



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Wedding
Guide*

A GUIDE TO YOUR CEREMONY



Introduction

Congratulations on your engagement! With the exception of your relationship with your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, this is the beginning of the most important relationship you will ever have – your marriage. Therefore, it is important that your wedding ceremony is as meaningful and stress-free as possible.

At First Lutheran Church, your wedding ceremony will be a sacred service of great and lasting spiritual significance. All of the plans relating to the ceremony should bear this in mind.

The purpose of this booklet is to make you aware of wedding policies and practices at First Lutheran Church. Please read it carefully and use this information as you make your plans. Your careful consideration of details will ensure a smooth and beautiful ceremony, making your wedding a time of joy for you, your wedding party, and guests.

Although this information is comprehensive, individual questions can arise. Please feel free to ask any questions relating to your wedding. The pastor performing your wedding, Megan Roling, our organist, our wedding coordinators and our custodians are all experienced and knowledgeable and willing to be of help to you.

Blessings!

Pastor Steve Knudson, Pastor Craig Brown, Pastor Katie Lowe Lancaster

Contact Information ***Church—319-365-1494***

Rev. Dr. Steven Knudson	<i>stevek@firstlutherancr.org</i>
Rev. Craig Brown	<i>craigb@firstlutherancr.org</i>
Rev. Katie Lowe Lancaster	<i>katiell@firstlutherancr.org</i>
Dr. Brett Wolgast, Cantor	<i>brettw@firstlutherancr.org</i>
Maddy Newhouse, Wedding Coord.	<i>maddyn@firstlutherancr.org</i>
Megan Roling, Admin Assistant	<i>meganr@firstlutherancr.org</i>

All weddings will be conducted by a pastor of First Lutheran Church unless other arrangements are made with them. Friends and relatives, including readers, musicians or a second pastor can participate in the service.

Rev. Steve Knudson
Rev. Craig Brown
Rev. Katie Lowe Lancaster

stevek@firstlutherancr.org
craigb@firstlutherancr.org
katiell@firstlutherancr.org

Scheduling a Wedding: The first step is to select an open date on the church calendar by contacting the church office at 319-365-1494. **The wedding date is not confirmed until you have made contact with a pastor and a deposit is made.** To confirm the wedding date, you may contact one of the pastors at First Lutheran Church or ask that a pastor contact you. Once you have made contact with the pastor, you may send in the deposit to the church office. The non-refundable deposit for members is \$150, and for non-members, \$450 (see Fee Schedule on page 6). Weddings are scheduled on a first come basis.

Pre-Marriage Retreat: All couples planning to get married at First Lutheran Church are required to attend a one-day retreat usually scheduled for a Saturday in the spring. The retreat runs from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at First Lutheran. The exit surveys from couples who have gone through the retreat give us high marks and find it very helpful in building their relationship. The pastors and “mentor couples” from the congregation provide valuable insight to help you talk about key areas such as communication, conflict resolution, realistic marriage expectations, and money. A light breakfast and lunch is included. The cost of the retreat is included in the wedding fee.

Online Marriage Survey: All couples getting married at First Lutheran will be asked to take an online marriage survey called “Prepare & Enrich.” To do this, please e-mail the pastor officiating your wedding, the first name and individual e-mail address for each person. You will receive an e-mail asking you to pay for the assessment with a credit/debit card. The wedding couple will take the survey separately from each other. Once you have completed the survey, you will get together a few times with your pastor to go over your results and help you identify areas of strength and areas of potential growth in your marriage.

Meeting with the Pastor and Planning Your Ceremony: You will meet with the pastor a few times in preparation for the wedding ceremony. This will provide time to build a relationship with the pastor and to plan the ceremony. Any special requests or anything “out of the ordinary” should be discussed with the pastor and wedding coordinators well in advance of your ceremony so proper arrangements can be made.

Music

Organist/Pianist: Dr. Brett Wolgast, Cantor

Phone: 319-365-1494 (church), or **brettw@firstlutherancr.org**

After your wedding date is confirmed with a pastor, you need to make an appointment with the organist of First Lutheran church. He will assist you in choosing appropriate music. Suggestions for vocalists, instrumentals and all music for the wedding ceremony will be provided. It is important to remember that the wedding ceremony is considered a worship service. All music selected should reflect that nature.

First Lutheran has fine instruments available for your ceremony: a pipe organ and piano in the balcony, and a grand piano at the front of the Sanctuary. Space is available in both locations for small instrumental ensembles. A limited number of microphones can be provided for vocalists as needed. Pre-recorded music and accompaniment tapes are discouraged.

You may ask a friend or relative to sing for your wedding. It is the responsibility of the soloist to schedule a rehearsal time with our organist as he normally does not attend the wedding rehearsal. An original copy of music in the correct key needs to be provided at least a month in advance, and the soloist is to have learned the music prior to the rehearsal. Photocopying music is illegal without the permission of the publisher.

Couples planning ceremonies that include musicians other than the organist/pianist, should plan on paying such professionals in addition to First Lutheran's costs. It is recommended that couples consult the musicians individually to discuss fees and what is included in their services.

Playing for weddings is considered a part of the Cantor's responsibilities at First Lutheran Church. The use of a guest organist or pianist is discouraged. If the use of a guest organist or pianist is still desired, the Cantor must give his approval. However, there will be no reduction in fees as a result of a substitution.

Wedding Coordinator

4

Maddy Newhouse

maddyn@firstlutherancr.org

Description: The wedding coordinator plays an important role in planning and assisting on the wedding day. The coordinator will meet with you during the planning stage to discuss the details of decorations, candles, and seating. The coordinator assists in the rehearsal and then also on the wedding day. They serve an important role of guiding the family and participants, so that you can enjoy the wedding day. You will receive and fill out the planning form when you meet with the pastor or the coordinator.

Contacting the Coordinator: The wedding coordinator will contact you about two months before the ceremony to set up a time to talk about the service. If you would like to meet at a time earlier in the planning, you may contact the coordinator at your convenience.

Facilities

The church sanctuary provides an attractive and worshipful setting with a seating capacity of approximately 450 persons.

Dressing rooms for the two sides of the wedding party are available. The dressing room for women has a number of mirrors, ample counter and table-top space, a high rod for hanging long dresses, and is located on the third floor. The dressing room for men is down the hall from the Luther Fellowship Center (Room 112). Both rooms can be accessed by elevator. **In case another wedding is scheduled for the same day as your ceremony, we suggest that your party remove all clothing and personal items from the rooms before the service.**

Also, as a precaution against theft and to control access, one of the wedding coordinators will lock and unlock the doors of your dressing rooms while the rooms are unattended. Please contact a wedding coordinator with any special facility needs.

If you are scheduling a wedding for Saturday evening, please note we may have to utilize other rooms to use a dressing rooms and these rooms may not have all items listed.

Note For Weddings in 2025-2027:

Due to planned construction projects, dressing rooms may be moved to a different room in the church.

Other Arrangements/Decorations

Seasonal & Other Church Decorations: During specific seasons of the church year, First Lutheran has decorations in the sanctuary which cannot be moved for weddings. These seasonal decorations may include but are not limited to: Christmas trees during the Advent season; poinsettias for 2-3 weeks after Christmas; spring flowers 2-3 weeks after Easter; and harvest decorations during November. Likewise, at times there may displays or decorations in the narthex which may or may not be removed for your wedding. The Wedding Coordinator can provide you with pictures of what to expect for your wedding.

Unity Candle: Should you choose to have a Unity Candle for your ceremony, we will provide a table for the candle to be placed on. No flowers or decorations are allowed on the unity candle stand for fire safety.

Other Candles: The four altar candles are lighted for any service in the church. The wedding coordinators can do this.

Programs: Samples of programs may be obtained from the wedding coordinator to assist you in formatting your own. You are responsible for printing your own programs. **Be sure to have a copy of your program approved by the pastor and organist prior to printing.**

Flowers: Several flower stands in varying heights are available for your use. Two of our brass vases may be used for wedding bouquets. If you use our vases, the florist should put your flowers in a liner that will fit (vases are 6 ½" in diameter and 8" deep). Bouquets cannot be placed on the altar, the table behind the altar or the musical instruments. Flower petals (fresh, dried, or silk), scattered by a flower girl need to be cleaned up by a member of the wedding party immediately after the ceremony.

Tossing Items: **NO BIRDSEED** or similar materials (rice, or confetti) are to be used. They are NOT allowed inside or outside the building due to the difficulty in removing them from the building or grounds and for environmental reasons. Bubbles may be made available to guests **OUTSIDE THE BUILDING** at the time the wedding couple is leaving. Bubbles may not be used inside.

Aisle Runner: An aisle runner can be dangerous underfoot and rumples easily. For the safety of everyone involved, we do not allow the use of an aisle runner.

Pastor Invitation: If you would like the Pastor and their spouse to attend the dinner following the rehearsal or the wedding reception following the wedding, please send a written invitation. Often the pastor will be involved in the Saturday evening worship service, so attendance at the reception may not be possible. It is often not possible to attend events with last minute verbal invitations.

Livestreaming: is available upon request by our professional A/V team. The livestream can also be posted to YouTube. There is an additional \$75 fee for livestreaming services. We require a minimum one month notice to arrange livestreams

Fee Schedule for Members

6

For members of First Lutheran, there is no charge for the use of the church. A couple may marry under the status of “member” only if at least one of the wedding couple or a parent or guardian of the wedding couple is a member of First Lutheran Church. A comprehensive fee of \$700.00 covers the pre-marriage retreat, pastoral services, the organist, wedding coordinators and custodian. A \$150.00 non-refundable deposit is due at the time the calendar reservation is made.

Fee Schedule for Non-Members

A comprehensive fee of \$950.00 covers the pre-marriage retreat, pastoral services, the organist, wedding coordinators and a custodian. This includes a \$450.00 non-refundable deposit due at the time the calendar reservation is made. Non-member weddings are scheduled only if one of the First Lutheran Pastors is available to perform the ceremony or another ELCA pastor has been approved by the Senior Pastor (See below).

Fee Schedule for Other Lutheran Pastors

Occasionally, First Lutheran Church is used by wedding couples whose home church is too small for the guests who have been invited to the wedding. With the approval of the Senior Pastor, we are happy to work with another ELCA pastor to accommodate the couple. The couple will provide an honorarium for their home pastor. A comprehensive fee of \$600 is charged to use our facility. This includes the services of our organist, our custodian, wedding coordinators, and a building fee. A \$150.00 non-refundable deposit is due at the time the calendar reservation is made.

****All fees must be paid in full
one month prior to the wedding.****

Nonpayment of fees may result in the cancellation of the wedding.

To pay via check:

- Make checks payable to “First Lutheran Church”
- The memo should include the couple’s last names
 - Ex: Doe-Brown Wedding
- Hand deliver your check to the church office, or mail it.

To pay online:

- Please visit **www.firstlutherancr.org/resources/weddings**
- Include couple’s last names + wedding in the memo
 - Ex: Doe-Brown Wedding

Reservations and Scheduling

Once you have determined that the date you would like is available and has been set aside by the Megan Roling, you will then need to ask one of the Pastors to perform your ceremony.

To avoid embarrassing errors, do not announce a wedding date until this confirmation takes place.

No rehearsal, wedding, or reception may be scheduled during Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday) or on Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, or Christmas Day. Weddings may be scheduled on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day with approval of the officiating pastor.

On Saturdays, wedding ceremonies may start after 11:00am, and ***absolutely no later than*** 2:00pm. 7:00pm ceremonies are available upon request and are subject to additional fees. This is to allow for evening programming and service.

Weddings and receptions may be scheduled on Sundays, providing the wedding is scheduled to begin at 2:00 p.m. or later.

The rehearsal is preferably scheduled on the day before the wedding ceremony. The church office reserves the right to change the rehearsal time until one month before the wedding in case of a scheduling conflict. Approximately one hour should be allowed for the rehearsal. It is important to have the entire wedding party present, including the parents of the wedding couple, readers, ushers, and anyone else involved in the ceremony.

As a church, our scheduling must be flexible so as to accommodate unforeseen occasions, such as funerals. In the event that something would come up on your wedding date, we reserve the right to change details such as dressing rooms or decorating times. Your reserved time for taking pictures and the ceremony itself will not be disrupted.

In consideration of your guests, church personnel, and others providing services to you, *please do your best to stay on your time scheduled* for the rehearsal, ceremony, and reception. The fees that are paid for a 2:00 pm wedding, cover between 11:00 am and 4:00 pm. Additional hours in the building will be billed at \$50.00 per extra hour.

Expectations of the Wedding Party and Guests

8

All persons attending the wedding are expected to act in accordance with the sacred nature of the ceremony. The wedding couple and their families are responsible for informing the wedding party and guests of the following policies.

NO SMOKING anywhere inside the church building or on the church grounds. Those who must smoke may do so on the city sidewalk or in the parking lot away from the doors.

NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES are allowed anywhere on the premises, including the parking lots. Failure to adhere to this rule could result in **immediate** cancellation of your wedding. No alcohol can be used, including champagne punch or toasts. We ask that all those in the wedding party (including parents) be sober for the ceremony.

NO FOOD OR BEVERAGES may be taken into the sanctuary at any time. You may make arrangements through the coordinators or the church office to serve food to the wedding party during the time of pictures. A separate room for food will be designated.

All persons attending the wedding are expected to act in accordance with the sacred nature of the ceremony. The wedding couple and their families are responsible for informing the wedding party and guests of the included policies.

Photography/Videography

The Wedding Couple are responsible for communicating the following policies with their Photographer and Videographer.

Photos may be taken before or after the ceremony in the sanctuary or narthex of the church. Group pictures of the wedding party taken before the ceremony is preferable. Consult with your photographer to determine the amount of time needed and then make arrangements for your arrival time in the building. Be sure that photos are completed and equipment removed from the sanctuary at least 30 minutes prior to the time of the wedding. If some pictures are being taken after the service, the wedding party should exit, have the guests ushered out, and then return to the front of the church for their pictures. The receiving line can then be formed at the reception.

NO FLASH PHOTOS are to be taken during the ceremony, except for during the processional and recessional. Photographs without flash may be taken during the ceremony from the sides of the sanctuary, balcony, and no further than half way down the center aisle.

Videorecording of the service is permitted with existing light only. The same location restrictions apply as with photography. The videographer will need to coordinate with our A/V team in advance to make arrangements to connect to the house sound system.

Livestreaming is available upon request by our professional A/V team. The livestream can also be posted to YouTube. There is an additional \$75 fee for livestreaming services. We require a minimum one month notice to arrange livestreams.

Please Note: We strongly encourage couples request that guests have all devices silenced and put away for the duration of the ceremony, and refrain from any kind of recording. (Often called an “Unplugged Ceremony”) This request may be made verbally prior to the processional, with a sign outside of the sanctuary (provided by the couple), or with a notice in the program.

State of Iowa Marriage License

The Marriage License, Certificate of Marriage and the envelope provided by the county should be delivered to Megan Roling or the Pastor performing the ceremony at the church office so it is at the church prior to the wedding. Iowa law requires that the pastor complete the required information, sign the Certificate, and return it to the appropriate county agency.

It is your responsibility to obtain the License. A license may be purchased in any county in the state and is valid in any county, but only in the state of Iowa. It must be purchased at least four days before the wedding date and is good for six months following the date of issue. The couple must be at least 18 years of age and have one witness over age 18 (can be a relative) who knows them both. Licenses are obtained at the County Recorder’s office. Office hours are 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. The Linn County Records Office is located at 930 1st St SW, Cedar Rapids and their number is 319-892-5420.

Checklist for your Wedding at First Lutheran

Well in advance of the wedding:

- ☐ Before anything else, arrange the wedding date with Megan Roling and the pastor.
- ☐ Pay deposit
- ☐ Register for and attend the Pre-Marriage Retreat.
- ☐ Meet with the pastor to plan the wedding service.
- ☐ Arrange to meet with organist, Brett Wolgast (319-365-1494), to plan music for the service.
- ☐ Arrange an appointment with wedding coordinators, to discuss your wedding arrangements, such as decorations, dressing rooms, fees, etc.
- ☐ If you are planning to have your reception at the church, contact church office for more information.
- ☐ **One month (minimum)** before the wedding, make arrangements with the wedding coordinators for arrival time, and decorating.
- ☐ **One month** before the wedding pay any outstanding fees due to the church.
- ☐ **The Monday before the wedding**, bring your marriage license, certificate and return envelope to Megan Roling at the church office.

Contact Information

<i>Rev. Steve Knudson</i>	<i>stevek@firstlutherancr.org</i>
<i>Rev. Craig Brown</i>	<i>craigb@firstlutherancr.org</i>
<i>Rev. Katie Lowe Lancaster</i>	<i>katiell@firstlutherancr.org</i>
<i>Dr. Brett Wolgast, Cantor</i>	<i>brettw@firstlutherancr.org</i>
<i>Maddy Newhouse, Wedding Coord.</i>	<i>maddyn@firstlutherancr.org</i>
<i>Megan Roling, Office Administrator</i>	<i>meganr@firstlutherancr.org</i>

Special Notes:

*Let us love one another, for
love comes from God...*

1 John 4

First Lutheran Church, 1000 Third Avenue SE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403
(319) 365-1494
www.firstlutherancr.org meganr@firstlutherancr.org