EASTSIDE MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on this exciting time of preparation for your upcoming wedding!

If you wish to have an Eastside pastor officiate your wedding, please review the guidelines below and complete and submit the pre-marriage questionnaire to the Eastside office (office@eastside.org.au).

As a church, we believe that marriage has been instituted by God, and that it is for one man and one woman.

The decision about whether an Eastside pastor will officiate a wedding is made by the officiating pastor, but in consultation with the eldership. We believe that the pastors should only marry those who have entered into it thoughtfully, and by those who are prepared well for the demands and responsibilities of the relationship.

GUIDELINES FOR MARRIAGE

#1. Complete the pre-marriage questionnaire. Each person should fill out the following questionnaire separately. When both of you have submitted the completed form your information will be forwarded to the pastor you have requested to officiate your wedding.

#2. Review & discussion around questionnaire. An Eastside pastor will review your completed questionnaire and will contact you with any questions and next steps. Before the eldership can confirm that a pastor can perform your wedding, a pastor may request an initial meeting with the couple. In this session, you can expect the pastor to ask you about information supplied in your questionnaire including: whether you agree with a Christian view of marriage, and the nature of your relationship.

#3. Preparation for marriage. If you are to be married by an Eastside pastor, you will be expected to attend pre-marital session. This will usually be 4-6 sessions with the pastor that will officiate your wedding. Depending on your background and level of preparedness for marriage, the pastor may also request that you supplement your preparation with further counselling.

#4. Use of church facilities. The church facilities may be available for weddings approved by the eldership, but this is subject to our building and grounds usage policy. Usually, the church facilities will only be used for weddings conducted by an Eastside pastor. If you want a pastor from outside Eastside to conduct your wedding, this must be approved by the elders. After the eldership have agreed to your wedding, you should contact the office as soon as possible about your preferred date (office@eastside.org.au).

#5. Travel. If you are not planning on using the church facilities for your wedding, it is important that you carefully consider the distance you will be asking the pastor travel. You should also make sure that a pastor is not left out-of-pocket for travel expenses.

#6. Wedding vows and service. Although the pastor will work with you in planning your wedding service, you must remember that because we believe marriage is God's idea, there will be set things that the pastor will expect. The pastor is also legally bound to marry you according to the rites of the Baptist Union of Australia. This means that any service that is conducted by an Eastside pastor will include: Christian vows that reflect a biblical view of marriage, Bible readings, prayer and a Bible talk.

#7. For those outside Eastside. Eastside pastors can conduct weddings for those that aren't part of the Eastside church family. But this is done with the consent of the elders at Eastside. If you are a Christian, it would also involve discussion with your local church pastor, and only where you agree to these guidelines.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Ideally, we would hope that a couple are well and truly seeking God's wisdom prior to engagement.

This should include, transparently conducting their relationship before your church family, engaging with Christian friends and seeking their prayerful support, seeking out the counsel of older godly people (including an elder), seeking the support and wisdom of parents (where Christian) and reading good books on marriage.

Some books that we recommend include:

Married for God by Christopher Ash
The Meaning of Marriage by Tim & Kathy Keller

QUESTIONNAIRE

*Note: These questions are in an electronic form that can be found here:
https://eastsidecommunity.churchcenter.com/people/forms/996934

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

Name:

Pastor you would like to officiate your wedding:

Name of future spouse:

Email address:

Phone number:

Desired date, time and location of wedding:

FAITH QUESTIONS:

Are you a Christian? If no, what reasons do you have for wanting a Christian wedding.

If you are a Christian, what is your church background and current involvement?

If you are a Christian, How are you currently growing in Christ?

If you are a Christian, but Eastside is not your church home, does your local church support your proposed marriage?

In a few sentences, please explain what you understand a Christian marriage to be?

Describe why you want to marry the person you are engaged to?

FAMILY & HISTORY QUESTIONS:

Will this be your first marriage? If no, please explain your previous marriage context.

What was the family context that you grew up in? (i.e. single parent, married, number of kids)

If you grew up in a married home with parents that were married, how would you describe their marriage?

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

KEYS AND BUILDING ACCESS

Keys are available for pickup from the church office 10 days before your wedding. Email office@eastside.org.au to organise a time to drop in and pick up a key. Please return the key at your earliest convenience after your wedding.

To help with the setup process, it has been our usual practice to have the upstairs auditorium available to the couple by the Monday prior to a wedding, and the downstairs auditorium (and kitchen) available by the Friday prior to a wedding. However, **regular Eastside ministries must always take the first priority in the use of our spaces**. If there is a scheduling conflict where this cannot happen, we will make it known to you in the months prior so that we can arrange a workaround.

Everything will need to be packed up and taken away at the end of the wedding day, as we will need to use our auditoriums for church on Sunday.

KITCHEN

If you are using our kitchen, we kindly request that everything be washed and returned to its proper place at the end of the day, as we use the kitchen regularly on Sundays. Please also supply your own disposable cups/plates/napkins etc.

DOWNSTAIRS AUDITORIUM

If you are using the downstairs auditorium after the ceremony, we kindly request that you arrange a small team of volunteers to help pack away chairs, tables, and any decorations after the event.

SEATING

When our seating is configured for a wedding ceremony (aisle down the middle), our upstairs auditorium can seat 250 people, and our downstairs auditorium (overflow) can seat 75-90 people. Below is a photo of what our auditorium typically looks like set up for a wedding. The band would not usually play from the stage but from the ground at the front right of the stage.

If you are from our Eastside church family, we ask that you please arrange a small team of volunteers to help move the chairs and put them back after the ceremony, as well as pack up any decorations and clean up any confetti.

REHEARSALS

In the week leading up to your wedding day, we generally have two rehearsals. The first is a band rehearsal to play through the songs that will be sung on the day. The second rehearsal is a bridal party rehearsal. This is to practice the movements of the bridal party as you walk down the aisle and take your position on the stage. These rehearsals can take place simultaneously or individually, on different days.

AUDIO-VISUAL REQUIREMENTS

Eastside will always have someone to run the audio/visual equipment for a wedding. For them to best prepare for your wedding day, below are some things to consider.

If you plan for there to be any slideshows, PowerPoint presentations, or videos to be played throughout the ceremony, please get them to the Eastside office at least 48 hours before the ceremony so we can pass them on to the audio-visual team. If you give us a PowerPoint/slides/keynote, it cannot include any slide transitions or animations. Our preferred format for videos is MP4.

We ask that you please also get a run sheet to us at least 10 days prior to the wedding. This will help our Audio-Visual team best prepare as they set up their equipment.

If you have any questions about using our facilities, please contact the church office: office@eastside.org.au