

## **WEDDING GUIDELINES FOR ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Marriage is the holy creation of God in which the marriage of one man to one woman is a reflection of God's love for the whole human race and God's blessing upon the human family. The marriage of a man to a woman is also a gift, which is not given to all, a privilege but not a right. Therefore, the Service of Marriage is both the proclamation of God's Word and thanksgiving for the fruit of God's Word born within the promise of enduring faithfulness between the woman and man.

Just as the Services of Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, Funeral, and other Christian worship are holy and all that is included in such Services must be adjudged as to its appropriateness to the will and purpose of God, so also the marriage service, all its ceremony, words and music, must be carefully considered so that it does not deny or detract from God's Word. It also follows that readings, music, or speeches, which are inappropriate to the Word of God have no place within the marriage service.

Customs associated with weddings within our country and culture may or may not be appropriate within the Marriage Liturgy of the Church. The pastor and Worship Committee of the congregation are well prepared to help the bride and groom to choose which may or may not be included. When a certain custom is discouraged, this should not be taken as a personal affront, but as helpfulness in planning an event, which has eternal meaning and consequences.

1. Specific material can be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (p. 286-291) and Notes on the Liturgy found in the *Minister's Edition* and *Manual on Liturgy*.
2. Those who plan to be married should discuss with the pastor of St. Luke's the nature of marriage, the form of the marriage service, the date, time, and location of the wedding. This should be done as soon as possible. Under no circumstances should a couple expect to be married with less than two weeks' notice to the pastor. Select and reserve a date in consultation with the Pastor and Secretary assuring that the desired facilities and services are available. Obtain, complete and return a Facility Use Request/Agreement.
3. Either the bride or groom or both should be baptized members of St. Luke's Lutheran Church before arrangements are made for a wedding at St. Luke's. With the Congregation Council approval, arrangements may be made with the pastor for a wedding for those who will be joining St. Luke's, for those baptized in the Christian faith who have had a family connection to St. Luke's, those who wish to renew their membership, and non-members in special circumstances. Membership arrangements are made at the first meeting with the pastor.
4. All couples planning a wedding at St. Luke's are required to participate in premarital counseling with the pastor of St. Luke's. There may be a separate small fee for counseling resources. In addition, couples may also consider attending an "Engagement Encounter" weekend.
5. The currently called pastor of St. Luke's congregation will preside at the marriage service. The pastor of St. Luke's must approve the use of other pastors.

6. The format for weddings at St. Luke's will follow the order for marriage in *the Evangelical Lutheran Worship* or from any other ELCA resource. Often the Marriage Service resources in the *Renewing Worship* resources of the ELCA are also used in planning the service. Usually couples in consultation with the pastor adjust the service to meet their family needs. Couples may write their vows, but these vows must be approved by the pastor and include a promise of faithfulness until death. If Holy Communion is desired it must be open and offered to all Christians attending, not just the wedding party.
7. Bulletins: The pastor and secretary will assist in the preparation and printing of all bulletins. Couples may wish to purchase special wedding bulletins, which must be approved by the pastor of St Luke's. Couples are responsible for the cost of any custom bulletins, special papers or other materials.
8. Photography: Photographers shall meet with the pastor prior to the service to review guidelines, camera placement and respect for the nature of the worship service. Pre-service photography should be completed 1 hour before the service begins. Flash photography during the service is not permitted between the processional and recessional. Any cameras or video equipment should be placed out of sight during the service, e.g. in the church balcony.
9. A member of the Altar Guild will meet with the couple to discuss the following: Altar flowers, altar candles, flower stands, candelabra, aisle candle holders, church decorations, pew decorations, liturgical color, unity candle, decorations already in place, and clean up after the service.
  - Candleholders have to be washed before being put away. A member of the Altar Guild will help put them up and take them down and explain about washing and putting away.
  - Church & Pew Decorations – Nothing should be nailed, taped, glued or screwed to the walls or any church furniture.
  - Liturgical Color – Season of Church Year determines liturgical color to be used for altar, pulpit and other paraments, and shall not be moved, changed or covered for the wedding service.
  - Unity Candle – Not a part of the marriage service- May be used but are the responsibility of the couple – with approval of pastor – may be ordered or purchased elsewhere by the couple.
  - Banners – St. Luke's has one (1) wedding banner.
10. Sound and A/V systems may only be operated by approved members of St Luke's
11. Theatrical, storybook or thematic services & decorating shall be reserved for the reception and reception hall.
12. A valid license for marriage in North Carolina must be presented to the pastor no later than the wedding rehearsal. Usually the wedding license is brought to the church at the beginning of the week of the wedding.

### **Important Notes**

- The consumption of alcohol is not permitted on church premises.
- There is no smoking anywhere on the property.
- Throwing rice is not permitted inside or outside any building. Birdseed may be used in the parking lot.

- No weddings should be planned during Holy Week or on the eve or day of major church festivals.

**Music**

When selecting music for a wedding it is important to remember that a marriage celebrated in church is primarily a service of worship. The focus is on God, and the music should help those present to be aware of that focus. Blatantly inappropriate texts have no place in the worship service. Secular texts, even those not offensive or profane but having no specific religious reference are inappropriate for the service. One song is not better than the other; they simply function in different ways and for different occasions. A couple’s favorite song may not be appropriate for the marriage service but may be used at the reception. Music should be selected for the purpose of creating a worshipful environment. Think about how the music has been used in the commercial world.

The music chosen for a wedding should also be suitable for the available instruments, in order to respect the integrity of the music. (Ex.: Music composed for bands are not appropriate for playing on an organ or piano.) St. Luke’s has a two manual Allen organ and a Yamaha piano. It would also be appropriate for the Handbell choir to play.

The congregational director of music is designated to provide music consultation, rehearsal time, and wedding music for all weddings at St. Luke’s. Couples are encouraged to meet with the director of music as soon as their wedding is scheduled. If St. Luke’s director of music will not be providing the music, other selected musicians (i.e. organist, soloist) must contact the director of music to discuss appropriate music and to make arrangements for rehearsal time. Decisions regarding wedding music are made by the director of music of the congregation in consultation with the pastor.

The Director of Music and the Pastor have lists of appropriate wedding music.

**Fees**

	<b>Members</b>	<b>Non-Members</b>
<b>Wedding Services</b> (Pastor, Sexton, Secretary, A/V, Altar Guild, etc)	Consider gifts of appreciation for all those serving at your wedding.	\$750 paid to <b>St. Luke’s Lutheran Church</b> minimum of one (1) week before the wedding
<b>Organist and Other Musicians</b>	See musician for fee package	
<b>Facilities</b>	Fees and policies for the use of the facilities are documented in the Facility Use Request/Agreement.	