

**Christ Lutheran Church**  
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## **WEDDING PREPARATION INFORMATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

These pages present an outline for planning and preparing for marriage. The Church wants to offer its blessing to the unions of Christian men and women who understand the Church and its ministry to be an important part of their lives. For a wedding to take place at Christ Church, it is required that one of the parties be a baptized Christian. It is preferred, but not required, that one of the parties is an active member of Christ Church.

The marriage service will be governed by the same principles as our Sunday morning worship. Congregational participation is encouraged as in any Lutheran service of worship. Solos should be limited in number with words that are scriptural and/or specifically ask for God's blessing. Solos should not replace the participation of the congregation, either by taking the place of hymns or of the congregation praying the Lord's Prayer.

Since weddings are an extension of the congregation's worship life, the planning of a separate service for a wedding is a courtesy extended by the congregation and should not be abused by requests to move furniture, to use music inappropriate for a Sunday service, or to add pseudo-sacramental acts. Many of the wedding practices developed over the years help the wedding industry but detract from the point of the service which is to witness the vows of life-long faithfulness that the bride and groom make before God and the assembled congregation.

Christ Church is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its Lower Susquehanna Synod. Thus we not only affirm our apostolic traditions and reformation heritage, but we also faithfully adhere to the practices of the Lutheran Church when it comes to the celebration of Holy Matrimony.

### **Preliminary Process**

Call the Church Office to find out if your proposed rehearsal and wedding dates/times are available. Please note that no weddings will be performed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, during the whole season of Lent including Holy Week. If the dates you have chosen are available, you will be penciled in on the calendar and wedding preparation information will be mailed to you. **Please note that this action alone will not guarantee your rehearsal and wedding dates/times.**

After you have spoken with someone in the church office, you must contact the Senior Pastor either by phone or email at [pastorrooney@christlutheranyork.com](mailto:pastorrooney@christlutheranyork.com). He will then be in touch to the Music Director and the Parish Administrator to discuss the proposed wedding. A pastor will be chosen to work with you based upon our ministry schedule and the calendar of events. Specific requests from the couple for the ministry of one pastor or another will be taken into consideration. The Senior Pastor will then contact you to affirm your request and the dates you have requested.

When your dates/times are guaranteed, you will meet with the Senior Pastor, the Parish Administrator and the Music Director for a preliminary session to discuss the wedding guidelines, fees and the remaining preparation process.

## **Preparing for Marriage**

Our cultural preparations for the wedding day often do not help prepare couples for marriage. Popular culture no longer believes that marriage is a life-long commitment. The Church believes otherwise. We understand marriage to be a life-long commitment between a man and a woman. The maintaining of that commitment is a reflection of God's faithfulness to us and a reminder that we are made in God's image. It is for that reason that we emphasize preparing for marriage over preparing for the wedding ceremony.

This preparation process usually takes a total of six (6) pre-marital counseling sessions with the pastor. These sessions offer the opportunity for the couple to realize the religious significance of the marriage covenant and to learn more about themselves in their relationship with each other and with God. If, after a period of counseling, it is the pastor's judgment that this couple is not yet ready for Christian marriage, he/she may refer the couple for further counseling or inform the couple that marriage in the church is not appropriate. The pre-marital sessions will last about one hour each. The meetings with the pastor will be held in the Church office and will be scheduled to suit each couple.

## **THE CEREMONY**

The ceremony will be planned in consultation with the Pastor using the form outlined in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Several options are available and some homework will be required on your part. This will be part of the discussion in your first appointment with the Pastor. The celebration of the Holy Communion is encouraged at all weddings but the entire congregation must be invited to participate.

## **MUSIC**

Fees for the organist are discussed at your initial meeting with the Pastor. Fees for soloists and instrumentalists are discussed at your meeting with the Music Director. The honorarium for the organist includes a preliminary planning session and the wedding service itself. Separate checks should be made payable to him and to the soloists and instrumentalists, if any. These checks are to be given to the Pastor at least two weeks before the wedding. It is the responsibility of the couple to contact the Music Director to arrange for the initial planning meeting. Musical arrangements need to be completed at least one month before the ceremony or the Music Director will make the selections.

Part of the joy of planning a wedding is selecting music for the service. Music chosen should reflect the readings and overall purpose of the wedding service: to express Christian love and the love of the members of the assembly. Christian love comes to us from God as revealed through his Son, Jesus Christ. Popular love songs shroud this meaning and distract from the Christian faith being celebrated. Pop music selections are best suited for the reception. The Pastor and Music Director can offer guidance in this matter. Please bring music you wish used to the planning meeting with the Music Director. He will have a selection of possible music for you to listen in advance of your meeting.

Hymn singing during your marriage service is encouraged. The *Lutheran Book of Worship, With One Voice and other resources* contain many hymns appropriate for a wedding celebration and a list of suggested hymns is attached. The Music Director has a large selection of possible wedding solos. Soloists and instrumentalists, such as trumpet, flute, or handbell choir can be provided for an extra fee.

## Processional/Recessional Music

### Introduction:

The organ serves as the primary instrument for all wedding ceremonies at Christ Church. Music may include additional instrumentalists. Specific requests for processional or recessional music will be honored, if appropriate and possible.

Music selections will be discussed at a mutually agreed upon time between the Director of Music and the wedding couple. At this time, the couple will have the opportunity to listen to, discuss, and choose from a wide variety of music. The use of instrumentalists with the organ will require additional planning and preparation. In this case, as mentioned earlier, it is customary to provide an honorarium to the instrumentalists and an extra honorarium to the organist.

Again, part of the joy of planning a wedding is selecting music for the service. Music chosen should reflect the readings and overall purpose of the wedding service: to express Christian love and the love of the members of the assembly. Christian love comes to us from God as revealed through his Son, Jesus Christ. The initial consultation with the Director of Music will answer any and all questions.

### General Ideas and Suggestions:

- 1) Congregational participation is highly encouraged. It is important for all present to take an active role in your wedding ceremony through the spoken and sung Word. Listed below are hymns most appropriate for a wedding service. If you do not have a hymnal to carefully study the hymns, one can be loaned to you. Hymns can be used at most any point in the wedding service.

### Hymns (from the *Lutheran Book of Worship*)

#### Processional or Opening Hymns:

Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present  
Holy Spirit, Truth Divine  
543 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

#### Marriage Hymns (for general use):

287 O Perfect Love  
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father  
Heavenly Father, Hear Our Prayer  
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling  
Blest Be the Tie That Binds  
With the Lord Begin Your Task  
Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us  
Oh, Blest the House

#### Recessional or Closing Hymns:

Come with Us, O Blessed Jesus  
224 Soul, Adorn Yourself with  
Gladness  
259 Lord, Dismiss Us  
Abide with Us, Our Savior  
320 O God, Our Help in Ages Past  
353 May We Your Precepts, Lord  
459 O Holy Spirit, Enter In  
475 Come, Gracious Spirit  
533/534 Now Thank We All Our God  
535 Holy God, We Praise Your  
Name  
551 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee  
695 O Blessed Spring

It is possible for any of these hymns to be used at most any point in the marriage service. Most other hymns in the two available hymnals can be appropriate for your wedding service. If you find another that is of particular interest to you, please inform the Pastor or Director of Music.

- 2) Processional Music may include one or more pieces. This will largely depend on the size of the wedding party and specific facets of the service. The music chosen will set the tone of the entire service. It is not uncommon to choose music for the bridal party and a separate piece for the bride's entrance.
- 3) Other music during the service may include a vocal solo or another instrumental solo piece. These are most frequently performed at the lighting of the unity candle, before, between, or after the reading of the lessons, or during communion. These will be discussed in direct consultation with the Pastor and Director of Music.
- 4) Recessional music may or may not include more than one piece. This will depend upon specifics of the service.

## **OFFICIATING CLERGY**

A pastor at Christ Church officiates at all weddings. Guest clergy of your choice from other Lutheran congregations or other denominations are welcome to participate in your wedding with the approval of the Senior Pastor. The division of the service will be done in consultation with the guest pastor.

## **DECORATIONS**

The paraments (altar, pulpit and lectern hangings) will generally remain in the liturgical colors for the season in which the wedding is held. However white/gold may be requested for specific reasons and approved by the Senior Pastor. Wedding or unity candles may be used by the couple during the service. The Church does not provide either the candles or the stand for this however and therefore they must be purchased by the couple. Altar flowers are placed only in the vases owned by the Church. Flowers may be chosen by the couple specifically for their wedding or they may use the flowers for the coming Sunday. It is the responsibility of the couple to see that the flowers they have ordered specifically are removed following the service.

## **WEDDING CONSULTANTS**

Wedding consultants can be helpful. However they should understand that all activities in the church are under the direction of the Pastor. The wedding service is a religious rite and therefore must be conducted according with the practices of the Lutheran church.

## **CUSTODIAN**

The Church custodian opens the building for the rehearsal and wedding, then returns after the wedding and cleans the Church for Sunday worship. The fee for this service is to be given to the Church office at least two weeks before the wedding.

## **RICE and BIRDSEED**

The custom of throwing rice, confetti, birdseed, rose petals etc. following the ceremony at the Church creates numerous problems. Christ Church does not permit use of these items, nor do we permit dropping live flower petals down the aisle.

## **ALCOHOL AND SMOKING**

Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed within any part of the church either at the rehearsal or on the day of the wedding. Christ Church is also a non-smoking area.

## **AISLE CANDLES and RUNNERS**

The use of candles along the aisle is not appropriate before 6 PM and creates additional work for the church volunteers and staff, both before and after the ceremony. For this reason we do not encourage their use. They cannot be used when air conditioning will be required.

If you desire a runner for the center aisle your florist can provide this. The aisle is 60 feet long.

## **BULLETINS**

The Office Staff will prepare a bulletin for the ceremony. The Pastor will talk with you about having a bulletin prepared and the fees associated with that. Please make certain to use full names in the wedding party list and that the names are spelled correctly. Please, also, list them in the correct order of procession.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

In order to preserve the solemnity of the service, we ask the congregation not to use cameras during the service. As the wedding party leaves the Church, flash pictures are permissible. All photographs in the church interior must be taken within 1 hour of the conclusion of the ceremony.

If you plan to have a photographer/videographer, please instruct him/her not to use a camera that will require an external light. The photographer will be asked to be inconspicuous during the service and to work from the balcony or back of the church. Please ask him/her to speak to the Pastor before the service so there is no misunderstanding.

## **WEDDING REHEARSAL**

Everyone involved in the wedding (ushers, bridal party, ring or flower bearers, readers and the bride's father, if he is to present her) should attend the rehearsal.

## **WEDDING LICENSE**

By law, the pastor must have a valid wedding license before performing the ceremony. No wedding will be conducted without one. A marriage license is only valid for 60 days after the date of application. Your wedding license must be given to the Church Office at least two weeks before the service.

## **READINGS**

Readings from the Bible help us understand marriage in the context of God's creative love for his people. One lesson from the Old Testament and one from a New Testament letter may be read by a lector (lay person) of your choosing. These people should be prepared to read the lessons at the rehearsal. The Pastor always reads the Gospel, which you are asked to select from the attached list.

Below you will find a list of suggested readings. Our readings are from the *New Revised Standard Version*. Typed copies will be available for the lectors at the rehearsal.

## **THE WORD OF GOD**

### **First Lessons**

Genesis 1:26-31

Genesis 2:18-24

Song of Solomon 2:10-13

Song of Solomon 8:6-7

Isaiah 63:7-9

### **Second Lessons**

Romans 12:1-2

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Ephesians 5:21-33

### **The Holy Gospel**

Matthew 19:4-6

John 2:1-10

John 15:9-12

Sometimes a Psalm can be spoken or sung between the First and Second Lessons. If it is sung this is one good way to make use of a soloist. Consider the following Psalms:

Psalm 33	A joyful song to the Creator
Psalm 100	Praise to God, the Creator and Shepherds
Psalm 117	A worldwide call to praise God
Psalm 127	Success depends on God's blessing
Psalm 128	The blessings of the home
Psalm 136	Litany of praises
Psalm 150	A grand doxology

## **VOWS**

You are asked to select a form for the vows you make to each other. Nine examples are attached. Be sure to inform the Pastor of your selection

### **VOWS TO BE CHOSEN**

- 1. In the Name of God, I \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my Wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.**
- 2. I \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.**
- 3. 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.**
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_, 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.**
- 5. I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, 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 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.**
- 6. I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, 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 to better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and the worst of what is to come as long as we live.**

7. In the presence of God and this community, I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, 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, \_\_\_\_\_, give myself to you, \_\_\_\_\_. 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, \_\_\_\_\_, 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 parts us.

## FEES

Use of Church	(non-members only)	\$500.00
Organist		\$200.00
Custodian		\$ 75.00
Bulletin/Printing/Layout		\$ 50.00
Parish Hall		\$250.00

There is no "fee" for the Pastor. It is customary to give an honorarium, but the amount is at your own discretion.

One check for the Custodian, use of the Church and bulletin is to be made payable to Christ Lutheran Church. All other checks are to be made payable to the individuals involved. All checks are to be paid no later than two weeks before the service.

## CONCLUSION

The members and pastors of Christ Lutheran Church want your wedding to be memorable as you ask God's blessing on your life together as husband and wife. These guidelines are designed to provide the facilities, the staff and the ceremony that will do exactly that. Please feel free to discuss any issues or concerns with the Pastors. Thank you and may God bless you as you prepare for your wedding.