

Wedding Policy

St. John Lutheran Church

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The Christian Wedding as Worship

After weeks, months, or perhaps years, the two of you have come to the place in your lives where you desire to express before God your total commitment to one another. The steps leading to this point may not have been easy. Yet prayerfully and in faith, you now desire to be joined as husband and wife in a marriage ceremony.

A Christian wedding has God as its primary focus. As such, it is first and foremost a worship service. It is an opportunity to acknowledge God as the source of life and love. God has prepared you for this special relationship. Thus, with thankfulness and praise, you can affirm that God is love!

It is a time to publicly affirm your faith in Jesus Christ. The forgiveness and love, which you receive through Christ, is that which God desires you to share with one another in ever-increasing measure. This is also the time for you to receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit upon your union for unity, peace, and joy.

Many will come to share in your joy. Family members, friends, and neighbors all desire to sense the presence of God through your marriage ceremony.

The following policies and guidelines are designed to enhance communication between the couple, the Pastor, the wedding coordinator, musicians, and the church staff. We truly want you to have a wonderful and meaningful wedding.

Here's the plan in Summary

1. **Contact the Pastor about scheduling a date**
2. **Carefully read our Policies and Procedures for Weddings.**
3. **Contact the Wedding Coordinator to secure the date.**
4. **Contact the organist (other musicians) to secure the date)**
5. **Complete the Prepare survey online (for pre-marital work)**
6. **Meet with the Pastor to prepare for marriage and plan the wedding.**
 - **Usually 3-4 meetings.**
7. **Meet with the musician(s) to plan music.**
8. **Get your Marriage License.**
9. **Gather your wedding party for the Wedding Rehearsal.**
10. **Wedding!**

Planning the Service

Since the wedding service is a worship service, all details concerning the wedding and related arrangements should conform to such practices consistent with the Christian faith and St. John Lutheran Church. The Pastor will work with you to plan and organize your wedding ceremony. We remain flexible and open to celebrating weddings in various ways as long as approved by the officiant in advance.

Scheduling the Wedding

Because of the high volume of requests we receive, weddings are only available for those who are a part of the Purple Door Church family. (The Pastor can make exceptions to this rule under certain circumstances.) We encourage you to schedule at least 6-12 months out.

The Officiant

The Pastor will be in touch within two weeks after we receive your application to schedule an initial meeting to review your application, to begin working out the details of pre-marital coaching, and planning for the wedding itself. Because our Pastor invests a significant amount of time and energy in preparing for weddings, there is a customary honorarium. For weddings more than 1 hour away from the church, travel and lodging costs should be reimbursed as well. Checks should be made out directly to the Pastor and are due any time before the beginning of the rehearsal.

Pre-marital Coaching

Pre-marital Coaching is extremely beneficial in preparing couples for healthy marriages. We require all couples to go through pre-marital coaching. Pre-marital coaching at the Purple Door Church uses the Prepare/Enrich Program. Couples will individually complete extensive surveys online.

Musicians

Our Musicians can be tremendously helpful in planning your wedding. We recommend and prefer that all music for a wedding be performed live. The church musicians will be able to assist you in your selection of music. They may also provide you with resources for musicians, instrumentalists and/or vocalists.

One of St. John's musicians will be the principal musician at all weddings held at the church. They should be consulted at least three months prior to your wedding for the purpose of scheduling and beginning the selection process. Guest musicians are welcome and encouraged to be involved in the service. Guest musicians must be approved by the Pastor.

Wedding Coordinator

We require you retain the services of a Wedding Coordinator. Our Wedding Coordinator will meet with the couple once or twice prior to the wedding, then will be present for the rehearsal and wedding ceremony.

The Rehearsal

A rehearsal for a public wedding is essential.

Plan for the wedding rehearsal to last one hour.

The bride, groom, maid/matron of honor, attendants, flower girl, ring bearer, ushers, parents, and readers should be present at the rehearsal. The duties and responsibilities of each member of the wedding party will be carefully explained during the rehearsal.

Prior to the start of the wedding rehearsal, the church requires:

- All fees, honoraria, etc. be paid.
- Marriage License in the hands of the Pastor.
- Unity Candle and two tapers (if part of the ceremony)

Before the Rehearsal, the couple may:

- Drop off dresses, suits, etc., to be locked in the parlor.
- Decorate the sanctuary, as the church calendar permits.

Policies and Procedures

Music

A wedding is, first and foremost, a worship service. Therefore, Christ ought to be the focus. Select music and hymns which are celebratory and worshipful. The music ought to lift up Christ as the center of the wedding and marriage. Please allow the Pastor and/or organist the right to affirm your musical selections, and if need be, to suggest alternatives. The music and words must be selected with the underlying thought of glorifying God, and must be suitable for a Christian church service. The use of secular texts and music should be reserved for the reception. **The Pastor is responsible for making the final determination on all music.**

Wedding Receptions or Rehearsal Dinners

Our church Fellowship Hall is available to you. Receptions and/or dinners held at the church are to be coordinated with the church staff. Our church does not provide any food. Rental and cleaning fees will apply.

Scripture Readings

Scripture readings help put the marriage in its appropriate context. Marriage is a part of God's creation. It is a commitment of fidelity and love made between two individuals. In a Christian wedding, we make a public profession of our union with Christ. The Pastor is happy to assist the couple in choosing scriptures (typically 1-3).

Alcohol Policy

A wedding is a sacred event, and as such, the serving or consuming of alcohol is prohibited on the church's premises at the rehearsal, wedding and reception (if at St. John). The Pastor will invite any persons who have been drinking to leave the premises (including the bride or groom). Violations of this policy will immediately **CONCLUDE** any festivities held on or in the church facility.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the church.

Flowers

Only real flowers should be used within the worship space; exceptions to this rule are at the Pastor's discretion. Flowers are permitted on flower stands. Flowers may also adorn the candelabra, pew candles, and communion rails. Flowers may not go on the front altar or piano.

Flowers may not be attached using anything that could possibly damage the brass or wood in the church.

Candles

St. John has converted almost all candles to high-quality LED candles. St. John's candelabra and pew candles are available to the couple.

Unity Candle

If a unity candle ceremony is part of the wedding, the couple is responsible for providing the unity candle set.

Aisle Runner

Use of an aisle runner is allowed but is strongly discouraged. Aisle runners create a significant tripping hazard for the wedding party and guests. If the couple chooses to use an aisle runner, the wedding coordinator and Pastor can offer instructions for safer use.

Fertility Blessing

Throwing rice over the newly married couple is an ancient pagan fertility rite. The belief was that the fertility of the rice would be transferred to the couple.

While this rite may still have sentimental value, St. John does not allow the throwing of rice, or confetti over the newly married couple. You may throw birdseed, flower petals, or use bubbles.

Photography and Videography

Photography and videos are an essential part of the memories created during a wedding. Photographers and videographers are not allowed to do anything that will distract from the worship service.

- ❖ Photographers and videographers are to check in with the Pastor upon arriving at the church.
- ❖ No flash photography during the ceremony. (The ceremony begins when the Pastor begins to speak and concludes with the benediction.)
- ❖ Cameras that do not require a flash are acceptable during the ceremony.
- ❖ Proper etiquette by the videographer and photographer should be maintained during the ceremony. Check with the Pastor about any questions concerning this topic.
- ❖ The placement of tripods must be approved by the Pastor.
- ❖ Photos taken before the ceremony must be completed one-half hour before the ceremony begins.

Audio

An Audio Tech will be assigned to your wedding service if the sound system is needed. He/she will also be responsible for setting up any microphones and assist with any audio needs.

Outdoor weddings

Outdoor weddings, either on the church grounds or at another outdoor venue, are subject to the same guidelines as indoor ceremonies. If appropriate, the wedding couple is responsible for covering all travel costs for the Pastor.

The church's wedding coordinator and musicians may be available for off-premises services.

Destination Weddings

For many reasons, destination weddings have great benefits and are gaining in popularity. If you would like one of our Pastor to preside over your destination wedding, the wedding couple is responsible for covering all costs (plane tickets, mileage, car rental, lodging, food, etc, for the Pastor)

Con-Celebrated weddings

In a community with a strong Roman Catholic and Lutheran presence, con-celebrated services allow for a Lutheran Pastor and Roman Catholic priest to preside over the service together. These services are possible but must be jointly coordinated between the Pastor and the Priest. The couple will be subject to the wedding guidelines of both churches, and the couple may be required to do pre-marital work with the Pastor and the Priest.

Holy Communion

Because a wedding is such an important event in the life of a family, and because so many members of the family are present, wedding ceremonies are ideal opportunities for Christian communities to celebrate Holy Communion. At the request of the bride and groom and at the discretion of the Pastor, Holy Communion is available at weddings.

Admission to the sacrament of Holy Communion is by invitation of the Lord, presented through the Church to those who are baptized. Therefore, all present who are baptized Christians and communing members of any Christian church will be welcomed to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Fees and Honoraria

We welcome couples to begin the marriage preparation process at St. John Lutheran Church. Our wedding contributions are divided into two categories. For those members who are active in the life of the congregation with a personal history of support to St. John Lutheran Church (attendance, giving, serving, etc.)—weddings are a part of our ministry to them. To those who are inactive members or guests, we offer fees comparable to other churches within our area.

Guests or Inactive members:

Church	\$250
Pastor	\$300
Prepare Survey	\$40
Wedding Coordinator	\$75
Organist	\$100 (<i>\$125 if accompanying other musicians</i>)
Custodian	\$50
Soloist	\$50-\$100 (<i>recommended depending on amount of music</i>)
Audio Operator	\$50 (<i>depending on time and needs</i>)
Fellowship Hall Rental	(if used) \$75 for 4 hours or less, \$125 for 5 hours or more
Fellowship Hall Cleaning	(If used) \$50

Active Members:

Church	Honorarium is at the discretion of the couple.
Pastor	Honorarium is at the discretion of the couple.
Prepare Survey	\$40
Wedding Coordinator	\$75
Organist	\$100 (<i>\$125 if accompanying other musicians</i>)
Custodian	\$50
Soloist	\$50-\$100 (<i>recommended gift</i>)
Audio Operator	\$50 (<i>recommended gift</i>)
Fellowship Hall Rental	(if used) A gift is at the discretion of the couple.
Fellowship Hall Cleaning	(If used) \$50

Helpful Hints

- Plan to be ready to go about 2 weeks in advance.
- The Church's door locks are all computer programmed. It is the couple's responsibility to contact the church office 1-2 weeks prior to the wedding to schedule which doors to open and when.
- Decorating the Church. Depending on the Church's schedule of events and with the permission of the Pastor, the couple may begin decorating early.
- Have food and water available for the wedding party, prior to the service, on the day of the wedding.
- If appropriate to your wedding party, please advise them that alcohol and smoking are prohibited on the church campus.
- It is often helpful to advise the wedding party regarding your preference for attire at the rehearsal and dinner. Whether you prefer coat and tie or jeans and flip-flops, you are helping them by sharing your preference.
- Schedule a clean-up/transition team to stay after, check for items left behind, straighten up the rooms where the bridal party dresses, and move items (special candles, guest book, floral arrangements, etc.) to the wedding reception. Too often, this forgotten responsible falls on the parents of the bride and groom.

With Pastor:

- If the Pastor's, presence is requested at the rehearsal dinner or wedding reception it is most appropriate to invite him (and his spouse if desired).
- If the couple would like the Pastor to offer a table blessing at the rehearsal dinner and/or reception, please ask ahead of time.
- The Pastor typically wears a white robe for indoor weddings and a suit for outdoor weddings. Please inform him if you prefer otherwise.