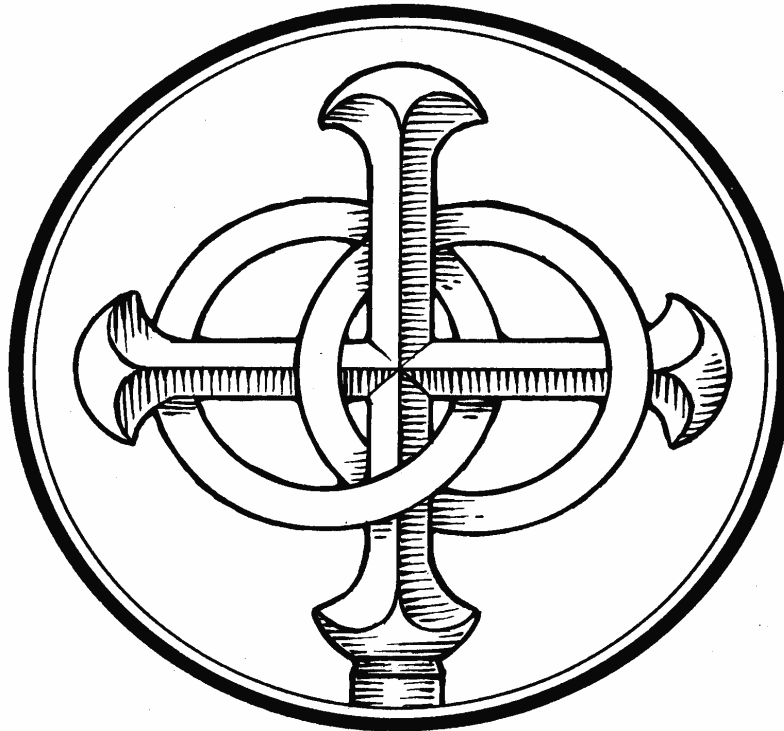


# WEDDING MANUAL



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## YOUR WEDDING PLANS

Your wedding day is one of the most important dates in your lives, and your church and pastor are pleased to share this happy occasion with you. We wish to do everything possible to make your wedding day a most pleasing and memorable experience.

In that any churchly wedding is first and foremost a worship service, you will want to avoid some wedding customs which have resulted from the infiltration of secular or even pagan thinking into the wedding ceremony. You will be pleased to know that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has successfully combated this trend, avoiding the sensational and sentimental, and emphasizing the Christ-centered character of the ceremony. When discussing details with the pastor you will note, therefore, that there are certain areas in which the Church speaks with clarity and finality so that the proper emphasis might be maintained.

Dates and times for the wedding as well as the rehearsal should be made well in advance and at times convenient for the bridal party, organist, and pastor. In order to prepare for the Divine Services on Sunday morning, ordinarily weddings are not scheduled after 7:00 p.m.

If you plan to have your reception in the church, please contact the church office at an early date to reserve the parish hall and receive information and guidelines governing its use.

After you have selected a tentative date and time for your wedding, it is important that you call the pastor for an appointment. Please plan no part of your wedding until after you have determined the availability of the church and the pastor.

The pastor will ask you to complete a wedding information form and will discuss with you the many details of your wedding, so that you may then proceed with positive plans involving invitations, flowers, music, reception, attendants, pictures, etc. Premarital work with the pastor involves about 4 sessions studying God's Word regarding Holy Marriage, the marriage ceremony, and other issues related to marriage.

As a couple prepares for a Christian marriage it follows that they will want to attend Sunday morning church services regularly to hear God's Word and to receive gifts from the Lord. At each church service Jesus strengthens you in your life with Him and each other. After all, Holy Marriage is based upon the union between Christ and His bride, Holy Church. If a couple makes vows at Christ's altar where they declare that their union is dependent on Christ's blessings, they will want to regularly receive from Christ's Word and Sacraments each Sunday.

Your pastor has ultimate responsibility for your rehearsal and the wedding. If you desire another clergyman of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to participate in your wedding, please remember that the invitation should be extended by your pastor. The services of the church organist should be engaged, and organ and vocal selections are to be approved by the pastor.

You may have many questions as you prepare. Hopefully, the following pages will provide some of the answers. Since your pastor wishes to be fully helpful to you in every way, we urge you to call him whenever necessary.

## THE CHRISTIAN UNION

When you are a Christian your union with your spouse on your wedding day is the second union of your life. St. Paul refers to both unions in his fifth chapter of Ephesians. In your Baptism you are united with Christ “for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” That union with Christ is your greatest blessing.

Many of you acknowledged that union at the Lord’s altar on the day of your confirmation. You are a Christian—a Christ-man, a Christ-woman. Your faith and life are centered in Christ. Your marriage and your preparation for that marriage will reflect Christ’s love for you and yours for each other.

Your union with Christ and your love for Him has influenced your choice of your life’s partner. Either s/he is already of the Christian faith, s/he has resolved to become active with you in the Christian faith, or at the very least s/he has agreed to allow you to freely exercise your Christian faith personally and with your children without interference.

The couple that regularly worships together before and after they are married has a distinct advantage over non-practicing couples. This is true because they receive strength from Jesus Christ to remain faithful and forgiving toward each other.

### WHY HAVE A CHRISTIAN WEDDING OR BLESSING OF A CIVIL UNION?

Many Christians choose to stand at the Lord’s altar when they speak their vows to each other in marriage. They do this because they want to receive the gift of Holy Marriage with God’s blessing and desire to use this gift as He has designed.

Sometimes it works best for a couple to proceed with a civil marriage, performed by either their pastor or a state official. Some will then desire to receive God’s blessing upon their marriage, while speaking their vows before God and His people. This service—*The Blessing of a Civil Union*--is much like the Rite of Holy Marriage.

In either case the couple will receive the prayers of their Christian friends for God’s continued blessing on their wedded life. Using the suggested hymns also allows them to sing their prayer and praise. Both services emphasize the origin and beneficial use of God’s gift of Holy Marriage, while benefitting the congregation as well as the couple.

### WHO CAN RECEIVE A MARRIAGE LICENSE IN NEBRASKA?

As Christian citizens both the congregation and those being married desire to abide by the law of the State of Nebraska (Romans 13); therefore, we need to know what our state requires. The County Clerk requires the following to issue a State of Nebraska marriage license:

- Each party must be at least 19 years old (18 with parental consent);
- Ordinarily a blood test is not required.
- There is no waiting period for the license; but it must be used within one year of its issue date;
- Each license costs \$15.00. This includes a keepsake certificate, along with the two copies that must be signed by your designated witnesses (usually the Best man and the Maid/Matron of Honor) and returned to the State after the wedding.
- Each party must show a photo I.D. or a birth certificate when applying for the license.
- A Nebraska marriage license can only be used when the wedding is performed in Nebraska.
- If either party has been divorced, the County Clerk’s Office will need to know the date that the judge signed the divorce decree. The divorced party must wait 6 months after the decree has been signed to apply for a marriage license.

## WHO CAN RECEIVE HOLY MARRIAGE AT ZION?

Ordinarily the use of our sanctuary for the Rite of Holy Marriage is reserved for the members of our congregation who:

- Wish to make the right use of Holy Marriage according to God's Word;
- Have joined with ones prospective spouse to complete premarital work (meeting about four times, depending on needs of the couple) with our pastor.

Occasionally sister congregations from The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod will request to use our church for a wedding. Such requests should be made through the pastor of that congregation, who can speak to the member's status and agree that his congregation will shoulder all responsibility for the proper use of our facilities and proper conduct of the service. Each request will be weighed on its own merits by our Board of Elders, who will consider the unique circumstances of each case and may choose to authorize or to deny such a request.

**Regarding non-members:** Our pastor will gladly instruct all who desire to learn the basics of the Christian faith as confessed by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The normal adult instruction class meets for six sessions, which last about two hours each. Those completing instruction are offered the following options:

1. If you do not agree with our teaching, you are under no obligation to become a member of our church.
2. We pray, however, that you will find yourself in agreement with our teaching. As such you will be invited to become a communicant member of our congregation.

## GENERAL REMARKS ON THE SERVICE AND DECORUM

As we stand before the altar and ask the blessing of Almighty God upon a marriage, all gowns, dresses, and groom/groomsmen attire should reflect good taste and modesty in keeping with the setting and decorum of God's house.

Music is a very important part of any wedding service, and more will be said about it later. Appropriate music is available for both organ and vocal selections, and a partial list of suggested items is included. All selections, vocal and instrumental, must be submitted to the pastor for his approval.

At no time are suggestive or lewd slogans, signs, etc., permitted in or on the building or on the cars of visitors, guests, or members of the wedding party. Please advise guests of this policy.

The consumption of alcoholic beverages and public intoxication is prohibited on church property (including all buildings, parking lots, and yards) before, during, or after the wedding rehearsal and service.

Everyone has the right to enter the church and be present throughout the wedding ceremony. The congregational Elders reserve the right to attend all rehearsals.

## **FLOWERS, CANDLES, & OTHER DECORATIONS**

- a. Neither the florist, nor a wedding consultant, if one is engaged, plays any part in the directing of the rehearsal or wedding service.
- b. The florist may discuss details with the custodian or pastor prior to the wedding.
- c. Corsages and boutonniere may be placed in the kitchen.
- d. Bouquets or floral pieces are not placed on the altar.
- e. The church does not own a center aisle runner. Your florist may provide one.
- f. Under no circumstances are flower petals to be dropped in the center aisle by the flower girl or any other person.
- g. Altar flowers may be left for Sunday services.
- h. If candelabra are used in addition to the regular candles, clear plastic sheets must be placed under the candelabra.
- i. If you plan to use a Unity Candle, it must be placed on one of our flower stands (or you may rent a unity candle stand) and have plastic placed under it to protect the carpet.
- j. Church decorating is ordinarily done only on the day before the wedding or on the day of the wedding and should be in place at least one hour before the wedding, so that there may be no disturbance.
- k. No chancel furnishings to be removed or concealed by decorations.
- l. No decorations may be fastened to the woodwork and furnishings of the chancel and nave.
- m. While pews may be decorated, the decorations are not to be attached with tacks, nails, etc.
- n. No glitter is to be used anywhere on the church property. No birdseed or bubbles are allowed inside the church. If used, these items may be handed to the guests outside the church following the service.
- o. Following the wedding removal of decorations, flowers, aisle runner, etc., should not take place until the nave is empty.
- p. Flower stands, runner, etc., need to be removed from the church on the day of the wedding.
- q. Consult the custodian with any other questions regarding flowers, candles, or decorations.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

- a. The taking of flash pictures by anyone during the church service is forbidden. Please notify your family and friends that pictures are not to be taken during the service.
- b. Flash pictures, by the professional photographer only, are permitted as the wedding party enters and leaves the nave--never during the ceremony proper.
- c. Poses before or after the service provide opportunity for a variety of pictures to be taken.
- d. Pictures before or after the ceremony are permitted. Please inform the pastor of any pictures which involve him so he can plan to be available when needed.
- e. You are strongly encouraged to have your pictures taken before the service, completing them at least one hour prior to the time of the wedding service. Please plan accordingly.

- f. Excessive informality is to be avoided, and the photographer is to see that individual members of the wedding party remain outside the chancel except when they are involved in a picture. Full decorum by all present should be carefully observed.
- g. Time exposures from the balcony during the ceremony are permitted.
- h. Video taping may be done from the balcony or by remote from a discreet location upon consulting with the pastor.
- i. Further information may be obtained from the pastor prior to the wedding.

**Note:** Under no circumstances are chancel furnishings to be moved or removed, nor is anything to be attached to them, nor are they to be visually obstructed.

### **THE REHEARSAL**

- a. The rehearsal is to begin promptly at the designated time.
- b. Rehearsals typically last 30-45 minutes and shall be conducted with all reverence and devotion, for the church is the house of God.
- c. Those present will naturally conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with the setting. Attendants and ushers should be chosen carefully.
- d. Attire may be informal, but in good taste. At all times gentlemen should remove their headgear (caps, hats & etc.) in the church.
- e. The pastor must have the couples' marriage license before the rehearsal.
- f. If you wish for your pastor and his family to join you for your rehearsal dinner or wedding reception, kindly provide him with an invitation.

### **NORMAL EXPENSES**

- a. The congregation has established the following as being a schedule of minimal fees for services connected with the weddings:

Organist		\$100.00
Soloist		\$25.00
Sound Engineer		\$25.00
Pastor		Couple's Choice

Normal payment procedure is to place the fees in marked envelopes, and have the best man deliver them to the appropriate persons before the service.

- b. A cleaning deposit--determined by the trustees--is required to pay the custodian if need be. The amount reimbursed to the couple depends on amount of time needed to clean.
- c. The following fees are due at least one week prior to the wedding:
  - Bulletins (*we purchase and print*).....price varies with number.
  - Use of fellowship hall .....ask secretary on cost.
- d. If the Board of Elders grants permission to a sister LC-MS congregation to use our church building for a wedding, then the officiating pastor will receive a separate form in addition to this manual. The form will include the procedures, responsibilities, fees, and deadlines applicable to that specific allowance. As the utility costs, insurance, etc., fluctuate with time, the Board of Trustees may change accordingly deposit requirements and fee schedules for future use.

## **YOUR WEDDING DAY**

All members of the wedding party should arrive at least one hour prior to the wedding, earlier if pictures are to be taken prior to the service.

### **THE WEDDING SERVICE**

You have a rich heritage of churchliness and worship to support the liturgy of the marriage rite in the Lutheran Church. The wedding service of worship leads you to have the glory of God uppermost in your mind and the receiving of His blessing. This is the reason for the sacredness and godliness which is to surround the persons and actions of the wedding service, all preparations, and rehearsals.

The Lutheran wedding service is very brief. The service requires about one-half hour. That brief time, out of the months of preparation ought, therefore, to be dedicated to God, his Word, his blessing.

The pastor will spend much time discussing with you the many possibilities and options available within the context of the worship service. All the planning may begin with a Biblically based theme, the various parts of the worship service flowing from the theme.

The service allows for a great deal of variety, creativity, and uniqueness. When vocal selections will be sung, the use of a unity candle, Scripture lessons to be read, congregational singing, etc. All of these and more may fit well within the service.

The bride and groom may approach the altar together. If the bride approaches the altar alone or at the right side of her father or some other male relative, she shall be given to the groom at the foot of the chancel steps, at the head of the center aisle.

The guiding principle continues to be this: a wedding in a Lutheran congregation is first and foremost a worship service. All that takes place must focus on our number one purpose of worship. Nothing should detract from Christ as our object of faith.

Your pastor will be pleased to offer guidance and assistance.

### **FOR THE USHERS**

- a. All ushers should arrive at least one hour prior to the wedding unless pictures are to be taken prior to the service.
- b. If the ushers are to be responsible for the lighting of the candles, this should be done ten minutes prior to the service.
- c. It is not necessary to ask those entering if they are “friends of the bride” or “friends of the groom”. Places are designated for the immediate members of the families involved. For the rest there is no special “side”.
- d. Following the recessional selected ushers are to return at once to escort the parents from the nave and then the congregation from the nave unless the bride and groom are to usher guests out.
- e. All ushers are to be available after the wedding for pictures unless pictures have been taken prior to the service.



# MUSIC AND ITS RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN WEDDING

Since the marriage ceremony is a service of worship, the music used throughout the wedding is to be religious. This quite naturally eliminates such “popular” songs as “Keeper of the Stars”, “We’ve Only Just Begun”, “Endless Love”, and the traditional “Wedding March”.

There is, however, an abundance of appropriate organ and vocal music available here. The pastor and organist will be happy to help you select appropriate religious music for your wedding. Please make selections with the organist no later than three weeks before the wedding. If you do not do so by that time, we will need to select the appropriate music for you.

If a special organist is requested, they must be named at the time when the arrangements for the marriage are made. Otherwise only organists from the congregation will be acceptable, who are accustomed to the organ and are acquainted with the order of service.

Vocal soloists and ensembles ordinarily use the balcony.

Where the vocal selections (if any) are used in the service will be decided prior to the rehearsal.

Any hymn from Lutheran Service Book is appropriate and may be used by soloist or congregation. Please see the “Hymns Suggested for the Wedding Service” on page 10.

## Samples of Processionals & Recessionals

Bach, J. S.	“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” “Nun Danket Alle Gott” “Sheep May Safely Graze”
Beollmann, L.	“Allegro” from “Suite Gothique”
Buxtehude, D.	“Toccata in F.”
Dunstable, J.	“Aquincourt Hymn”
Handel, G. F.	“Aria in F. Major”
Karg-Elert, S.	“Now Thank We All Our God”
Manz, Paul	“God of Grace” “Jesus, Lead Thou On” “Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus” “Lift High the Cross”
	“Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices” “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” “Psalm XIX”
Clarke	“Trumpet Tune”
Purcell	“Trumpet Voluntary”

## Vocal Music

Bain J. L. M.	“Brother James’ Air”
Baker, H.	“The King of Love”
Barnby	“O Perfect Love”
Busarow, D.	<u>A Ring of Gold</u> (Book)
Includes “Love is the Sunlight”	“When God Designed Creation”
“When Jesus to the Wedding Went”	“Within the Arc of Grace”
“The Lamps That Light This Wedding Day”	“Wedding Prayer”
“The Days of the Summer”	“Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace”
“Now With Thanksgiving”	

## HYMNS SUGGESTED FOR THE WEDDING SERVICE

LSB	TITLE	LSB	TITLE
395	O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright	*802	Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
497	Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord	*804	Oh, Worship the King
498	Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest	*805	Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow
500	Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid	*811	Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices
*504	Father Most Holy	812	Come Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs
*506	Glory Be to God the Father	*816	From All That Dwell Below the Skies
*525	Crown Him with Many Crowns	*818	In You is Gladness
528	Oh For a Thousand Tongues to Sing	819	Sing Praise to God, the Highest Good
533	Jesus Has Come and Brings Pleasure	822	Alleluias! Let Praises Ring
*685	Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus	823	May God Embrace Us with His Grace
692	Praise to You and Adoration	*837	Lift High the Cross
698	May We Your Precepts, Lord, Fulfill	*858	O Father, All Creating
*700	Love Divine, All Love Excelling	859	Lord, When You Came as Welcome Guest
703	How Can I Thank You Lord	860	Gracious Savior, Grant Your Blessing
*706	Love in Christ is Strong and Living	*862	Oh, Blest the House
708	Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart	869	With the Lord Being Your Task
*709	The King of Love My Shepherd Is	*895	Now Thank We All Our God
710	The Lord's My Shepherd, Leading Me	*905	Come, O Almighty King
*726	Evening and Morning	*913	O Holy Spirit, Enter In
732	All Depends on Our Possessing	919	Abide, O dearest Jesus
750	If You But Trust in God to Guide You	920	Forth in the Peace of Christ
768	To God the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray	*922	Go, My Children, with My Blessing
789	Praise and Thanksgiving	*940	Holy God, We Praise Your Name
*790	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	947	All Glory Be to God on High
*791	All People That on Earth Do Dwell	948	All Glory Be to God Alone
*794	The Lord, My God be Praised	953	We All Believe in One True God, Father
797	Praise the Almighty	954	We All Believe in One True God, Maker
		977	I Will Sing My Maker's Praises

*\*Denotes hymns that are familiar to most congregations.*