**PASTOR CAVEN’S WEDDING POLICY**

In the realm of human relationships, no decision is more significant or more vital than the decision to marry. Marriage is both a civil ceremony, authorized and recognized by the state, and a spiritual union, approved and established by God. Because of its importance, I take very seriously the responsibility to unite a man and woman together in holy matrimony. When couples ask me to marry them, they have to meet certain criteria and agree to several requirements which I have included below. If you read them over and find that you meet these criteria and you agree to my requirements, then call me and schedule a time to meet with me and talk about your wedding plans and schedule. Please note that these requirements apply *ONLY* to my participation in the ceremony, not necessarily to the use of the church building. That is a completely separate application process and not directly related to my own personal convictions.

1. Both the bride and the groom must be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have accepted Him as Savior, submitted to baptism, and joined a local church. Furthermore, they must agree to be members of the same church after they are married.
2. The couple must have as much as eight hours of premarital counseling. This includes about six hours of video that the couple watches together, and about two hours meeting with Bro. Cole. The premarital counseling includes frank discussions about finances, family, sexual matters, and personality issues.

3) The marriage must be the first marriage for both the bride and the groom, unless you meet one of the following exceptions:

* 1. Your previous spouse passed away.
	2. You are remarrying the spouse you previously divorced.
	3. There are children between the two parties desiring marriage.
	4. You have unequivocal evidence that your previous divorce meets one of the two biblical criteria allowed in Matthew 5:31-32 or 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 (unrepentant and repeated adultery or abandonment by an unbelieving spouse).
1. No alcohol will be served at any wedding function, including the rehearsal dinner and the reception.
2. No music will be played in the wedding ceremony that is inconsistent with Christian principles and lifestyle.
3. The wife agrees to take her husband’s last name.
4. Consistent with Ephesians 5:22, the vows in the ceremony include the promise of “my love, my honor, and my submission” for the bride and the biblical admonition of spiritual servant leadership for the man.
5. The couple agrees to never consider divorce as an option once they are married.
6. The bride and groom agree to complete celibacy from this point until the wedding. If you are living together, you must confess this sin to the Lord and separate immediately. The Bible commands me not to be a partaker in the sins of others (1 Timothy 5:22), and I cannot in good conscience condone sexual immorality by ignoring it until the wedding day. Sex before marriage is just as wrong as adultery after marriage. This point is non-negotiable. I regret that I have to remind Christian couples that God commands sexual purity, but the commitment that you must make is for celibacy outside of marriage and exclusive monogamy within marriage.