

Guidelines for a Church Wedding

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

In effect October 1, 2010



Congratulation on your upcoming wedding! The following guidelines have been developed by your pastors and council, concerning marriage preparation, wedding ceremony, financial obligations and other policies of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church related to your wedding. Please consider them carefully.

Christian Marriage

A church wedding is an event of short duration, but a Christian marriage is to last a lifetime. To this end the Church is not simply a place for your wedding to be held, but a home for the nourishment of your life together. We encourage your active participation in the life of the church here at Trinity, both before and after your wedding. Active church involvement can make a vital contribution to the health of your marriage and family.

First Steps/Seminar

Normally, marriages at Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church are performed by one of our pastors (See *Policies*, page 2). As soon as possible arrange a meeting with one of our pastors to discuss details and set a time for your wedding and rehearsal. If you would like to be married by someone other than one of our pastors, please arrange for this person to speak to one of our pastors as soon as possible.

Also please note: It is expected that a pre-marriage counseling seminar will be attended by all couples seeking to be married at Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church.

Wedding Ceremony

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church has been consecrated to God; we require that your wedding service be in keeping with the dignity, beauty and sacredness of Christian worship. The wedding ceremony is in the same category as other rites and sacraments of the church and should convey a spirit of reverence and joy. Decor, music and other activities are to be in keeping with sound religious practice. At Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, the wedding ceremony typically takes 30-45 minutes. The pastor will plan the ceremony with you.

Decor/Flower/Candles

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church provides a beautiful setting for a wedding. The sanctuary does not need elaborate decorations. You may wish to adorn the altar with flowers; however, this is not necessary. The altar is a symbol of God's presence in the sanctuary and the two candles on the altar are symbols of Christ's human and divine nature. When lit they remind us that Christians are to be a light in the world.

Music/Church Organist/other Musicians

Music in the Church serves primarily to glorify God and to express a Christian response to God's Word and world. Therefore, music used during the wedding ceremony – be it organ, piano, vocal or instrumental music – should express a sacred theme. Secular music is not in keeping with a church wedding and is far better used at the reception.

At your meeting with the pastor, the role of music will be discussed. The church will provide the organist to play for your wedding unless you notify us well in advance that you desire to ask a relative or close friend to play. Our organist will work with you should you want instruments beyond organ or piano.

Photography

The marriage service is sacred. It should not be disrupted in any way, especially through picture taking. For this reason, no flash pictures are permitted during the wedding service, except during the processional, during the signing of the register, and during the recessional. Please inform your photographer and your guests of this requirement; an announcement to this effect will also be made by the pastor. Pictures may be taken without flash during the ceremony, provided there is no excessive noise or movement. A video recording may be made of the service provided there is no excessive noise or movement in the chancel area or sanctuary and provided no additional lighting is used.

Please coordinate the scheduling of your wedding when setting the wedding date with the pastor if:

- You wish to have formal pictures taken in the church after the service.
- You wish to reenact parts of the ceremony to allow your photographer freedom to take pictures from more perspectives than is possible during the service.

The Wedding Rehearsal

A rehearsal is advisable as preparation for any wedding where several people are involved in the ceremony. A time will have to be worked out with the pastor when most participants will be able to attend. All members of the wedding party, including the parents and ushers, and all people participating in the wedding service should be present promptly at the agreed upon time. The rehearsal will require about 1 hour.

Marriage License

Your marriage license and all fees must be provided to the church office at least two weeks prior to your wedding date. Note: You can obtain a license up to 3 months prior to your wedding at Vital Statistics, or any registry office.

Financial Obligations

For **non-members** the fee assessed by Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church for a wedding ceremony is \$950.00, plus a refundable damage deposit of \$150.00. The fee includes all costs related to the maintenance of the facility, janitorial expenses and consideration of the pastor's and organist's time. The fee stays the same if a different pastor or organist is involved in the ceremony. Active members are required to pay the organist fee of \$150.00 and a facility fee of \$100. They are also encouraged to provide an honorarium to the pastor and to make a donation to the church.

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church will consider exceptions to these fees in cases of financial hardship; please explain your circumstances to one of our pastors.

Bulletins

If bulletins for the ceremony are desired, the wedding party is responsible for securing these and having them printed, in accordance with the service plans made with the pastor.

Questions

Questions about the marriage ceremony itself should be directed to the pastor. Questions about the facility (decorations, sound system, and so on) or fees should be directed to the church office or parish manager.

Policies of the Church

- Smoking on the church premises is not permitted at any time.
- You are to advise the members of the wedding party to refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages before both the rehearsal and the ceremony.
- **PLEASE: NO THROWING OF RICE, BIRD SEED, CONFETTI OR OTHER MATERIAL IN OR AROUND THE CHURCH FACILITY.**
- The bride and groom are responsible for any damage done to the building, grounds, furnishings, or equipment.
- No candles are allowed on the pillars of the church due to fire concerns. The only candles that may be lit are the altar candles, baptismal candle, commitment candle, and/or candelabra at the altar.



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