

Wedding Information and Policy Guide

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
KASSON, MINNESOTA**

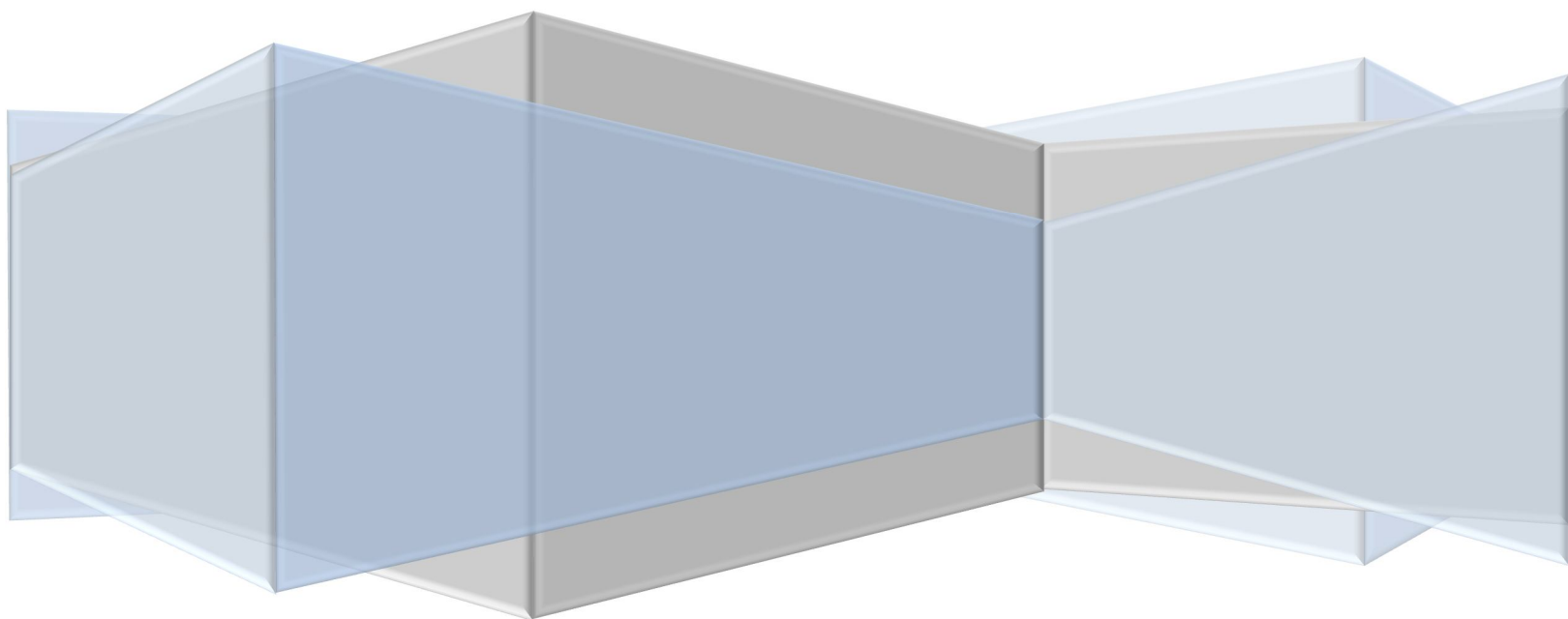


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Marriage and the Church

Marriage does not belong exclusively to the church. It belongs to all humanity. It is a social contract, governed and regulated by the state - hence, marriage licenses originate from and are returned to the court house. But to the Christian, marriage is more than that:

- We believe that marriage is a life-long relationship based on the public promise of faithfulness of a man and a woman to each other.
- We believe that marriage is rooted in the steadfast love of God and that God's faithfulness and self-giving love is the model for the relationship between husband and wife.
- We believe that God, along with the church, desires marriage to be characterized by faithfulness, joy, love, growth, and fulfillment.
- We believe that the sharing of such covenantal promises is rightly placed in the context of worship.

Date and Time

Call the church office to determine an open date for your wedding. Do this as far in advance of the date as possible. You may pick up a copy of the "Wedding Information Sheet" and the "Wedding Agreement Form" in the church office. As soon as both of these completed forms and a non-refundable deposit are returned to the church office, your wedding date will be reserved and placed on our master calendar.

For all wedding couples, a non-refundable deposit is required when both forms are returned. See the fee schedule.

On the following holidays and church scheduled activities, St. John's Lutheran Church cannot schedule weddings or rehearsals:

- New Year's Day
- Holy Week (Palm Sunday - Easter Sunday)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Lutfisk Week
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve and Day
- Synod Assembly

Weddings are scheduled at 1 pm, 4 pm, or 7 pm. On those dates when a 2nd or 3rd wedding is scheduled, all weddings will need to accommodate each other by doing the following:

- Beginning the time of photographs no more than 2 hours before the ceremony.
- Removing all flowers and decorations from the sanctuary within ½ hour after the wedding.
- Designating someone to clean-up the dressing rooms immediately after the wedding.

The Wedding Worship Coordinator

The services of a Wedding Worship Coordinator are a part of every wedding at St. John's Lutheran Church taking place in the

Sanctuary. The St. John's Wedding Worship Coordinator will be in charge of details regarding the wedding service at St. John's and the reception if held in our Fellowship Hall. Those details include such matters as flowers, candles, ushers, seating of guests, receiving line, rehearsal, etc. She will be at the church for the rehearsal and wedding. Couples may choose to hire their own social wedding coordinator but his/her duties will remain outside of the Sanctuary and Narthex (gathering area).

The couple should contact the Wedding Worship Coordinator assigned to their wedding at least three months prior to the wedding.

Coordinators are:

- Colleen Jacobson (507-634-7861 or 507-951-1025 cell) cjlily97@aol.com
- Nancy "Sunny" Reich (507-634-7859 or 507-273-6998 cell) sunny@stjohnskasson.org
- Ann Brenke (507-891-4000) brenkeann@yahoo.com

The Pastor

St. John's pastors want to help you with your life together and look forward to helping you celebrate your wedding. As a pastoral staff we mutually represent each other; where one of us is, in a sense we all are.

As weddings are worship services of the St. John's congregation, a Called or appointed pastor of St. John's will be assigned to and preside at all weddings. However, we are delighted to invite other clergy to participate and share with us. If you desire another clergy person to participate in the wedding, FIRST consult with the St. John's pastor who will be presiding at your wedding.

Musicians

An organist from St. John's is available to play at all weddings where organ music is desired. Guest organists are welcome if approved by a St. John's organist. It is the responsibility of the bride and/or groom to contact the organist of the church. You may contact Gloria Gilbertson (775-6470) or Phyllis Sands (634-7182) at least two months before your wedding.

The organist will provide wedding prelude music as the ushers begin seating guests, processional music and other music during the wedding ceremony, and recessional music until all the guests have been escorted out. Note, however, that the organists do not normally attend the wedding rehearsals. When requested to accompany soloists, the organist will set a specific time to rehearse with them.

St. John's also has a Bell Choir. Contact the director for their music choices and fees. Our Bell Choir Director is Linda Wunderlich (635-5676).

Before arrangements are made with a soloist or instrumentalist, please read the section about music and discuss your plans with both the pastor and the organist.

Use of Tapes and CDs

If you desire to use tapes and/or CDs for music or have a musician who needs to use the house audio system, you must have a St. John's sound technician to operate the equipment during the rehearsal/wedding under the guidance of the Wedding Worship Coordinator. There is a fee for this service. ALL music must be pre-approved by the Pastor performing the ceremony.

Your Wedding Rehearsal

The rehearsal takes between 30 and 60 minutes and is usually led by both the pastor and the Wedding Worship Coordinator.

The rehearsal is important and everyone in the wedding party, including parents of both the bride and groom, should be present. It is important that the rehearsal begins and ends on time. The couple is responsible for seeing that everyone is in the sanctuary at the appointed time.

Musicians and soloists will not practice during the wedding rehearsal time.

Marriage Preparation/Counseling

We are not only planning a wedding ceremony; we are planning a marriage.

All couples being married at St. John's will participate in marriage preparation sessions. Discussing your hopes for marriage, your expectations of each other, and some of the strengths and growing edges of your relationship is time well spent.

The marriage preparation sessions are a requirement to getting married at St. John's. We provide numerous options throughout the year through Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota as well as through Bethel Lutheran Church in Rochester. These are enjoyable group sessions and also satisfy Minnesota state requirements for reduction of the marriage license fee. Classes may be taken no more than 1 year prior to the wedding. Classes will need to be taken again if the wedding is rescheduled past the 1 year mark of taking the class the first time. If you live out-of-town, you may make arrangements with your home church for the sessions.

The License

Minnesota law requires couples to secure a License to marry, and pastors must have this authorization before officiating at a wedding. There is a fee for the License which is significantly reduced when couples have taken 12 hours of premarital counseling.

The License should be brought to the church office at least one week prior to the wedding.

Wedding Fees

Please refer to the appropriate Member or Non-Member Wedding Agreement Form. Other than the initial deposit, all fees are to be paid in full no less than one week prior to the wedding date. Please leave a check made payable to St. John's Lutheran Church for the balance of the fees and the pastors honorarium with the church secretary when you bring in your marriage license. Individual checks need to be made out to the Organist, Wedding Worship Coordinator, Custodian, and Sound Board Technician. The church secretary will provide you with these names. Deposit fees are not transferable if the wedding is rescheduled past 1 year of original date.

The Liturgy for Marriage

The wedding ceremony is a worship service of the congregation. The focus is on God's creative Love that gives blessing and force to the couple's love. Generally, we follow the order for marriage in the Lutheran Book of Worship. The rite is characterized by variety and flexibility, so that it may be adapted to many situations and be open to creativity. The presiding pastor at your wedding will discuss the liturgical options with you.

Outline of the Marriage Liturgy:

- Prelude Music
- Processional (organ, instrumental, hymn)
- Processional Hymn (optional)
- Pastoral Greeting
- Cana Prayer
- Special Music: Hymn or Solo (optional)
- First Lesson
- Second Lesson
- Gospel
- Message
- Special Music: Hymn or Solo (optional)
- Exchange of Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Unity Candle / Music (optional)

- Pastoral Blessing
- Blessing by parents or wedding party (optional)
- Lord's Prayer
- Special Music: Hymn or Solo (optional)
- Pronouncement of Marriage
- Recessional
- Postlude

Assisting ministers may be used in the service to read the lessons or to assist in the prayers and communion. These assisting ministers may be lay people. As a worship service of the congregation in the course of the normal liturgical year, it is understood that all of the paraments (altar cloth, etc.) that are in the sanctuary will remain there with their appropriate seasonal colors of the church year. As at all worship services, flowers are not to be placed on the altar or on the grand piano. Flowers may be placed in a wide variety of other locations in the worship place.

Guidelines in Selecting Music

Since your wedding is a worship service, it should embody high standards of quality, texts which reflect the praise of God, the steadfast love of Christ for his church as the foundation, model love and fidelity in marriage, and invite God's presence and blessing into the wedding and marriage. Music used in the marriage service may be instrumental and/or vocal. It may be organ music or other instrumental music, such as strings, brass, or woodwind, performed by a soloist or an ensemble. It may be music with text sung by a single voice, duet, small ensemble, full choir, or congregational hymns. All music **MUST** be pre-approved by the organist and Pastor.

Although tapes or CDs may be used, the church's technology is limited. Please discuss these options with the wedding worship coordinator.

While there are many appropriate contemporary songs, it should be remembered that recordings of such music are made under ideal conditions with sophisticated electronic equipment and mixing devices. Renditions of these selections on a pipe organ or by the most talented amateurs, especially in non-studio settings, will not sound like the recorded selections.

In summary, if you can answer "yes" to the following questions, the music is probably appropriate:

- Does this music/text reflect praise and/or thanksgiving to God?
- Is it based on or does it reflect a scriptural theme?
- Does it express the love that comes from God and is a part of your relationship?

All music must be approved by the organist and pastor. Wagner's Wedding March from the opera *Lohengrin* and Mendelssohn's Wedding March from *Midsummer Night's Dream* are discouraged.

Congregational hymns

Because your wedding is a worship service, we encourage congregational hymns. Hymns may be sung in place of other vocal music. The pastors or organists will assist you in selecting them.

Suggested Scripture Readings

From the Old Testament:

- Genesis 1:26-31 Male and female created by God
- Genesis 2:18-24 God creates man and woman
- Ruth 1:16-17 Pledge of faithfulness
- Proverbs 3 Trust in the Lord with all your heart
- Song of Solomon 2:10-13 Love in the spring
- Song of Solomon 8:7 Unquenchable love
- Isaiah 63:7-9 The steadfast love of God
- Jeremiah 29:11-13 I know the plans I have for you
- Jeremiah 32:38-41 God's faithfulness
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Two better than one
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 A time for everything

Psalms:

- 33, 100, 117, 127, 128, 136, 150

From the Epistles:

- Romans 12:1-2 A living offering
- Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39 God's continuing presence
- 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13 The hymn of divine love
- Philippians 4:4-7 Rejoice in the Lord always
- Colossians 3:12-17 Live in love and thanksgiving
- 1 John 4:7-11 Let us love one another
- 1 John 3:18-24 Love one another as he commanded us

From the Gospels:

- Matthew 5:13-16 Salt and light
- Matthew 7:21,24-29 A firm foundation
- Matthew 19:4-6 Faithfulness in marriage
- Mark 10:6-9 Two shall become one flesh
- John 2:1-10 The wedding at Cana
- John 15:9-12 Love one another

You may select one or more readings. The liturgy requires at least one scripture reading in addition to the gospel reading. The above are suggestions. Many other texts are appropriate. If you have no preference, the pastor will choose texts for you.

In addition to readings from the Bible, a selection from a secular source may be used if it is in harmony with the biblical understanding of marriage. All readings must be approved by the Pastor.

Vows and Rings

#1 I take you, name, 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.

#2 I take you, name, to be my wife/husband, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, 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 better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come until death parts us.

#3 I take you, name, to be my wife/husband, I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband/wife, 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.

#4 Name, 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 my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.

#5 I, name, take you, name, to be my wife/husband: To have and to hold from this day forward, in good times and in bad, when rich or when poor, when sick or when healthy, to love and to cherish until death makes us part.

#6 I, name, take you, to be my wife/husband; to have and to hold from this day forward; for better or for worse; for richer or for poorer; in sickness or in health; to love and to cherish until death makes us part.

#7 In the presence of God and this community, I, name, 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.

#8 I, name, give myself to you, name. By the grace of God, I promise to support and care for you. In the love of Christ, I promise to love and cherish you. With the Spirit's help, I promise to be faithful to you, as long as we both shall live.

#9 I take you, name to be my wife/husband, and these things I promise you; I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help, and care for you. I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will share my life with you, through the best and worst of all that is to come, until death part us.

You may wish to write your own vows. They should be consistent with the biblical understanding of marriage, and should make clear that the promises are a life-long commitment. This should be done in consultation with the pastor. If you write your own vows, be careful not to promise the impossible!

Holy Communion

As baptized Christians, you may want your marriage set in the context of the celebration of Holy Communion.

Since it is a sign of unity, the entire congregation will be invited to participate.

Celebrating marriage in the context of the Holy Communion enriches the meaning of both. Marriage often involves a festive meal; Holy Communion always does. Marriage is a sign of intimacy and union and communion; so is Holy Communion.

Decorations

If floral decorations and an aisle runner (the aisle is 75 feet long) are desired (neither are necessary), they are provided by the couple and placed under the supervision of the Wedding Worship Coordinator. Because they express life, it is recommended that real flowers be used in the chancel. For liturgical reasons, flowers are placed on flower stands rather than on the altar or baptism font. Only artificial flower pedals may be used for throwing by your flower girl. Please assign someone to lay and remove the aisle runner, as well as the artificial flowers.

The church has two wedding candelabra, each holding seven special oil candles and three unity candles, which are provided by the congregation and placed in the chancel. Aisle candles need to be an enclosed globe style which stand on the floor and are secured to the pew with a rubber gripper. These can be rented from some florists. The congregation is not permitted to hold candles. These and other decorations should be discussed with the Wedding Worship Coordinator. Tea lights on the outer walls must be in glass containers and are to be set up and taken down by someone designated by you.

Ushers

You will need to choose a minimum of two ushers to light candles, seat guests, etc. We strongly recommend two ushers for each 100 guests. Groomsmen or bridesmaids may be used as additional ushers. Ushers can light the tea lights and will be lit shortly before guests arrive.

Bulletins

It is helpful, but not necessary, to have printed bulletins to inform members of the congregation of the order of service and the names of participants in the wedding. You may discuss the bulletin with the office secretary, although we ask that you purchase your own. You may prepare the bulletins yourself or have the church secretary prepare them for you. If bulletins are to be printed at St. John's, we need the information and blank bulletin covers no less than THREE WEEKS before the date of the wedding OR THE FEE WILL BE DOUBLED.

If bulletins are printed elsewhere, show the final proof to the pastor before it is printed. Include in the bulletin the sentence: "Please, no flash photography during the ceremony." Bring 3 copies of the bulletin to the rehearsal or when you bring in your wedding license.

Photography/Videography

Each wedding is a worship service of the Church. During the worship service itself, we ask that no flash photographs be taken and that all photographers/videographers remain at the back of the sanctuary behind the worshippers. If it is absolutely essential, the video/photographer may kneel in the aisle during the processional (only) but it is expected that this person will discretely return to the back before the worship begins.

A remote-controlled video camera on a tripod is allowed to be placed in the altar area if another point of view is desired.

Formal pictures may be taken before or after the service; consult the Wedding Worship Coordinator about photography times of other weddings that day. Since weddings are sometimes scheduled three hours apart, picture-taking time in the sanctuary is limited. Photographers not acquainted with St. John's should plan to discuss with the pastor the above regulations for photography during the worship service.

Fireside Room Weddings

Weddings in the Fireside Room are for couples with guests of 30 or less. There is no custodial fee for Fireside Room weddings and a wedding worship coordinator is not required unless you desire to have one. There is a \$75 charge for the use of the Fireside Room which is to be paid at the time of reserving the date.

Additional Notes

The Bride and Groom along with their attendants will each be assigned a dressing room.

No rice, birdseed or confetti throwing is allowed in the building or on the church grounds because of clean-up difficulties.

St. John's has three different unity candle holders and two candelabra which you may use. You provide your own unity candles; the candelabra have their own permanent, oil-based candles. Plant stands are also available for your use. A stand is available for your guest book, and a lace tablecloth is available to use on the gift table. Your Wedding Worship Coordinator will help you with these details.

It is suggested that two guest books be available to sign to keep the guests moving. The guest book will need to be closed at least five minutes before the ceremony begins.

St. John's policy is to maintain a smoke-and alcohol-free environment. If alcohol is found on the premises or parking lot, the offenders will be asked to leave and the police will be called.

Receptions

The Fellowship Hall of the church is usually available for wedding receptions. If you wish to use the church facilities for your reception, you should request this as soon as possible. All receptions must be catered. Note: details for receptions and fees are listed on a separate form.

It is the responsibility of the wedding party to arrange for the care of their property before, during, and after the ceremony. Leave all valuable personal belongings and gifts in the care of parents, friends or attendants during the service. The church cannot be responsible for lost or stolen articles.

Congratulations!

Your wedding day is very special to you—and to us. The congregation of St. John's Lutheran Church will be happy to work with you to create a memorable wedding worship service. Our Wedding Worship Coordinators are here to serve you and help you with the details and the day.

Carefully read through this booklet to acquaint yourself with the wedding policies here at St. John's. Feel free to call the church office or your assigned Wedding Worship Coordinator with any questions you may have. The church office is open from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM weekdays. The phone number is 634-7110 and email is office@stjohnskasson.org

HAVE A WONDERFUL WEDDING CEREMONY

AND THEN A WONDERFUL MARRIAGE.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU IN YOUR LIFE TOGETHER!