

## **Information and Policy Regarding Use of Church Facilities for Weddings**

1. **MEMBERSHIP** – Weddings at St. Mark's Lutheran Church are performed for couples where at least one is a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. Where an individual or couple has not been attending for the last two years, the Pastor will speak with them regarding updating their membership. Any exceptions must have explicit permission of the Church Council and Pastors of St. Mark's.
2. **RESERVING THE CHURCH FACILITIES** – Reservations for the church and all other arrangements should be made with the church office well in advance of the ceremony but no later than one month. This will insure sufficient time to meet counseling requirements.
3. **SETTING THE DATE** – No weddings will be scheduled during the season of Lent or Holy Week, on July 4 weekend, during VBS (typically the third and fourth weekends of July), or on Labor Day, Thanksgiving, or the weekends in December preceding Christmas.
4. **PRESIDING PASTOR** – Pastors presiding at marriages shall normally be pastors of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. The Senior Pastor must approve any exceptions.
5. **PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING** – All weddings will be preceded by at least six hours of counseling with the pastor. An additional visit may be needed. The sessions are designed to include discussion of the wedding service, initial arrangements, personality and/or relationship inventories, communication patterns, conflict resolution and other issues.
6. **MUSICIANS** – Live music shall normally be performed by musicians of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, including organ, piano and contemporary musicians. The presiding Pastor at the wedding must approve any arrangements to the contrary.
7. **ORDER OF WORSHIP** – The order of worship for weddings comes from the Lutheran Book of Worship, with exceptions as tradition allows.
8. **WEDDING MUSIC** – Remembering that a wedding is a worship service the music, both vocal and instrumental, should be of the type that embodies high standards of quality, and in general, should reflect the praise of God, God's steadfast love in Christ as the foundation of and model for marriage, and the asking of God's presence and blessing. Please check with the Director of Music and pastor before picking out music. All music is subject to the approval of the Director of Music and the Pastor presiding at the wedding, at least one week prior to the wedding and before printing the wedding folder. If an instrumentalist or vocalist is desired, this should also be discussed and approved with the Director of Music who can provide gifted individuals from the congregation to help in this capacity.
9. **DECORATION** – Any decorations and floral arrangements should be checked with the Pastor or authorized persons from St. Mark's for appropriate placement and suitability for church use. If the florist puts candelabras on pews, these should be removed by the florist or by family members after the wedding. Also, any florist tape should be used when tape is needed to place decorations or floral arrangements on pews or other church furniture.

10. PHOTOGRAPHY – No flash pictures are permitted in the sanctuary following the procession and prior to the recessional while the people are present for worship, except by a professional photographer after consulting with the Pastor. (We suggest this be printed in the wedding bulletin.)
11. VIDEO TAPING – Video taping is permitted after consulting with the Pastor as to the location from which to video tape.
12. CANDLE LIGHTERS AND USHERS – Candle lighters or ushers should meet with the Pastor during the rehearsal for instructions.
13. POST CEREMONY CELEBRATION – Rice and puffed rice should not be thrown in the church or on church grounds. Birdseed, bubbles, etc. are permitted only when distributed outside after the wedding.
14. FURNITURE – Any furniture, chairs, tables, etc., which have been moved should be put back into their place directly after the wedding by family or friends. Custodians will take care of clean up.
15. WEDDING BULLETINS/PROGRAMS – Wedding Bulletins, whether printed by the church office or elsewhere, must be submitted three weeks prior to the printing for approval.
16. SMOKING AND DRINKING – No rehearsal or wedding will be conducted when members of the wedding party are intoxicated. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church grounds before, during or following the rehearsal and ceremony. The church is a smoke free environment.
17. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION – Active member\* contribution of \$725 includes the Pastor, organist, wedding coordinator and custodian. There is a \$700 fee for a reception in the fellowship hall. The contribution is payable no later than one month prior to the wedding. Checks should be made payable to St. Mark's and sent to the attention of the Financial Administrator. Be sure to note the bride's and groom's names and the date of the wedding on the check.  
  
\*An active member is one who has officially joined the church and worships frequently, receives the sacrament of Holy Communion regularly, and shows their commitment by generously sharing time, talent, and treasure.
18. MARRIAGE LICENSE – The Couple must secure a Marriage License from the County courthouse no later than three days prior to the wedding date. Please bring the license along to the rehearsal and give it to the wedding coordinator. A copy of the marriage certificate will be left with the church and another given to the couple. The original will be sent in by the church to the County Courthouse.
19. CELL PHONES – No cell phone calls shall be permitted during the rehearsal or wedding. Please ask the wedding party and family to turn off all cell phones or set them to vibrate.