

Planning a Marriage Celebration at First Lutheran Church

Congratulations! You have entered into the process of preparing for marriage. We at First Lutheran wish you a joyous wedding day and a joy-filled marriage. We look forward to helping you make your wedding as personal and special as can be.

The celebration of marriage in the Christian tradition is primarily a service of worship during which the people of God gather to give thanks and share the joy as the couple begins a new and unique relationship in their lives. The marriage ceremony bears witness to a couple's mutual faith and represents the values they regard as important for their future life together. Therefore, choices made regarding the service are expected to reflect these values.

In order to assist you in planning your wedding in accordance with scripture, wedding etiquette and our church policies, a wedding coordinator is a part of every wedding held in the main sanctuary at First Lutheran Church. She will serve as your primary contact person during the planning process.



Scheduling the Wedding and Rehearsal

Contact the church receptionist (852-4853) as soon as possible to determine available dates. When a particular wedding date has been requested, it is considered ***tentative*** until the church office receives a \$100 deposit, which is non-refundable. **No dates should be announced until confirmed by the church office.**

- Weddings are not to be scheduled on the holidays of Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Eve, Thanksgiving Day, during Holy Week or on Sundays.
- Available start times are: Monday – Friday 1:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Saturday 11:00 - 3:30 p.m.
- Saturday evening weddings are not possible due to worship services at 5:30 p.m.
- The date and time for the rehearsal should also be scheduled, which is generally held from 5 – 6 p.m. the day prior to the wedding.
- Scheduling exceptions may be made in consultation with the church office and officiating pastor.

Fees

While there is much joy in participating with you in your marriage celebration, it does mean extra time and work for the church staff. In addition, there are costs associated with using our facility. A wedding fee schedule is enclosed. In determining fees, to qualify as a member, either the bride or groom must be listed on First Lutheran Church's membership roster at the time the wedding is scheduled. The membership rate also applies if the parent(s) of the bride or groom are current members of the church.

Your \$100 non-refundable deposit will be applied toward all fees incurred. The remaining balance (based on your selections – including custodial and wedding coordinator fees) is due at the church office **one month** before the wedding date. Individual fees for the pastor and organist are to be paid directly to them at the rehearsal. This will be collected by the wedding coordinator.

Marriage License

You will need to contact a ND State Clerk of Court to obtain a license. The marriage license must be received by the church office at least 1 week prior to your wedding date. (This includes all the copies and mailing envelope received from the Clerk of Court.)

Church Facility

The Main Sanctuary seats 450 comfortably

The Chapel seats 70 comfortably

Dressing rooms for members of the wedding party are located in the church basement. The bride's room is equipped with a full-length mirror, well-lit vanity counter, and garment hooks. The groom and his attendants may use the choir room, which has several full-length mirrors. The Friendship Room in the church basement is usually available for your wedding party to gather. Snacks may be served in the kitchen area.

Wedding Coordinator

After your date has been confirmed by the church office, a First Lutheran wedding coordinator will contact you to set up a meeting at the church. The coordinator's role is to help make your day go as smoothly as possible and is mandatory for all weddings held in the main sanctuary. She will assist you and the pastor in working out all of the details and will be present at both the rehearsal and wedding to see that these plans are carried out.

The First Lutheran Church wedding coordinator will:

- Consult with the bride, groom, and pastor about details of the ceremony.
- Utilize a Wedding Planning Form to determine when pictures will be taken, who is in the wedding party, where people will stand, when they will enter, the order of service, etc.
- Offer suggestions for the wedding program/bulletin (if needed).
- Coordinate special requests, such as an aisle runner, candelabras, pew bow holders, unity candle, guest book table and gift table.
- Be a liaison between all parties, including the church office, pastor, custodian, organist, musicians, photographer, florist, wedding party, and family.
- Make arrangements for opening the church at the designated times.
- Assist the pastor with the rehearsal and collect fees for the pastor and organist.
- Guide the wedding party in appropriate demeanor at the rehearsal and wedding.
- Close the guest book to ensure the wedding starts on time.
- Assist the ushers with seating of the guests and family.
- Coordinate the processional of the wedding party.

Meeting with the Pastor

The pastor officiating at your wedding will call you to set a date and time for a meeting **approximately 3 months before** your wedding. First Lutheran Church strongly encourages couples to participate in marriage preparation session. This is often done with the pastor, but can be done at a marriage retreat through Lutheran Engaged Encounter, Lutheran Social Services, or Camp of the Cross's "Threefold Cord" program. The pastor will discuss options with you during your first meeting.

Wedding Vows

A listing of vows will be provided when you meet with the pastor. Specific wording can be discussed at that time.

Scripture Selection

Part of your conversation with the pastor will concern the selection of scripture passages to be read during the wedding service. While all scripture is of great benefit to us as the people of God, there are passages that are particularly valuable to hear at this time.

We encourage you as a couple to select scriptures that help to set the tone for your wedding and your marriage. Following is a list of suggestions. You are welcome to choose from this list, or to consult with the pastor about a passage you would prefer.

Scripture	Message
Genesis 1:26-31	<i>Woman and man created in God's image</i>
Genesis 2:18-24	<i>Companionship rather than loneliness</i>
Psalm 100	<i>We are God's people, the sheep of his pasture</i>
Song of Solomon 8:6-7	<i>Many waters cannot quench love</i>
Matthew 7:24-27	<i>Build your house upon the rock</i>
Mark 10:6-9	<i>The two shall become one</i>
John 2:1-10	<i>Jesus' miracle at the wedding in Cana</i>
John 15:9-17	<i>Love one another</i>
I John 2:15-17	<i>Do not love the world</i>
I John 3:18-24	<i>Let us love with actions, not words</i>
Romans 12:1-2	<i>Living as ones not conformed to this world</i>
I Corinthians 13:1-13	<i>Paul's hymn to love - Love is patient, love is kind...</i>
Ephesians 5:21-33	<i>Marriage reflects Christ's love for the church</i>
Philippians 1:9-11	<i>A prayer for overflowing love</i>
Colossians 3:12-17	<i>Love binds all together in perfect unity</i>

Music for the Ceremony

When choosing music, it is important to keep in mind that the Christian wedding is a worship service. Since music selections are expected to complement the Christian tone of the ceremony, numbers from the pop charts are generally not appropriate. All music is to be selected in consultation with the pastor, organist and wedding coordinator. Song lyrics will be reviewed by the pastor at your initial meeting. Soloists and other musicians may practice before or after the rehearsal.

Due to the size of First Lutheran's sanctuary, "live" music is strongly recommended for sound quality. The use of pre-recorded music is discouraged. However, if using recorded music, you will need to provide your own CD player and arrange for someone to operate it.

You should contact First Lutheran Church's organist (contact the church office for possible organists) as soon as possible to schedule their services, and they are available to consult with the bride and groom about music for the processional and recessional, as well as organ accompaniment for special music during the service. Guest organists may be used, but must consult with FLC's organist for instructions.

Decorations

Seasonal decorations and paraments (altar cloths), when present, cannot be moved for the wedding. These decorations may be present around Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. A time to decorate should be scheduled with the wedding coordinator. She will also designate a time for flowers to be delivered. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to remove all decorations as soon as the wedding concludes.

The church has pew bow holders available for decorations to be attached to, but these must be left at the church. Battery operated pew candles are also available for an additional fee. There are 29 rows of pews in the main sanctuary and 7 in the chapel.

Only First Lutheran Church candelabras that use oil candles are permitted. These are available from the church for a fee. A unity candle may be used, which the bride and groom are responsible for furnishing, along with the candleholder.

First Lutheran Church has a cloth aisle runner that is available for an additional fee. Disposable aisle runners may be obtained from most florists if desired (should be 120 feet long). Flower petals may be used if there is an aisle runner. If no runner is used, only silk petals are permitted to avoid staining the carpet.

Pictures/Videos

Formal pictures of wedding party may be taken either before or after the wedding service. Your photographer and/or videographer should consult with the wedding coordinator at least one hour before the service regarding the placement of equipment. During the ceremony, camera and video technicians must remain stationary - no movement is permitted near the altar.

Guest Book Table & Gift Table

Tables are available in the narthex area outside the sanctuary for the guest book and gifts. White linens from the church are available or you may furnish your own. Arrangements for setting up these tables are to be made with the wedding coordinator.

It is important to designate an attendant to keep your gifts, cards, and guest book secure during the service and to remove them from the church immediately following the ceremony.

Personal Valuables

Every reasonable effort will be made to assist the wedding party in protecting personal property. However, First Lutheran Church is not responsible for items brought to the church for a wedding and will not be liable if items are lost, stolen, or damaged. It is suggested that purses, cameras, and other valuables not be left unattended.

Receiving Line & Send Off

If a receiving line is held inside the church on Saturday, be sure to allow enough time so that everyone is out and decorations are taken down by 4:30 p.m.

The throwing of rice, birdseed and/or confetti is not allowed on church grounds for custodial reasons. Bubbles may be used outside only.

Smoking/Alcohol/Wedding Party Vehicles

First Lutheran Church is a smoke-free facility. Smoking is not permitted inside church buildings or within 20 feet of doorways. A designated smoking area is available in the courtyard between the church and parish center.

Alcohol is not permitted on church property. Be sure members of the wedding party are aware that anyone under the influence of alcohol will not be allowed to take part in the rehearsal or wedding.

Decorating the vehicles of the wedding party should be done in an appropriate manner keeping in mind that this is a religious ceremony.

Receptions at First Lutheran

Receptions held at the church are for FLC members only. They should be booked at the same time as scheduling the wedding date. Reception arrangements can be made by contacting Becky Ortiz at the church office (852-4853).

In Summary

Your marriage celebration can be a beautiful event without being extravagant. There is much beauty in the simplicity of a service that is both joyous and religious. The attitudes and values you bring to the event will play a large part in making it the memorable experience you want it to be.

Once a wedding date has been confirmed, you will be provided with your FLC wedding coordinator's name and phone number. If you have any questions regarding the information in this handbook prior to that, feel free to contact the church office and we will be happy to help you.

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Wedding Coordinator:

Sarah Hom

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