



Policy: Marriage & Wedding

Approved by Board of Elders: October 8, 2024. Updated March 6, 2026.

“For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24

In view of the fact that almost half of marriages in the United States today end in divorce, Oxlip wants to have the confidence that each marriage will remain intact and continue to glorify God for the couples’ entire lives

It is our conviction, therefore, that we as a church are accountable to God in preparing couples for the responsibilities and commitments of marriage. Only then can they more fully experience the total joy and happiness that the LORD desires for their marriage.

We believe that marriage is the exclusive, covenantal union of one man and one woman ONLY—a union which was designed by God. Genesis 2:24 states, *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”*

Jesus Christ affirmed this in Matthew 19:4-6: *“And He answered and said, ‘Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.’”*

Oxlip will faithfully follow this scriptural definition of marriage in the teachings and practices of the church. Therefore, this church will not officiate, solemnize, perform, or host a marriage or marriage-like ceremony involving any union other than one man with one woman as instituted by God. According to Minnesota Statutes, section 517.09 regarding *Solemnization* for doctrinal convictions, Oxlip Church reserves the right to refuse same-sex unions on the basis of Scripture calling these desires and lifestyles sinful (Romans 1:18-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

The services of the Pastor and/or use of the church building should be requested at least six months prior to the wedding to secure the date on the church calendar, to make the needed wedding plans, to meet and work with the wedding coordinator, and to schedule the pre-marital counseling sessions. All of this will be set up with an initial consultation meeting with the pastor to discuss standard fees and requirements prior to agreement on officiating the wedding.

In light of the above, we request that those who desire to be married at Oxlip Church (or under its auspices) (1) read the following Marriage Covenant, (2) commit themselves to our program of preparation, and (3) indicate agreement by signing below.

Marriage Covenant

1. Both parties must have similar religious convictions. In II Corinthians 6:14, Christians are called not to be “unequally yoked” to unbelievers.
2. Both parties must be adults (Minnesota Statutes, section 645.451. In general, the law considers a minor to be an individual under the age of 18) or have special written permission from parent(s). Oxlip requests that both sets of parents approve the marriage, unless the party has been independent of his or her parents for at least a year. If this is a problem, both parties should speak with the officiating pastor.
3. Both parties must agree to participate in a minimum of six counseling sessions with the officiating pastor. Oxlip asks that counseling begin before invitations to the wedding are sent out.

Premarital counseling sessions include, among other topics, the following:

- Biblical Understanding of Marriage
 - Biblical Roles and Expectations
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Communication
 - Financial Matters
 - Parents & In-Laws
 - Sexual matters
4. If this is not the first marriage, then there are four questions for both parties to consider. Because we believe that the following are biblical grounds for remarriage, both parties should be able to answer at least one of the following questions affirmatively if they wish to be married at Oxlip Church.
 - a. Is your previous marriage partner deceased? (I Corinthians 7:39)
 - b. Has your previous marriage partner remarried? (Matthew 19:6)
 - c. Has the former spouse broken the marital commitment by either:
 - Sexual immorality and is unwilling to repent and to live faithfully with the spouse? (Matthew 5:32, 19:3-9, Mark 10:11); OR
 - Desertion or extreme cases of physical or sexual abuse (1 Corinthians 7:15).¹
 - d. Did your unbelieving spouse willfully and permanently leave you because of your faith? (I Corinthians 7:15)

If you cannot answer one of the above four questions with a “Yes”, we will not be able to officiate your wedding.

6. Moral expectations during your engagement:
We ask each person who seeks a Christian wedding at Oxlip Church to accept and agree to the following condition:

The engaged couple will abstain from intimate sexual relations for the entire time of the counseling sessions until the wedding.

¹ See Wayne Grudem, *Divorce and Remarriage* book; also: <https://cbmw.org/2020/06/10/grounds-for-divorce-why-i-now-believe-there-are-more-than-two/>

Even if the individuals have already been intimate (in which case confession and forgiveness is the proper solution), we insist that they resolve to cease such activity by the grace of God.

Note: The reason for this requirement is the conviction that such involvement is sin apart from marriage (I Corinthians 7:1-40, Hebrews 13:4, Ephesians 5:5, I Thessalonians 4:1-18). The counseling we will be providing in preparation for marriage will be hindered by the emotional strains of physical involvement. Individuals simply do not get to know one another's personalities or work through challenges between them when the physical is the primary focus of the relationship. One could wish that the issue of immorality would not have to be raised with couples seeking a Christian marriage, but unfortunately that is not always the case. We will assume that the making of an appointment for an initial session with the officiating pastor entails the acceptance of the above commitment.

Note: The officiating pastor reserves the right to refuse to marry the couple if, from counseling sessions, he senses a strong possibility that the marriage will not be God-honoring.

Above all, Oxlip is committed to honoring the LORD by heeding the marital counsel He gives us through the Bible. We believe that whenever we act in disobedience to God's plan for our lives negative consequences will inevitably follow; conversely, whenever we obediently follow our LORD's will, then blessings will come. Therefore, we strongly urge engaged couples to seek God's will for their marriage plans and resolve to abide by it. We stand willing to assist you in any way that we can to make marriage preparations both purposeful and joyful.

We have read and will abide by the above policy and procedure.

Groom's Signature: _____

Bride's Signature: _____

Officiating Pastor's Signature: _____

Date: _____