

# TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

## Wedding Information Booklet

A Christian wedding is the corporate or congregational worship of all those gathered to thank and praise, pray and implore God's blessing with you upon your marriage. Strange as this may sound at first, it means that your wedding is not for you alone. Those who come to share your joy have an important part to play as well. Those who come should not come as spectators, but as worshippers and participants in the marriage service. By emphasizing the congregational nature of the Christian wedding, you will be helping those who come to share your joy, play their most effective part.

The Christian wedding is a public act of the Church. The Church has the responsibility to see that the service is carried out in a reverent, dignified manner. Furthermore, the Church has the responsibility to see that the wedding service is in harmony with the principles of Christian worship - that it is directed first of all to God, and that it is centered in Christ.

The Christian wedding draws all present into active participation through prayer, praise and thanksgiving to God. Several ways of doing this will be suggested in the course of this booklet. You may not want to utilize all of them. But as you plan your wedding service, you will want to be sure that all those gathering with you around the Lord's altar have opportunity to participate actively in the common worship. One of the best ways to realize the strength and support of the Holy Christian Church at the time of your wedding is to emphasize the corporate, congregational character of Christian worship through the active participation of all those present.

What follows are descriptions of specific facets of planning for your wedding. *Please read each section carefully - if you have any specific questions, please write them down and share them with the pastor for clarification.*

## **PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING**

You will be expected to meet with the pastor at least three or four times prior to your wedding. These sessions will focus on answering questions about your wedding service, building a relationship between you and the pastor and discussing those things essential to a good marriage.

To facilitate those discussions you will be asked to choose among a number of options that will serve as the basis for your "pre-marital counseling." These include an inventory (the cost of which is \$25.00 and can be paid for in either cash or a check made out to Trinity Lutheran Church and is due on the day you take the inventory); a video/worksheet package you can complete at home; or a series of communication worksheets to be finished at home and discussed with the pastor.

Appointments for these pre-marital sessions can be made directly with the pastor (949-2510).

## **MUSIC FOR THE CHRISTIAN WEDDING**

Care should be taken to select music, which supports, reinforces and celebrates the worshipful setting of your wedding service. The church organist can be of great assistance to you in choosing the music for your wedding. Some specific thoughts on music are as follows:

- 1) When thinking of musical selection, there are two criteria, which will be helpful to you in the process:
  - a) Musical - this asks whether or not the musical piece under consideration is technically, aesthetically and expressively good. There is good music for weddings in a variety of styles, tastes or personal preferences.
  - b) Liturgical - this asks whether the music, especially the words, is appropriate to a service of worship. Keep in mind that

the music used at your wedding falls within the liturgy of the service and must enhance and not disrupt the worship setting.

**2)** It is *very appropriate*, if not encouraged, to use congregational hymns as part your wedding service. The singing of hymns by the congregation can be an excellent way of helping those assembled share in the thanks, praise, and invoking of God's blessing upon your marriage.

**a)** Hymns may be sung at a number of appropriate places in the service. Hymns can be used for both processional and recessional music. Ask the pastor for help in placing hymns within the marriage service.

**b)** Hymns may be sung from the E found in the pew racks or may be printed in the bulletin for congregational use.

**3)** It is your responsibility to choose and make arrangements with those individuals providing special vocal music. Soloists/duets/groups are welcome to bring a message in song. In addition, you are encouraged to consider the use of trumpets, flutes, violins, and similar instruments to provide a unique note of joyful celebration. Good guitar music can also bring a special expression to your wedding service. *If you do not know of musicians whom you could invite, the pastor or the church organist can provide the names of competent people. Please check with either of them for assistance.*

**4)** It is Trinity's policy that our church organist will be used at your wedding.

**5)** The church organist will be happy to meet with you and your vocal/instrumental musicians for the purposes of planning and practicing. Such times should be coordinated directly with the church organist.

## PICTURES

Wedding pictures may be taken either before or after your service. No pictures, however, are to be taken during the service itself - if your photographer is capable of taking time-exposed shots from the rear of the church, that is fine and acceptable. The responsibility to retain a photographer is yours - the pastor can, however, recommend someone if you so desire. If pictures are taken before the service, *the pictures must be finished at least one-half hour prior to the service time.*

## WEDDING LICENSE

The marriage service cannot begin until the marriage license is in the hands of the officiating pastor. Plan to get your license well in advance of your wedding day. Licenses are valid for one month from the date of application. The marriage license can be obtained from the County Clerk's office of the county where the bride resides.

## USHERS

It is recommended that for weddings up to 100 guests two ushers be used. For those exceeding 100 guests it is suggested that three or four ushers be used. Because of our spacious narthex, guests (who are usually familiar with one another) tend to congregate in the narthex for conversation and your ushers will need to encourage people to find seating in the sanctuary. It is appropriate to use groomsmen as ushers.

## RICE AND CONFETTI AND BIRD SEED

Throwing of rice, confetti, or birdseed is prohibited in the worship area, the narthex or anywhere on the church grounds. Please inform your family and friends. Thank you.

## [AISLE RUNNER](#)

The use of an aisle runner is prohibited. They are difficult to walk on and pose a definite hazard to both wedding party and guests.

## [RECORDING YOUR MARRIAGE SERVICE](#)

A DVD recording of your wedding can be taken with Trinity's in-house video system. Please speak to the pastor or Rhonda to make these arrangements. Trinity has a multiple-camera set up that will make a wonderful recording. If you'd like someone from the church's trained staff to record your wedding, the cost is an extra \$100 or \$110 if Trinity supplies the tape.

## [CLERGY](#)

If either of you have a meaningful relationship with another pastor or priest and wish to invite them to participate in the service, please discuss this with Trinity's pastor. The pastor would appreciate knowing your plans early so the proper invitation may be sent to the pastor/priest in question. Trinity's pastor will serve as the officiant for the service and the guest pastor/priest will serve as the assisting minister.

## [FEES](#)

For weddings of ***non-Trinity members***, a total fee package of \$1,000.00 is payable to Trinity Lutheran Church *in advance of the wedding*. This fee includes the use of the church sanctuary, parlor and double classroom, the organist, the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal and the wedding, the custodial work involved, the use of the church's unity candelabra, all pre-marital counseling sessions, and an honorarium for the pastor.

For weddings of ***Trinity members***, a total fee package of \$500 is payable to Trinity Lutheran Church *in advance of the wedding*. This includes the organist , custodial work and the wedding coordinator. **Members of Trinity are urged to consider a suggested honorarium of \$200 for the pastor.**

### **ALCOHOL POLICY**

The use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted on church grounds or in the church building. Any member of the wedding party using alcohol or showing the effects of use will not be permitted to participate in the wedding. It is appropriate that the pastor may refuse to conduct the wedding if there is abuse of this policy.

### **RESERVING YOUR WEDDING DATE**

Members of Trinity may reserve a wedding date at any time with a \$100 deposit. Non-members can reserve a wedding date one-year prior to their wedding date with a \$150 deposit. This enables members of the congregational priority for dates.

### **GENERAL THOUGHTS**

Make your service as uniquely yours as possible within the context of the worship setting.

Involve the congregation (guests and family) as much as possible, using congregational hymns, litanies and prayers.

Service folders/bulletins can be effective in keeping the congregation informed as to the order of worship. They can provide the space for printing hymns, litanies and prayers. Wedding folders/bulletins are available through local print shops or through church publishing houses.

## OUTLINE OF WEDDING SERVICE

You may wish to "customize" your own service. The following outline is provided to assist you in that process. The sections that are italicized and asterisked are not necessary to the marriage service while those in normal print are considered essential elements of the marriage service:

**Processional** - Most groomsmen and bridesmaids enter as couples. The groom and the bride are encouraged to enter with both parents. Either a musical selection or a congregational hymn would accompany the bridal party into the sanctuary.

*\*Greeting - A welcome to the congregation on behalf of the bride and groom. The welcome can be given by the pastor or anyone else of your choosing.*

**Invocation** - The opening call to worship, it begins all services of the Church and any special liturgies.

**Opening Prayer** - Prayed by either the pastor or another person selected by the bride and groom.

*\*Responsive Litany - Either a special reading or a Psalm that is read responsively by the congregation and the pastor. Psalms are found in the Lutheran Book of Worship.*

**Scripture Readings** - Two or more selections of scripture are normally chosen and may be read by the pastor, individuals chosen by the bride and groom or corporately by the congregation. The following are some suggestions:

## Old Testament Readings

Genesis 1:26-31  
Genesis 2:18-24  
Song of Solomon 2:8-17  
Song of Solomon 8:7  
Isaiah 40:31  
Isaiah 63:7-9  
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-9  
Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a

## New Testament Readings

Romans 12:1-2  
I Corinthians 12:31-13:13  
Ephesians 5:21-33  
Matthew 19:4-6  
John 2:1-10  
I Corinthians 11:11-12  
I John 4:7-21  
John 15:9-12  
Colossians 3:12-17  
Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39  
Matthew 5:1-12a  
Matthew 22:35-40  
John 15:12-16

*\*Homily - A short sermonette of no more than three to five minutes in length; given by the pastor; reflecting on either the scriptures chosen or the themes of marriage.*

**The Invitation** - "The Lord God in his goodness created mankind male and female and by the gift of marriage has founded human community in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come."

**Promises of Commitment** - "N/N, do you accept N/N as your wife/husband; to live together sharing God's love and grace? Will you try to always love her/him; comfort her/him; understand her/him during discouraging times and joyful times; and commit yourself to her/him as long as both of you are alive?"

Response: "I will/I do"

*\*Parental Blessing - Replaces the antiquated "who gives this bride to be married;" this option allows the parents of the wedding couple to participate in a meaningful way in the service.*

**Marriage Vows** - The central part of the wedding liturgy focuses on the meaningful exchange of promises and commitments made to one another by the bride and groom. They are best written individually by the bride and groom so as to express the personal depth and meaning of the relationship. It is also preferable that the vows are said to one another and *not repeated after the pastor*. If you need help in writing vows, you may choose any of the following; compose new vows by using segments of the following; or by having the bride choose one and the groom another:

1) "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 you with my whole life and my whole being."

2) "I take you, N, to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and these witnesses 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."

3) "I 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 the worst of what is to come as long as we live."

4) "I, N, take you, N, for my wife/husband; for what you are now and for what we will become together. I promise to be understanding, thoughtful and forgiving and I will give you my love and trust as long as I live."

5) "I promise, with God's help, to be your faithful husband/wife; to love you and to work with you in establishing a life of love, mutual dependency, honesty, respect, forgiveness and trust."

6) "N, I am willing to commit myself to you in love, acceptance, understanding and forgiveness. I will try to be sensitive to your needs, I will try to give you my best so that you may be your best, and I will try to respect and honor you as a person at all times."

**Exchange of Rings** - Each person exchanges a ring as a symbol of their commitment to the other with the words, "*Accept this ring as a sign of my love and commitment*". This is a very good time for the lighting of a unity candle. A musical piece should be featured during the lighting of the unity candle to provide a special backdrop to the symbolism of lighting one candle.

**Prayer/Prayers** - You may write your own or ask others to write them. You or anyone you choose (as well as the pastor) may pray at this time.

**Lord's Prayer** - Either sung by musician(s) or the congregation or said by the congregation.

**Pronouncement of Marriage** - Spoken by the pastor, this is the public affirmation that you have been joined together in marriage.

**Wedding Blessing/Benediction** - Said by pastor.

*\*Presentation of Couple - You may be presented to the congregation as either "Mr. and Mrs. N" or as "N and N, husband and wife."*

**Recessional** - As with the processional, this music can be instrumental, a vocal, or a congregational hymn.

(Note: It is also possible to celebrate Holy Communion as a part of your wedding service. In that case, the appropriate communion liturgy is inserted into the wedding liturgy. *Communion must be open communion, that is, all present must be invited to receive the sacrament!*)

If you have any questions, thoughts, concerns or ideas that you'd like to talk about with either the pastor or the organist, please feel free to contact them. They are eager to assist you in making your wedding service a uniquely meaningful event in your life.

***God bless you in your new life together!***

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*God bless you in your new life together!*



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