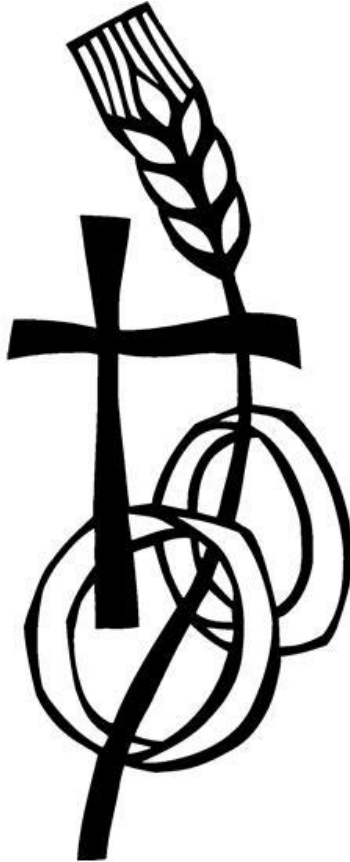


Pilgrim Lutheran Church

Wedding Planning Handbook



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Ministry to All in the Heart of Superior

Congratulations! Your wedding is one of the greatest events of life. The scriptures tell us, *“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God! Whoever does not love, does not know God, for God is love...Beloved since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another!”* 1 John 4:7-8, 11

We pray and wish you joy and blessings as you begin your lives together. We also want to help make this day a real celebration of your love for one another.

This handbook contains the policies and procedures for weddings here at Pilgrim Lutheran Church. Please read through this document closely and bring any questions or concerns you may have to the pastor at any time.

Blessings to you both as you begin the process of planning your wedding. Know that you are in our prayers during this time.



Some Basic Considerations

First and foremost, the emphasis of a Christian wedding is on the presence of God in this important time of commitment. Lutheran Christians understand marriage in two ways: On the one hand, marriage is God's gift. God intends to bring strength and joy to those who enter into marriage and, through marriage, to promote the well-being of the whole human family. On the other hand, marriage is a human estate. Two people make vows to each other, which are publicly witnessed, and society recognizes their status as legally married. In the Order for Marriage which takes place in our church, the Christian assembly surrounds those who enter into this human estate with the gifts of the presence and support of the Christian community, the promise of God's word proclaimed from scripture, and prayers of blessing and intercession.

The wedding is, first and foremost, a worship service. The music, prayers, and actions focus on the worship of God and the celebration of God's love.

Second, the wedding is a worship service for the people. Even private weddings are really a public event in the sense that all worship services are open to all the people of God. That said, it is useful to remember that the only audience is God. All others are participants with some kind of role to play. All are here to worship. All are here to witness. All are here to pray, to acknowledge your marriage, and to extend God's blessing on your life together.

Third, the wedding is a service of celebration. As we celebrate your marriage and God's presence, we give thanks that God has given you to one another. We celebrate and thank God for all the friends and family who will be with you on that day and for the joy you will be sharing.

Expectations

We want you to have a clear understanding of what you can expect from Pilgrim Lutheran Church, and what we expect from you. Here are some things to remember:

1. **Make wedding arrangements at least 90 days in advance.**

It is your responsibility to confirm the availability of the pastor and the church on your anticipated date. Please note that weddings are not typically scheduled for Holy Week, Easter Sunday, Christmas Eve, or Christmas Day.

The date you choose for your wedding is picked for your special reasons. Please remember that your date occurs during a particular time and season of the church year. Our sanctuary will have various banners and paraments in use that depict these realities. Because your wedding takes place in the midst of the life of our church, the banners and paraments will reflect the time of the year and cannot be changed.

2. **Considerations regarding alcohol and drugs**

Participants in the wedding must be sober and may not be under the influence of any drug. The pastor will stop a rehearsal or wedding if participants appear to be under the influence.

3. **Pre-marital counseling is an important aspect of wedding preparation.**

If you do not live in the immediate area, counseling may be done with another pastor with the approval of the pastor at Pilgrim Lutheran Church. A letter from that pastor is required to verify the counseling. Other options for pre-marital work may be discussed with the pastor. There may be a fee involved for the pre-marital coursework.

4. **Pilgrim Lutheran Church's Pastor(s) officiate all weddings at Pilgrim Lutheran Church.** Another ELCA pastor (or pastor from one of our full-communion partners)

may officiate if prior arrangements have been made with Pilgrim's pastor. Pastors from denominations not in full-communion agreements with the ELCA may assist at the service with the approval of Pilgrim's pastor. The possibility of participation by visiting clergy should be discussed well in advance of the ceremony.

Couples often desire that the pastor participate in leading prayer at rehearsal dinners, receptions, etc. You should not feel obligated to extend an invitation to the pastor for these events; but be sure to do so well in advance if you desire their participation.

5. **The pastor will conduct the wedding rehearsal.** Please make sure the wedding party arrives early so that the rehearsal starts on time. A typical rehearsal will last one hour. The rehearsal typically is scheduled for the evening before the wedding. Occasionally the pastor's schedule requires an earlier rehearsal. In addition to the pastor being present, the following are asked to attend: the bride, groom, all attendants, ushers, and parents.
6. **Candles and candelabra.** We use wax candles at Pilgrim and have several options available for your wedding. If you'd like to use the aisle candles, please let us know well in advance and note that there may be an additional cost for these candles.
7. **Please use silk or artificial flowers** in the basket for the flower bearers. Real flower petals will leave a stain.
8. **Holy Communion** may be celebrated during the Rite of Marriage but is not necessary. Be sure to ask the pastor for more information.
9. **Organ, piano, and musicians.** An organ and grand piano are available for the ceremony. *The Music Minister at Pilgrim will play for all weddings at the church.* Other musicians may play, but only after permission has been

secured from the music minister and pastor in charge of the wedding. It is your responsibility to contact the Music Minister, which should be done as far in advance as possible. Your active participation in planning the music for your wedding is encouraged and welcomed. The Music Minister will make arrangements to meet with couples and play pieces to help you select processional and recessional music.

10. **Music is an important part of the wedding ceremony.** The music for your wedding should be limited to music that is appropriate for a house of worship. If you have a soloist or choose to play a song through our sound system, the lyrics must be approved by our pastor and music minister.
11. **Our sound system** can accommodate pre-recorded music. If you choose to use pre-recorded music, it is your responsibility to provide necessary information to our Sound Technician well in advance of the service.
12. **Please deliver your marriage license** to the church office by the Monday prior to your wedding.
13. **Please do not bring or leave items** for your wedding or reception to the church earlier than the day of your rehearsal, as the church is used by many groups from around the community every week. Clean up after yourself and be sure to remove all of your things after the wedding. Pilgrim Lutheran Church cannot assume responsibility for any items left at the church.
14. **We ask that guests avoid throwing things (i.e. birdseed, rice) as the couple leaves the church building.**
15. **Decorations in the sanctuary** (i.e. bows, flowers, etc.) must be attached without using tacks or nails. Please consult with our pastor before decorating in the sanctuary.

The Reception

Receptions may be held at the church in the Fellowship Hall. A member of Pilgrim Lutheran Church People will work with you advising on the arrangements for the reception area and personnel needed, plus food and serving policy. Your reservation of the hall is secured by payment of the damage deposit, which will be refunded after the wedding (damages or extra cleaning charges will be deducted as necessary).

Building Use

While initial inquiries may be made by phone or email, wedding dates will normally not be confirmed until the initial meeting with the pastor.

Rooms are available for bridal parties to dress. You may also bring items from home such as mirrors, etc. Please designate someone to clean the dressing rooms and see that things are not forgotten.

Smoking is not permitted in the building or near the entrances.

Fees

A breakdown of fees for using Pilgrim Lutheran Church for your wedding is available. Payment is required in full by the Monday before your wedding. Fees for the Custodian, Music Minister, Pastor, and other musicians are to be individual checks made payable to those individuals.

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We are excited to be a part of this amazing day in your lives! Our hope is that the planning process for your wedding is as stress-free as possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to talk to our pastor. May God bless you as you begin this new journey in life together.

