

WEDDINGS WITH ADA BIBLE CHURCH

Congratulations! We are excited about your engagement! We highly value marriage at Ada Bible Church. For those called to marry, it can be a significant blessing in their lives.

Creating a great marriage takes a lot of hard, intentional work, support from others and God's direction in your life. As a church, we can help you plan a great wedding and build a strong marriage.

Our wedding process is two-fold:

- **Part One: Wedding Ceremony.** This is the physical planning of the rehearsal, wedding and reception. We have an incredible, experienced staff happy to work with you through the planning process if you are getting married at an Ada Bible Church campus venue. You will be assigned an Events Coordinator to field any questions about your rehearsal, wedding and reception (if applicable, see receptions) planning at Ada Bible. This booklet covers much of that information.
- **Part Two: Discipleship Process.** We want you to continue to deepen your relationship with Christ and each other before and after your wedding. We offer marriage preparation groups to all those desiring to be married at or through Ada Bible. These groups run for six weeks in the winter, spring and fall of each year. We encourage couples to continue with a small group even after the Marriage Prep group. Strong marriages happen when you invest in your relationship and continue to grow spiritually, emotionally, and relationally right from the start.

This booklet will explain Ada Bible's requirements for getting married at or through our church. It will answer the many questions you may have regarding the wedding process.

As a church, we want to make your special day one you will never forget. We look forward to working with you to make your marriage and wedding day everything you want it to be! Please read through this booklet carefully and contact marriages@adabible.org or call 616-622-3175 if you have questions or desire to pursue an Ada Bible wedding.

May God continue to bless you in your pursuit to be married!

WEDDING REQUIREMENTS

We require either the bride or the groom be a member of Ada Bible or a regular attendee of not less than one year at the time you submit your completed wedding application. Additionally, your wedding application must be submitted no less than 6 months and no more than 12 months from the desired date of your wedding. This paperwork is required if you desire to be married at Ada Bible or seeking an Ada Bible pastor for an off-site wedding.

- **To request the wedding packet** contact marriages@adabible.org. The wedding packet consists of three documents: (1) Wedding Application, (2) Engagement Questionnaire and (3) this Weddings with Ada Bible booklet. When you return your completed application and questionnaire, you will be contacted regarding the next steps.
- **Black-Out Dates.** Due to our ministry calendar and schedule, we are unable to host a wedding ceremony or reception at any of our facilities during the month of December or on Holiday weekends. Holidays include New Year's, Easter, Spring Break, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. We will do our best to find an officiant for your ceremony during these holiday weekends; however, we cannot guarantee a pastor.
- **Marriage Prep Class Requirement.** A 6-week marriage prep class (Marriage Prep or Marriage Prep: Remarriage) is required for all weddings at Ada Bible or if you are seeking a pastor from Ada Bible for an off-site wedding. These courses are offered in the winter, spring and fall. Once your application has been returned, you will be added to the list to be contacted about our next class.
- **Remarriage Counseling.** In the case of a remarriage with one or both parties, we require couples desiring to be married at or through Ada Bible to see a professional counselor for a minimum of 8 sessions in addition to participating in the Marriage Prep: Remarriage.
- **Using an Non-Ada Bible Pastor.** If you desire to have a pastor from outside Ada Bible who is spiritually significant in your life perform the wedding ceremony using one of Ada Bible venues, we ask that the pastor share Ada Bible's view of Christian faith and the sanctity of marriage.

We Believe about Marriages

Marriage is a significant commitment. We encourage at least six months of dating and six months of engagement. Take time to truly know each other, make the proper preparations and complete relational work prior to saying "I do."

We believe the Bible directs couples to not be joined together when one is not a believer. If only one partner is actively pursuing God and the other is not, significant conflict in the marriage relationship may occur. We would like to journey with you both in developing a relationship with God before setting a wedding date.

We believe the Bible teaches that marriage is between a man and a woman.

Ada Bible pastors are committed to upholding Ada Bible's Constitution and Doctrines when conducting wedding ceremonies.

Regarding Divorce

We believe God designed marriage to be a lifelong commitment. The dissolving of a marriage relationship is something that brings great pain to God. He seeks reconciliation and restoration. The Scripture even says God hates divorce (Malachi 2:13-16). We believe God, in his infinite grace, allows the dissolving of the marital relationship in limited cases.

Because these situations are complex and require loving discernment, we will consider remarriage on a case-by-case basis with some cases requiring additional counsel with elders or pastors of Ada Bible. We ask couples to seek 8 sessions of professional counseling when considering remarriage.

We believe that a new relationship should not be pursued until the potential of a healthy reconciliation has been exhausted and time for personal recovery has passed. We encourage at least one year to have elapsed from the time the divorce was finalized.

NOTE. We recognize the excitement newly engaged couples experience at this time, and the eagerness you may have to pin down other major decisions including selection of a reception site. **We highly recommend you postpone committing to or announcing any dates until written confirmation is received from our church.** This will prevent any disappointment, frustration or anxiety over canceled dates, unavailable venues and lost deposits.

GETTING STARTED

Ada Bible schedules weddings no less than six months in advance. This time is needed to complete applications, prep courses, counseling and planning as well as schedule pastors and facilities.

1. **Complete a Wedding Application.** Email marriages@adabible.org to request a wedding packet. Return your completed application by email or mail to Marriages, c/o Ada Bible Church, East Paris Campus, 1640 East Paris Avenue, SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546.
2. **Schedule a Marriage Prep or Marriage Prep: Remarriage Course.** After reviewing your Wedding Application, we will contact you to enroll in Marriage Prep or Marriage Prep: Remarriage. Groups are offered in the winter, spring and fall. **The course must be completed before your wedding date.**
3. **Meet the Events Team Coordinator.** If you are having your wedding at an Ada Bible campus, an Events Team Coordinator will contact you once your Wedding Application has been approved and you are enrolled in a marriage prep course. She will serve as liaison between you and the church from this point forward regarding the rehearsal, ceremony and reception*. Additional information will be gathered at this time along with scheduling the initial face-to-face meeting with the Events Team Coordinator. *Effective 2021, receptions at Ada Bible Church are available only to those, bride or groom, having completed Ada Bible membership.
4. **Sign a Wedding Agreement and Pay Deposit.** The Events Team Coordinator will prepare and forward for your review a Facility Use Contract. This contract will indicate the venue, dates and times for the rehearsal and ceremony, anticipated number of guests and fees. You will sign and return it along with a 50% deposit.

Marriage Prep/Remarriage Prep Groups

All couples seeking to marry at an Ada Bible Campus or with an Ada Bible pastor must be enrolled in one of the following marriage prep groups.

MARRIAGE PREP 6 weeks, (1) 2-hour class/week. Donation \$20/couple. This course teaches marriage principles for couples getting married for the first time. Couples will discuss key topics such as communication, conflict resolution, intimacy, finances and faith. Marriage Prep is led by a couple sharing fresh insights and using a highly interactive approach. Couples will take an online assessment which identifies their strengths and growth areas. Marriage Prep and the online assessment/review are required for all who want to be married at Ada Bible or by one of our pastors.

MARRIAGE PREP: REMARRIAGE 6 weeks, (1) 2-hour class/week. Donation \$20/couple. This course is designed for couples thinking about remarrying. It will explore such issues as finances, parenting issues and relationship dynamics. All couples remarrying will take an online assessment which identifies their strengths and growth areas. Marriage Prep:

Remarriage also require eight sessions of professional counseling in addition to course enrollment for all who want to be married at Ada Bible or by one of our pastors.

THE WEDDING VENUES

Weddings at Ada Bible may be scheduled for Fridays or Saturdays. You may schedule a wedding on Saturdays as late as 11 am at the East Paris, Kentwood and Knapp Street Campuses and 1:30 pm at the Cascade Campus. All Saturday events and activities must conclude by 3 pm; therefore, we are unable to host Saturday receptions. Weddings will not be scheduled in December or holiday weekends at any campus due to our ministry schedule.

Your wedding fee includes four hours on the day of the wedding including before the wedding, the wedding and at least one hour following. Reception time is in addition (if applicable). Multiple rooms will be available for your use. See Fees on page 10.

Cascade Campus

Celebrate in our beautiful, intimate Chapel which seats up to 250 guests in a front-facing theater format with a 41-foot long flat center aisle. The platform is elevated with three steps covering its full length. Each step is approximately 6.5 inches tall. The Chapel is located upstairs with accessibility by the elevator or stairs.

East Paris Campus

Celebrate in the Auditorium which seats up to 800 guests in a front-facing theater format. It includes two side aisles with four stepped tiers with a 7 inch drop and 12 feet in length. The platform consists of 2 tiers, the Thrust is 22.5 feet long x 6 feet deep, elevated with four 6 inch steps on each side of the Thrust. The platform is 60 feet long x 22 feet deep, elevated with two 6 inch steps in the center. The Auditorium is on the main level with accessibility from all front entrances.

Kentwood Campus

Celebrate in the Auditorium which seats up to 450 guests in chairs. It includes a 44-foot long center aisle with three stepped tiers of 8 inches each. The platform is elevated with four 6.5-inch stairs. The Auditorium is on the main level with accessibility from all front entrances.

Knapp Street Campus

Celebrate in the Auditorium which seats up to 800 guests in a front-facing theater format. It includes a 46-foot long center aisle with three stepped tiers of 8 inches each. The platform is elevated 27 inches with four 7-inch aisle steps on each side. The Auditorium is on the main level with accessibility from all front entrances.

THE RECEPTION VENUES

The wedding reception is just as important to the couple as the ceremony. Effective 2021, Ada Bible Church will approve wedding receptions only for those, either bride or groom, who have completed membership at Ada Bible Church.

Ada Bible has the following areas available for receptions:

Cascade Campus

The Atrium is the primary reception area, though the Bridge may be reserved for celebrations with 50 or fewer guests. The Atrium is a bright open space and offers access to the outside courtyard. It will accommodate up to 250 guests for plated or buffet style receptions, and up to 400 guests for standing hors d'oeuvre or cake and punch receptions.

East Paris Campus

The Atrium is the primary reception area. The Atrium is a bright open space. It will accommodate up to 200 guests for plated or buffet style receptions, and up to 250 guests for standing hors d'oeuvre or cake and punch receptions.

Kentwood Campus

The Atrium or Theater may be reserved for receptions. The Atrium is a bright open space with large windows. It will accommodate up to 192 guests for plated or buffet style receptions, and up to 300 guests for standing hors d'oeuvre or cake and punch receptions. The Theater is a cozy open space. It will accommodate up to 128 guests for plated or buffet style receptions, and up to 150 guests for standing hors d'oeuvre or cake and punch receptions.

Knapp Street Campus

The Atrium is the primary reception area. The Atrium is a bright open space with access to a patio. It will accommodate up to 216 guests for plated or buffet style receptions, and up to 250 guests for standing hors d'oeuvre or cake and punch receptions.

FOOD & BEVERAGES

You may provide food and beverages prepared and served by friends or family members or catered. The Events Team Coordinator must approve all food and beverages in advance. All food must be brought in cooked and ready to serve, or ready to warm on-site. All foods must be removed immediately following the reception. You or your food service provider should bring containers and wrappings for any leftover items. If you will need them, bring a cake knife and server, toasting glasses and party favors. **Please note that all punch must be non-red and all beverages must be non-alcoholic.**

Catering

If you choose to use a catering service, we encourage you to schedule a site visit with the Events Team Coordinator to tour the kitchen with the caterer. This will allow you to see

everything the church provides for your use. The caterer or wedding couple is to provide all tableware, napkins and table coverings. Also, you are responsible for cleaning up the kitchen, in accordance with the posted Kitchen Use Policy.

THE REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is an integral part of any wedding. First and foremost, a wedding ceremony is a worship service and should be conducted properly and with reverence. The wedding rehearsal helps to insure this will happen.

The wedding rehearsal is typically scheduled for a Friday wedding on Thursday at 5:30 pm or for a Saturday wedding on Friday at 6 pm. Days and times may vary.

The rehearsal will involve the entire wedding party including the pastor, bride, groom, attendants, and both sets of parents, vocalists and any other musicians. Stand-ins can be used if someone (other than the bride or groom) has to be late. The Events Team Coordinator will supervise the rehearsal—carrying out the plans you have made with the Events Team, instructing everyone on proper wedding etiquette and the procedures involved. This includes directing the staging and giving cues for every element of the program from the prelude music and seating of the guests through the recessional and receiving line (if included). The officiating pastor will guide the bridal party through the ceremony.

If you are having a rehearsal dinner after the wedding rehearsal, you will need to allow an hour and a half for the arrival, rehearsal and departure of the bridal party. Set the time of the dinner accordingly.

What to Bring to the Rehearsal

The more you bring the night of rehearsal—the less you forget for the wedding day!

1. Practice bouquet
2. Wedding shoes to practice the processional
3. Bride's gown, bridesmaids' dresses and groomsmen's attire (must prearrange with the Events Team Coordinator)
4. Copies of map/directions to the rehearsal dinner
5. Copies of map/directions to the reception
6. Marriage license
7. Balance of wedding fees
8. Printed programs
9. Any recorded music or video that will be part of the ceremony (must be provided at least one week in advance of the rehearsal date)
10. Decorations/ceremony elements
11. List of who will be helping to setup and teardown on the wedding day

THE WEDDING DAY

Flowers & Decorations

The bridal couple will provide their own decorations, which must be approved by our Events Team Coordinator during the planning process. We allow many types of decorations including chuppas, arbors or trellises, candelabras, strung lights and aisle runners (not available from the church). Candles are permitted for both the ceremony and reception; however, *open flames are not permitted*, with the exception of the Unity Candle and candelabras for use during the ceremony. All other candles must be in a glass enclosure, such as a hurricane vase or bowl.

Please note the following items **are not allowed**:

1. Candles with open flames
2. Signage/décor on walls or doors using nails, tacks or screws
3. Red or other dark colored flower petals (for Flower Girls or on carpets)
4. Rice, birdseed, confetti or glitter
5. Dance floors
6. Sparklers may be used only outdoors but require you provide buckets of water or sand for safety

In order for everyone to stay on schedule, **PLEASE RECRUIT ENOUGH FRIENDS OR FAMILY** by the day of the rehearsal to handle the wedding teardown and clean up.

Set Up & Tear Down

Setup and teardown will be your responsibility; however, we will provide assistance from our Facility Support Team and Events Team Coordinator. The Events Team Coordinator will schedule the setup and decorating with you at the time of your final review meeting. Often this is scheduled for the morning of the rehearsal. All decorations must be removed and all rooms must be returned to their normal settings immediately following your celebration.

Photographers & Videographers

Pictures and video recordings can preserve your special day and bring back memories for years to come. Choose your photographer with care, selecting one with a reputation for quality photography as well as respect for you, the worship service and the special guests who will join in your wedding celebration.

It is important that your photographer coordinates with the Events Team Coordinator regarding his/her time schedule and our policies.

- Lighted candelabra or candles are not to be moved at any time. If necessary, extinguish all candles, move the equipment and relight the candles.

- All pre-service photographs in the Chapel/Auditorium are to be completed not less than 30 minutes prior to the wedding service.
- All candid photographs in the Bride's Room are to be completed 15 minutes prior to the ceremony to allow the bride and her attendants time to relax a few moments before the processional.

Officiating Pastor

Ada Bible has several pastors, elders and leaders who are licensed to officiate your wedding. You may request a specific pastor for your wedding although we cannot guarantee availability. Make any of these requests as you complete the Wedding Application. You may have a non-Ada Bible pastor officiate your ceremony with prior approval.

The officiating pastor will contact and meet with you at least twice prior to the wedding day to discuss issues related to the wedding ceremony and its preparation.

Ada Bible pastors are willing to travel to off-site wedding ceremonies within a 50-mile radius of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The wedding fees include the cost of an officiating pastor from Ada Bible. If you are requesting an officiant for an offsite wedding ceremony, and wish to thank your officiant with an honorarium, you may do so. The amount is at your discretion.

WEDDING FEES

Wedding Ceremony

\$400 for members ¹
\$600 for non-members

Fees include:

- Four hours for day of wedding; one hour rehearsal time
- Three hours on day of rehearsal for decorating
- The wedding venue plus two classrooms for bridal party
- Facility support staff (custodial)
- On-site Events Team Coordinator (required)
- One AV tech for rehearsal and wedding
- Use of basic in-house sound and lighting

Wedding Reception

\$400 for members only ¹
not available for non-members

Fees include:

- A maximum of five hours event time
- The reception venue
- Facility support staff (custodial)
- On-site Events Team Coordinator (required)
- Banquet tables and chairs

Additional Fees

The wedding couple is responsible for any damage, extra cleanup or extraordinary charges such as setup requirements, the use of any special equipment, additional staffing needs and use of our kitchen facilities. These fees are determined and charged by the Support Services Director.

¹ Must have completed Ada Bible membership at time of application.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email marriages@adabible.org to start your application process. After your application is approved, any questions concerning wedding dates, rehearsals, reception or other wedding logistics for Ada Bible on-campus weddings will be directed to the Events Coordinator. For all other questions or concerns, contact marriages@adabible.org.