



TWO SHALL
BECOME ONE

**ST. JOHN'S AMERICAN
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
WEDDING GUIDELINES**

213 PEARL STREET
PO BOX 819
GUTTENBERG, IA
563.252.2355

-A CONGREGATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA-

I

FIRST STEPS

IN PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

AND YOUR MARRIAGE

1) PRINT AND READ THIS BOOKLET

- a. Congratulations on your upcoming wedding!
- b. We are pleased that you have found someone that you want to spend the rest of your life with, and we would like to wish you and your future spouse a lifetime of blessings and happiness!
- c. Please read this entire document so you know what to expect when you make your wedding plans. There is a planning/information worksheet provided at the end of this booklet for you to fill out. Please bring this worksheet with you when you meet with the pastor to plan your upcoming wedding.

2) CONFIRM THE DATE OF YOUR WEDDING

- a. The date and time of your wedding and rehearsal will be reserved through our church secretary after you have received confirmation from one of our pastors on the availability of the date you have chosen. **The non-refundable deposit (please see fee schedule at the end of this document) must be received by our church prior to reserving your wedding date on our church calendar.**
- b. Non-members desiring to be married in our congregation should attend worship regularly in order to help you get to know the pastor who will be officiating at your wedding, as well as allowing the pastor to get to know you.

3) SCHEDULE INITIAL PLANNING SESSION WITH THE PASTOR

- a. The pastor who will officiate at your wedding will consult with you in the planning of your special day and provide premarital counseling . When you are planning your wedding date, please allow a minimum of four months to allow for these planning and counseling sessions.
- b. Normally, the pastor of our congregation will officiate at your wedding service. If it is your intention to have a clergy person from outside our congregation participate or officiate, you should first consult our pastor about such arrangements. Our pastor will then contact other clergy to pass on the rules and guidelines for weddings conducted in our church.

- c. With the pastor's approval, you may choose to have your wedding at our congregation, outdoors or at another venue with their permission.

4) PARTICIPATE IN PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

- a. All couples being married in our congregation or by our pastor are STRONGLY encouraged to participate in pre-marital counseling sessions with the officiating pastor.
- b. Our pastor may use a variety of resources in their pre-marital counseling sessions with you. One such resource is the **Prepare & Enrich Program** taken by over three million couples since it began in 1980. This program will help you and your spouse identify areas of strength and growth; improve your communication; increase your ability to resolve conflict; gain a better appreciation of your Family-of-Origin; build on your relationship strengths; deal with financial goals and budgets; discuss spiritual, personal and family goals; and improve your chances of a happy marriage.

5) OBTAIN A WEDDING LICENSE

- a. Iowa law requires couples to secure a license to marry. You may apply for a license at the office of any County Registrar of Vital Records in the state. You must apply a minimum of three (3) days before the date of your wedding, though we strongly recommend you apply earlier.
- b. Both of you need to be 18 years of age at the time application is made. Be sure to bring your driver's licenses or state issued ID. The state will charge you a fee to grant you your wedding license. **Please bring the marriage license with you to your rehearsal and give it to the pastor.**

II

MARRIAGE AND THE CHURCH

1) MARRIAGE DOES NOT BELONG EXCLUSIVELY TO THE CHURCH

- a. While marriage is ordained by God and sponsored by the church, it is also a social contract, governed and regulated by the state for the purpose of protecting individuals and providing stability to the social order. **As Christians:**
 - i. **We believe** God ordains marriage to enrich the lives of husband and wife, and to provide a sound basis for family life.
 - ii. **We believe** God's intention for marriage is that it be a life-long, committed monogamous relationship based on the promises or vows by the man to the woman and the woman to the man.
 - iii. **We believe** God's self-giving love and faithfulness toward us is the foundation of a committed relationship between husband and wife. In the words of St. Paul, "**Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.**" –Eph. 4:32
 - iv. **We believe** God, along with the church, desires marriage to be a source of joy, love and fulfillment lived out in faith. Marriages that are rooted in God's steadfast love will be the most likely to experience these qualities.
- b. The pastor officiates at your wedding, representing both church and state. But it is you who bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife by your promises before God and in the presence of the gathered community. You make your vows in the presence of God, trusting that God will bless and support you as you work together to fulfill those vows.
- c. With this understanding of a Christian wedding service, we feel it is appropriate that couples intending to be married at St. John's or by our pastor follow these guidelines:
 - i. It is desired that couples uniting in marriage be baptized (though not necessarily of the Lutheran denomination) since we are asking Christ to be part of your marriage.
 - ii. We strongly encourage the couple to show an active interest in the life of the congregation by attending worship services and joining the church if they intend to live in the area and are not presently members.
 - iii. Weddings taking place at St. John's will be officiated by our pastor or another ordained minister of the ELCA (with our pastor's approval).
- d. **The officiating pastor reserves the right to halt or cancel the wedding service if a member of the wedding party or guest is behaving in an inappropriate manner, such as being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.**

III

THE WEDDING SERVICE

1) YOUR WEDDING IS A VERY SPECIAL EVENT THAT SHOULD BE PLANNED WITH GREAT CARE.

a. Typically, a wedding service lasts about 1/2 hour and follows the Wedding Service Outline below:

i. Prelude

1. *(Secular or Sacred)

ii. Processional

1. *(Secular or Sacred)

iii. Invocation and Prayer

iv. Scripture Reading

v. *(Sacred)

vi. Meditation (short sermon)

vii. Wedding Vows (*see options below*)

viii. Exchange of rings

ix. *Optional: unity candle / response / Presentation to parents/ Congregation's vow*

1. *(sacred)

x. Marriage Blessing

xi. General Prayers

xii. The Lord's Prayer (*may be sung*)

xiii. *Optional: Holy Communion*

xiv. Benediction

xv. *Optional presentation of the couple as Mr. & Mrs.*

xvi. Recessional

1. *(Secular or Sacred)

xvii. The "*" is used to denote locations within the service where special music or hymns could be included. **All music must be approved by the officiating pastor.**

2) OPTIONAL UNITY CANDLE READING:

- a. During the lighting of the Unity Candle the following may be spoken, or music may be played.
- b. In the wedding liturgy, the candle light symbolizes the commitment and love these two people are expressing today. On the altar you see three special wedding candles. The two smaller ones represent the lives of the bride and groom. Until today, each of them in their own way have let their light shine as individuals in the Christian community. Today, they have publically proclaimed their love in the new union of marriage. They do not lose their individuality, yet in marriage they are united in so close a bond that they become one. (Name) and (name) will light from the smaller candles, the larger candle in the center. In this they are saying that now their light must shine together, for each other, for their family, and for the community.

3) OPTIONAL PRESENTATION TO THE PARENTS:

- a. Roses may be given to the parents of both the bride and groom as the following is read by one or both.
 - i. Dear mom and Dad,

Over the years you have dealt with us in friendliness and gentleness. You have shared with us the frailties of our nature. Surely God's grace has not been bestowed upon you in vain. You have followed the pathway of a Christian in the duties and responsibilities of establishing a home in God's name.

Let this rose which we give you today, adorn you for it is a symbol of the words "kindness and gentleness." It is the queen of all flowers, as you have been the queen of parents to us.

You have dealt with us in gentleness, kindness, and friendliness—as the bright color and delicate fragrance of this rose symbolizes. We give them to you in love and thanks so that we can begin our life together in the same way you began your life.

We thank you for the foundation of life that you have given us. Take this rose of love and still remember us in your kindness and friendliness.

4) OPTIONAL CONGREGATION'S VOW TO THE COUPLE:

- a. The following may be read by the officiating pastor following the vows or exchange of rings.
 - i. Pastor: (to congregation): And you, friends and family of (name) and (name), you heard the commitment that have made to each other. You are not here just to watch what they are doing. You, too, participate in this marriage by virtue of the love you have offered in the past, and by that same love which you will give in the future. So I ask you now, do you promise (name) and (name) your guidance, help, support and prayers in their new life together? If so, please answer "Yes, with help of God."

5) MUSIC CHOSEN FOR WEDDINGS.

- a. Because a wedding service officiated by one of our pastors or held at our congregation is a worship service, the music should be chosen with great care and should glorify God and reflect the couple's faith. The officiating pastor will work with you as you plan and choose appropriate music for your wedding. Here are some suggestions and the places they would be appropriate to be sung.
- b. Beginning of the service: (before the Invocation)
 - i. "Keeper of the Stars"
 - ii. "Because You Love Me"
 - iii. "When You Say Nothing At All"
 - iv. "My Love Will Go On"
 - v. "In This Very Room"
 - vi. "Valentine"
 - vii. "Through The Eyes Of Love"
 - viii. "Endless Love"
 - ix. "God Knew That I Needed You"
 - x. "This Day You And I"
- c. Between the readings, before/after the homily and before the Vows are exchanged:
 - i. "Cherish The Treasure"
 - ii. "Flesh Of My Flesh"
 - iii. "All Of Me" (Not the Willie Nelson song)
 - iv. "The Wedding Song"
 - v. "Household of Faith"
 - vi. "Sunrise, Sunset"
 - vii. "You Light Up My Life"
 - viii. "Here And Now"
 - ix. "This Is The Day"
 - x. "Seekers Of The Heart"
 - xi. "Grow Old With Me"
 - xii. "If You Could See What I See"
 - xiii. "If God Could Love You More"
- d. During the Lighting of the Unity Candle:
 - i. "Battle Hymn Of Love"
 - ii. "I Will Be Here"
 - iii. "Love Will Be Our Home"
 - iv. "The Wedding Song"
 - v. "Till The End Of Time"
 - vi. "Two Hearts"
 - vii. "Perfect Union"
 - viii. "God Knew That I Needed You"
- e. These are suggestions for songs and placement where they would be most appropriate in the service. If you would like other songs to be sung, please talk to the officiating pastor. We are willing to work with you to make your service both personalized and meaningful.

6) HYMN SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CONGREGATION

- a. Hymns, in addition to adding richness and variety to the service, also involve the gathered community to take part in your wedding service, rather than simply being passive observers. Here are a few suggestions from our hymnals:

i. Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW):

1. #870 "We Praise You O' God"
2. #883 "All People That On Earth Do Dwell"
3. #787 "On Eagle's Wings"
4. #631 "Love Divine, All Love Excelling"
5. #658 "O Jesus, Joy Of Loving Hearts"
6. #778 "The Lord's My Shepherd"
7. #781 "Children Of The Heavenly Father"
8. #820 "Savior, Precious Savior"
9. #848 "Give To Our God Immortal Praise"
10. #854 "Blessing And Honor, Glory And Power"
11. #839 "Now Thank We All Our God"
12. #836 "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

ii. With One Voice (WOV):

1. #648 "Jesus, Come! For We Invite You"
2. #748 "Bind Us Together"
3. #749 "When Love Is Found"
4. #751 "As Man And Woman We Were Made"
5. #770 "I Was There To Hear Your Morning Cry"

iii. Worship & Praise Songbook (W&P):

1. #18 "Bind Us Together"
2. #132 "Step By Step"
3. #41 "Give Thanks"
4. #53 "Great Is The Lord"
5. #84 "Lead Me, Guide Me"
6. #98 "Morning Has Broken"

- b. You may also have these songs sung as solos, duets, instrumentals, etc. if you desire.

7) SCRIPTURE SUGGESTIONS

a. You may choose your own Scripture readings for your wedding service. You may have one or as many as you wish. The homily which the pastor will prepare for the service will be based on one or more of the readings you have chosen, therefore the readings that you choose should have special meaning or significance for both of you.

i. Psalms:

1. Psalm 33
2. Psalm 100
3. Psalm 117
4. Psalm 127
5. Psalm 128
6. Psalm 136
7. Psalm 150

ii. Old Testament Readings:

1. Genesis 1:26-31
2. Genesis 2:18-24
3. Ruth 1:16-17
4. Song of Solomon 2:10-13
5. Song of Solomon 8:7
6. Isaiah 63:7-9
7. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

iii. New Testament Readings:

1. Romans 12:1-2
2. Romans 13:8-10
3. 1 John 4:7-12
4. 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13
5. Ephesians 5:21-33
6. Colossians 3:12-17

iv. Gospel Readings:

1. Matthew 19:4-6
2. Mark 10:6-9
3. John 2:1-10
4. John 15:(1-8)9-12

b. The above are simply suggestions, you may choose other scripture passages that you find more meaningful or appropriate.

c. Some couples choose to have a poem or tribute read as part of their service. If you would like this option, please consult with the officiating pastor.

8) WEDDING VOWS

- a. During a wedding service, the bride and groom will be making promises to each other which are meant to be kept for a lifetime. Therefore, the promises should be from the heart and carefully chosen to be both a foundation to your marriage, but also a source of comfort for your spouse. Below are several suggestions. You may however, write your own vows with the guidance and approval of the officiating pastor.
- b. The couple will join hands, face each other and repeat these words:

Option 1:

I take you (name), to be my wedded (wife/husband),
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for better or for worse,
for richer or poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and cherish,
till death parts us,
according to God's holy will;
and from this day on,
I promise you my faithfulness.

Option 2:

I take you (name), 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.

Option 3:

I take you (name), 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 share my life with you;
I will forgive you as we have been forgiven;
And I will try with you
Better to understand ourselves,
The world and God;
Through the best and worst of what is to come,
Until death parts us.

Option 4:

I, (name) take you (name), to be my wedded (wife/husband),
To have and to hold from this day forward,
For better or for worse,
For richer or 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 pledge you my faithfulness.

Option 5:

I take you (name) 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 in want,
In joy and in sorrow,
In sickness and in health,
To forgive and strengthen you,
And to join with you
So that we may serve God and others,
As long as we both shall live.

IV

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

1) REHEARSALS MUST BE SCHEDULED WITH THE OFFICIATING PASTOR.

- a. All members of the wedding party should be present to take part in the wedding rehearsal. (this would include: bride, groom, musicians, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, flower girls, ring-bearers, best man, maid/matron of honor and parents of the bride and groom). Wedding moderator(s) will also be present to assist you with any questions you might have.
- b. The rehearsal usually takes no more than 30 minutes and will typically follow this format:
 - i. We begin at the time set! Please be prompt and see that the wedding party knows what time the rehearsal takes place.
 - ii. The officiating pastor will meet with the wedding party for an opening prayer.
 - iii. The bride and groom show their attendants where they are to stand at the altar railing.
 - iv. We line up for the processional and process to our predetermined place at the altar railing.
 - v. The officiating pastor will explain the service in detail (rings, vows, kneeling, etc.)
 - vi. We then practice our recessional one more time.
 - vii. The pastor will meet with the wedding party to discuss:
 1. Honored guests—who will be ushered in, and in what order?
 2. Will the ushers light the candles?
 3. Will the ushers be in charge of rolling out the aisle runner (if you want an aisle runner, you can usually obtain them at a florist or wedding boutique)?
 4. Do the ushers know their duties of seating and ushering out the guests?
 5. Will ushers remain “on duty” to extinguish the candles?
 6. Will ushers make sure that no rice or bird-seed is thrown in the building (bubbles are preferred outside)?
 7. Soloists/musicians will be made aware of where the special music will be included in the service as well as being given the opportunity to practice.
 - viii. Our church council has adopted a policy of no alcohol on the premises. People coming to either the rehearsal or the wedding intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substances or acting in an inappropriate manner will not be permitted to participate and may be asked to leave. This decision is at the sole discretion of the officiating pastor.
 - ix. **PLEASE BRING THE MARRIAGE LICENSE TO THE REHEARSAL AND GIVE IT TO THE OFFICIATING PASTOR.**

V

OTHER DETAILS

1) USHERS

- a. A minimum of two (2) ushers are necessary to seat guests and family members. More ushers will be needed if you intend to invite more than 150 guests. Remember that groomsmen or bridesmaids may also serve as ushers.

2) BULLETINS

- a. It is helpful to provide a service bulletin to inform guests of the order of service, including their participation and the names of the wedding party.
- b. Our church secretary has several sample bulletins to show you to give you some ideas. You may choose to buy and print the bulletins yourself or our church secretary and may print the bulletins for you for a nominal fee plus the cost of the bulletins.
- c. **You need to discuss the layout of the service bulletin and the order of service with the officiating pastor before printing.**

3) DECORATIONS

- a. Floral decorations and an aisle runner are not necessary, but if desired, must be provided by you. Flowers will be placed in the appropriate vases and we recommend cut flowers for the altar.
- b. **No tape, wire or staples are to be used to fasten decorations on pews or candelabra.**
- c. The color of the paraments on the altar and lectern are determined by the season of the church year. **These are not changed for weddings.**
- d. **No items may be removed from the altar.**
- e. The candles in the chancel will be lighted for the wedding service. Aisle candles are discouraged because of fire hazard and potential damage to the pews and carpeting. A Unity Candle or Unity Sand Vessel may be used but must be supplied by you.
- f. **Absolutely no rice, confetti, or bird seed are allowed in the church building.** Bird seed or bubbles (but not rice or confetti) may be used outside the building.

4) CONDUCT OF GUESTS AND WEDDING PARTY

- a. As the wedding service is a worship service, participants and guests are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. **The consumption of alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the church premises (building or parking lot)—either during rehearsal, picture taking or wedding.** *Persons deemed to be under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances will not be permitted to participate in the wedding, and you risk your wedding being cancelled if you or your guests are in this condition.*

5) PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS

- a. We realize that your wedding is a very special day and you may want to have it documented through the use of a photographer or videographer. Because this is a worship service, we ask that there be no flash photography between the processional and recessional. Flood lights and flash are not permitted during the actual service, and any pictures or video must be taken from the back of the church or the balcony.
- b. Please include in your worship bulletin the following phrase:
 - i. NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY PERMITTED DURING THE SERVICE**
- c. As a courtesy to your reception guests, you should consider taking all of your wedding portraits prior to the start of the service.

6) THE RECEPTION

- a. The fellowship hall can be reserved for wedding receptions at the time you schedule your wedding.
- b. As you make your plans, please be advised that alcoholic beverages may not be served or consumed on church property and that smoking is prohibited within the building.

7) OTHER

- a. Here you may jot down any questions you may have as they come up during the planning of your wedding.

WEDDING PLANNING WORKSHEET

Date of Wedding: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____

Bride's full name: _____

Complete Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date of birth: _____ Age: _____

Bride's Parent's name: Father: _____ Phone: _____

Mother: _____ Phone: _____

Groom's full name: _____

Complete Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date of birth: _____ Age: _____

Groom's Parent's name: Father: _____ Phone: _____

Mother: _____ Phone: _____

Date of rehearsal: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal dinner: _____ (yes) _____ (no) Location: _____ Time: _____

Reception location: _____ Time: _____

Maid/Matron of Honor: _____

Bridesmaids: _____

Flower Girl: _____

Personal Attendant: _____

Best Man: _____

Groomsmen: _____

Ring Bearer: _____

Ushers: _____

Organist: _____ Soloist/instrumentalist: _____

Christian Music: _____

Unity Candle: _____ (yes) _____ (no) Reading: _____ (yes) _____ (no)

Scripture Readings: _____

Music: _____ (yes) _____ (no) Homily: _____ (yes) _____ (no)

Wedding Vows [circle one] (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Writing your own: _____ (yes) _____ (no)

Bulletins printed by Church: _____ (yes) _____ (no) Qty: _____ Bulletin # & company: _____

ST. JOHN'S AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Email: Pastor Shane: luther962@me.com



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

WEDDING FEE SCHEDULE

St. John's Council has established the following fee schedule. The schedule is not under the purview of the Pastor. All fees (less the reservation fee) must be paid in full by your wedding planning session with the Pastor.

Groom's Name _____	Bride's Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
City, St., ZIP _____	City, St., ZIP _____
Phone _____	Phone _____

Wedding Date: _____

	Voting Member	Non-Voting Member	Amount
Pastor (counseling, rehearsal & ceremony)	\$100	\$200	
Custodian (operating elevator & sound system)			
Wedding Only (required)	\$30	\$30	\$30
Reception	\$20	\$20	
Wedding Moderators (required)	\$50	\$50	\$50
Use of facilities			
Sanctuary	\$50	\$150	
Fellowship Hall & Kitchen – grooms dinner/ reception	\$50	\$150	
Total			
Less reservation fee			
Voting Member (\$50)			
Non-voting member (\$150)			
Total Due			

Reservation fee made payable to: St. John's Lutheran Church

Pastor's fee payable to: Pastor Shane Anderson

Custodial fee payable to: Alan Moser

Moderator fee payable to: (name provided @ final planning session)

If you wish to use St. John's organist, contact the church office for names & phone numbers.

* In order to qualify as a voting member you must be baptized, confirmed and have communed and made a contribution of record during the current or preceding year. (as per our constitution)