

## Weddings at Red Hill Lutheran Church

*“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, <sup>8</sup> and the two shall become one flesh. <sup>9</sup> So they are no longer two but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Mark 10.7-9)*

The wedding day is one of the most joyful and significant days in the life of a bride and groom! At Red Hill Lutheran Church (RHLC), we are deeply committed to equipping men and women to build healthy Christian marriages and families. Our commitment to the bride and groom goes beyond the wedding day! As a church, we desire to be a faith community that offers Biblical care, prayer, and counsel through all ages and life-stages. Consequently, RHLC performs only Christian marriage services. By enquiring about a wedding at RHLC, you are indicating a desire for a Christian marriage.

A Christian wedding, the service of Holy Matrimony, is first and foremost a *Worship service* whereby a couple testifies to their faith in God through Christ, renders thanks to God for the gift of the other, and is meant to reflect the covenantal union of Christ the “Groom” to His “bride,” the church (*Ephesians 5.22-33*). As such, the covenant of Holy Matrimony is the foundation for the vocation of parenting and the building of a Christian family. For example, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod affirms that:

The Holy Scriptures teach that God, in creating the world, gave marriage to be the life-long union of one man and one woman (Gen 2:24), a gift to be held in honor and kept pure (Heb 13:4; 1 Th 4:2-5). As a man and woman freely commit themselves to one another, God himself joins them as one. Marriage is far more than a social contract or a mere interpersonal bond. It is an act of God the creator...As the two “become one flesh,” the highest possible result of this marriage union, when it is God’s will, is the conception and birth of a child...The optimal setting for the care of children is the loving marital unity of a man and woman...This biblical understanding of the marriage union of man and woman is both purposeful and beautiful...Such purposes reveal a beauty so great that Ephesians 5:21-33 connects marriage to the holy union of Christ and His “bride,” the church.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, the marriage policy of RHLC is and always will be, consistent with the Bible’s teaching on marriage. *We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Gen 2.24-25), and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the church (Ephesians 5.32). Our pastors will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy.*

### **POLICIES FOR WEDDINGS AT THE CHURCH**

Policies and procedures for weddings performed at RHLC, are outlined in the wedding packet. The wedding packet is available by contacting the church office.

### **POLICIES FOR WEDDINGS OUTSIDE THE CHURCH**

The Pastors at RHLC officiate at weddings outside of the congregation. However, the Pastors are not allowed to perform weddings that are inconsistent with the overall wedding policies of RHLC. Please call the church office to speak with the Pastor to schedule your wedding.

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<sup>1</sup> The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. “Information on Marriage Policies for Member Congregations.” [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org).

For weddings performed away from the church, here are some further considerations as you prepare for your wedding day:

- ◆ Premarital counseling has proven to be a valuable experience for couples. In preparation for your wedding, three sessions are required with the officiating Pastor. These sessions provide a good opportunity for a friendship (if necessary) to develop between the couple and the officiating Pastor. This friendship makes a remarkable impact on the wedding. The sessions are as follows:

Session I: The Wedding Day: What to Expect.

Session II: Communication and Expectations in Marriage

Session III: Our Family of Origin: Gifts and Challenges

In certain circumstances, a couple may participate in a Premarital Preparation Program offered by a licensed Christian, Marriage and Family Counselor. In this case, one session will be required with the officiating pastor.

- ◆ Unless otherwise agreed upon, the Pastor is not, and need not, be present at the rehearsal. (The actual Service of Holy Matrimony does not need to be rehearsed; only the procession, recessional, and placement of the wedding participants.