

WEDDING HANDBOOK

Zion Lutheran Church
Litchfield, Illinois

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God's Blessings on your upcoming wedding.

Your church family and its pastors are pleased to be of help. This booklet has been prepared to provide you with information relating to weddings at Zion.

THOSE WHO MAY BE MARRIED

Besides members, Lutherans who desire to become members of Zion; couples (one party who is Lutheran) who may be ultimately directed to the ministry of another Lutheran congregation; couples outside the Lutheran church who commit themselves to become members of a Lutheran congregation; and others at the special discretion of the pastor and elders of Zion may have their wedding at Zion. There will be an extra fee of \$100.00 for non-members to rent the church facilities.

OFFICIATING

The called pastor of Zion will usually officiate at the wedding. However, he may invite other clergy to participate. Visiting clergy must be ordained ministers of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, or of other Lutheran Synods who are in altar and pulpit fellowship with Missouri-Synod.

ARRANGEMENTS

Arrangements must be made with a pastor well in advance of the wedding, prior to setting a date. It is a policy at Zion that the couple to be married meet with a pastor for premarital sessions. These may be started as early as six to eight months prior to the wedding. Individual circumstances may require adjustments.

Premarital sessions will include Biblical understanding of marriage, role expectations, planning the service, etc. We require that all couples go through the Prepare/Enrich Inventory with the pastor as an aid to these discussions. The fee for this inventory is \$35.00 and is paid directly to Life Innovations, Inc. There will be approximately four sessions total with the pastor prior to the wedding.

If the wedding is being scheduled for Saturday afternoon, it must be finished in plenty of time for the church to be prepared for the 5:30pm service. Under normal circumstances no wedding should begin any later than 3:00pm on Saturday.

FEES AND LICENSE

Marriage License:

The license must be obtained from the Montgomery County Clerk at the courthouse in Hillsboro. Both the bride and groom need to apply in person, providing proof that each is over 18 years of age, or providing legal consent from parents. A photo ID is necessary. The present fee for the license is \$60.00.

The County Clerk's hours are 8:00am-4:00pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays.

The license is effective the day after it is issued and is good for 60 days. Please note that the license must be purchased at least one day prior to the wedding. We normally request that we receive the license in the office at least one week in advance of the wedding.

Fees:

It is the responsibility of the couple to make arrangements for an organist. Zion's organist, Mr. Keith Marburger, is normally available to play if he is contacted well in advance. His phone number is 324-5913. There is a suggested fee of at least \$100.00 for his services.

It is also suggested that an honorarium be provided for the pastor who is officiating the service. The amount of this honorarium may be determined by the couple, but should take into account the hours spent in premarriage discussions, as well as the time spent preparing for the service and the rehearsal.

A \$75.00 custodian fee (paid directly to the custodians) is charged for all weddings. The custodian will open the building for the wedding party and be available if needed.

All fees must be paid no later than the night of the rehearsal.

WEDDING BULLETINS

The church office will type and print a worship folder for those attending, which includes an outline of the service and names of the participants. The folder cover may be purchased by the couple through a local Christian bookstore and provided to the church office for printing. The church office can order service folders for you, at cost. The church office should have the service folders at least one week prior to the wedding for printing.

CHURCH DECORATIONS

Aisle Decorations:

The hanging of bows, bouquets, or candles on the pews down the center aisle is permissible, but must not damage the pews in any way (no tape, tacks, etc.).

Aisle Candles:

The church has ten aisle candles which are available for use. We also have ivy garland which may be used on the aisle candles. Arrangements to use these must be made when completing the application for marriage. A rental fee of \$50.00 must be paid to the church by the night of the rehearsal. This fee covers the setup and the purchase of ten inch white tapers. If you desire to have colored tapers, you must purchase them yourself (must be ten inches in height), but the \$50.00 fee is still applicable.

Additional Candles:

The candles on the sides of the altar, as well as the Christ candle in front of the altar are furnished. The altar candles are not to be lit for a wedding unless it is within a Divine Service where the Lord's Supper is celebrated.

The Unity Candle, symbolizing the joining of two lives in Christ, is another option many couples choose to include. This candle (normally about three inches wide and eight

inches tall), as well as the two individual candles (normally twelve inch tapers), must be purchased by the couple. Be sure to also purchase the base these candles are to sit upon, as the church does not supply them. Should a unity candle be desired in the service, it should be indicated on the application form.

Aisle Runner:

A white aisle runner is a permissible option, but is discouraged.

- It is difficult to unroll, and usually ends up crooked and wrinkled.
- The carpeting is a much better background for the bride's gown.
- The runner makes it easier to trip, stumble, or fall.

The church does not own an aisle runner. If one is desired, the couple must purchase or rent it on their own. A 75 foot runner is needed to cover the length of the church aisle.

The color of the paraments on the altar, pulpit, and lectern will be the color of the season of the church year and may not be changed.

Any other decorations that are desired must be first approved by the pastor.

Dressing Rooms

Rooms are available at the church for the bridal party to change for the wedding. Please check with the custodian about the location. The church is not responsible for possessions left after the wedding. Please be sure to remove all items and return the rooms to the previous condition before leaving.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Weddings are services of worship. They are to glorify and praise the Lord God, who is the center not only of the wedding service, but of the marriage to be solemnized.

Because a wedding is a significant event in the life of the husband and wife joined in the presence of God, photographs and videotapes can be appropriate ways of remembrance.

Please follow the guidelines listed below so that wedding services remain Christ centered and worshipful:

- The hired photographer should be instructed to consult with the pastor, and other friends and relatives should be advised of following the guidelines.
- Flash photographs may be taken during the processional and the recessional. It is preferred that the photographer not stand at the head of the aisle.
- No pictures shall be taken from the Invocation through the Benediction, except those taken without flash, and from inconspicuous locations, such as the balcony, the rear of the sanctuary, or in the sacristy. For videotaping, no extra lighting should be used.
- No pictures are to be taken during the service from within the chancel/altar area. No ecclesiastical furniture or appointments (except wedding unity candle) are to be moved without the consent of the pastor.
- It is advisable to take pictures before the service to minimize delay between wedding and reception, as a courtesy to guests.
- Pictures may be posed after the service. We respectfully ask that those involving the pastor be taken first.
- We suggest that you place a message in the bulletin requesting no flash photography during the service.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ABOUT WEDDINGS

Today's weddings contain a variety of interesting traditions, some of them from extremely primitive, pagan, and superstitious backgrounds

As Christians who seek to live in the power of the Good News of our Lord's forgiveness and new life, we seek to avoid anything in weddings that is suggestive of the mere theatrical, the pagan, or superstitious.

What is most important for a wedding is that it be done decently and in good order, giving glory to the Lord and highlighting the Christ-centered aspects of marriage. Weddings are occasions of joy and celebration, but not of drunkenness and immorality. It is important to keep in mind the sacred nature of the vows spoken before God. In that way, plans will be made for the service (and even the reception following) that honor Jesus Christ.

Because the wedding service is a service of the church, and not merely a ceremony, it should conform to Christian standards in terms of both rites and music. Beginning with the pre-service music through the recessional, only music and use of musical instruments approved by the pastor may be used. The "Bridal Chorus" and the "Wedding March" are discouraged because of their pagan and secular origin. Secular music, if not immoral or anti-Christian, may be used as pre-service music, but must be approved by the pastor. Our music director/organist can suggest music that would be appropriate for the service as well as the pre-service, processional, and recessional.

For wedding plans, including the reception, alcohol should not be central to the festivities. Under no circumstances should members of the wedding party come to the rehearsal or the wedding under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol is not permitted in the church building, or in the church parking lot at any time.

The throwing of rice or birdseed is not permitted inside the church building. Confetti is not permitted inside or outside the church building.

While detailed instructions are given during the rehearsal, it is wise to arrive at the church at least an hour before the service.