

Marriage Policy - Georgetown Christian Reformed Church (GCRC)

Marriage -

Position of the Christian Reformed Church

Marriage is an institution created by God. It is a covenant relationship established by mutual vows between a man and a woman united by God. Permanent unity in marriage is possible in Christ and is demanded of Christ's disciples who are married.

CRCNA Church Order and Its Supplements 2022

https://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/church_order_2022.pdf

Article 69 - Solemnization of Marriage

- a. Consistories shall instruct and admonish those under their spiritual care to marry only in the Lord.
- b. Christian marriages should be solemnized with appropriate admonitions, promises, and prayers, as provided for in the official form. Marriages may be solemnized either in a worship service or in private gatherings of relatives and friends.
- c. Ministers shall not solemnize marriages which would be in conflict with the Word of God.

-Cf. **Supplement, Article 69-c**

Supplement, Article 69-c

The pastoral guidance recommended to the churches by Synod 2016, found in the minority report of the Committee to Provide Pastoral Guidance re Same-sex Marriage (Agenda for Synod 2016, pp. 436-43), represents one example of how synod has determined that a marriage is considered to be in conflict with the Word of God. *(cf. Acts of Synod 2016, p. 918)*

Policy of GCRC

Being married by a Christian pastor (minister) in our church building signifies a commitment to obey the Lord. In light of the teachings of Scripture, the GCRC holds the following position:

- (1) Two Christians, at least one who is from GCRC, who are active members (baptized or professed) in good standing in a Christian church, are encouraged to be married in the church with Council's blessing with an open invitation to the congregation to attend the wedding ceremony. In the case that either one or both are not professing members, they should be strongly encouraged to profess their faith.
- (2) When at least one person of the couple desiring to be married does not show a desire to live in obedience to the Lord, even though one or both may be members (baptized or professing) of the GCRC, Council at their discretion may decline to endorse the wedding and prohibit the pastor from performing the ceremony. Further, the use of the church sanctuary may also be prohibited.
- (3) When it is clear that a professing member of the GCRC seeks to be married to someone who openly professes not to be a Christian, then Council shall not give permission to the pastor to perform the wedding ceremony.
- (4) Non-members who wish to be married in GCRC must show a commitment to Jesus. Therefore, we ask the pastor who will perform the ceremony to send Council a letter or email indicating that the bride and groom are both committed Christians.
- (5) Couples who wish to be married in our church by our pastor (minister), are encouraged to use the forms that are provided by our church. They must agree that the institution and meaning of marriage described therein are God's design and will for marriage. The Form for the Solemnization of Marriage (1979) can be found in the back of the grey Psalter Hymnal titled

'Marriage' (Page ~1010) or online at <https://www.crcna.org/resources/church-resources/liturgical-forms/marriage/form-solemnization-marriage-1979> .

- (6) All weddings which take place in the GCRC, and that are performed by the pastor of this church must be supervised by Council. All weddings performed by our pastor, outside of GCRC, must first be approved by Council, well in advance of the wedding date.
- (7) The pastor is expected to provide a pre-marriage course or a series of counselling sessions to the engaged couple prior to their wedding date, in order to help them build a strong foundation for their future marriage.
- (8) The pastor of GCRC will maintain open discussions with Council as to the requests for weddings.

Divorce and Remarriage – Position of the Christian Reformed Church

Marriage is an institution created by God. It is a covenant relationship established by mutual vows between a man and a woman united by God. Permanent unity in marriage is possible in Christ and is demanded of Christ's disciples who are married. Marriages should not be dissolved; divorce is contrary to God's will. However, by persistent and unrepented sin, people can separate what God has joined together. Scripture acknowledges that certain actions and attitudes that occur in a sinful world and conflict with God's will can destroy a marriage relationship.

Since failure to keep the marriage covenant is sin, the church must exercise a ministry of reconciliation and call marriage partners to confession, forgiveness, reconciliation, and renewed obedience. The church must minister with special concern to those involved in the traumatic experience of divorce, speaking with clarity where sinful conduct is overt and apparent and exercising formal discipline when there is disdain for biblical teaching and when repentance is beyond hope. The church must be a place of acceptance and support for those who have been divorced and for their children.

The church should neither issue a clear prohibition against remarriage, nor attempt to list with legal precision the circumstances under which remarriage does not conflict with biblical teaching. The church must apply biblical principles to concrete situations in the light of its best understanding of what happened in a particular divorce and what is being planned for a particular remarriage.

Policy of GCRC

Each divorced person has become divorced because of unique circumstances. In such circumstances, Council must be diligent in these matters and should prayerfully consider the reasons why a divorcee and their marriage partner are choosing to be married in and by the pastor of GCRC. Further, Council should rely on scriptural doctrine, and on the position that the Christian Reformed Church adheres to in order to determine its response.

Approved August 2007

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