

# Weddings and the Church

A Booklet To Guide You Through Wedding  
Planning



St. James Lutheran Church, ELCA  
P.O. Box 25 | 421 Main Street  
Allison, Iowa  
319.267.2274

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Congratulations on your decision to be married! Since you have chosen to be married here at St. James Lutheran Church, we have prepared this booklet to help you make plans for this important milestone event in your lives.

Saved by God's mercy and called by the Holy Spirit, the people of St. James 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.

The following pages will help you to plan for your wedding service here, so please read them carefully. In addition to what is printed, you will be speaking with our pastor and our secretary about various matters. Each of these people have a part in helping you prepare for the wedding, so be sure that you make contact with each one. Names and telephone numbers will be provided later in this document.

You will 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 her or him about plans for the wedding service as well. The pastor is entrusted with final decisions about your wedding and the wedding worship service.

## **WEDDING SERVICE**

Saturday weddings can be scheduled to begin between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 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 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Wedding times set to occur on other days are to be discussed and approved with the Pastor.

Due reverence shall be maintained in the preparation for the wedding service which is a religious order of worship of the church. The music should be carefully chosen in consultation with the Pastor and parish musicians. Music of a “secular” nature is normally not to be played and/or sung during the wedding service itself. If approved by the Pastor and parish musicians, selected music of a secular nature may be performed prior to the service or following the recessional. Please remember that many songs, while meaningful to you personally, might be more appropriate for the reception. It is encouraged that congregational hymns be included as part of the service. If you would like a musician other than the parish musicians to play for your wedding, please consult with the pastor. As always, exceptions may be made, however, the Pastor reserves the right of final approval in relation to music during the worship service.

A page outlining the order for the wedding service can be found near the end of this booklet and a more detailed outline will be given to you during your conversations with the Pastor. The general order for marriage as found in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) is to be followed at all wedding ceremonies. Several options within the basic wedding service are possible and the Pastor will discuss these with you. Other directives and resources published by the ELCA as supplements to the ELW Marriage Rite will be utilized as they are distributed.

A question often asked is whether a wedding is an appropriate occasion for the celebration of Holy Communion. If you desire to have Holy Communion at your wedding service, please understand that this Sacrament is always to be a sign of our unity in Christ Jesus and that it will be open to all baptized Christians present at the service. If having the sacrament as part of the service threatens to become a point of discord or disunity among families or friends present at your wedding, it is possible that Communion should not be included.

Guest pastors may be asked to participate in your wedding under the “presidency” of this congregation’s pastor. If a guest pastor is to preside, she or he must be invited by our pastor and be affiliated with a church body that St. James Lutheran Church and the ELCA are in full communion fellowship with.

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 worship should be present if at all possible.

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).

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Because the wedding is a worship service, due decorum is required of anyone taking photos or videotaping the service. Flash photos may not be taken during the worship service with the exception of the processional and recessional. Please advise your professional photographer to consult with the pastor about appropriate photography or videography during the service itself. Generally, 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.

## **KITCHEN USE**

If you desire to utilize the kitchen in the parish hall at St. James, please request a copy of the policy associated with kitchen use and its associated fee schedule.

## **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 6th Street, Allison). You will have to wait three days after applying for the license before you will be able to pick it up after proper application and a fee of \$35. 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.

## **WEDDINGS FOR NON-MEMBERS**

Weddings for non-members must be approved by the congregation's Council and the Pastor. Approval can be given no more than one year in advance of the proposed wedding date. A use of facility fee will be charged to non-members. All fees are listed later in this booklet. Speak with our secretary for more information.

## **A TYPICAL WEDDING PLANNING SCHEDULE**

1. Contact the church's secretary (319.267.2274) to discuss a possible wedding date. Come by the office to pick up (or request by mail) the Wedding Booklet and Wedding Information Page. Non-Members must write to the church council and to the pastor requesting permission to use the church facility. Read all materials carefully and please return the Initial Pre-Marriage Information Sheet to the office as soon as possible.
2. Make an appointment to see the pastor at least three months prior to the event. Schedule a time to take the "Prepare" pre-wedding inventory and to discuss future sessions with the Pastor. There is a \$35 fee to cover the cost of the inventory. You should plan to meet with the pastor around five total times prior to your wedding and rehearsal.
3. Make an appointment with one of the church musicians for consultation regarding music for your wedding worship service. A list of recommended pre-service music, processions, and recessions is available for your guidance. Please meet with a parish musician as early as possible but no later than four weeks prior to the wedding.
4. If you want the secretary to print your wedding bulletin, make an appointment to speak with the secretary about this option. Bulletins should be scheduled to print at least two weeks prior to your wedding.
5. Please pay all fees prior to or on the day of the wedding.

## SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *How much will it cost us to be married here?* Since the wedding is a worship service, it does not “cost” anything. However, various fees are assessed for the services a number of persons will render on your behalf. Also, a use of facility fee is charged for non-members. A returnable deposit is required from all couples. Please check the fee schedule at the end of this document for more details.
2. *Do you print wedding bulletins?* Yes. Speak with the church’s secretary.
3. *Where can we and with what materials are we allowed to decorate?* It is important to note that nothing should be placed on the communion table. However, other decorations in the sanctuary are acceptable such as the pew bow hangers that are available from the church secretary. Again, the pastor has final say on decorations and any plans should be cleared with the pastor prior to decorating. There are no restrictions on decorations for the parish hall, but we do ask that no thumbtacks or nails be used to hang decorations anywhere in the church building. Furthermore, we kindly ask that only bubbles are to be used when the couple exit the church (e.g. please, no confetti, rice, or the like is to be thrown).
4. *How many people does the sanctuary accommodate?* The sanctuary can accommodate 280 people in addition to your wedding party. Please note that there is an “open pew” in the rear of the sanctuary that easily accommodates wedding guests who may have special mobility needs. Also, it is requested that wedding guests are only seated on the main level allowing for musicians to have plenty of room in the choir loft.
5. *May we bring our “wedding things” on rehearsal night and leave them here 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 for the meantime. Please note, however, that no personal items or items of value should be left unattended at any time. Although the church is locked at night, the congregation is not under any circumstance liable for lost or stolen items.

## **FEE SCHEDULE**

Returnable Deposit to Reserve Space (\$150 deposit returnable if no additional cleaning (e.g. trash not properly disposed of or belongings left behind) or property damage charges are necessary)	\$150
Non-Refundable Fee For All Non-Members (Those to be married who have a parent on the active member roll of the parish will not be assessed the non-member fee)	\$150
Organist (This is a suggested fee for the organist considering their personal rehearsal and pre-wedding meeting obligations in addition to the wedding rehearsal and wedding proper. Please arrange in advance with the organist the fee to be assessed based off of time requirements for your wedding).	\$125
Custodian	\$75
Prepare & Enrich Pre-Wedding Inventory	\$35
Bulletins (per 50)	\$35
Pastor's Suggested Honorarium (not required)	\$150

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Church Office

Secretary-Syd Brinkman

319.267.2274

stjamesa@netins.net

Vivian Green—Organist

Robin Morton—Organist

**SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE READINGS  
FOR THE MARRIAGE SERVICE**

**HEBREW BIBLE READINGS**

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 READINGS**

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

**SUGGESTED WEDDING HYMNS**  
(All hymns are found in the ELW)

All Glory be to God on High	#410
Beautiful Savior	#838
Blest Be the Tie that Binds	#656
Children of the Heavenly Father	#781
Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation	#645
Day by Day	#790
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father	#585
Here in This Place	#532
I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry	#732
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee	#836
Let All Things Now Living	#881
Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying	#752
Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now	#527
Lord of ALL Hopefulness	#765
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	#631
Now Thank We All Our God	#840
O Holy Spirit, Enter In	#786
O God, Our Help In Ages Past	#632
Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing	#886
Oh, Sing to the Lord	#822
Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven	#865
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	#858
Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us	#789
Sent Forth by God's Blessing	#547
The King of Love, My Shepherd Is	#502
We Praise You, O God, Our Redeemer	#870

## **PRESCRIBED ORDER OF SERVICE**

(With Holy Communion Included)

Prelude

Seating of the Parents/Grandparents  
Processional

Greeting  
Declaration of Intent  
Prayer of the Day

Scripture Readings  
Sermon  
Hymn of the Day

Affirmation of Vows  
Giving of Rings  
Acclamation  
Unity Candle (Optional)  
Marriage Blessing  
Prayers of Intercession  
Peace

Preface and Words of Institution  
The Lord's Prayer  
Communion  
Post-Communion Prayer and Blessing  
Benediction and Dismissal

Presentation of the Couple  
Recessional  
Postlude

## NOTES

