

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

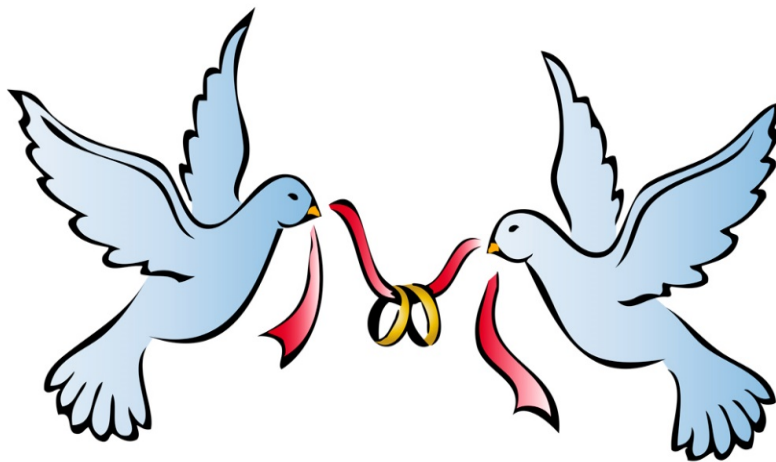
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WEDDING GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH



WEDDINGS AT ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

St John Lutheran Church shares in your joy as you prepare for your wedding ceremony and your marriage. With the hope that your wedding will be as joyous and meaningful as possible, this booklet is intended to provide important information about the guidelines and procedures followed at St John's. May God bless you- on your special day, during the weeks leading up to it, and throughout the years that follow it.

A. MARRIAGE AND THE CHURCH

1. A Christian Rite

There are some very specific Christian beliefs and responsibilities concerning marriage. You should consider carefully whether you wish to have a "Christian" wedding. We do not desire to use our sanctuary as simply a nice setting for a secular wedding. Such events may occur in many other settings, with a civil authority presiding.

St John's wedding coordinators and pastor are also open to working with weddings in outdoor sites or other settings. Other than decorations and facility-related policies, the rest of this booklet would still apply when making these arrangements.

A Christian marriage, as part of God's plan, is intended as a life-long and singular commitment. It is undertaken by two who share a faith in their Lord and a willingness to commit their lives to be together in service to God and humanity. Such a commitment demands not only love, but also gentleness, self control, maturity and many of the other qualities described in Gal. 5:22 and I Cor. 13.

Our Lutheran heritage understands that God does not perform your marriage, nor does the pastor, you do by your promises to one another (see *Vows*). You do this in the presence of the pastor, who represents both church and state and who is the presiding witness to your action. Then, along with the congregation, he/she asks for God's blessing and support for your marriage, and verifies the legality of your union.

Thus, to be married in the church is to recognize God's intentions for marriage. Realizing our own sinfulness and self-centered nature, we seek God's blessing, strength, and support for our marriage. Because you are asking to be married in the church, your marriage service will be consistent with this Christian view of marriage.

2. Worship

While a wedding is a wonderful celebration, it is also a worship service. It begins with an invocation (invoking, inviting God's presence) and ends with a benediction (assurance of God's blessing). Since this is a time spent in God's presence, seeking God's desires for our lives, the order of service needs to be appropriate for a worship setting (see details in *The Ceremony*). The pastor, speaking on behalf of the congregation, has final decision-making authority in these matters.

Also be aware, that as Christians, worship is a vital part of our ongoing life and faith. Many studies have shown that worshipping regularly together strengthens our faith (as individuals and as a couple) and gives marriages their best chance for success. Because of this, you are encouraged you to worship together regularly, before and after your wedding. Please note that St. John's worship service is 9:30 a.m. on Sunday morning.

3. Non-Members

St John's facility is a beautiful setting for a wedding, and non-members can also arrange to use the facility. **Non-Members are required to observe all of the same Wedding Policy expectations laid out for St. John members, including leaving a deposit and signing a contract/agreement.**

B. FIRST STEPS

The following arrangements should be completed before making detailed plans for the wedding.

1. Reserving the Date Through the Church Office

Reserve the date and hour for your wedding by contacting the church office as far in advance as possible. **The date and hour will be entered on the church's calendar and will be reserved for you after you have confirmed them with the office and left a \$75 deposit (this deposit will be refunded, if no excessive cleaning or damage repair is needed, and provided all fees have been paid).**

The church suggests a minimum of 6 months to plan your wedding, unless there are special circumstances (which need to be approved by the pastor).

Reserve the date and hour for your wedding by contacting the church office as far in advance as possible. **The date and hour will be entered on the church's calendar and will be reserved for you after you have confirmed them with the office and left a \$75 deposit (this deposit is non-refundable, but will be applied to wedding costs).** The church suggests a minimum of 6 months to plan your wedding, unless there are special circumstances (which need to be approved by the pastor).

2. Rehearsal

Although a wedding is a worship service and a celebration (not a pageant), a rehearsal is always helpful and usually necessary. It takes about an hour and is normally held the night before the wedding. It is best when the entire wedding party is present for the rehearsal. (Note: musicians and audio personnel need to arrange a time before or after the Rehearsal to make necessary arrangements and/or practice) **PLEASE BE PROMPT.** The rehearsal will not take place unless the License has been submitted and all expenses have been paid.

3. Pastor(s)

The pastor from St John will be involved with every wedding ceremony that takes place at St John's. There is also a general openness, if you wish, for a clergy person from another church to also participate in your wedding. Please discuss this possibility with St John's pastor.

4. Musicians

Musicians should be scheduled as soon as possible in your wedding planning. Organ music is frequently used, however other instruments may also be appropriate. It is best to have one of St. John's organists play for your wedding. A consultation with her will assist you in choosing the music for your wedding. If you choose to use a St. John organist, he/she is required to meet with a St. John organist before using the instrument. You and St. John will want music during the ceremony to be appropriate for worship, so your choices need to be approved by St John's pastor. The organist, the wedding coordinator or the pastor may also help supply you with the names of singers and other musicians or options. While taped or prerecorded music is possible, that involves many potential difficulties. **Remind all musicians that practice times need to be scheduled on the St. John master calendar, to avoid potential conflicts.**

5. Sound System

St. John has a very effective, but very complex sound system. And because it is dedicated primarily for worship purposes, it is to be operated by St. John-trained personnel, only. They will very gladly work with you to provide the sound/music that you desire, however they will make the final decision on all sound/audio matters. This consultation should take place prior to the Rehearsal.

6. PREPARE

Couples married at St John are asked to participate in marriage preparation/counseling. PREPARE is a copyrighted instrument designed to help a couple explore their relationship. As a part of your first meeting with your wedding coordinator, you will make arrangements for completing the inventory. You will process the results with the pastor at your second meeting at the church. Subsequent sessions might be suggested, based on this conversation.

7. Marriage License

Minnesota law requires a Minnesota License to marry in Minnesota, which currently costs \$115 (with additional pre-marriage preparation, this cost can be reduced to \$40). You can apply for your license from the County Clerk of Court in any county in Minnesota. There is a **5-day waiting period to pick it up, and then it is valid for 6 months.** Only one person needs to apply for the license, but he/she must have proof of age for both bride and groom. **Leave the license at the church office two weeks before the wedding so that the certificate can be completed (please also provide the legal names of the witnesses at this time).**

C. PLANNING THE WEDDING

1. Wedding Coordinator

To help ensure that your wedding is as worry-free and as beautiful as possible (both for you and for the church), we provide a wedding coordinator to help guide you with your wedding plans at St. John. She will assist you with details including such things as flowers, candles, seating of guests, receiving line, rehearsal, photographer's guidelines and answering any questions you may have. **After you contact the church office to reserve your wedding date and pay the \$75 deposit, a coordinator will contact you.** The office can provide available coordinators names and phone numbers.

Appendix A is a wedding worksheet, which will be filed in the church office, to facilitate your planning. It will be completed with your wedding coordinator. Please look at it carefully and be thinking about as many details as possible before you meet with the coordinator, and then be prepared to ask questions and hear suggestions.

2. Custodian

The custodian will clean the church before your wedding day, and do 'normal use' clean-up afterward. Please take care of the areas you use, to avoid any fees for damage or extra cleaning. Your wedding coordinator will be the contact person with the custodian.

3. Physical Arrangements

St John's building is first and foremost a place of worship. Seasonal decorations and signs of the congregation's ongoing life will not ordinarily be moved or removed for a wedding. Consult with your wedding coordinator for ideas and options concerning the physical arrangements in the sanctuary.

4. Pre-Wedding Sessions

After your wedding date is reserved and your deposit has been paid, you will normally have at least three meetings at the church, prior to the wedding day. Additional meetings might be scheduled, after making arrangements with the pastor. (1) Initial consultation with the wedding coordinator and instructions for the PREPARE inventory. This meeting is most helpful when it takes place as soon as possible. (2) Process PREPARE results with the pastor and talk about other plans and considerations. (3) Final details and plans are discussed with the coordinator (this usually happens about a month before your wedding day).

D. THE CEREMONY

1. Order of Service

A wedding worship service can make use of a variety of options and participants. The pastor will have many resources to show you, and help you in choosing how your service will come together. Before final printing of the bulletin, please bring a final draft of the order of service to the church to allow the pastor to 'proof' it.

2. Holy Communion

When the couple shares a common belief in Jesus Christ as their Savior, they might wish to celebrate their marriage with Holy Communion. All in attendance who share that belief are always invited to partake of this sacrament. Ask the pastor any questions you might have about this option.

3. Vows

You marry one another by the promises you make. The pastor will provide some models or examples of wedding vows for you to use or personally adapt, or you might create your own vows.

4. Scripture Readings

There are many appropriate and possible readings for a wedding, as well as a variety of Bible translations. The pastor will be happy to help you with your choices.

5. Decorations

If floral decorations (optional) are desired, they are to be provided by the couple. Flowers for Sunday worship are provided by St. John's members and are delivered by a local florist. Often, and at no cost to you, these may also be used at your wedding if you have a Saturday afternoon or evening ceremony. Check with the wedding coordinator if you would like to know more about this option. Please be aware that some oversized or artificial arrangements might not be appropriate to be placed on the altar.

Aisle runners are NOT allowed at St. John.

Please speak with the wedding coordinator about decorating questions or plans, so that you are aware of all that is possible and are not surprised by what is not possible.

Placement of other decorations prior to the wedding and their removal after the service are the responsibility of the wedding party. Decorations should not be attached with tacks, nails, or tape. All seasonal church decorations will remain in place. All decorating plans should be discussed with the wedding coordinator ahead of time, as there are certain seasons of the church year that have special considerations. Decorating can often be done as early as Thursday on the week of the wedding, depending on the Church's schedule of activities. Of course, funerals are not planned far in advance,

so that might create the possibility of last-minute changes in decorating plans.

6. Chancel Paraments

The colored hangings on the lectern, walls, pulpit and altar remain in place, according to the season of the Church Year. They are not changed for a wedding. St. John does have a beautiful set of white wedding parament that can be hung over the seasonal paraments. Your wedding coordinator can show them to you and explain their use.

7. Ushers

Ushers are extremely helpful to light candles, seat guests, etc. At least two for each 100 guests are recommended. Groomsmen or bridesmaids may be used as additional ushers. Ushers should be responsible people, as the nature of their tasks requires confidence and decisiveness.

8. Wedding Bulletins

The wedding bulletin is a guide for worship as well as a treasured memento for those attending the service. The order of service, congregational participation and names of participants are printed inside. If you wish to use bulletins, they can be printed at any commercial printer. Also, with the availability of computers with word processing and graphic art capabilities, preparing the bulletins can be a fun and creative project for the bride, groom or a friend. The wedding coordinator can provide you with sample bulletins, **but it is your responsibility to order or pick up bulletins at a church supply store. The information to be included should be proofed by the pastor a minimum of one week in advance of your wedding. The final proofing is the responsibility of the couple.** Please remember to include the following wording in the bulletin: "Please do not use flash photography during the worship service."

9. Photography

Wedding pictures are lifelong reminders of the joy and excitement of your wedding day. If you plan to secure a professional photographer, it is good to do so as soon as possible. Please remind them that even though they are working for you, they are guests at St. John on the wedding day. Also, flash pictures are not appropriate during the worship, so we ask that all pictures by friends and relatives be taken before or after the service only (a note in the bulletin to this effect is the best way to convey this wish).

It is recommended that pictures be taken before the service. This prevents your guests from having to wait an hour between the wedding and reception, time they hope to spend with you. Arrangements for photography sessions should be talked over with the wedding coordinator, prior to the wedding day. **Picture taking needs to be completed 45 minutes prior-to the start of the ceremony.**

Video taping of the service may be done from the choir loft. Unmanned, stationary cameras may be set up prior to the ceremony, to run during the service. Please make arrangements with the pastor or coordinator at the rehearsal, or earlier.

10. Seating Capacity

St. John worship center can seat 300 guests comfortably, and can accommodate up to 400 (crowded, with folding chairs), when necessary.

11. An Additional Reminder

The wedding is a worship service of the church. Participants and guests should conduct themselves accordingly. The pastor reserves the right to halt any ceremony when a member of the party or guest in the church is not conducting him/herself properly.

E. GENERAL POLICIES

CHURCH HOURS are seasonal, so please consult with the church staff for your needs (this might affect florists, caterers, photographers, decorators, etc..). **The church building is locked when the office is closed, so delivery times might need to be arranged.**

NO RICE/BIRDSEED/SILLY STRING/CONFETTI In or outside the church. (the wedding coordinator can suggest some fun and acceptable alternatives)

ALCOHOL. Alcoholic beverages (or any mood-altering substances) are not permitted in the church or on the premises. **Anyone under the influence on the wedding day (or at the rehearsal) may be asked to leave.**

SMOKING. **No smoking within the church building.**

PROMPTNESS. Please be on time for the wedding rehearsal and photography sessions. Allow sufficient time before the wedding to dress. The wedding coordinator can direct you to areas that can be used as dressing rooms.

VALUABLES. While normally a safe location, unattended valuables are not secure in the building. Please have someone remove them and secure them.

F. EXPENSES

General Comments: For members of St. John there is no rental charge for use of the sanctuary or the greeting area. However, there are fees for some of those who are involved in your wedding. All fees are required to be paid two weeks prior to the wedding.

1. Church Facilitiesno charge
2. Wedding Services (to be paid directly to individuals serving):
 - Pastor \$200
 - Coordinator \$150
 - Custodian \$150
 - Sound Tech \$50
3. Organists/Musicians. . . arrangements for these costs/payments are your responsibility
4. Video Taping arrangements (optional) may be made with St. John personnel \$50



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Appendix A

WEDDING WORKSHEET

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Deposit Paid: _____ Applied to costs _____ Returned _____

Rehearsal Date & Time: _____

Pastor(s) _____ **Coordinator** _____

Bride:

Full Name _____ Address _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ (cell) _____

Occupation _____ Church _____ Age _____

Parents' Names _____

Groom:

Full Name _____ Address _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ (cell) _____

Occupation _____ Church _____ Age _____

Parents' Names _____

Wedding Party:

Maid/Matron of Honor _____

Bridesmaids _____

Best Man _____

Groomsmen _____

Ushers _____

Reader(s) _____

Flower Girl _____ Ring Bearer _____ Candle lighters _____

Organist _____ Singers/Musicians _____

Personal Attendant(s) _____

Set-Up Arrangements:

Arrival Times of Wedding Party _____

Photographer _____ Time Pictures to be Taken _____

Florist _____ Delivery Time _____

Estimated Number of Guests _____ Reception Site _____

Candles (aisle, unity, etc.) _____

Decorations _____ Set-Up Time _____

(back of Appendix A)

Audio/Video _____

Paraments Y/N Guestbook Y/N - Attendant(s) _____

Additional Notes _____

Bridal Escort _____ Bridesmaids escorted? ____ Yes ____ No

Other escorts: Who? _____ Escorted by _____

Who? _____ Escorted by _____

Who? _____ Escorted by _____

Who? _____ Escorted by _____

Who? _____ Escorted by _____

Who? _____ Escorted by _____

Parental Blessing ____ Giving of the Bride ____ Neither ____ Other ____

Pews saved for Bride _____ # Pews saved for Groom _____

Candles lit by _____ Bell rung by _____

Readings _____

Vows _____ Double Ring? ____ Yes ____ No Unity Candle? ____ Yes ____ No

Flowers for Parents? ____ Yes ____ No Surprise? ____ Yes ____ No

Communion? ____ Yes ____ No Veil? ____ Yes ____ No Extra Flowers? ____ Yes ____ No

License Signing? ____ Yes ____ No Receiving Line _____

Final Introduction: _____

Dressing Rooms Needed _____

Special Requests: _____

Other Considerations: _____

We have received, read and understood St. John's Wedding Booklet, and agree to plan our wedding according to the guidelines, procedures, fees and philosophies stated in it.

(Bride's Signature)

(Groom's Signature)

Date _____

Date _____