

Christian Marriage Resources



St. John's Lutheran Church
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Rev. Galen M. Purpura Jr.—Pastor

CONGRATULATIONS...



Dear Friends,

We are pleased that you are interested in using St. John's Lutheran Church for your wedding and we look forward to sharing our facilities with you. Our goal is to provide the support personnel and the setting which will uphold the sacredness, the beauty, and the joy of a Christian marriage ceremony. We will work diligently to enable you to experience your wedding as a true spiritual celebration. By God's grace, we will do our best to enhance the consciousness of God's presence, both in your mind and in the minds of those who share in the celebration with you. By listening and providing careful guidance, we hope to serve you in the Spirit of Christ.

Congratulations! We look forward to celebrating with you!

Yours in Christ,

Twelve Axioms For A Happy Marriage

1. Vocally and Frequently Declare Your Love.
2. Make Your Spouse Happy
3. Never Look At Another Man or Woman
4. Try to Include Your Spouse In Things You Think Will Be Fun.
5. Plan And Do Unexpected Things
6. When Away From Home, Contact Your Wife Everyday
7. Beware of Criticism of your Spouse.
8. Shun Gossip
9. Plan and Arrange Time Alone With Your Spouse
10. Beware of Money Problems
11. Never Compete With Your Spouse
12. Go Regularly to the SAME Church

The Five Love Languages

1. Words of Affirmation
2. Quality Time
3. Receiving Gifts
4. Acts of Service
5. Physical Touch

A Model For Spending Spiritual Time Together

Every Night set aside 15 minutes, turn off the TV, set the newspaper aside and GIVE YOUR FULL ATTENTION TO EACH OTHER.

1. Each person share with your partner your "High and Low" from the day. (What's the best thing and the worst thing that happened to you that day?)
2. Read a passage from Scripture out loud with each other. (Use a Calendar, Portals of Prayer, etc.)
3. Talk to each other about how that Bible reading might relate to your "Highs and Lows."
4. Pray for one another's "Highs and Lows."
5. Bless one another. perhaps make the sign of the cross on their forehead and speak one of these blessings:
 - * I Love you and God loves you
 - * The Lord bless you and keep you always in his care.
 - * May God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless and keep you.

may regard as decorating choices, and unfortunate ones at that, may have significant theological purposes and significance.

#2—Modest dress is required, in keeping with the dignity of the place as well as the solemnity of the occasion. Whatever you strip off the wedding dress afterward to turn, it into a party dress is not at issue; one does not show up for a religious ceremony in a plunging neckline or strapless party dress.

#3—That also bans costumes representing a different period in history, a fairy tale or a favorite cartoon. Does it mean that you can't try out your "theme" at the wedding? Yes. The theme of a wedding is marriage.

#4- Arguments about creating creatures great and small will not give your dog permission to be in the processional. Even though he is your best friend. And no doves, either, by the way.

#5—You may not rewrite the ceremony. You will be told if there are choices allowed in the wording, but you are not allowed to fool with the liturgy.

#6—Nor should you be thinking in terms of adding your favorite entertainment or original contributions. Choices about readings and music will be limited by the practice of the religion and the dignity of the occasion.

#7—The couple's kiss should be circumspect (prudent). It marks the conclusion of the marriage ceremony, not the commencement of the consummation.

#8—Photography and videography will be severely limited, if not banned. Although it is understandable that couples want keepsakes and memories of their wedding, they need to be able to concentrate on their vows well enough to remember them and keep them.

Judith Martin writes the nationally syndicated etiquette column "Miss Manners" - Taken from the Lutheran Witness, February 2002.

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CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

God established marriage between a man and woman as the basis of family life, and for the wellbeing of human society. He said: 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner'. God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it'. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female', and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no-one separate. So then, our Lord promises to bless those who honor his purpose for marriage and remain faithful to each other in it.

God created us male and female and blessed humankind with the gifts of companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. Jesus affirmed the covenant of marriage and revealed God's own self-giving love on the cross. The Holy Spirit helps those who are united in marriage to be living signs of God's grace, love and faithfulness.

Marriage is also a human estate, with vows publicly witnessed. The church in worship surrounds these promises with the gathering of God's people, the witness of the word of God, and prayers of blessing and intercession.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AS WORSHIP

Christians believe that the marriage service is a time of worship. It is a time when the couple being married enters a relationship of devotion and dedication with one another and before God. A Christian couple believes that God has given them to one another and they pray that by God's grace He would unite their lives in a spiritual union. In the marriage service that ask for God's blessing on their union and the support of His grace and love in their relationship. In the worship service, the couple testifies to their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They do this in the midst of the love and support of the Christian community, represented by the guests who assemble for the service. With, this support, a couple may have the faith and courage to meet the joys and challenges of their life together. With this support, they can dare to commit themselves to a life - long relationship of love and faithfulness.



Other Resources

Miss Manners Advice On Church Weddings

By Judith Martin

The Syndicated etiquette columnist has some thoughts on what's proper – and what's not – at the wedding service.

in a house of worship, which figure represents the higher authority: the presiding member of the clergy or the wedding coordinator? Miss Manner's would not have thought this to be a particularly thorny protocol question. She would be mistaken. Everyone gets the answer wrong. The wedding coordinator, whether she is in the business professionally or for the purposes of being married, thinks it is she. And if the clerics don't actually voice agreement, an amazing number of them behave as if they regretfully believe this to be the case. "There is nothing we can do," they wail when admitting that some of the arrangements strike them as being undignified, if not sacrilegious. "That's what people want nowadays." Well, sure. People want to commit all kinds of sins, not just against etiquette, but that doesn't mean that the clergy must condone it. They themselves may be tempted to do the wrong thing for the noble sake of accruing income or popularity for their congregations, but they are supposed to resist temptation. In the interest of bolstering their resolve to insist on proper behavior, even if it means turning away couples who refuse to respect the terms, Miss Manners recommends clerical solidarity. Here is a suggested list of rules they might impose on those who wish to be married under what is, after all, their jurisdiction.

#1—No, you don't have a free hand in decorating the place. Rearranging the altar and replacing or supplementing the fixtures requires express permission, which may be withheld – and this even applies to flowers and (especially) candles. Much of what you

REMINDERS

- Contact the organists as soon as possible to arrangement an appointment to discuss music options.
- Schedule your pre-marriage sessions with the pastor.
- See your town clerk at least a few weeks before the ceremony to obtain your marriage license.
- Bring the license and all fees with you on the day of the rehearsal.
- NO alcoholic beverages are allowed on the church premises in connection with the wedding or rehearsal. The church reserves the right to ask anyone who has been drinking to LEAVE the premises. This includes members of the wedding party, including the bride and groom! It is imperative that none of the members of the wedding party drink prior to the wedding. Avoid personal embarrassment! **No exceptions!**



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Marriage service culminates one of the most important decisions that a person makes in this life. Marriage is indeed a sacred trust. As such, we should not enter marriage lightly, but with reverence, maturity, and faith. The Church, through its Pastors and staff, are present to help you in your planning and preparations. This takes time, and for this reason, an agenda of planning steps is expected of every couple preparing for a wedding at St. John's. As a beginning point, **Dates for the wedding and rehearsal should be set as far in advance as possible!** Furthermore, couples should be prepared to **engage in a series of pre-marital counseling sessions** with the officiating pastor. Usually there are three to five sessions. The objective of these sessions is, to discuss Marriage in general (origin, purpose, etc), to know one another better and to discuss the foundation of marriage, to discuss various situations that commonly impact marriage, and to plan your wedding service so that it may express the faith and witness of the couple involved.

Membership in the congregation is strongly encouraged – We will perform wedding services for those who are not yet members, but we urge couples to seriously consider making a commitment to joining our congregation prior to their marriage service. A solid faith foundation for your relationship is one of the most important steps you can take to prepare your marriage! We want to help! Please speak to a pastor regarding membership opportunities.

PRACTICES

Holy Communion – may be celebrated as part of the marriage service. However, care should be taken in deciding to have Holy Communion if a significant number of those present would not participate because of differing beliefs.

We as Lutherans believe in the clear claim of Christ in Holy Scripture that His Body and Blood are truly present in the Sacrament and distributed to those who eat. The Bible also clearly states, “Let a man examine himself... Whoever, therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of our Lord.” One should therefore examine himself/herself prior to communing.

Do you believe you are a sinner?

Are you sorry for your sins?

Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?

Photography and Video

Photographers are instructed NOT to take pictures during the service. Pictures may be taken during the processional and recessional, and natural light pictures may be taken from the balcony. All other pictures and

poses may be reset after the worship service. Videographers may place themselves anywhere convenient during the processional and recessional, but once the bridal party is in place, they must record from a stationary position.

Rice, Birdseed, Bubbles, etc. – The throwing of rice at the conclusion of your wedding is strongly discouraged. The church encourages the use of birdseed, but highly favors the use of bubbles or bells. Should you decide to use birdseed bubbles, they must be used outside where cleanup is easiest. In no circumstance should they be used in the church building!

Music- Throughout the centuries, music has been one of the primary vehicles that the church has employed to praise and thank God. There is a vast selection of music that is particularly appropriate for wedding ceremonies. Remember that your wedding is a worship service! Therefore, it is important that you choose music that emphasizes praise and thanks to God. Secular music is best used at the reception.

Candles – The church will light candles during your wedding service. However, if you wish to utilize a unity candle you must supply it. Additional supplies should be brought to the rehearsal so they aren't forgotten on the wedding day.

Bulletins – A bulletin will be prepared by the church office for your marriage service. You may select the bulletin style from a catalog provided by the church. The cost of the bulletins is the responsibility of the bride and groom.

Flowers and Decorations – Decoration are NEVER to be placed on the altar. Decorations should not distract participants or attendees. Aisle runners and pew bows are acceptable decorations. If you have questions please speak to a pastor. Note: Chancel furnishing and the like should not be moved to accommodate decorations.

The Wedding Rehearsal – Should (typically) be held the day before the wedding. All service participants are required to attend! Please encourage your wedding party to arrive on time.



CHECKLIST

SIX MONTHS PRIOR

Date	Description	✓
	Called Pastor- Reserved the Date and times for Rehearsal and Wedding Ceremony	
	Received a Copy of the Wedding Manual from the Pastor and Read it through.	
	Completed and Returned Information Forms	
	Met with the Pastor	
	Scheduled pre-marriage Sessions	

THREE MONTHS PRIOR

Date	Description	✓
	Meet with the Church Musician and select music approved and appropriate for a worship service.	

A FEW WEEKS PRIOR

Date	Description	✓
	Purchase wedding license from town clerk's office.	
	Purchase unity candle for unity candle ceremony.	
	Get all final information to the pastor- correctly spelled names of those standing up and their role.	
	Select your Bible passages and select readers to read them in the ceremony. Get names and readings to the pastor	

REHEARSAL

Date	Description	✓
	Bring Wedding License for the Pastor.	
	Bring any decorations you may have.	
	Pastor's Fee payable to Rev. Galen M. Purpura Jr.	
	organist fee payable to Lois Will	
	Care takers fee payable to Tom Bluhm	
	Special Musician Fee (if applicable)	
	non-member building use fee (if applicable) Payable to St. John's Lutheran Church	

WEDDING VOWS

OPTION 1

I take you, _____ to be my wife/husband from this day forward to join with you and share with you that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.

OPTION 2

I take you, _____ to be my wife/husband, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest to 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 to better understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and the worst of what is to come until death parts us.

OPTION 3

I take you, _____ to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful wife/husband, 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 together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.

OPTION 4

_____, I take you to be my wife/husband from this day onward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.

OPTION 5

In the presence of God and this community, I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband; to have and to hold from this day forward, in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

FEES AND EXPENSES

The Service of marriage is enhanced by the support services provided by the staff and members of St. John's. Therefore, the following schedule is suggested. Should extra services be desired, additional compensation should be considered.

Members	Non-Members
Pastor..... \$300.00 (pre-marriage, rehearsal, ceremony)	Pastor..... \$325.00 (pre-marriage, rehearsal, ceremony)
Organist..... \$200.00 (ceremony)	Organist..... \$225.00 (ceremony)
Caretaker..... \$100.00 (Set-up / clean-up)	Caretaker..... \$125.00 (Set-up / clean-up)
Total: \$600.00	Building Use..... \$150.00
	Total \$825.00

If your wedding is scheduled on a civil holiday or two weeks before Christmas or 2 weeks before Easter The fee Scale is as follows:

Members	Non-Members
Pastor..... \$350.00 (pre-marriage, rehearsal, ceremony)	Pastor..... \$375.00 (pre-marriage, rehearsal, ceremony)
Organist..... \$250.00 (ceremony)	Organist..... \$275.00 (ceremony)
Caretaker..... \$150.00 (Set-up / clean-up)	Caretaker..... \$175.00 (Set-up / clean-up)
Total: \$750.00	Building Use..... \$150.00
	Total \$975.00

All Fees are DUE the day of the rehearsal.

Payments are to the individual staff members not the church.

Please make Checks payable to the following:

- Pastor Fee..... Rev. Galen M. Purpura
- Organist Fee..... Lois Will
- Caretaker Fee..... Tom Bluhm
- Building Fee..... St. John's Lutheran Church

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:26-28
 Genesis 2:18-24
 Genesis 24:48-51, 58-67
 Proverbs 3:3-6
 Song of Solomon 2:10-13
 Song of Solomon 8:6-7
 Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
 Isaiah 63:7-9
 Jeremiah 31:31-34



PSALMS

Psalms 33, 67, 100, 117, 121, 127, 128, 150

EPISTLE

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39
 Romans 12:1-2, 9-18
 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
 Ephesians 3:14-19
 Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33
 Philippians 2:1-11
 Philippians 4:4-9
 Colossians 3:12-17
 1 John 3:18-24
 1 John 4:7-16
 Revelation 19:1, 5-9

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-10
 Matthew 5:14-16
 Matthew 7:21, 24-29
 Matthew 19:4-6
 Matthew 22:35-40
 Mark 10:6-9
 John 2:1-11
 John 15:9-17



MUSIC OPTIONS



Please schedule an appointment with the organist as soon as possible to discuss your music options for the ceremony. There is a vast selection of music that is particularly appropriate for wedding ceremonies. Remember that your wedding is a worship service! Therefore, it is important that you

choose music that emphasizes praise and thanks to God. Secular music is best used at the reception.

Music Director: Lois Will..... (716) 907-8362

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

Prelude
 Seating of the Mothers..... *Music of your choice*
 The Processional
 Bridesmaids.....*Music of your choice*
 Bride.....*Music of your choice*
 The Invocation
 The Wedding Prayer
 Scripture Readings
 Reading One
 Reading Two
 Reading Three
 Hymn..... *If Desired*
 Homily
 Special Music..... *If Desired*
 The Wedding Vows
 The Ring Exchange
 The Announcement of Marriage
 The Unity Candle Ceremony
 Holy Communion..... *If Applicable*
 The Prayers
 The Benediction
 Introduction of the Bride and Groom
 Recessional.....*Music of your choice*