

Community Marriage Policy (CMP) for Frederick County, Maryland

This covenant expresses the common concerns of the faith community regarding the need to strengthen marriages in Frederick County Maryland.

We Believe

- God has established the sanctity and companionship of marriage in scripture.
- God intends the marriage bond between a man and a woman to last for a lifetime.
- God intends religious leaders to nurture the people in their care. This responsibility extends to helping couples prepare for marriage, as well as strengthening, restoring and reconciling marriages already established, and helping step-families to be successful.

Therefore, we will:

- Encourage a courtship of at least one year.
- Promote sexual abstinence outside of marriage and affirm fidelity in marital relationships.
- Provide a premarital preparation process of at least four months that incorporates a recommended minimum of six premarital sessions providing spiritual guidance and use of a premarital inventory such as PREPARE or FOCCUS, administered individually by a marriage mentor couple.
- Provide and promote at least one annual enrichment event in our congregation or in our community, such as a marriage retreat, to help couples improve their communication and conflict resolution skills, and deepen their intimacy. These must be both convenient and affordable.
- Identify, inspire, and train couples with strong marriages to serve as mentor couples for: Couples in serious relationships (pre-engaged), engaged couples, newlyweds, couples wanting to strengthen their relationship, couples experiencing marital difficulties, and couples in second marriages or with step-children.

- Provide restoration mentoring for marriages in crisis that may be at the brink of divorce, primarily through specially trained mentor couples who have restored their own relationship.
- Help separated couples to reconcile by offering them a variety of opportunities, such as a self-guided, 12-week course called "Reconciling God's Way", which is taken with a friend of the same gender.
- Create and promote step-family support groups to help those with children from a previous marriage or relationship to be successful parents and partners.
- Cooperate with other congregations and organizations in sharing family resources for the purpose of building healthy marriages throughout the county.