

GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS AT TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Although there are several acceptable variations of the Christian wedding service, the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church has adopted the following guidelines in order to assure that all services be conducted in accordance with God's Word.

1. THE RITE OF MARRIAGE

The rite of marriage is a Divine Service in which:

- a. God's people are gathered in His Name.
- b. God's Word concerning marriage is read and proclaimed.
- c. On the basis of that Word of God a man and a woman make solemn promises to be faithful to each other as husband and wife until death parts them.
- d. The congregation joins in praising God for His gift of marriage and makes intercession for the couple.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PASTOR

As an Evangelical Lutheran congregation, we expect our pastor to function in conformity with the solemn vows, which he made at his ordination (see pp. 211-212 of LUTHERAN WORSHIP AGENDA) to conduct his ministry in conformity to the Sacred Scriptures and the Book of Concord in preparing couples for marriage and in the conduction of the marriage service.

3. WHO WILL BE MARRIED

Those who wish to make God a part of their on-going marriage, not only on their wedding day. This ordinarily means that at least one of the marriage couple will be a member of Trinity Lutheran Church.

4. THE WEDDING SERVICE

Only liturgical forms, which are faithful to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, are to be used in weddings conducted under the auspices of Trinity Lutheran Church.

- a. The marriage liturgy contained in the LUTHERAN SERVICE BOOK AGENDA is the official wedding liturgy of this congregation.
- b. Genesis 2:18-24; Ephesians 5:21-33; and Matthew 19:4-6 are the appointed readings for the Service as they tell us of God's institution of marriage, His design for marriage, and His purpose for marriage. Additional Scripture readings may be added.
- c. Only music that is appropriate for a Divine Service is used in the marriage rite. Music should reflect a worshipful, God-centered attitude. Therefore, no secular music will be used at the church before, during, or after the ceremony. Secular music is appropriate at the reception.
- d. The service is first and foremost a service of worship in which the focus is on God and His love for us, not upon the couple. The color of the altar paraments used will be in keeping with the liturgical season. Likewise, chancel candles will be used according to the historical tradition of the church.

- e. Our pastor is not at liberty to make changes in the wedding liturgy, which would distort God’s plan and design for marriage. Additional prayers and liturgical forms may be included in the liturgy if they are in conformity with God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions.
- f. No pictures should be taken during the ceremony proper, either by a professional photographer or by guests (photographer may take pictures during processional and recessional). The facilities of the church can be used to pose for pictures both before and after the ceremony. A video of the ceremony can be made from the balcony of the church.

5. OTHER CLERGY

As the pastor is the rightly called and ordained servant of the Word in this congregation, he is responsible for all weddings conducted here. With the consent of the pastor, other clergymen of congregations in fellowship with Trinity Lutheran Church may be invited to conduct or assist the pastor in conducting the marriage service. Guest pastors will abide by the practices set forth in these guidelines.

6. PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

Couples desiring to be married at Trinity Lutheran Church will arrange for pre-marital counseling with the pastor. The pastor expects to meet with the couple four times for at least one hour each time prior to the wedding. Therefore weddings should ordinarily be scheduled at least three month in advance. The purpose of these meetings will be to look at the Bible’s teachings about marriage; discuss various areas of the couple’s relationship; and plan the wedding service.

7. SUGGESTED HYMNS FROM LUTHEAN WORSHIP AND THE HYMNAL SUPPLEMENT

There are a number of hymns written specifically for use in weddings. Among these are:

LSB 922	Go, My Children With My Blessing <i>(note wedding stanza-next page)</i>
LW 253	O Perfect Love
LSB 858	O Father, All Creating

In addition to “wedding” hymns, any hymn of a general character of praise and thanks to God for His blessings is appropriate. A partial list of recommendations follows:

LSB 895	Now Thank We All Our God
LSB 790	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
LSB 709	The King of Love My Shepherd Is
LSB 818	In Thee is Gladness
LSB 816	From All that Dwells Below the Skies
LSB 685	Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus
LSB 862	Oh, Blest the House
LSB 863	Our Father, By Whose Name
LW 456	God Brought Me to This Time and Place

Note that any of these hymns are effective as vocal solos as well.