desire then that all of our practices as a church conform to the standard of God’s Word, and this includes our wedding practices.

We understand that many couples, either by conscious choice or out of unfamiliarity with what the Scriptures teach, choose to overlook what the Bible has to teach about marriage and sexuality when making choices regarding these matters. These choices however do not negate our responsibility as a Christian church to uphold and conform our practices to what the Scriptures teach regarding marriage and sexuality.

Four common places where couples today may find themselves at odds with what the Bible teaches regarding marriage and sexuality are in the areas of premarital sexual intercourse, divorce/remarriage, a professing Christian who would like to marry a professing non-Christian, and in how marriage is to be defined. As we have wrestled together as a church regarding what the Bible has to teach on these matters we have established the following guidelines concerning solemnizing the marriages of couples who fit into one or more of these four categories:

1. Premarital Sexual Intercourse

In cases where the couple has already engaged in sexual intercourse before exchanging their wedding vows, by their desire to be married through Middleton Baptist, we assume that they wish to make this wrong a right. This being the case in order to demonstrate a repentant heart and to respect the fact that God intends sexual intercourse to be celebrated only within the confines of marriage we request that couples must remain celibate and refrain from sexual activity at all times during the pre-marital period.

2. Divorce/Remarriage

Divorce is never God's perfect will for marriage (Malachi 2:16), however due to sin in the relationship divorce does at times occur. There are four circumstances in the Scriptures under which remarriage is permitted once divorce has occurred: i) divorce occurred prior to conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17), ii) divorce occurred because of sexual unfaithfulness by spouse (Matthew 19:9), iii) desertion by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15), iv) former divorced spouse is deceased (Romans 7:3).

If a divorced person does not meet the Biblical criteria for remarriage, acknowledging that other extenuating circumstances often relate to divorce, the Pastor will determine if the wedding should take place. Middleton Baptist, realizing God's position on divorce, (Malachi 2:16), and that God is forgiving (Psalm 103:12), requests that the Pastor include in the determination process the following criteria where applicable: i) Reconciliation with the former spouse is not a possibility (Romans 12:18), ii) The divorced person has repented and displays a changed heart and attitude (Psalm 51:10), iii) The divorced person has sought forgiveness from God and his or her former spouse (Colossians 3:13).

3. Professing Believer Marrying a Professing Unbeliever

The Scriptures make it clear that a Christian should not be joined with a non-Christian because of the incompatibility of their spiritual lives; we believe this includes marriage (2 Corinthians 6:14).

If one member of the couple is not a professing Christian and the other is an effort will be made to clearly explain the gospel message to the unbelieving partner, with the hope that he/she will come to faith in Christ, but no marriage between a professing Christian and a professing non-Christian will be performed at/through Middleton Baptist Church.

4. Defining Marriage

Based on our Biblical convictions about marriage, as a matter of belief, doctrine and religious practice, Middleton Baptist Church reserves the term "marriage" for the covenant relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. No other couple-type will be considered for marriage at Middleton Baptist Church.

Appendix B

Our Wedding Checklist

Wedding Preparation Checklist:

- Made contact with a pastor from MBC
- Read the 'Middleton Baptist Church Wedding Preparation Book' and signed consent form
- Attended an initial meeting with a pastor from MBC
- Paid \$150 fee to reserve the date and time for the wedding ceremony and made sure the date was cleared by the MBC secretary.
- Reserved the date and time of the wedding rehearsal with the MBC secretary, informed our wedding party of the date, and told them they were expected to be there.
- Reserved dates with a pastor from MBC for the four Wedding Preparation Sessions
- Began to attend MBC worship services if not already attending
- Attended Wedding Preparation Session 1 and did all home work
- Attended Wedding Preparation Session 2 and did all home work
- Attended Wedding Preparation Session 3 and did all home work
- Attended Wedding Preparation Session 4 and did all home work
- Paid the second \$150 wedding fee plus any outstanding fees at least one week before the wedding ceremony is to take place.

Ceremony Checklist:

- Wedding party have been contacted and they have agreed to participate.
- We have found two people willing to act as ushers to seat our guests.
- Rings have been purchased.
- Photographer has been booked.
- Videographer has been booked.
- Purchased our marriage license, personal information for bride/groom has been filled in, and it has been given to the officiating pastor to be kept on file.
- All musical participants/pieces have been approved by officiating pastor before inviting vocalists/musicians to be involved in the wedding ceremony.
- All others who will take part in the wedding ceremony (ie. readers, other clergy, etc.) have been approved by officiating pastor before inviting them to be involved in the wedding ceremony.
- We have chosen the scripture, couple's pledges, wedding vows, and exchanging of rings and informed the officiating pastor of our choices.
- Final draft of the wedding ceremony has been approved by the officiating pastor.

- Bulletins have been made.
- Candles/candle holders for family/unity candles have been purchased.

Wedding Day Checklist:

- The best man and maid of honor have been given the rings and they have them in their possession when they arrive at the church.
- If pictures are to be taken at MBC before or after the ceremony this has already been discussed with the officiating pastor.
- Our guests have been informed that no pictures are to be taken during the Wedding Ceremony.
- We have ensured there is a pen available on the table where the register will be signed.
- Matches/lighter are available at the front for lighting the family candles.
- We know where we will be gathering after the ceremony for the receiving line.
- We have designated someone to be responsible to remove decorations from the building in a timely manner.

Appendix C

Important Dates and Times

Initial Meeting with Pastor: _____

Marriage Preparation: Session 1 _____

 Session 2 _____

 Session 3 _____

 Session 4 _____

 Additional Session _____

 Additional Session _____

Pre-rehearsal Walk through _____

Wedding Rehearsal: _____

Wedding: _____

Appendix D

Our Wedding Plan

Date & Time of Wedding: _____

Date & Time of Rehearsal: _____

Couple Details:

Groom

Name: _____

Age: _____

Address:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Parents Names:

Father - _____

Mother - _____

Bride

Name: _____

Age: _____

Address:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Parents Names:

Father - _____

Mother - _____

Wedding Participants:

Officiating Pastor: _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Readers: _____

Family Candle Lighters: (Bride) _____

(Groom) _____

Giving Away the Bride: _____

Wedding Party:

Maid of Honor _____ Best Man _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Bridesmaid _____ Groomsman _____

Flower Girl _____ Ring Bearer _____

Vocalist(s)/Musicians: _____

Vocal/Musical Pieces: Processional _____

Register _____

Recessional _____

Couple's Pledges: Example # _____

Couple's Wedding Vows: Example # _____

We will be writing our own vows (please see pg. 17 for further instruction).

Yes _____ No _____

Exchanging of Rings: Example # _____

We would like to be presented as (ie. Mr & Mrs John Doe, Mr John & Mrs Jane Doe, John & Jane Doe, etc.):

Additional Notes: _____

Appendix D

Statement of Consent

We have read and understand everything in this document. By signing our names below we agree to abide by all of the provisions laid out in this document and we understand that our failure to do so may result in the cancelation of our wedding at Middleton Baptist Church.

Groom: _____
Name (Signature) (Date)

Name (Print)

Bride: _____
Name (Signature) (Date)

Name (Print)