



A **GUIDE**

for the
Marriage of Christians

An Informational Booklet

To Assist You With the Planning of Your Marriage Ceremony

***St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church - Vilmar***



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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your decision to be married! Since you have chosen to be married at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church – Vilmar, we have prepared this booklet to help you make plans for this important milestone event in your lives.

We look forward to celebrating with you the mutual love you have discovered and commend you for your desire to declare and seal that love publicly and permanently before God and his Church in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. In this way, your love and life together will serve those around you as a symbol that Jesus Christ is alive and present in the world.

Saved by God's mercy and called by the Holy Spirit, the people of St. John's and the whole Christian church are called to share the good news of Christ by reaching out in love. With this in mind, a wedding at our church is first and foremost a worship service. This means that Christ Jesus is the focal point of all that we do, and that our actions as a congregation always seek to honor Christ and to live within his mission.

We pray that this time of preparation will be spiritually fruitful for you as you grow closer to God and to one another. The following pages will help you to plan for your wedding service here, so please read them carefully.

AS YOU BEGIN PLANNING

- You will need to meet with the pastor a number of times before the wedding. Most of these meetings will deal with your marriage, but you are encouraged to make use of those occasions to talk with them about plans for the wedding service as well. The pastor is entrusted with final decisions about your wedding and the service. *(If without a called pastor, see below.)*
- During the pastoral vacancy, please contact Director of Communications Monica Edeker (319-939-7348) to help with arrangements. The church has a list of guest pastors that can be contacted to cover wedding services. The couple is also able to request another pastor to officiate during the vacancy, however please let Monica know as soon as possible so she can work with them to make bulletin arrangements, if needed.

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SETTING A DATE

- To check the availability of the church, please contact the pastor or the director of communications.
- Saturday weddings can be scheduled to begin between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. This allows for the sanctuary to be cleaned and prepared for Sunday worship in a timely manner. Sunday weddings can be scheduled between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Wedding times set to occur on other days are to be discussed and approved with the pastor.

STRUCTURE OF THE CEREMONY

- Remember that a wedding ceremony is a worship service and its purpose is to glorify God and to proclaim the life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Preparations are therefore made from the perspective of the Christian faith.
- The order for worship will follow the “Marriage Ceremony” in the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW, green hymnal).

Sample Order of Service

Prelude
Processional
Opening Prayer
Scripture Readings
Homily
Message/Sermon
Exchange of Vows
Exchange of Rings
Unity Ceremony
Special Music
Declaration of Marriage
Blessing of the Marriage
Prayer of the Church
Lord’s Prayer
Blessing
Recessional Hymn
Postlude

REHEARSAL

- The wedding rehearsal is a crucial component to your wedding in order that all parties involved have knowledge about how things will occur on your wedding day. Please mutually agree on a rehearsal time with the pastor. This typically will happen the night prior to your wedding and all individuals involved in your wedding should be present if at all possible.

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BUILDING USE

- The areas of use for weddings are limited to: sanctuary/narthex, fellowship hall, council room and choir room (for the wedding party to get ready/change), restrooms. All other Sunday school rooms and offices are to remain
- If you desire to utilize the kitchen in the fellowship hall please request a copy of the policy associated with kitchen use and its associated fee schedule.
- Food and snacks may be brought in. Please keep them in the basement and out of the church space itself. The party is expected to clean up after themselves.

WEDDING LICENSE

- A wedding license should be secured at least two weeks prior to the date of the wedding, although you are encouraged to obtain the wedding license earlier than this deadline. Please bring or send the wedding license and any accompanying documents or envelopes to the church office when you have secured them. Assuming the wedding is to occur within the state of Iowa, the license can be secured within any of Iowa's 99 counties. If you are applying in Butler County, you can do so through the recorder's office at the courthouse (428 Sixth St., Allison). You will have to wait three days after applying for the license before you will be able to pick it up. You will need to apply for the license as a couple in addition to taking a witness (18+ years old) with you and all three persons will need a photo ID. The license can be applied for beginning six months prior to your wedding day.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Because the wedding is a worship service, due decorum is required of anyone taking photos or videotaping the service. Please advise your professional photographer to consult with the pastor about appropriate photography or videography during the service itself. No one should be in the chancel area during the worship service with the exception of the pastor, the wedding couple, and the wedding party.

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MUSIC

- The music should be carefully chosen in consultation with the pastor. Music of a “secular” nature is normally not to be played and/or sung during the wedding service itself. Please remember that many songs, while meaningful to you personally, might be more appropriate for the reception. As always, exceptions may be made, however, the pastor reserves the right of final approval in relation to music during the service.
- One of St. John’s organists can play for the wedding, you may contact them for their assistance.
- The singing of hymns by the congregation is strongly recommended, both as a statement of faith and as a means of participation by the congregation. The pastor will provide guidance regarding music. St John’s – Vilmar has 3 hymnals: Lutheran Book of Worship, Sing to the Lord, and With One Voice.
- Other music, whether sung or played by soloists or instrumentalists should receive prior approval by the pastor or director of communications.
- If the couple wishes to have music played through the sound system, please provide the director of communications with a flash drive containing the audio file before the service.

BULLETINS

- The director of communications can print standard wedding bulletins with the order of service, at the request of the couple.

VIDEO

- The Director of Communications will operate the sound system and video recording. At the couple’s request, the service can be live-streamed to the church’s Facebook page. A DVD copy of the service can be provided to the couple upon request.

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WEDDING DECOR & FLOWERS

- Floral arrangements, plants and other decor can bring dignity and beauty to the service, but please adhere to the following rules about such:
- Flower vases must have a plate underneath them when placed on the altar, rails, or plant stands.
- Do not cover up the altar (obstruct the view of it) with any decoration.
- The small metal crosses must remain on the altar.
- Do not cover up the stained-glass windows.
- You may not change the color of the church (altar, lectern, and pulpit) for any special occasion; it must remain the color of the current church season.
- Do not put up decorations with anything that will leave a sticky residue on any of the surfaces throughout the church.
- **No rice, confetti, or bird seed is allowed.** Bubbles are a good alternative.
- You may bring your “wedding things” on rehearsal night and leave them at the church until the next day. Most likely that will not be a problem, but check with the pastor to be sure that no other activity is scheduled in the sanctuary. Please note, however, that no personal items or items of value should be left unattended. Although the church is locked at night, the congregation is not under any circumstance liable for lost or stolen items.

CONDUCT

- The wedding couple IS RESPONSIBLE for the conduct of the party and all guests. The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is to be respected by all at all times, regardless of religion or practice.
- Appropriate decorum should be maintained by the wedding couple, wedding party, and wedding guests. The pastor reserves the right to excuse anyone from the wedding rehearsal or wedding proper who is unbecoming of public interaction (e.g. due to drunkenness).
- Absolutely no alcoholic beverages or drugs to be found anywhere on church property, including the parking lot. No smoking on the church property.

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SCRIPTURES

- It is recommended that the couple consider and suggest appropriate Bible lessons or verses for reading at the service. Normally two lessons are read, one of which is a Gospel text.
- The pastor will provide guidance regarding the scripture passages.

Scripture Suggestions

Old Testament:

- Genesis 1:26-31
- Genesis 2:18-24
- Ruth 1:16-17
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 100
- Psalm 112
- Psalm 117
- Psalm 127
- Psalm 128
- Psalm 136
- Psalm 150
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
- Song of Songs 2:10-13
- Song of Songs 8:7
- Isaiah 63:7-9
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Gospel:

- Matthew 16:25
- Matthew 19:4-6
- Mark 8:35

- Luke 9:23-24
- Mark 10:6-9
- John 2:1-10
- John 15:9-12 (or 9-17)

New Testament Epistles:

- Romans 12:1-2, 9-13
- Romans 15:7
- Galatians 5:22-26
- 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13
- 2 Corinthians 13:13
- Ephesians 5:21-33
- Philippians 1:3-11
- Philippians 4:4-9
- Colossians 3:12-17
- 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13
- Hebrews 13:1-6
- 1 Peter 3:7-8
- 1 John 3:1-3
- 1 John 3:18-24
- 1 John 4:7-8 (or 7-12)
- 1 John 4:16-19
- Ephesians 3:16-19

