



First Lutheran Church

208 West Sandusky Avenue
Bellevue, Ohio 43311-1498
(937) 592-7699 + fax (888) 471-1970
Rev. Lawrence J. Novak, Pastor

Greetings to the Prospective Bride and Groom,

This booklet is intended to help you get ready for one of the most important days of your lives. This is the day you promise before God, family, friends your love for each other as you are united as husband and wife. This booklet is intended to help you prepare for this special day!

You have requested the privilege of being united in marriage in the sanctuary of First Lutheran Church. First Lutheran views weddings in the context of worship in a Christian church. In other words, the worship and praise of God is what is central to the marriage service. The spiritual significance of this worship service should be the focal point of your wedding day. Secular fads that seem important have no place in a Christian worship service. The presence of God, the thoughts in your hearts and prayers, the scriptures read, and your promises to each other are the things that matter. As we prepare for your wedding day together, let us prepare a service of worship as we celebrate the promises you will make to one another.

Since your wedding is a once-in-a-lifetime event, let us plan carefully that our worship reflects the solemnity and meaning you anticipate. Use this booklet as a guide to help you understand some of the principles of worship at First Lutheran. I hope this will enable us to plan a service that will reflect the reverence and dignity appropriate for your wedding.

God's blessings be with you. I look forward to working with you as we prepare for your special day.

Peace in Christ,

Lawrence J. Novak
Pastor

Revised March 2017

PLANING YOUR WEDDING

Where to Begin

You should notify the church as soon as you begin your wedding plans. Otherwise you may be disappointed to find conflicts in time and facilities. Your wedding plans are part of many different celebrations being planned and must work into the total program of the church.

If you have developed a close relationship with your pastor, one of the great joys will be pre-marital counseling, where we will prepare not just for a wedding, but also for marriage. If you have not had a close relationship with the church, pre-marital counseling will give you an opportunity to understand the teachings of the church and the meaning of establishing a Christian home. When checking with the church office to schedule your wedding, make an appointment for the first counseling session.

To prepare for your wedding day means preparing for one of the most significant worship services in your life between now and your funeral. Let's take the time to do it right! Whether we use the Order for Marriage in the hymnal or one of the new orders prepared by the church or a service we prepare especially for your wedding, we must remember that this is a worship service, not a social event.

Pre-marital Counseling

No marriage may be celebrated in our church without pre-marital counseling sessions with the pastor. There will be a minimum of three pre-marital counseling sessions. *No dates will be confirmed until after the first session of such counseling.* At these conferences the pastor will talk over with you your plans for your wedding and for your life together. You will be asked to take the Prepare/Enrich Pre-marital inventory. This will allow the pastor to get to know you faster and help guide our pre-marital counseling sessions. The pastor will seek to aid you to begin a relationship that will be your joy for life. Arrange for these conferences now for they must be completed before the wedding.

The Rehearsal

The rehearsal will usually take place the evening before the wedding. Wedding etiquette, for the most part, is a secular tradition. It is flexible. You may plan your wedding in any way you wish to express Christian love and faithfulness. Our Lutheran liturgical practice will guide us as we prepare for worship. Arrangements for the time of the rehearsal are made with the pastor at the time the wedding date is set. It is up to you to be sure that all other participants are present at the designated time. **Promptness** and attendance on the part of all members of the wedding party is essential. The pastor or the organist sometimes has other engagements before or following the rehearsal. Sometimes you have a schedule to meet for the rehearsal party. Details for a small or informal wedding can often be arranged without a formal rehearsal.

Wedding Coordinator

First Lutheran Church is proud to provide a wedding coordinator. The coordinator assists the pastor during the rehearsal and assists the wedding party the day of your ceremony. The coordinator will assure that your wedding day will go smoothly.

The Organist

If you desire music at your wedding, it is your responsibility to contact the Director of Music of First Lutheran after the first counseling session with the pastor. If the Director of Music cannot play the organ for your wedding, First Lutheran has a supply of organists. ***All music and any alternate organist must be approved by the Director of Music one month prior to your wedding.***

Dressing Room

The bride and her attendants may use the nursery as a dressing room. The groom and ushers use the upstairs classroom designated by the pastor.

WARNING!

The wedding party should ***never*** leave purses and other valuables unattended at any time in the church. We do not have a way of knowing who was invited to your wedding. Even both families do not know each other! Security is difficult.

Smoking and Alcohol

First Lutheran Church has a ***No Smoking*** and a ***No Alcohol*** policy in all church buildings and on surrounding church grounds. Thank you for your co-operation!

Reception at the Church

Receptions may be held at First Lutheran Church in Rice Hall upon request. Please see the attached fee schedule for cost. The Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA) are willing to provide serving assistance and simple catering service. Please contact the Kitchen Ministry Team to make arrangements. The cost to members is the actual cost of the supplies and a donation to the WELCA. If you desire to make other arrangements, the Kitchen Ministry Team must be consulted, and their approval given.

Please Note: Rice Hall is part of our church buildings, so smoking and alcohol are prohibited.

Custodian

A fee shall be given to the custodian for the extra work entailed in the opening and closing of the building and in cleaning up after the wedding. An additional fee is to be given the custodian if a reception is held in Rice Hall. Receptions must be completed by 10:00 p.m.

Wedding Gifts

Wedding gifts brought to the church should either be placed in the Bride's room where the ushers can see that they are undisturbed or placed in the reception hall (if used). If wedding gifts are taken to the reception hall, the bride and groom should assign someone to be there so the gifts are not left unattended. (If the Lutheran Church Women cater, they can care for this). The gifts are the property of the bride and groom. The church cannot assume responsibility for them.

Flowers and Decorations

If it is the desire of the couple, flowers may be placed on the altar for the wedding service. ***All flowers on the altar and in the chancel must be real, in other words, no artificial flowers on the altar or in the chancel.*** It is the responsibility of the couple or the florist they use to pick up and return the liners for the altar vases. Flowers would generally be removed after the service. We do not recommend the placement of floral baskets around the altar or stairs as they impede the movement of the wedding party. It is understood that ***NO*** decoration will be placed on the altar or chancel furnishings, including the candelabras. Decorations may be placed on the pews. The use of tape in hanging decorations is prohibited as it can damage the wood. (Additional information can be found on page five (5) of this booklet.)

Aisle Runner

The use of an aisle cloth or runner dates to secular traditions. As our sanctuary is carpeted and most of the commercially available runners are thin paper/plastic mixtures, and due to the growing number of lawsuits, ***we no longer permit the use of an aisle cloth.***

Rice and Bird Seed

The throwing of rice, and later bird seed, is an old form of a fertility blessing. Though enjoyed by the wedding guests, it has become a perplexing problem for the church. In the past decade a growing number of lawsuits have been entered and won by wedding guests who fell on the seeds or rice. In view of this reality and the secular origin, *neither* rice or bird seed may be thrown at the church.

Fees

The pastor will discuss and confirm all fees with you during pre-marital counseling. A schedule of fees can be found on page (8) of this book. For members of First Lutheran there are no fees for the use of the sanctuary or building. Your regular giving to the church maintains the building. A gift to the church in thanksgiving is appropriate. Please see the fee schedule for the appropriate fees for the organist and custodian as this is work beyond their regular duty. As a member, you are encouraged to remember the pastor with a gift.

For persons who are not members of First Lutheran the pastor will discuss and confirm the fees necessary for the use of the building and those participating.

All fees are payable to the church at the final pre-marital counseling session.

Paraments and Furnishings

The colors of the paraments used on the altar, lectern, and pulpit are the liturgical colors for the season of the Church Year and are not changed for particular individual services such as weddings, and funerals. All furnishings in the sanctuary (i.e. baptismal font) may not be moved.

Wedding License

No wedding will take place without a valid Wedding License. Your license is good for 60 days and should be given to the pastor for safe keeping no later than the last pre-marital counseling session.

Video Taping and Photography

All video taping must be done from the back of the sanctuary. First Lutheran Church offers this service for a reasonable fee. Only First Lutheran Church personnel may use the church's equipment and only First Lutheran Church equipment can plug directly into the church's sound system.

No flash photographs are permitted during the wedding ceremony. All photographers must meet with the pastor prior to the wedding.

Guidelines for a Christian Wedding

1. *Music shall reflect the spirit of devotion to the Lord.* Secular music is not appropriate during any worship service. Remember that your wedding is a service of Praise to God.
2. *No flash photographs* are to be taken in the sanctuary once the service starts. Please inform your photographer of this policy as you make your arrangements. All pre-service pictures in the sanctuary should be finished no later than forty-five minutes prior to the hour of the wedding. The photographer should check with pastor before the service. *Flash pictures snapped during the wedding service are absolutely not permitted.* (Tell your ushers to inform guests with cameras of this rule.) We are here to worship God, not to be distracted by flash or by persons moving around to get pictures. Furthermore, flash pictures distort any videotapes being made.
3. It is customary for worshippers to remain seated until dismissed by the ushers, the bride and groom, or as directed by the Pastor.
4. The marriage license should be given to the Pastor and all fees paid at the last pre-marital counseling session.
5. Our Church is worshipful and reverent and does not need elaborate decorations or flowers. Any decoration in the church will be done only after consultation with the Altar Guild. A kneeling bench is provided by the church. The Church provides vases for the Altar and these are the only ones to be used. Arrangements for the use of these vases should be made with the Altar Guild. **NO** decorations are to be placed on the Altar or Chancel ornaments -- especially the Altar candelabras. In the use of floral displays, the flowers on the Altar take precedence to any other flowers. Other flowers may be placed only if the Altar vases are first filled. The florist must have the flowers and runner (if one is used) in place prior to the beginning of the music. Florists arriving after that time will be refused.
6. The colors of the paraments used on the altar, lectern, and pulpit are the liturgical colors for the season of the Church Year and are not changed for particular individual services such as weddings, and funerals. All furnishings in the sanctuary may not be moved.
7. Bulletins providing names of participants, musical selections, and other appropriate information may be prepared for presentation to your guests. Arrangements may be made with the office. Please see fee schedule for pricing.

Suggested Hymns, Psalms and Scripture Readings

Suggested hymns and psalms are listed:

“O Perfect Love” (LBW 287)
“Hear Us Now, Our God & Father” (LBW 288)
“Heavenly Father, Hear Our Prayer” (LBW 289)
“Eternal God, Before Your Throne” (LBW 354)
“Deck Thyself with Joy and Gladness” (LBW 224)
“Our Father, by Whose Name all Fatherhood is Known” (LBW 357)

Suggested Old Testament readings:

<i>Genesis 1:26-31</i>	<i>Male and female created by God</i>
<i>Genesis 2:18-24</i>	<i>God creates man and woman</i>
<i>Song of Solomon 2:10-13</i>	<i>Love in the spring</i>
<i>Song of Solomon 8:7</i>	<i>Unquenchable love</i>
<i>Isaiah 63:7-9</i>	<i>The steadfast love of God</i>
<i>Ecclesiastes 4:9-12</i>	<i>A threefold cord is not easily broken</i>

Suggested Psalms: 33, 100, 117, 127, 128, 136, 150.

Suggested Second Lessons:

<i>Romans 12:1-2</i>	<i>A living offering</i>
<i>1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13</i>	<i>A hymn of divine love</i>
<i>Ephesians 5:21-33</i>	<i>Marriage and the church</i>

Suggested Gospel Lessons:

<i>Matthew 19:4-6</i>	<i>Faithfulness in marriage</i>
<i>John 2:1-10</i>	<i>The wedding at Cana</i>

Wedding Promises

(Please choose one)

1. I,(N) take you, (N) to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.
2. I,(N) take you, (N) to be my wife/husband, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with 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 worst of what is to come until death parts us.
3. I,(N), take you, (N) to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and(these witnesses) (or this congregation) to be your faithful husband/wife, 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.
4. I, (N), give myself to you, (N). By the grace of God, I promise to support and care for you. In the love of Christ, I promise to love and cherish you. With the Spirit's help, I promise to be faithful to you, as long as we both shall live.
5. (N), I take you to be my wife/husband from this time 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 with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Non-Member</i>
Pastor	Donation	\$300
Organist	\$100	\$150
Custodian	\$75	\$100
Sanctuary	n/a	\$200
Rice Hall	n/a	\$200
Rice Hall Deposit**	\$200	\$200
Bulletins	Cost + \$35 printing	Cost + \$70 printing
DVD	\$75	\$125
Women of the Church*	Donation	\$100

Stipulations:

All fees must be paid to the church one week prior to the rehearsal.

The counseling sessions with the pastor are mandatory.

It is expected that a couple be active members of the congregation and worship with us at least three times prior to the wedding.

Unless special permission is given by the Pastor and the Congregational Council, a pastor of First Lutheran will participate and direct the wedding service.

The organist and Pastor of First Lutheran will designate or approve any other organists to lead the wedding service.

* Women of the Church only apply if they are catering your reception at the church.

** Rice Hall deposit is refunded upon satisfactory inspection of facilities by church office staff after your reception.