

A "Wedding Information" booklet was revised by American Lutheran Church Council, in 2003 & 2005, based on existing documents. The booklet as a whole was edited in 2013 and adopted by the congregational Council of American Lutheran Church on _____.

Wedding Information



American Lutheran Church
Grundy Center, Iowa

Marriage and the Church

Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to assist a couple in planning their marriage service in such a way that they will always remember it as a beautiful and significant experience, the memory of which will strengthen their years together. As each marriage is unique, so each wedding ceremony can be planned to be unique and personal. There are options available to the couple for several portions of the service, and the Pastor will suggest these in the process of planning the service.

As Christians...

We believe God ordained marriage to enrich the lives of husband and wife, between wife and husband. In the words of St. Paul to the Ephesian Church, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32

We believe God, along with the church, desires marriage to be a source of faith, joy, love, and fulfillment. Marriages rooted in God's steadfast love will be the most likely to experience these qualities.

While your pastor officiates at your wedding, it is you who bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife, by your promises before God and in the presence of the gathered community. You make your promises in the presence of God, trusting that God will bless and support you as you work together to fulfill them. Thus, to be married in the church is to recognize God's intentions for marriage and to affirm them as your own.

MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

- Congregational song is encouraged as well as solos by vocalists and/or instrumentalists (suggestions will be provided by pastor and/or organist).
- The organist/pianist and soloist(s) are expected at rehearsal. If a soloist is not at rehearsal, the organist may choose not to accompany him/her and other accompaniment will need to be found.
- A list of processional and recessional music is available from each organist (not all organists may be prepared to play every available piece of music). If music not on the organist's list is requested, the couple will provide a legally obtained copy for the organist to keep.
- The couple is expected to provide legally obtained copies of music for both the accompanist and soloist (as appropriate).
- For solos or other special music, we ask that you select sacred, rather than popular music. Examples are available at your request. However, exceptions are made based on the appropriateness of the text of a popular piece of music.
- Accompaniment music for solos/special music is to be provided to the organist prior to the wedding to allow personal rehearsal. The timing of sharing that music is at the discretion of the organist. The couple, without reducing the compensation to the organist will find alternate accompaniment in the event this music is not provided by that time.

Early Steps in Planning Your Wedding

- H. A unity candle may be used on the Altar. The couple shall provide these candles and holders. Please use only white candles. Candles containing color dyes are damaging to Altar linens. Please spread plastic or plastic wrap between the linens and candle holders to protect the linens.
- I. Please ask your guests not to use rice at all. We request that if used, bird seed be handed out outside, and thrown outside only.
- J. Balloon launching is now illegal, for environmental reasons.
- K. If rose petals are used for the procession, the couple or family is expected to remove them following the ceremony on the day of the wedding (they “resist” vacuuming, and are difficult for custodians to remove).
- L. Thermostats (for Air Conditioning and/or Heating) are to be adjusted only by the congregation’s custodian or someone designated by him/her.
- M. Snacks for the bridal party are to be served from the kitchen and consumed only in the fellowship hall.
- N. Any one who is asked to videotape the wedding for the couple is expected to be at rehearsal.

Arrange for Pre-marital Counseling and Wedding Planning

All couples to be married will participate in several pre-marital counseling and wedding planning sessions with your pastor. These are designed to help you look at yourself, your partner, and your relationship as you prepare for married life together, and to help you make important decisions concerning your wedding ceremony.

THE PRE-MARRIAGE INVENTORY: One necessary part of life together is building on your relationship strengths. The Inventory is an instrument that helps you do this. After answering 107 questions about your relationship and expectations, you will be invited to dialog together with our Pastor about the areas in which your relationship is strong, as well as those where it may need to grow. This helps take you beyond the wedding ceremony to a long and successful marriage. There is no cost to the couple. The process covers three to four sessions over a period of several weeks. The results are confidential. Other parts of the discussions with the couple include some wedding details and family histories.

Initial Planning

After wedding date and time are scheduled with our pastor, the next steps in planning (photographer, reception location, etc.) can proceed.

Scheduling and Consulting with an Organist

An organist should be scheduled once the date has been set. It is your responsibility to consult with the organist at least 4 to 6 months prior to the wedding, to discuss music selections. Before you make arrangements with singers or instrumentalists who will participate in your wedding, please read the section “Selecting Solo and Organ Music”, and discuss your plans with our pastor.

Planning the Ceremony

As you meet with our pastor to plan your ceremony, you are encouraged to bring ideas about ways to personalize your wedding. Everything done in the service should be appropriate to a service of worship and consistent with the Christian understanding of marriage.

Selecting Wedding Vows

There are several wedding vows from which you can choose. Our pastor will provide a copy of the various options.

Selecting Scripture Readings

You are encouraged to select Bible readings, either from the list our pastor provides, or others you have chosen. Read through the options as a couple and make your decision for Bible readings together. Friends or members of your family or wedding party may serve as readers of scripture texts if you wish.

Selecting Solo and Organ Music

The *Manual on the Liturgy—Lutheran Book of Worship* reads, “The Marriage Service is a service of worship, and the music therefore must be carefully chosen. The texts should reflect the praise of God, the steadfast love of Christ for his church as the foundation and model for love and fidelity in marriage”.

These guidelines are reminders that music that does not refer to God may not be suitable for a worship service. Music, which does not fit a service of worship, is better used at a wedding reception. If you need assistance in choosing music, your organist, pastor, or the congregation’s wedding consultant, will be able to assist you. All selections are to be approved by the pastor.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. All dates on which church facilities will be used are to be set with the Pastor and/or Parish secretary, and all fees for showers and anniversaries are to be paid at the time of reserving the facility.
- B. All those using church facilities shall leave the rooms, ovens, and refrigerators clean, except for vacuuming.
- C. All those using church facilities will be responsible for any damages to the satisfaction of the Church Council.
- D. The Pastor of American Lutheran Church shall conduct all services held in the sanctuary, whether for members or non-members. Any arrangements to the contrary must be cleared with the Pastor.
- E. The use of flash photos or strong lighting is discouraged during any church service. Such pictures may be taken before or after the service.
- F. Any exceptions to the policies and fees covered herein will need the approval of the Church Council.
- G. It is expected that when a shower or reception is being held at our facility, the couple or those in charge will contact the custodian not less than one week prior to the event to describe the desired arrangement of tables and chairs. If this is not done, the set up may need to be done by someone other than the custodian (i.e. someone with the shower/reception).

FEES:

	MEMBERS	NON-MEMBERS	PAID TO
1. WEDDINGS (and related showers/receptions)			
A. Sanctuary	None	\$50 (min)	American
B. Fellowship Hall & Kitchen	None	\$25	American
C. Custodian (wedding without reception)	\$50	\$75	Custodian
D. Custodian (wedding with reception)	\$75	\$100	Custodian
E. Organist*	\$100	\$100	Organist
F. Soloist*	\$25 (sug.min)	\$25	Soloist
G. Pastor	At your discretion		Pastor
		\$150	American
H. Reception	\$50 (min)	\$50 (min)	Women of ELCA
I. Shower - Custodian	\$25	\$25	Custodian
J. Shower - Facility	None	\$25	American
K. Wedding Bulletins	Actual Cost plus Postage		Publisher
L. Typing and/or copying	None	None	
Wedding bulletins (all information to Church Secretary 7 days prior to rehearsal)			

Note: All immediate fees and expenses for a wedding should be paid in full to the appropriate parties no later than the final meeting of the couple with the pastor prior to the rehearsal. Checks may be dated as of the wedding day, but are to be given to the pastor or other recipients in advance.

* These are fees for musicians secured through congregational channels. If other persons are engaged through family or friendship channels, compensation and/or gifts would be negotiated through those channels.

Photographs and Videos

Because a wedding is a service of worship, no flash pictures or floodlights are permitted during the ceremony. This applies to your photographer and guests. Any pictures taken during the ceremony must be without flash. Flash pictures are permitted as the wedding party is coming down the aisle and as they are going down the aisle at the conclusion of the ceremony.

As a matter of courtesy to your reception guests, you should consider having your wedding pictures taken prior to the service.

You are encouraged to have your wedding video taped. Talk to your pastor about where the video camera(s) should be placed.

Selecting Congregational Hymns

A wedding is a service of worship in which the guests are invited to be participants, not mere spectators. Therefore you are encouraged to incorporate the singing of hymns in your wedding. Pastor Luther can provide you a list of suggested hymns from current congregational resources.

Other Details

Rehearsal

Rehearsals are usually held the evening before the ceremony, and are scheduled with our pastor. The organist will also need to be consulted prior to setting the rehearsal time. All members of the wedding party (bride, groom, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, candle lighters, flower girls, ring-bearers, and parents of the bride and groom) should be present at the time scheduled for the rehearsal. The rehearsal normally takes about one hour.

Ushers

Two ushers are normally sufficient. Additional ushers will be needed if you expect more than 150 guests. Either the bride and groom or two of the ushers will usher people out of the church at the end of the ceremony.

Wedding Bulletin

Many couples wish to have a wedding bulletin which lists the order of service and the names of participants in the wedding party. You can discuss the various possibilities with our pastor.

Seating Capacity of the Church

The church comfortably seats 180 people in the pews on the main level. In addition, as many as 50 chairs can be set up in the back of the sanctuary and another 25 people can be seated in the balcony.

Decorations

Floral decorations and an aisle runner are not necessary, but if desired, must be provided by you. An aisle runner, if used, should be cloth, not paper.

The color of the paraments on the altar are determined by the season of the church year.

The candles on the altar will be lighted for the wedding ceremony. If the wedding candelabras are used, the candles (18) are provided by you. Aisle candles, if used, must be taken down and put away by a friend or relative of the bride and groom (the janitor fee does not cover this). A unity candle may be used, and is supplied by the couple, as are the outside candles.

Conduct of Guests

As the wedding is set within the context of worship, participants and guests are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. The use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted on the church premises (building or parking areas). Persons under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances will not be permitted to participate in the wedding.

The Reception

The Fellowship Hall is available for wedding receptions. If you desire to use this space, please reserve it at the time you reserve the sanctuary for your wedding.

Marriage License & Marriage Certificate

You may apply for a marriage license in the Recorder's Office at any county courthouse in the state of Iowa. The two of you must be present to apply, along with one witness. You will also need your driver's licenses. Once you apply, there is a three day waiting period. The Grundy County Courthouse is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The Marriage License and Certificate of Marriage need to be at the church office no later than the Thursday prior to your wedding. The Certificate of Marriage will be signed by the couple and your witnesses at the church, prior to the reception, or occasionally at the reception.

More Information

Both wedding and rehearsal will start on time. The time for the wedding is to be negotiated with the pastor and may be affected by other weekend activities. However, we would want the building vacated on a Saturday no later than noted below so as to allow our custodians ample time for cleaning.

Wedding only: the church vacated by 8:00 p.m.

Wedding and reception: the church vacated by 7:00 p.m.

The Guest Book will be closed five minutes prior to the beginning of the wedding. Any guests who have not yet signed the guest book will do so at the reception.

Any items belonging to you need to be removed from the church prior to your leaving the building on your wedding day.

Flowers on flower stands may be real, or artificial. The brass vases are not to be removed from the church. The green liners are removed from the church only when taken to the flower shop. They should not be removed from the church following the wedding.

No thumbtacks, staples or masking tape can be used on the woodwork or pews.