

WEDDING GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

*St. John Lutheran Church
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Preface

It is always a delight for the church to share in the marriage of couples who are seeking to make a lifelong commitment to each other in the Name of Christ and in the Presence of God and God's People.

Throughout the planning process and the wedding itself, it is good to remember that the Marriage Service belongs to the Church, and is a liturgy in praise of God, seeking God's blessing upon the bridal couple and the assembled congregation.

A church wedding is, first of all, a worship service. In this worship, we praise God and we celebrate the gracious gifts which God grants to those who enter into marriage. The entire service is to give glory to God. This sense of praise to our Lord is the theme that is the foundation for all our wedding guidelines and practices here at St. John.

The Church Council of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church has adopted the following as a foundational statement for all weddings that will take place in this congregation or by its pastors in other locations:

“Resolved, that all marriage services should reflect our Lutheran Christian understanding that they are services of worship. Thus, all texts, music and decorations will reflect our concern that the primary purpose of such a service is to give clear witness to what God has done, is doing now, and will continue to do for those who live in marriage. The marriage service will focus on our praise to God, our thanksgiving offered to God, and our receiving of God's gifts of grace and blessing.”

All couples who choose to schedule their marriage worship service here at St. John Lutheran Church should do so with a willingness to abide by the above foundational statement.

Expectations

- ***Those who plan to marry shall contact the church office to confirm, and reserve the date and time of the wedding. Members (bride, groom or parent of either) may reserve their desired wedding date at any time, while, non-members may only reserve six months prior to the desired date. A reservation for non-members must be accompanied by a non-refundable \$100 deposit.***
- ***Pre-marriage counseling is required for all who are married at St. John. A minimum of three sessions with the pastor will be expected of all couples. These sessions will include: a Biblical overview of marriage, the completion of a Pre-Marriage Awareness Inventory, a review of basic communication skills, as well as planning for the marriage worship service.***
- ***All weddings scheduled for a Saturday must begin NO LATER THAN 2:30 PM and NO EARLIER THAN 7:00 PM to avoid conflict with St. John's Saturday evening worship service which begins at 5:00 PM.***
- ***At no time will the possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages be permitted in the building or on church property. Failure to observe this rule will result in the immediate cancellation of the wedding service.***

- For those who will be married here, and are not members of our congregation, we strongly encourage you to attend a Sunday worship service before you schedule your wedding.
- All participants in the wedding service are expected to be present, and on time, for the rehearsal. The Pastor of St. John will conduct the rehearsal.
- Following state regulations, smoking is NOT allowed inside the building.
- The throwing of rice, bird seed or any form of confetti (basically anything that goes up and then comes down) will not be permitted. Confetti may not be used inside the worship area. For your information, the throwing of rice is an ancient pagan symbol of fertility. It has no place within the Christian community.
- No chancel furnishing and vestments will be removed or covered in any way. Any decorating of the church is to be accomplished at least one hour prior to the service. Decorations are to be removed immediately after the photographs have been taken. The Custodian will be able to answer your questions about what is allowed, and will advise and assist you in the placement and removal of all decorations and flowers. Decorations must be placed so as not to damage walls or chancel furnishings.
- To preserve the atmosphere of worship, no flash pictures will be permitted during the service by professional photographers, guests or members of the wedding party. The following line will be printed in the wedding bulletin: “In the spirit of worship, guests are asked to refrain from taking pictures during the service. All photographers and videographers should be in communication with the Pastor and/or Custodian prior to the wedding to be clear about what is permitted. One suggestion to save time and inconvenience to your guests, is to schedule all or most of your photo session before the wedding to avoid long delays between the service and the reception.
- All those who schedule afternoon weddings must vacate the worship space no later than 4:00 pm, so that preparations can be made for our 5:00 worship service.
- You will need to obtain a marriage license either in the county in which you reside, or the county in which you will be married. There may be a waiting period between the time that you apply for the license and the day you pick it up.
- The marriage license and all fees and honorariums are to be brought to the church the week before the wedding or no later than the day of the rehearsal.
- The altar candles and candelabras will be used for all weddings. A Unity Candle may also be used, but it will be the responsibility of the bridal couple to provide both the Unity Candle and the individual candles. We do have a stand for the Unity Candle that you will be able to use. Aisle candles on stands with globe covers are available for your use. There is an extra charge for setting up and taking down these candles, see Custodian honorarium.
- Only guide (or service) dogs are permitted in our worship space.

Worship Guidelines

All marriage worship services will follow the pattern for the Service of Marriage in the **EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP**, (ELW). There is a great deal of flexibility which will allow couples to include various options in the service. Options might include: Lighting of the Unity Candle, Holy Communion, The Apostle’s Creed, and other options with the approval of the Pastor.

Marriage vows will be selected by the bridal couple from a number of options from the Resource part of this document.

There shall be lessons from the Scriptures read, and a homily proclaimed, celebrating God's blessing and empowering of marriage. Appropriate passages are available in the Marriage Resources Section.

Music that will be included in the service must reflect the praise of God, witness to God's steadfast love in Christ, and seek God's blessing upon those who enter into marriage. All music must be approved by either the Pastor or Organist. The Organist and Pastor have many resources to assist you in the selection of music that is appropriate for worship, and will work with you in this process.

The inclusion of at least one congregational hymn is encouraged. A list of appropriate hymns can be found in the Marriage Resources Section.

St. John's Organist shall normally be the organist for all weddings. If St. John's Organist is unable to play, another may be invited to play, with the approval of St. John's Organist and Pastor. If the bridal couple desires to have another organist play for their wedding, permission must be secured from St. John's Organist, Pastor, and the Worship Committee.

The bridal couple may invite a soloist to participate in the worship service. As previously stated, all music must be approved by the Pastor and the Organist. Also, other instrumentalists may be included in the service.

All weddings at St. John's shall include the Pastor of St. John as the Presiding Pastor. Another ordained Pastor may be invited to participate in the service at the request of the couple, and with the consent of St. John's Pastor and the Church Council.

A wedding worship service may not be scheduled during Holy Week (from 6pm on the eve of the Sunday of the Passion, through 6pm on Holy Saturday) because of the solemn character of that time.

If Holy Communion is celebrated within the marriage service, it must be open to the assembled congregation, and not limited to just the bride and groom, or the wedding party.

Wedding bulletins, listing the order of the worship service, music and wedding party, et., can be provided, if you so desire. The bridal couple will purchase the bulletins, normally at a Christian book store. The congregation will print them through the Church Office at no charge.

Wedding Fees & Honorariums

The following fees and honorariums shall apply for all weddings. With sufficient need, they may be waived at the discretion of the Pastor and Church Council.

Fees for the use of the Building	Member	Non-Member
Sanctuary (wedding)	-0-	\$300.00
Parish Hall for reception	-0-	\$150.00
Honorariums		
1. Custodian		
a. Sanctuary only	\$110.00	\$110.00
b. Sanctuary with Aisle Candles	\$125.00	\$125.00
c. Parish Hall Cleaning	\$15 /hr	\$15/hr
2. Organist		
a. With Soloist/Instrumental	\$140.00	\$140.00
3. Pastor	\$100.00	\$125.00

MARRIAGE RESOURCES

Psalms and Scripture Passages for a Service of Marriage

Psalm 33	Genesis 1:26-31	Ephesians 5:21-33
Psalm 100	Genesis 2:18-24	Colossians 3:12-14
Psalm 117	Isaiah 63:7-9	Romans 12:1-2
Psalm 127	John 2:1-10	John 15:9-12
Psalm 128	I Corinthians 13:1-13	Matthew 19:4-6
Psalm 136	Song of Solomon 2:10-13	
Psalm 130	Song of Solomon 8:7	

Hymns for Congregational Singing

Hear Us Now Our God and Father (585)	The King of Love (502)
This Is a Day, Lord, Gladly Awaited (586)	Bind Us Together
Beloved God's Chosen (648)	When Love Is Found
Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life (816)	Borning Cry (732)
Jesus, come! For We Invite You (312)	When Love Is Found
Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee (836)	Praise to the Lord (858)
Now Thank We All Our God (839,840)	Blest be the Tie (656)
O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright (308)	Love Divine (631)
Soul, Adorn yourself with Gladness (488,489)	You Are Mine (581)

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Marriage Service

ENTRANCE

The Ministers and the wedding group enter. Music—hymn, song, psalm, instrumental music—may accompany the entrance.

GREETING

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

INTRODUCTION OF SERVICE

Option A: Dear friends: We have come together in the presence of God to witness the marriage of _____ and _____, to surround them with our prayers and to share in their hope. The scriptures teach us that the bond and covenant of marriage is a gift of God in which a man and a woman are joined as one, an image of the union of Christ and the church. As _____ and _____ make their promises to each other today, we remember that at Cana in Galilee our Lord Jesus Christ made the wedding feast a sign of God's reign of love. Let us enter into this celebration confident that, through the Holy Spirit, Christ is present with us now also. We pray that this couple may fulfill God's purpose for the whole of their lives.

Option B: The Lord God in his goodness created us male and female, and by the gift of marriage founded human community in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come. Because of sin, our age-old rebellion, the gladness of marriage can be overcast and the gift of the family can become a burden. But because God, who established marriage, continues still to bless it with abundant and ever-present support, we can be sustained in our weariness and have our joy restored.

Option C: _____ and _____ have come to make their marriage vows in the presence of God and of this assembly. The uniting of this man and this woman in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy, for the help and comfort they give to one another in prosperity and adversity, and that their love may be a

blessing to all whom they encounter. Let us now witness their promises to each other and surround them with our prayers, giving thanks to God for the gift of marriage and asking God's blessing upon them, that they may be strengthened for their life together and nurtured in the love of God.

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

The minister addresses the couple in these or similar words, asking each person in turn:

Option A: _____, will you have _____ to be your *wife/husband*, to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love *her/him*, comfort *her/him*, honor and keep *her/him*, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live? *Response: I will.*

Option B: _____, will you receive _____ as your wife/husband and bind yourself to her/him in the covenant of marriage? Will you promise to love and honor her/him in true devotion, to rejoice with her/him in times of gladness, to grieve with her/him in times of sorrow, and to be faithful to her/him as long as you both shall live? *Response: I will.*

Option C: _____, living in the promise of God, joined to Christ in Baptism, will you give yourself to _____ in love and faithfulness? Will you share your life with her/him, in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, and will you be faithful to her/him as long as you both shall live? *Response: I will.*

The minister may address the assembly.

Option A: Will all of you, by God's grace, uphold and care for _____ and _____ in their life together?
We will.

Option B: Will you, the families of _____ and _____, give your love and blessing to this new family?
We will.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The presiding minister leads the following or another prayer of the day.

Option A: Let us pray. Gracious God, you sent your Son Jesus Christ into the world to reveal your love to all people. Enrich _____ and _____ with every good gift, that their life together may show forth your love; and grant that at the last we may all celebrate with Christ the marriage feast that has no end; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Option B: Let us pray. Eternal God, our creator and redeemer, as you gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee by the presence of your Son, so bring your joy to this wedding by his presence now. Look in favor upon _____ and _____ and grant that they, rejoicing in all your gifts, may at length celebrate the unending marriage feast with Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

READINGS

Two or three scripture readings are proclaimed.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

A hymn of the day may be sung or special music.

VOWS

The couple may join hands. Each promises faithfulness to the other in these or similar words.

_____ and _____, I invite you to declare your vows to one another.

OPTION A: I take you, _____, to be my *wife/husband* from this day forward, to join with you and share all

that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.

OPTION B: In the presence of God and this community, I, _____, take you, *name*, to be my *wife/husband*; to have and to hold from this day forward, in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

OPTION C: I take you _____ to be my wife/husband, and these things I promise you. I will be faithful to you and honest with you. I will respect and trust, help and care for you. I will share my life with you. I will forgive you, as we have been forgiven. And I will try with you to better understand ourselves, the world and God, through the best and worst of what is to come until death parts us.

OPTION D: I take you _____, to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband, to share with you in plenty and in want; in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in health; to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you, so that together, we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.

OPTION E: _____, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward. To join with you and to share all that is to come. To give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond. And in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with all my life and with all my being until death parts us.

OPTION F: I take you, _____ to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband, to join with you and to share all that is to come. To give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, to forgive and strengthen you. And to join with you, so that together we may both serve God and others as long as we both shall live.

GIVING OF RINGS

Option A. Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God of grace, for your love and faithfulness to your people. May these rings be symbols of the promise _____ and _____ have made with each other; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Option B: Bless O Lord, this ring, that he/she who gives it and she/he who wears it may abide forever in your peace, continue in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The couple may exchange rings with these or similar words.

OPTION A: _____, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

OPTION B: _____ I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow. With all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

ACCLAMATION

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

_____ and _____ by their promises before God and in the presence of this assembly, have joined themselves to one another as husband and wife. Those whom God has joined together let no one separate. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

The assembly may offer acclamation with applause. A sung acclamation, hymn, or other music may follow. Other symbols of marriage may be given or used at this time, such as Unity Candle.

UNITY CANDLE

The promise of faithfulness and commitment that _____ and _____ have made this day, reflect the depths of their love for each other. During the playing/singing of _____, _____ and _____ will be lighting together the Unity Candle.

Option with Children. As a sign of their commitment to each other, _____ and _____, and their children will be lighting the Unity Candle together as a new family is bound to one another in love.

MARRIAGE BLESSING

The couple may kneel. The presiding minister may extend a hand over the couple while praying for God's blessing in the following or similar words.

Option A: Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to endure the cross for our sake, that we may have abundance of life.

By the power of your Holy Spirit pour out the abundance of your blessing on *name* and *name*. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let your love be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads.

Bless them so that their lives together may bear witness to your love. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death.

Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table where your saints feast forever in your heavenly home, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Option B: The Lord God who created our first parents and established them in marriage, establish and sustain you, that you may find delight in each other and grow in holy love until your life's end. **Amen.**

Parents or others may speak additional words of blessing and encouragement at this time.

PARENTAL BLESSING

The devoted and loving support of parents can be a vital and wondrous blessing for those who enter into marriage. Will you the parents of ___ and ___ continue to lend your support and to give your love to them? Will you encourage them, help them, and pray for them in their new life together as husband and wife? If so answer, we will with God's help." ***We will with God's help.***

COMMUNITY BLESSING

The devoted and loving support of family and friends can be a vital and wondrous blessing for those who enter into marriage. Will you the family and friends of ___ and ___ continue to lend your support and to give your love to them? Will you encourage them, help them, and pray for them in their new life together as husband and wife? If so answer, we will with God's help."

We will with God's help.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

HOLY COMMUNION *A service with communion may continue.*

LORD'S PRAYER

A service without communion continues as follows.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

BLESSING

OPTION A: The blessed and holy Trinity, make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace, now and forever. **Amen.**

OPTION B: God Almighty send you light and truth to keep you all the days of your life. The hand of God protect you; the holy angels accompany you; and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you now and forever. **Amen.**

The couple may greet one another with a kiss.

A hymn may be sung or instrumental music played as the wedding group and the ministers depart.

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WEDDING INFORMATION _____

DATE OF WEDDING _____ TIME _____

DATE OF REHEARSAL _____ TIME _____

PASTOR(S) OFFICIATING _____

PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING DATES

SESSION ONE: _____

SESSION TWO: _____

SESSION THREE: _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

BRIDE

GROOM

NAME: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS: _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE _____

CITY/STATE _____

PHONE _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

E-MAIL _____

BIRTHDATE _____

BIRTHDATE _____

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP _____

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP _____

LOCATION _____

LOCATION _____

PREVIOUS MARRIAGE ____ YES ____ NO

PREVIOUS MARRIAGE ____ YES ____ NO

DATE OF DIVORCE _____

DATE OF DIVROCE _____

SPOUSE DECEASED _____

SPOUSE DECEASED _____

CHILDREN _____

CHILDREN _____

PARENTS _____

PARENTS _____

WEDDING RECEPTION (Invited) ___ YES ___ NO LOCATION _____

REHEARSAL DINNER (Invited) ___ YES ___ NO LOCATION _____

MARRIED ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE _____

PHONE _____

WEDDING PARTY PARTICIPANTS

MAID/MATRON OF HONOR

BEST MAN

BRIDESMAIDS

GROOMSMEN

FLOWER GIRL _____

RING BEARER _____

USHERS _____

ACOLYTE _____

GUEST BOOK _____

BULLETINS _____

LECTORS _____

SOLOIST _____

ORGANIST _____

PHOTOGRAHPER _____

VIDEO _____

FLORIST _____

MARRIAGE LICENSE INFORMATION SHARED _____

HONORARIUM INFORMATION REVIEWED _____

WORSHIP SERVICE

ENTRANCE (PROCESSIONAL)

INTRODUCTION

_____ OPTION A _____ OPTION B _____ OPTION C

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

_____ OPTION A _____ OPTION B _____ OPTION C

_____ PARENTS _____ COMMUNITY

PRAYER OF THE DAY

_____ OPTION A _____ OPTION B

READINGS

VOWS

_____ OPTION A _____ OPTION B _____ OPTION C

_____ OPTION D _____ OPTION E _____ OPTION F

BLESSING OF RINGS

_____ OPTION A _____ OPTION B

GIVING OF RINGS

_____ OPTION A _____ OPTION B

UNITY CANDLE

_____ YES _____ NO _____ MOTHERS LIGHTING
_____ CHILDREN PARTICIPATING

MARRIAGE BLESSING

_____ OPTION A _____ OPTION B

PARENTAL BLESSING

_____ YES _____ NO

COMMUNITY BLESSING

_____ YES _____ NO

HOLY COMMUNION

_____ YES

_____ NO

BLESSING

_____ OPTION A

_____ OPTION B

KNEELING BENCH

_____ YES

_____ NO

AISLE CANDLES

_____ YES

_____ NO

AISLE RUNNER

_____ YES

_____ NO

RELEASE OF GUESTS

MUSIC DURING THE SERVICE

PARENTS

IN

OUT

GRANDPARENTS

WEDDING BULLETINS

_____ ST JOHN

_____ PRINTER

_____ COUPLE

_____ NUMBER OF BULLETINS