

Covenant Ceremonies
At
Glendale Baptist Church
1021 Glendale Lane
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
615.269.0926

In consultation with other like-minded churches; our community of faith; our Worship, Administration, and Ministry Divisions; and our church staff, the Church Council of Glendale Baptist Church has approved the following statements of belief and policy for use in the planning and celebration of covenantal relationships in our church. It is our hope that this document will provide clear guidance without imposing the kind of rigid limitation that our church family finds untenable. As you work through this material in preparation for your service of marriage/union, take care to address items for which further discussion would provide clarification or assistance.

Broadly speaking, human relationships are formalized in two ways. One is a contractual relationship. The other is a covenantal relationship. Contractual relationships are based on the promise that one party makes with another, but in addition, there are state and federal laws that regulate the terms of the vows. Such contracts honor human relationships and preserve good order and fair treatment in society. Covenantal relationships are also based on the promises that one party makes with another, but instead of legal conditions, the vows are based on a spiritual pledge most often made in the context of the faith community.

The Christian Church offers its members the blessings and responsibilities of covenantal relationships. In the presence of God, Christians are invited to make their pledges and promises with one another. A violation of these promises does not necessarily break the law, but it does break the heart. These services of commitment obligate persons to God as well as to each other; therefore, they are considered acts of worship. Parent/child dedication, baptism, holy communion, ordination, and holy unions are among these sacred covenants.

For centuries, the Church performed only covenants, but in the fourth century, when Christianity was made a state religion, the Church conjoined the legal contract of marriage with its blessing of unions. Since that time, the Church has sometimes confused its unique role. It is our belief that the role of the Church is to witness and bless the covenantal relationships, to nurture as a congregation the promises made before God and the gathered people of God, and to be a continual reminder of God's faithfulness in the covenants of our lives.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULING, COUNSELING, FORMS, DEPOSIT

- ◆ At least one of the persons in the couple or a close member of their family shall be a current, active member, a former member, or a regular worshipper in the Glendale Baptist Church family. Requests by those without a significant connection to Glendale will be reviewed by the pastors and the chairs of the Administration and Ministry Divisions and shall be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- ◆ All ceremonies must be scheduled on the church calendar with first priority for Glendale Baptist Church members.
- ◆ The couple should make an appointment with one or both of the pastors for the purpose of discussing their intentions and for scheduling counseling. This must be done prior to the final scheduling of the ceremony. The pastor(s) will conduct the counseling, be advised as to the person who will be counseling the couple, or will refer the couple for counseling.
- ◆ After consultation with the pastors, the couple should contact the Covenant Ceremony Coordinator to schedule the dates of the rehearsal, service, and reception (if desired) on the church calendar. The Covenant Ceremony Request Form will be completed at that time.
- ◆ A refundable deposit must be paid at the time of scheduling. (see details below)

OFFICIATING AT THE CEREMONY

Normally, one or both of the pastors of Glendale Baptist Church will officiate at the service. If a guest minister is to be involved, this should be discussed with pastor(s) during consultation. In choosing to be united in a sacred covenant rather than a civil contract, a couple expresses a desire for the ceremony to be a service of worship as they exchange their vows in the presence of the faith community and of God. Therefore, rites, rituals, and music for the ceremony shall be determined in consultation with the pastor(s) and shall reflect an attitude of worship and reverence.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

FOR GLENDALE MEMBERS

- ◆ Glendale members (defined as currently active members or active watchcare members of the church) may use the facilities without charge. (Members are requested to place a \$200 refundable deposit to cover any loss or damage to church property.)

FOR NON-MEMBERS

- ◆ Non-members will pay a fee of \$200 at the time of scheduling for the use of the sanctuary. If the couple desires to use the Fellowship Hall and kitchen, an additional fee of \$100 is required for the use of these spaces. In addition, a refundable deposit of \$300 is required to cover possible loss or damage to the property. This deposit may be refunded in its entirety or it may be pro-rated in the event that particular damage or loss has occurred.

GENERAL

- ◆ Honoraria for clergy should reflect the time spent with the couple in counseling, the rehearsal, and the service. An honorarium for church members is optional. The fee for non-members is \$250. If both pastors are involved, or if there are extenuating circumstances or needs that do not fit into the regular service of the pastor(s), the couple should discuss the fee directly with the pastor(s).
- ◆ If services of the minister of music or the pianist are needed, arrangements should be made directly with those individuals and compensation offered congruent with the services desired.
- ◆ The Covenant Ceremony Coordinator is the person who works with the church to provide careful use of the building and other items needed for a memorable and joyful ceremony. This coordinator will enable couples to be informed and to receive the help needed. The fee for the coordinator is \$125 for the rehearsal and ceremony, and \$25 for the reception, if needed. The coordinator will be responsible for opening and closing the building for the rehearsal and the service. He or she will be available during those times to answer questions and provide guidance about the use of the facilities.
- ◆ The coordinator is also available to direct the ceremony, but this service is separate and the fee must be arranged with the coordinator. It will be negotiated according to the size and complexity of the ceremony. Prices and payments for above services should be negotiated directly with the Covenant Ceremony Coordinator.
- ◆ Both Glendale members and non-members will be required to pay a minimum of \$75 for the services of the custodian, including rehearsal. Other fees may apply according to the needs of the couple. The coordinator will make arrangements with the custodian for necessary services.
- ◆ The coordinator's decisions in consultation with the pastors will be the final word in matters not addressed by church policy.
- ◆ Your Covenant Ceremony Coordinator will be _____.

SCHEDULE OF FEES

Non-members will be assessed the following non-refundable fees:

Use of sanctuary	\$200
Use of Fellowship Hall and Kitchen	\$100

Kitchen cleanup will be extra and should be discussed with the Covenant Ceremony Coordinator.

- ◆ Fees for the pastor(s), musicians, Covenant Ceremony Coordinator are paid directly to those individuals and not through the church.
- ◆ Payment Worksheet:

	<u>Pay to Individual/s</u>	<u>Pay to Church</u>
Officiating Pastor(s)	\$ _____	
Pianist	\$ _____	
Minister of Music/Soloist	\$ _____	
Covenant Ceremony Coordinator	\$ _____	
Custodial Services*		\$ _____
Deposit (refundable)*		\$ _____
Use of Sanctuary		\$ _____
Use of Fellowship Hall and Kitchen		\$ _____

* Required of members and non-members.

- ◆ All “Pay to Church” fees are payable to Glendale Baptist Church and are to be paid at the time of scheduling.

BUILDING USE

- ◆ No alcohol and tobacco products are allowed on the church premises at any time.
- ◆ No furniture or fixture can be moved without permission. The Covenant Ceremony Coordinator will approve any such changes, and anything moved must be returned to its original place. All wedding items, large or small, which do not belong to the church, must be removed from the building immediately following the ceremony.
- ◆ Only dripless candles may be used in the church building. Candles must never be left unattended and must be extinguished immediately following the ceremony.
- ◆ All decorations, floral arrangements, video and photography plans must be reviewed and approved by the Covenant Ceremony Coordinator. Tacks, tape and wires are not to be used on walls or furniture. Any changes in banners must be made through the coordinator. The banners are handmade and require special handling.
- ◆ Only birdseed or grass seed may be thrown and they must be thrown outside the building.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ For those for whom legal recognition of their union is available and is desired by the couple, a valid marriage license may be obtained from the Davidson County Clerk’s office, Nashville, Tennessee. The license should be given to the officiating pastor prior to beginning the rehearsal.

