

Wedding Planning Guide



Our Savior's Lutheran Church

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your engagement! You are at the beginning of an important journey, and we are honored that you want Our Savior's Lutheran Church to serve in helping you to enjoy your special day, and to help you prepare for life together!

In your planning, we hope these materials will help guide you so that your wedding will be a joyous act of worship. By attending to details in a timely and thoughtful manner now, you and your guests will be able to focus on celebrating your union in the presence and blessing of God.

As you move through this planning process, do so carefully and prayerfully. Consider each detail in turn, and don't worry, all will be ready when the time comes. Remember that marriage is a rite of the church, "intended for the joy and mutual strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family" (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, ELW). The most important thing about your wedding day is not the flowers, the clothes, the pictures, or the party. The most important thing is worshiping the Creator and Giver of all things ... the one who makes the party possible! Our sincere hope is that you will put far more energy into preparing for your marriage than for the single day of this wedding.

This booklet will provide an overview of what is involved in having a wedding at Our Savior's Lutheran. If you have further questions, feel free to contact the Church Office or the Pastor. We want your wedding to be a joyful occasion, and we are here to support you as you prepare. Thank you for inviting us to share this important day in your life.

Please note that the policies and fees presented in this document are subject to change. Feel free to contact the Church Office for confirmation or clarification of these policies.

THE BASICS

Scheduling Your Wedding

One of your first calls will be to the church to schedule the date, place and pastor who will officiate your wedding. Please remember that a wedding date is not set until it is written in the church master calendar and the pastor's personal planner. Weddings are performed for both members and non-members of Our Savior's Lutheran Church upon the discretion of the pastor and after satisfactory completion of three pre-marital counseling sessions with the pastor. If clergy other than Our Savior's pastor(s) are to participate in the wedding, arrangements must first be made with the lead pastor at Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

At Our Savior's there are two locations for a wedding: the Sanctuary, which seats approximately 180 guests; and the Community Life Center (CLC), which can accommodate up to 400 guests. Seating is not the only consideration, however. While both venues are lovely spaces, the Sanctuary offers a more traditional and intimate environment, while the CLC is lighter, more contemporary and more spacious.

We recognize that the date and time for a wedding is often driven by the availability of a reception location. It would be wise to make sure that the church and the pastor are available before making any binding agreements with a reception hall.

Premarital Counseling

All wedding couples are required to attend three pre-marital counseling sessions with the pastor. Throughout these meetings you will be asked to discuss your relationship in terms of family, friends, finances & faith. Communication tools and techniques will be emphasized as well as the importance of being grounded in Christ as you enter into this blessed union by God. At one of these meetings you will also spend time planning and structuring the order of service with the pastor. We ask that prior to your meetings with the pastor you discuss together

what scriptures, music, and vows you would like to use in your service. You can find suggestions in the reference pages of this booklet.

Questions to expect during pre-marital sessions include:

1. How well do you know each other and how well are you suited for each other?
2. What does our love mean to us? How has our love been tested or challenged?
3. Are we ready to establish a home of our own? What expectations do we have of each other in home building? What will make our home a Christian home?
4. Do we have a sound spiritual foundation? Have we discussed our religious values and feelings? Do we attend church regularly together?
5. Are we emotionally, mentally, and physically ready for the full meaning of sex in our marriage?
6. Have we read over the marriage service? Are we ready to accept the marriage vows?
7. Why have we chosen to be married by a minister in a church?
8. What discussions do we need to continue before we are ready to make our marriage vows?

The Marriage License

You must apply for a marriage license in person at a county registrar's office. For a complete listing see: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/osr/registrars.html> At least one of the contracting parties must be present to apply. If either of the parties is not present, their signature must be notarized on the application. You may pick up the license after a five-day statutory waiting period. Licenses are valid for six months from the issue date. No refunds are issued on unused licenses at any time. Both parties are required to provide their Social Security numbers.

If either or both applicant(s) has/have been previously married, information regarding termination of the most recent marriage is required at the time of application. If the most recent previous marriage was terminated by death, the

exact date, as well as the state and county in which the death occurred, must be provided. If termination was by divorce or court annulment, the exact date, county, state, and type of court are required. If termination by divorce or legal annulment occurred within 30 days of the date of application, a certified copy of the decree must be presented for viewing. You are required to show one form of valid ID when applying for a marriage license. Acceptable documents include:

- Current drivers license (Minnesota or other state)
- Clipped Minnesota license with yellow receipt
- Current passport
- Current Minnesota ID card
- Current ID issued by INS
- Military ID
- Naturalization papers with current photo

The name you provide on your application must *exactly* match the name on your identifying document.

The regular fee for a marriage license is currently \$100. It is best to be prepared to pay with cash. This fee is reduced to \$30 for couples who complete 12 hours of premarital education. A licensed or ordained minister or the minister's designee must provide the education, or a person authorized to practice marriage and family therapy. To be eligible for the reduced fee, a premarital education statement must be submitted when the couple applies for the license. This statement can be given to you by the pastor upon request.

You must give your marriage license to the pastor at the wedding rehearsal.

Planning the Wedding Service

The message of worship and rejoicing that you wish to express through your marriage ceremony may be communicated in many ways. There are many options for the order of your marriage service and the elements included in it. Your pastor will help you make choices of scripture, music and service order to express your personalities, your relationship to each other and your relationship

to God. You may also want to consider celebrating the *Sacrament of Holy Communion* as part of your marriage service. As you are being united as one, Holy Communion also unites all the gathered family of God as one body—the Body of Christ. This can add a special feel to your service. Discuss this option with the pastor if you're interested.

Here is an example of the order of service from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (red hymnal) found on pages 286-291.

A Marriage Celebration

Prelude

Solo/Hymn (optional)

Entrance/Processional

Solo/Hymn (optional)

Greeting

Declaration of Intention

Prayer of the Day

Scriptures

Meditation/Sermon

Solo/Hymn (optional)

Exchange of vows

Exchange of rings

Lighting of Unity Candle (optional)

Solo/Hymn (optional)

Marriage Blessing

Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Presentation of the Couple

Recessional

Postlude

Lists of suggested scripture, vows, ring texts and hymns are provided in the reference pages of this guide.

Thinking About Your Wedding Service

(Adapted from "Marriage: A Worship Handbook" by Karen G. Bockelman)

Before your last session with your pastor, when you will discuss the details of the worship service, think about what your marriage means to you. How will the things most important to you be reflected in the service. Use the questions below to make some notes to prepare for this final meeting.

1. How do you understand the wedding as a service of worship?
2. How do you understand the assembly to be involved in supporting your wedding and marriage?
3. What do you want the music to express (through instruments, voice, congregational singing)? What hymns or other music selections might you choose?
4. What Bible readings most clearly express for you God's love, God's intentions for marriage and God's blessings upon those gathered?
5. What promises are at the heart of the marriage vow? What words say that best for you?

The Rehearsal

The evening before the wedding, you will want to schedule a rehearsal. Typically, a wedding is not so complicated that a lengthy practice is needed. However, a brief rehearsal, so that people are comfortable with the timing and location of the parts of the worship service, is essential. This lasts about an hour, but will allow all participants to relax and enjoy the wedding worship, confident in knowing their roles.

Who should attend the rehearsal? Certainly the entire wedding party should attend (bride, groom, attendants, flower girl, ring bearer), along with parents of the bride and groom, ushers, readers and accompanist. The vocalists may or may not attend; however, they will want to do a “sound check” sometime before the worship service.

MATTERS TO CONSIDER

1. **Dressing at the church.** Rooms are provided for the bridal party to use. These rooms ARE NOT LOCKABLE. Please do not leave valuables in these rooms during the taking of pictures or during the worship service.
2. **Pictures and Video.** Years from now, you will want to have detailed remembrances of your wedding day, and certainly pictures and video are a part of this. Most wedding parties take many of the photos before or after the worship service. Flash pictures are not appropriate during the worship service between the Invocation and the Benediction. Taste and discretion is greatly appreciated. Regarding video, the photographer may set up anywhere in the seating area of the Sanctuary or the CLC, however, in the altar area, only a tripod (unstaffed) may be used. Please have the photographer and videographer check with the pastor before the worship begins.
3. **Décor.** We believe that both worship spaces at Our Savior’s are nicely appointed and provide a lovely setting for a wedding. However, you may want to provide your own special decorations. Candles, flowers and ribbons are the

most appropriate decorations in either space. Only living flowers should be placed on the altar. You should not plan to move any of the worship furniture in the front of the worship space. The church is able to provide a pair of candelabra for your use, as well as a unity candle stand, should you choose to use them (couples are responsible for providing all candles). If yours is a Saturday wedding, you may decorate during business hours on Friday, or as early as 8:00 am on Saturday, arranged through the church office.

4. **The Setting.** If you know anything about “seasons” of the Church year, then you know that the Sanctuary or the CLC will look different at different times of the year. For example, during December, the altar colors will be blue for Advent. During February and March, they are likely to be purple for Lent. Most of the spring, summer and fall, the colors are green. The Pastor will help you know what color to expect as you plan your wedding worship.
5. **Musicians and Music.** Because the instruments at Our Savior’s are expensive and unique to our facility, it is recommended that only Our Savior’s musicians play them. However, if you have a musician among your family or friends, arrangements can be made for them to play.

As in creating any worship service, the selection of music is important. You will want to give thought to the music to which you will walk into the worship space, the special music – whether vocal or instrumental – you would like, as well as other selections for prelude, postlude, recessional, etc. Keep in mind that this is a worship service. Love songs or other popular tunes may be very special to you, but are not appropriate for a worship service. Sacred, classical or contemporary Christian music are the appropriate styles for a wedding. The pastor or the accompanist will be happy to assist you in the selection of music.

6. **Alcohol, Drug & Smoking Policy.** The use of alcohol or any illegal drugs anywhere on the church property is prohibited. We reserve the right to postpone or cancel the wedding service if any part of this policy is not adhered to. Smoking is also prohibited inside the church building.
7. **Birdseed, yes; rice, no!** As you and your wedding party leave the church to go to your reception, the joy will be obvious. We ask that your guests do

not throw rice as you depart. Bird seed, flower petals or bubbles would be our suggestion and only outside the building.

8. **Access for the Disabled.** Our sanctuary and restrooms are accessible to persons in wheelchairs, and assisted listening devices are available during all worship services. Please let the church office know if you required special accommodations and we will work to make sure that everyone is able to participate fully in the service.
9. **Clean up.** Our custodian will be responsible for cleaning up the space used during the wedding worship service. However, please be considerate in your use of these spaces. If you provide food for the wedding party during the taking of pictures, please dispose of boxes, bags, bottles and cans before the wedding. If you have rented items, or bring in other decorations, please assign someone to remove them following the service. Remember, our congregation worships early Sunday morning.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Do weddings and rehearsals usually begin at the scheduled time?**
A. Yes. We work very hard to respect your time and your guests' time, and we expect that you will, too.
2. **How long is the wedding ceremony itself?**
A. The wedding service will last approximately 30 minutes.
3. **What items can be left at the church on the rehearsal night?**
A. The unity candle, programs and decorations may be left overnight at the church after the rehearsal, but we cannot be responsible for any clothing, jewelry, electronic equipment, or other valuables. Our Savior's Lutheran Church is not responsible for lost or stolen items left at the church.
4. **What about my marriage license and certificates?**
A. You may obtain your license from the county courthouse. You must bring the license to the wedding rehearsal and give to the pastor. (For more information see the **Marriage License** section.)

5. **Is there a waiting period for the marriage license?**
A. There is a 5-day waiting period in Minnesota. Also note that your marriage license is valid for six months after the date of issue. Please consider applying early.
6. **Does Minnesota require a blood test?**
A. No.
7. **Do we need witnesses to our wedding?**
A. Yes. The certificate of marriage must contain the signature of the officiant and two witnesses who must be at least 16 years of age, usually the best man and maid of honor.
8. **How do I apply for a name change after the wedding?**
A. When you apply for your name change on your driver's license, certificate of title, or identification card you will be required to present a **certified copy** of your marriage record. **Do not file the application to change your name until after the marriage has taken place.** To change your name you will also need your original Social Security card.
9. **Can our children be included in the ceremony?**
A. Yes, we welcome them.
10. **Should we have Holy Communion at our wedding?**
A. This is a decision you will want to discuss with your pastor. Communion is a wonderful way to celebrate unity, but it can be challenging at a marriage service where those in attendance may not share one religious background. In these circumstances, it may highlight more tension than unity.

If you have communion, the whole assembly is invited to commune. It is not appropriate to have communion only for the bride and groom. If you do have communion, you will be asked to provide two to four volunteers to help the pastor administer communion, often including the bride and groom. Communion is administered by intinction.
11. **Should we have a symbol of unity?**
A. A symbol of unity can be done with the use of candles, sand or some other method. Just remember that if you choose to include a symbol of unity in your ceremony, you will need to provide the items that will be used.

REFERENCE: SCRIPTURE

Old Testament

Genesis 1.26-31	<i>Humankind is created by God</i>
Genesis 2.18-24	<i>Created for relationship</i>
Proverbs 3.3-6	<i>Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart</i>
Ecclesiastes 4.9-12	<i>The value of two together</i>
Song of Solomon 2.10-13	<i>The voice of the beloved; Song of two lovers</i>
Song of Solomon 8.6-7	<i>Many waters cannot quench love</i>
Isaiah 63.7-9	<i>God's steadfast love lifts up the people</i>
Jeremiah 31.31-34	<i>The new covenant of the people of God</i>

Psalms

Psalm 33	<i>The Lord is our help and our shield (33.20) Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you. (33:22)</i>
Psalm 67	<i>May God be gracious to us and bless us</i>
Psalm 100	<i>We are God's people and the sheep of his pasture (100.3) Enter his gates with thanksgiving (100.4)</i>
Psalm 117	<i>The steadfast love of the Lord</i>
Psalm 121	<i>The Lord keeps watch over you</i>
Psalm 127	<i>Unless the Lord builds the house Children are a heritage from the LORD (127.3)</i>
Psalm 128	<i>Happy are they who follow in the ways of the LORD</i>
Psalm 136	<i>God's mercy endures forever</i>
Psalm 150	<i>Let everything that breathes praise the LORD (150.6)</i>

New Testament Letters

Romans 12.1-2, 9-18	<i>A living sacrifice and genuine love</i>
I Corinthians 12.31 - 13.13	<i>The greatest gift is love</i>
Ephesians 3.14-19	<i>The breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love</i>
Ephesians 5.21-33	<i>Walk in love, as Christ loved us</i>
Philippians 4.4-9	<i>Rejoice in the Lord always</i>
Colossians 3.12-17	<i>Clothed in compassion, kindness, meekness and patience</i>
1 John 3.18-23	<i>Let us love in truth and action</i>
1 John 4.7-12	<i>Let us love one another for love is from God</i>

New Testament Gospels

Matthew 5.14-16	<i>You are the light, let your light shine</i>
Matthew 7.21, 24-29	<i>A wise person builds upon the rock</i>
Matthew 19.4-6	<i>What God has united must not be divided</i>
Matthew 22.35-40	<i>Love, the greatest commandment</i>
Mark 10.6-9	<i>They are no longer two but one</i>
John 2.1-10	<i>The wedding at Cana</i>
John 15.9-12	<i>Love one another as I have loved you</i>

REFERENCE: VOWS

General counsel about composing original vows or modifying vows: The primary promise in Christian marriage is faithfulness to one another. Keep your vows simple as possible. You'll be living with them the rest of your life! Don't promise anything that is impossible. Avoid words like forever, never, only, always.

Below are optional vows:

1. I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband/wife, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.
2. _____, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.
3. I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.
4. I, _____, take you, _____, for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold, for this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.
5. I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband; and I promise, before God and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful husband/wife; in plenty and in want; in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in health; as long as we both shall live.
6. Before God and these witnesses, I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, and I promise to love you, and to be faithful to you, as long as we both shall live.

7. I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. I promise to love you, comfort you, honor and keep you, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.
8. I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband/wife, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.
9. _____, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.
10. _____, I want to live with you just as you are. I will be honest with you and forgive you. I love you for what you are to me and for what you are to others. I choose you above all others, and promise to be faithful to you as long as life endures.
11. I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and before this community to be faithful to you and to share all that is to come. In times of happiness I will share your joy and laughter. In times of sorrow, I will share your tears and pain. I will forgive as I have been forgiven. I will love as I have been loved. I will join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.
12. I, _____, take you, _____, to be my spouse, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy law; and this is my solemn vow.

REFERENCE: RING TEXTS

Below are suggested ring texts:

1. I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.
2. _____, take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.
3. I give/take this ring as a sign of our covenant.
4. This ring I give you, as a sign of our constant faith and abiding love.
5. _____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you.
6. _____, I give you this ring, as a sign of the covenant we have made today.
7. As this ring has no end, my love for you has no end.
8. I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage. With my body I honor you, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you, within the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

REFERENCE: HYMNS

Below are some suggested hymns from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW):

The marriage rite is a liturgy of the Church, celebrated by the local congregation who offer their witness and support to the couple and who, with them, seek God's blessings on this marriage. As such, only that which is appropriate for the worship of God is included in the wedding service. Music is chosen on the basis of Christian themes of faithfulness, self-giving love, and the seasonal context.

– Worship Wordbook

All People that on Earth Do Dwell	ELW 883
Be Thou My Vision	ELW 793
Beautiful Savior	ELW 838
Borning Cry	ELW 732
For the Beauty of the Earth.....	ELW 879
For the Fruit of All Creation.....	ELW 679
Give to Our God Immortal Praise!.....	ELW 848
Go, My Children, with My Blessing.....	ELW 543
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father.....	ELW 585
In Christ There Is No East or West.....	ELW 650
Joy to the World.....	ELW 267
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee.....	ELW 836
Let All Things Now Living.....	ELW 881
Lord, Be Glorified.....	ELW 744
Lord of All Hopefulness.....	ELW 765
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	ELW 631
Now Thank We All Our God.....	ELW 840
Praise the Lord! O Heaven	ELW 823
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.....	ELW 858
Songs of Thankfulness and Praise.....	ELW 310
This Is a Day, Lord, Gladly Awaited	ELW 586
What Feast of Love	ELW 487

Choose a favorite hymn or one that has meaning to you.

FEES

	<u>Sanctuary</u>	<u>CLC</u>
Building Usage*	\$200	\$300
Pastor	\$250	\$250
Custodian	\$100	\$150
Sound Tech.	NA	\$100
Accompanist - Arranged directly with accompanist		

**Building usage fee is not charged to active members of Our Savior's Lutheran Church.*

All fees must be paid to the church office two weeks prior to your wedding.

A \$100 non-refundable deposit is required to reserve the church. This will be applied toward your total wedding fees.

CONTACTS

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**A CARING COMMUNITY CALLED BY CHRIST TO SERVE AND LIVE IN FAITH.
ENERGIZED, ENGAGED AND EQUIPPED TO DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE TO ALL.**