

Welcome!

Messiah Lutheran Church is pleased that you are considering exchanging your marriage vows in our sanctuary. Indeed, this is a service that we view as a ministry of our congregation.

A wedding requires careful planning, so these guidelines have been prepared to assist you. We have certain guidelines for the use of the church facilities, in keeping with good worship practices, that you will need to be aware of as you make your plans. Each wedding at Messiah Lutheran Church is subject to these wedding policies, which include having the pastor of Messiah involved in planning and leading the service. Please remain in close communication with the church office as you prepare for your wedding day.

God's peace and blessings to you as you plan, not only for your wedding day, but for life!

Things to keep in mind when scheduling a wedding...

The first step in planning a wedding is to schedule the date. Please communicate directly with the pastor to finalize your wedding date. All arrangements for the marriage service must be made in consultation with the pastor, so the wedding couple should make an appointment with the pastor at the earliest possible time to confirm the wedding date. This is important because you are planning not only a ceremony, but also a lifetime of commitment to each other. Getting started well in advance of the wedding will allow ample time to examine the marriage relationship. It's also necessary to plan early in order to serve the entire congregation and make the facilities of the church available to all on an equal basis.

Please note: Do not order announcements or invitations until the wedding date has been confirmed with the pastor.

We recommend that you have a few dates in mind in case the pastor or the building is not available at the time you would like. And although special seasons of the year may seem appealing for weddings, please understand that weddings are not usually scheduled during the penitential season of Lent or during Holy Week. Weddings are also not scheduled during holidays.

Marriage Preparation

Having set the date, it is the policy of the pastor to meet with the bride and groom a number of times before the wedding takes place, preferably three to four months prior to the wedding date. During these meetings, the pastor will assist you in planning your wedding service and will conduct pre-marital pastoral guidance. Pastoral guidance is an important stage in your preparation for marriage. We suggest you schedule your first meeting near the beginning of your engagement.

We realize that sometimes, because of distance or other circumstances, Messiah's pastor may not be able to serve you in this stage of your preparation. However, another person whose qualifications and skills are recognized can also perform this service. Please discuss this possibility with the Messiah pastor.

Participation in the [PREPARE/ENRICH](#) Program (by Life Innovations, Inc.) is highly encouraged for all couples who marry at Messiah. It is a meaningful tool for the couples and the pastor to utilize in preparation for marriage. Please see the Wedding Honorariums schedule on

Marriage License

A valid marriage license is required by law for the pastor to officiate at a marriage service. The license is obtained by the wedding couple through application at the “Recorder of Deeds” located in the county courthouse or government building. A license is usually valid for six months from the day it is issued.

Please note: The marriage license must be delivered to the pastor on or before the wedding rehearsal date, or the wedding cannot take place as scheduled.

Wedding Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is generally held the evening prior to the wedding and lasts approximately an hour. The purpose of the rehearsal is to familiarize all participants with the order of the service. The entire bridal party is to be in attendance: bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girl, ring bearer, parents of both bride and groom, visiting clergy, ushers, musicians, organist, sound system technician, videographer and any other participants. Persons serving as lay readers should be prepared at the rehearsal to read the portion of scripture assigned to them. Musicians should not expect to rehearse during the wedding rehearsal. Please ask your bridal party to arrive early, as the pastor and organist may have other commitments scheduled following the rehearsal.

Please note: The pastor and his family do not automatically presume to be guests at rehearsal dinners or wedding receptions. Invitations are purely a personal decision, and no offense is taken if they are not extended. If you desire the pastor and his family to attend the rehearsal dinner or wedding and reception, be sure to extend an invitation well in advance to allow them to plan accordingly.

Wedding Service

We ask that you consider these five guidelines in planning your wedding service:

The Christian wedding service is a service of worship.

The Christian wedding service is a public service; it belongs to all the people.

The Christian wedding service is corporate worship; everyone is involved in the worship of God.

The Christian wedding service proclaims God's Good News.

The Christian wedding service celebrates God's goodness and grace.

Lutherans acknowledge that marriage is a “Holy Estate” ordained by God. It is solemnized at the altar of our Lord, placing the marriage relationship under the blessing and commandment of God. The marriage service is a worship service of the church. Therefore, anything that is not appropriate for a Sunday morning worship service is not appropriate for the wedding service. The basic order of the wedding service is found on page 202 in the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) or page 286 of the New Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). Scripture lessons, hymns, psalms and solos can be added to that basic service.

Please note: In the worship service, we worship neither the bride nor the groom, but the God of Love who has created us all and who promises to abide with those who seek Him. Hymns are sung, scripture is read, and a brief sermon is preached. The purpose of the wedding sermon is not to be last minute instructions to the bride and groom. The Word of God is the word that teaches us about Christian marriage. Exhortations from God's word are brought to the bride and groom, a challenge is made to them, and the blessing of the Lord of the Church is bestowed upon them. All should be done in good taste and in the spirit of worship.

Whatever specific form the wedding service may take, the pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church is responsible for the service. This is to guarantee that the wedding service remains in the proper spiritual and worshipful form.

Wedding Scriptures

The pastor will provide the couple with a list of suggested readings for use during the wedding service. This list is not exclusive -- it is only used as a basic guideline -- other appropriate scriptural lessons may also be used.

Holy Communion

The marriage service may include the celebration of Holy Communion if both the bride and groom are baptized and communing members of a Christian church. Please note that Communion is never received by the couple alone. It is an act in which all of the baptized are invited to participate. When we realize that our Lord's first miracle was performed at the wedding in Cana, that the opening prayer of the service itself remembers that wedding in Cana, and that the Holy Communion is referred to as the Marriage Feasts of the Lamb, it becomes apparent how fitting Holy Communion is for this important event in our lives.

Presiders other than our Messiah Pastor

The services of another ordained minister may be used only with the approval and invitation of the presiding pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church. Our pastor is charged by the Lutheran Confessions as well as by the Rite of Installation to ensure the responsible proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments, and to conduct all worship services. It is inappropriate for a former pastor to preside or preach at the Wedding Service. The Synod constitution upholds this position as follows:

S14.14. Ordained ministers shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

It is much better for you to invite your former pastor to attend the service as a guest rather than a participant. If other than a Lutheran pastor is invited, the Messiah pastor must preside, assisted by the visiting pastor. If another pastor, (usually this occurs only when another church uses our church for the wedding) has been approved by the Messiah pastor to preside at your wedding, it may not be necessary for the Messiah pastor to be involved. The details would be worked out between the two pastors. On occasion, a mission congregation of another tradition may "borrow" our church facilities for a wedding. The pastor of that congregation may preside on those occasions.

Flowers, Candles and Decorations

Your wedding day is special and should be as beautiful as possible. It is appropriate, however, to maintain simplicity of flowers and decorations around the chancel area, maintaining the focus on the altar. Please inform your florist and other professionals about our policies.

Flowers and decorations may NOT be placed on the altar. The paraments (hangings on the altar and pulpit) display the appropriate color and symbols of the season, and they cannot be changed or removed. Please ask the pastor about the parament colors that will be displayed on your wedding day.

Messiah maintains the large candles in the wall sconces behind the pulpit. We have flower stands and candelabras available for you and your florist to use. Your florist can provide the candles, in addition to flowers and other decorations. Candles may not be placed in the aisles.

Please keep these additional policies in mind when decorating the sanctuary and narthex:

Florists are to have all flowers and potted plants in place at least an hour before the service is to begin. Potted plants may not be placed on the floor without adequate waterproof protection beneath them.

Bows or ribbon decorations may be used on the pews, but do not attach them with tacks, nails, screws or other hardware that may damage the wood surface.

Flower petals may be used during the procession, but we ask that you arrange for a responsible person to clean up the petals after the service.

A unity candle may be used. Please see your florist, as Messiah does not provide the unity candle. Appropriate protection must accompany the use of the unity candle to protect the area from dripping wax.

A Bride's Book or Guest Book may be placed in the narthex with an attendant.

Wedding Bulletin

A wedding bulletin may be ordered from a catalog through the church office, and it can be printed by the church office (see page 8), or you may use another printing method of your own choosing. A wedding bulletin would contain the outline of the wedding service and would list family members, participants, musical selections, the reception announcement, etc. A bulletin is not a required item. But if you desire a bulletin, it must be reviewed by the pastor before printing. If a bulletin is to be printed by the church office, please have the information available to the office at least two weeks prior to the wedding day.

Photographs

Pictures and videos are an important part of your wedding day. Cameras may be used during the service providing that a flash IS NOT USED and that the photographer remains at the rear of the sanctuary to avoid interfering with the service. Flash photography during a wedding service is considered inappropriate and distracting. We suggest that you make arrangements for the wedding party to pose for pictures before and/or after the service.

Please note: Flash photography may be used when the bride first enters the sanctuary, and should not be used again until the bride and groom begin to exit the sanctuary.

If video recording equipment is to be used during the service, its placement and use must be discussed with the pastor prior to the wedding service. The rehearsal is an appropriate time to make such plans.

Wedding Director

Messiah Lutheran Church does not have a wedding director. However, we encourage you to contact our organist Joyce Hulst 463-1063 to help you with the Wedding Service. Together Joyce and the pastor will assist in this capacity. The florist may be of assistance with many details, and the pastor will ensure that proper protocol is followed for the service. The pastor will address these

items during the rehearsal, especially: Escorting family members and guests (before and after the service)

Entering the sanctuary (groomsmen, bride's attendants, groom, bride, ushers) If the couple desires to retain a professional wedding director, the director will work with the pastor in all matters regarding the service.

Ushers

The selection of mature ushers is important. They have the task of moving people, lighting candles and greeting your guests. Out of respect for the guests, the service must begin at the scheduled time, and it is the responsibility of the ushers to make sure all guests are seated at the appointed time.

The Bridal Party

One man and one woman are required by law to be witnesses to your wedding. They sign the marriage license immediately after the ceremony. These are usually the Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor. The total number of bridesmaids and groomsmen is the choice of the wedding couple.

Others in the Service

You may choose to have readers, acolytes, a crucifer or others participate in your wedding. Please have them listed in the bulletin and invite all participants to the wedding rehearsal.

Personal Items

Messiah cannot be responsible for personal items left at the church before, during or after the wedding service. For your protection, please be sure to remove all gifts, cards, clothing and other personal items from the church when you leave.

Wedding Music

Messiah's pipe organ must be played only by a qualified organist. The Messiah organist is usually the organist for all weddings in the church, but he/she can also provide the wedding couple with a list of other organists who are qualified to play this organ. Please contact the organist directly (as soon as your wedding date is confirmed) to determine availability for the service and the rehearsal, as well as to discuss appropriate music.

Wedding music, be it old or new, simple or involved, is expected to be worshipful. It should always be reverently beautiful and give praise to God. The pastor may provide you with a list of appropriate music. The organist Joyce Hulst is the best resource for this. Please, call her 463-0444. If you wish to have another piece of music as a part of your service, please provide a recording for the pastor to review at least one month before the wedding service.

Please note: Some music may be more appropriate for the reception than for the wedding.

Sound System

The sound system in the Messiah sanctuary must be operated by trained sound system technicians. The pastor will make arrangements to provide a Messiah technician for your wedding service. The technician will contact you to coordinate any special needs, such as CD playback for a soloist. The sound system technician will attend the wedding rehearsal. Please see the Wedding Honorariums schedule on.

Custodial Service

The church custodians will make sure the church is clean before your wedding. In general, the sanctuary, narthex, restrooms and assigned Sunday school rooms are available for your use before, during and after the service.

Additional custodial service is required if the fellowship hall will be used for the reception. Please see the Wedding Honorarium's schedule on page 8.

Reception

If you wish to have your wedding reception at Messiah, please refer to our Facilities Use Policy for details about using the fellowship hall. A representative from the Messiah WELCA must be present if the kitchen area will be used for your reception. The pastor will provide you with contact information.

A custodial honorarium also applies for use of the fellowship hall. Please see the Wedding Honorariums schedule on

Facility Policies

The Pastor will provide you with a copy of the Messiah Facilities Use Policy.

No alcoholic beverages may be served or consumed in the church building or on the church grounds. Anyone found under the influence of alcohol on the wedding day will not be allowed to participate in the service, including the bride and groom. If any evidence of alcohol use is found, the damage security deposit will be retained.

Smoking IS NOT permitted anywhere in the church building.

Rice, confetti, birdseed and similar substances MAY NOT be thrown in the church or on the sidewalks or grounds. These substances create a slipping hazard as well as an environmental hazard. Messiah expects the facility to be left in the same condition as found.

Please Note: A damage deposit fee is required (payable when making application). Please see the Wedding Honorariums schedule on page 8.

This fee will be refunded after the wedding, unless there is damage to the church or the church requires extraordinary clean-up following the wedding. Replacement costs are expected for any breakage or damage.

Wedding Honorariums

	<u>MEMBER*</u>	<u>NON-MEMBER*</u>
<u>Use of Facilities:</u>		
Sanctuary	\$0.00	\$110.00
Damage Deposit (Refundable)	50.00**	\$100.00**
Fellowship Hall	\$0.00	\$75.00
Kitchen & Fellowship Hall	\$0.00	\$150.00
<u>Professional Services:</u>		
Pastor (honorarium)***	\$150.00	\$150.00
Organist	50.00	\$50.00
Soloist (to be negotiated by the wedding couple)		
Sound System Technician	\$50.00	\$50.00
Bulletin Printing	\$25.00	\$25.00
Reception (please contact the MWELCA Reception Coordinator)		
Prepare/Enrich	\$35.00	\$35.00
Custodian (Wedding)	\$25.00	\$50.00
Custodian (Reception)	\$25.00	\$50.00

* Membership status is determined at the time you set your wedding date with the Pastor and have it officially entered on the church calendar.

** Damage deposit will be returned within a week of the ceremony unless 1) evidence of alcoholic beverages is found on the church premises, 2) rice or a similar substance is found in the building or on the sidewalk and grounds outside the church, or 3) other significant damage occurs.

*** The honorarium for an assisting pastor should be \$50 minimum, plus mileage. The honorarium for the presiding pastor is usually \$100 minimum, plus mileage.

Please note: ALL FEES ARE PAYABLE ON THE DATE OF THE WEDDING REHEARSAL.

We hope this Wedding Policy & Planning Guide helps make the planning of your wedding a truly memorable experience. Your pastor is here to help you plan your perfect wedding day, so please be sure to contact him at the church office if you have any questions or concerns.

May you both be blessed with God's gifts of love, and may you find true happiness as you plan and live out your lives together!

Messiah Lutheran Church Wedding Registration Form

Please complete this form and mail or deliver it to the church office. The pastor will call you.

Today's Date: _____

Bride's Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Groom's Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Requested Date of Wedding: _____

(Please remember that the date chosen is tentative until confirmed by the pastor.)

Alternative Dates: _____

Wedding Time: _____

Rehearsal Date & Time: _____

Best time to Call: _____

We have read the Wedding Policy: _____ YES _____ NO

(Signature of bride)

(Signature of groom)

Please provide the damage security deposit with this application (see). It will be refunded to you under the guidelines of the wedding policy.

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