

# WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE

*Congratulations on your upcoming wedding!*

*At Blackhawk Church, we believe that a wedding ceremony should be a Christ-centered celebration of a man and a woman being united by God, and that the basic principles of marriage outlined in the Bible offer the best way to pursue a journey of living and following Christ together.*

*We also believe that a God-honoring marriage goes well beyond the wedding day, so we want to help couples begin their marriage on a strong spiritual foundation.*

*Because our mission at Blackhawk is to build a loving community that follows Christ, our marriage process is for couples who are Christ-followers and consider Blackhawk their church home.*

*The following guide is an overview of our practices, process and pricing that will help you plan a memorable ceremony as well as a healthy, life-long marriage.*

## PRACTICES

**Scheduling** | We encourage couples to allow six to nine months for completion of our premarital process. We are able to work with couples on a shorter timeline but starting the process as early as possible will allow you to get the most out of it.

**Officiants** | Blackhawk has a wonderful team of officiants available for weddings. We would also encourage you to hire a Wedding Coordinator to help with the many details. A Blackhawk Wedding Coordinator is required for onsite weddings and suggested for offsite weddings. They provide oversight and guidance for the rehearsal and ceremony.

**Wedding Venue Location** | Weddings can be held onsite at our Brader Way building, located at 9620 Brader Way, Middleton WI 53562. Our officiants are also available for offsite weddings within a 20-mile radius of Madison.

**Wedding Date** | Our building is not open, and our officiants are typically not available for weddings during holiday weekends, including New Year's, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

**Pre-marital Pathway** | Couples will have an introductory meeting with a pastor from our Marriage Team, participate in an online premarital assessment, and be paired with a couple within our church for five to six sessions of marriage mentoring.

## PROCESS

The premarital process outlined below is *required* for all couples getting married at Blackhawk and/or using a Blackhawk officiant. It is also *available* to any couple who calls Blackhawk Church their home, regardless of whether they are using our facility or one of our officiants (if not, the last 3 steps do not apply).

**Wedding Planning Guide** | Read the entire guide and if you have any questions, please contact Rachel Metzger at [rmetzger@blackhawkchurch.org](mailto:rmetzger@blackhawkchurch.org).

**Couple Profile Form** | Fill out [this form](#) to initiate a conversation about our premarital process, which is designed to draw engaged couples deeper into community at Blackhawk.

**Pastoral Meeting** | Meet with a pastor from our Marriage Team to gather your story and discuss the next steps in our process.

**SYMBIS Assessment** | Take the online SYMBIS (Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts) assessment, which includes topics such as mindset, wellbeing, social support, finances, expectations, personality dynamics, sexual intimacy, communication, conflict resolution and spirituality.

**SYMBIS Appointment** | Meet with a trained SYMBIS Facilitator, who will walk through the results of your assessment with you.

**Marriage Mentoring\*** | Be paired with a mentor couple within our church who will meet with you five or six times to work through a premarital curriculum by SYMBIS. Topics covered will include expectations for marriage, communication, spirituality, finances, and intimacy. Be prepared to spend some time on homework between sessions.

\*There may be situations where professional Christian counseling is recommended instead of or in addition to marriage mentoring, especially in the case of remarriage.

**Site Fee Payment** | You will be billed 3-6 months before your wedding day, and have one month to make your payment.

**Wedding Coordinator Meeting** | Meet with your Blackhawk wedding coordinator to discuss equipment available to you, your rehearsal and ceremony in detail (2 months before wedding).

**Officiant Meeting** | Meet with your Blackhawk pastor to discuss wedding ceremony details (1-2 months before wedding).

## PRICING

### Premarital Process

The cost of the SYMBIS assessment is **\$105** per couple, which includes the assessment itself, as well as a 90-minute session with a SYMBIS Facilitator. There are also workbooks to purchase for the marriage mentoring sessions, which are available on amazon for about **\$20** total.

### Onsite Wedding

**Pastor honorarium** | This amount is up to you (we recommend **\$400** as a guideline) and can be given directly to the officiating pastor at any time (many couples do it the day of the rehearsal).

Wedding in the Atrium | **\$780**

- Seats up to 250 people; an open space with lots of windows that provide great natural light; no stage used in this space

Wedding in the Eastside Auditorium | **\$580**

- Seats up to 800 people; a large space with no windows

Wedding in the Westside Auditorium | **\$580**

- Seats up to 300 people; a smaller, more intimate setting with four large windows that can provide some natural light

Wedding in the Fireside Room | **\$580**

- Seats up to 80-100 people (depending on room set-up); a cozy space with lots of natural light

Included in the Onsite Wedding Fee:

- Facility Use (for rehearsal and ceremony)
- Wedding Coordinator
- Sound Tech (for ceremony only; extra **\$50** for rehearsal)

### Offsite Wedding

**Pastor honorarium** | This amount is up to you (we recommend **\$400** as a guideline) and can be given directly to the officiating pastor at any time (many couples do it the day of the rehearsal).\*

**Wedding Coordinator** | Suggested, but not required. A Blackhawk wedding coordinator is available for a **\$150** fee, paid directly to the coordinator (many couples do it the day of the rehearsal).

\*Please note: In situations where our officiants have made an exception to the 20-mile radius rule, it is customary for them to be provided with compensation for gas and mileage (per the IRS's Standard Mileage Rates), as well as a hotel room, if necessary, on top of the officiant honorarium.

## Questions?

Email Rachel at [rmetzger@blackhawkchurch.org](mailto:rmetzger@blackhawkchurch.org). Please don't hesitate to reach out...we're here to help!