



St. John's Lutheran Church Wedding Planning Brochure



Congratulations!

Welcome to St. John's Lutheran Church! We are pleased that you desire to have your wedding service at St. John's, or to have a St. John's pastor officiate your wedding off-site.

Marriage is a significant commitment and celebration, and it is also a worship service. In this way, your wedding guests are not simply spectators but are part of a congregation of support and care, witnessing your promises to one another and God's promises to you. We believe that God's care is often shown through the people who love us, and the congregation present who will witness your wedding will be the ones who will uplift and support you and your spouse throughout your married life in the years to come.

As you consider your wedding as a worship service, you will find the information that follows helpful in your planning. Please note that this is simply an outline, and appropriate changes can certainly be considered in conversation with your officiating pastor. Unique elements for your wedding service, when planned and executed with a faithful, caring approach, can be quite meaningful.

First Steps: Setting a Wedding Date

- Before you announce a wedding date to any family or friends, submit your date request with the church office, at least six months before the anticipated wedding date.
- Your requested wedding date needs to be approved by a St. John's pastor, consulting both the church calendar and the pastors' schedule.
- Weddings are scheduled throughout the year, except during Holy Week (Palm Sunday - Easter) and Christmas Week.
- Weddings held in the church building at St. John's will be officiated by a St. John's pastor. If the engaged couple has a pastor of another church they wish to have included in officiating, please indicate this desire at the time of your request, for approval of the St. John's pastor.
- Once a wedding date has been approved by the pastor, you may begin making other arrangements and announcing the approved date.

Obtaining Your Marriage License

The engaged couple must obtain their own marriage license prior to the wedding service. Marriage license applications are available at the County Treasurer's office in the county where your wedding will take place.

Please note the following factors regarding timing for obtaining your marriage license:

- Once you have completed premarital counseling with the officiating pastor, you will receive a notarized letter, certifying your premarital counseling. Bring this letter with you when applying for your marriage license; this letter will grant you a discount on your marriage license.
- There is a five-day waiting period from the time the application is filed to the actual effective date of the license.
- The license is only valid for six months.
- Please deliver your license to the church office at least one week prior to the wedding.

Premarital Counseling

Working with a St. John's pastor for your wedding includes premarital counseling. Premarital counseling is a beneficial opportunity for engaged couples to participate in key conversations and exercises to nurture and further strengthen your relationship, giving you tools to navigate married life together with health and vitality. As you will note the following section, premarital counseling is included in your work with a pastor for members of this congregation at no additional cost; for non-members, premarital counseling comes with an additional fee.

Normally, the engaged couple will meet with your officiating pastor several times for premarital counseling. For local couples, these meetings will take place in-person. For couples outside the metro area, these meetings can take place via video chat (e.g. zoom, google meets, etc.).

Wedding Fees

The following payments should be made directly to individual staff members, via check or cash, and should be delivered to the church office no later than one week before your wedding date.

Premarital Counseling	
Members	No Charge
Non-Members	\$300
Pastor	\$300
Wedding Coordinator	\$150
<i>Includes both wedding rehearsal and wedding service</i>	
Sound Technician	\$100
<i>Includes both wedding rehearsal and wedding service</i>	
Janitorial Fee	\$100
Organist (optional)	\$200
<i>Includes wedding rehearsal, wedding service, and additional rehearsals with soloists, as needed</i>	
Nursery Attendant (optional)	\$20/hour
<i>If you would like nursery care during the rehearsal and/or wedding, please indicate this desire. The nursery will not be available if unattended by St. John's staff.</i>	

Planning the Wedding Service

A wedding service is a worship service, an expression of God's gift of love in its many forms. For some, a very traditional worship service is desired. For others, you may want to personalize or help design certain parts of your wedding service. Please bring your desires for your wedding service to a conversation with your officiating pastor.

We encourage participation and leadership by family and friends, in ways that it will enhance your celebration. Use the following order of service as a template to begin planning your own service. Items noted with an *asterisk are required elements in the wedding service.

- Processional Music
- Greeting
- *Declaration of Marriage Intentions
- Prayer

- Hymn/Special Music
- *Scripture Readings (and Secular Readings)
- Message
- Hymn/Special Music
- *Declaration of Vows
- *Exchange of Rings
- Unity Ritual
- Holy Communion
- Prayers/Lord's Prayer
- Blessing
- Presentation of the Couple
- Recessional Music

Once you have selected an order of wedding service, please share a draft of your wedding bulletin with the pastor, for their approval before printing.

Selecting Scripture & Other Readings

Couples are encouraged to select at least one Scripture reading for your wedding service. Up to three readings is appropriate. If you desire to have a secular reading in addition to a Scripture reading (e.g. a poem or reading from another literary work), please share this reading with the pastor for their consideration.

Options for potential Scripture readings include but are not limited to those listed below.

Old Testament

Ruth 1:16-17
 Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
 Psalm 98
 Psalm 100
 Song of Solomon 2:10-13
 Song of Solomon 8:6a-7

New Testament

Romans 8:31-39
 Romans 12:9-12
 Romans 15:5-6
 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
 Colossians 3:12-17
 1 John 4:7-16

Gospels

Matthew 6:25-34
 Matthew 22:35-40
 Luke 12:22-34
 John 2:1-11
 John 15:9-17

Preparing Marriage Vows

Couples may choose to use the traditional marriage vows listed below, or you may choose to write your own.

- Traditional vows: "I take you, _____ to be my *wife/husband*, and these things I promise 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 parts us."
- Personalized vows: As you write your vows, remember that vows are ultimately, promises. Personalized vows can include mention of things you love or admire about your partner, but should utilize the phrase, "I promise to ____" as the central focus of your written vows.

Selecting Music

Couples have a wide variety of options when it comes to choosing music for your wedding service, including hymns for congregational singing accompanied by organ or piano; special music, either vocal or instrumental, or recorded music. Remembering that a wedding is a worship service, choose your music accordingly.

If you would like to include piano or organ for some or all of your wedding music, an organist/pianist will be arranged; this musician can make recommendations for music, if desired.

In choosing your music, consider the following questions:

1. Does this music and its lyrics reflect praise to God?
2. Is it based on or does it reflect a theme found in Scripture?
3. Is it appropriate for use in a regular worship service?
4. Is the music within the ability of the musicians to play or sing well?

If you can answer “yes” to all of these questions, your music is likely appropriate for your wedding.

If you have additional music that does not fit well with the questions above, those musical selections might fit better for a special moment during your reception.

Rehearsal & Wedding Coordinator

Wedding rehearsals should be scheduled when the wedding date is scheduled. It is normally held the day prior to the wedding, but can be held the same day, if necessary. The Wedding Coordinator will be present to lead your party through the order of the wedding service and answer any questions you may have. The Wedding Coordinator will also be present on the day of your wedding, to oversee and guide the wedding party in carrying out their roles during the wedding service as well.

As you make plans for your wedding rehearsal, consider the following:

- All members of the wedding party, and anyone with a leadership role should be present at the scheduled time of the rehearsal. Additional family members do not need to attend the rehearsal.
- When determining the time of the rehearsal, consider the availability of your wedding party, including if they are traveling from out of town, or if they are working locally on the day of your rehearsal.
- If everyone arrives for rehearsal on-time, the rehearsal should last for no more than one hour.
- If you are making reservations for a rehearsal dinner following the actual rehearsal, please make your reservations considering one hour for the rehearsal, plus travel time to your dinner location.

Ushers

In selecting your wedding party, choose at least two people to act as ushers. Ushers will be tasked with distributing bulletins to guests, directing guests as to any seating preferences you may have, and directing guests to the location of the restrooms, as needed. If you are inviting more than 150 guests, more ushers may be needed. Ushers should plan to arrive at your wedding site no later than one hour prior to the wedding service on the day of your wedding.

Invitations

In ordering invitations, use the following form for the address of our church:

St. John's Lutheran Church
20165 Heath Ave
Lakeville, MN 55044

Wedding Bulletins

Wedding bulletins are completely optional, at the preference of the engaged couple. Some couples choose to forgo wedding bulletins altogether. If you do desire to have wedding bulletins printed, please share a draft of

the bulletin with the pastor for final approval prior to printing, to ensure all information is correct. Ordering and printing of bulletins is the responsibility of the couple, not the church.

Decorations

- **Floral decorations** for the church sanctuary are not necessary, but if desired, they will be provided by the couple. Local florists are familiar with our building, and are able to make suggestions for your consideration. No tacks, nails or staples are allowed into sanctuary woodwork or walls. If you wish to leave a floral arrangement in the front of the sanctuary after your wedding for Sunday worship, simply let the church office know.
- **Paraments** on the altar and lectern are determined by the season of the church year. They are not changed for weddings. If you would like to know what color the paraments will be at the time of your wedding, please contact the church office.
- **Rice Throwing** - No rice, bird seed, glitter, or flower petals may be thrown either inside or outside the building. Bubbles may be used.

Conduct of Wedding Party & Guests

All participants and guests are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful to God and to the engaged couple, acknowledging that the wedding is a worship service. As such, the use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted in the church building or on church property. People under the influence of alcohol or other substances will be asked to leave. Smoking is prohibited in the church building. Food and beverages are not permitted in the sanctuary, besides water.

Photography and Videography

Photography and videography are welcome to take place during the wedding service with a few parameters. Floodlights and flash are not permitted during the wedding service. Photographers and videographers should be stationed at the back of the sanctuary throughout the duration of the wedding service, rather than disrupt the wedding service by moving around the sanctuary. Please communicate these guidelines to your vendors prior to the wedding day.

Sanctuary Seating Capacity

The sanctuary can seat 400 people comfortably. The sanctuary is air-conditioned during the summer months.

Wedding Site "Hosts"

Please arrange to have a pair of wedding hosts, often an aunt-and-uncle couple or a pair of cousins of the engaged couple, to act as wedding site hosts. The wedding host has a different role than the personal attendant. These hosts are responsible to clean up the church after the wedding service has finished, as your wedding party and guests proceed to the reception. Wedding hosts should collect all decorations including a guest book, card box, floral arrangements, etc., but also any additional personal items left by the wedding party or guests, including in any preparation areas. Wedding hosts should be prepared to dispose of trash left out, and return the church building to the level of tidiness as when you arrived.

Additional Considerations for Wedding Planning

- The church office is open Monday-Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm on weekdays. Confirm delivery times with all suppliers who may deliver flowers, etc. directly to the church. Kindly advise the church of any anticipated deliveries as well, to ensure a staff member is available to receive deliveries.
- Get all documents in order. Bring your marriage license and all fees to the church office no later than one week before your wedding date.
- Do as much as you can ahead of time. There will be plenty of “last-minute” things to do, so advance preparation will help reduce rushing and stress.
- If you are giving gifts to your attendants, wedding party, or family, the rehearsal dinner is an appropriate time for giving gifts.
- Provide a map and/or instructions for getting to each location to your guests, especially for those who are from out-of-town, and for those who may not use a navigational app.
- Create a schedule for the rehearsal day through the end of the wedding day, to provide to each member of your wedding party and immediate family. When creating this schedule, allow plenty of time for each activity, to avoid rushing and to allow for unexpected delays.
- Tell people involved what they are expected to do and when. Try not to make assumptions that people know what you mean, as all weddings are unique.
- If you would like to have the wedding party get ready at the church, please coordinate with the church office to arrange for how and what time you would like to gain access to the building on the day of the wedding.

St. John's Lutheran Church
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