

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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WEDDING CUSTOMARY

We rejoice with you in your decision to enter into the commitment of marriage. The church believes that marriage is a gift of God whereby we enter more fully into our relationship to Christ by sharing our life with another person. Therefore, it is to be entered into prayerfully and with careful preparation. In this same spirit, the marriage ceremony is to be understood as an expression of Christian worship, a celebration for what God is doing in your life and in the life of the church. The marriage ceremony is to be an extension of the regular ongoing worship life of the congregation and should therefore reflect our faith and praise of God.

PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

All couples planning to be married at St. John's must receive pre-marital counseling, to be completed no less than one month prior to their wedding date. (The member of the pastoral staff who will be presiding at the wedding ceremony may perform such counseling or at the pastor's discretion, the counseling is performed by another qualified individual, usually a professional counselor.) In such cases the person performing the counseling must, upon completion of the counseling, provide the pastor written verification that the counseling has taken place. In some extreme circumstances, upon the couple's completion of pre-marital counseling, the presiding pastor may determine that marriage is not advisable at the present time and that he, in good conscience, cannot perform the wedding until further in-depth counseling is sought by the couple. For this reason it is advisable to complete your pre-marital counseling early in the process of planning for your wedding.

Do we have to be members of St. John's in order to be married at St. John's? Because marriage is both a sacrament and a gift from God, we at St. John's expect that you will commit your lives to each other and to God and that you will actively worship with fellow believers.

How do we reserve a date for our wedding? Please phone the church office at 210-223-2611 at least **nine months** prior to your wedding to schedule appointments with a pastor and with the wedding coordinator. Once you have consulted with both a pastor and the wedding coordinator and your file is complete a date will be scheduled for your wedding. It is best to confirm your wedding date with St. John's prior to booking further wedding details.

Can we choose any date and time? Weddings cannot be scheduled during the following times of the church year: the weekend after Thanksgiving; December 1 through January 1; Lent; Holy Week; Easter; the first weekend of April; the week of Fiesta; and the week of Synod Assembly. All times are subject to availability of the church facilities. It is recommended that weddings be scheduled no later than 5:00 pm on Saturdays. Rehearsals may not be scheduled later than 5:00 pm on any day of the week.

What does the Wedding Coordinator do? The wedding coordinator will handle all communication between the wedding party and the church office. The coordinator is available for all questions related to the worship service. The coordinator is present for both the rehearsal and the worship service and is present to ensure a smooth worship service. If your reception is being held at St. John's all details for the reception are coordinated through the church office business manager.

Can we use flash photography in the service? The use of flash photography is strictly prohibited during the wedding ceremony. Photos may be taken up to two hours prior to the service and up to one half hour following the conclusion of the service. Please let the church know what time you will begin taking photographs before the service. Videography is permitted, but in an inconspicuous manner. Cameras are not permitted behind the communion rail or in front of the altar.

Who is responsible for our marriage license? The wedding party is responsible for obtaining the marriage license at least 72 hours prior to the wedding ceremony. Prior to the ceremony, the marriage license should be given to the presiding Pastor from St. John's. St. John's will record the license and forward it to the Court House. The Court House will then forward the license to the couple.

Can we use Aisle Candelabras? Aisle candelabras may be rented at the cost of \$50 for members and \$100 for non-members. The wedding party will supply the 10-inch candles.

Can we park at the church during our reception? If your reception is in the area and guests intend to leave their vehicles parked at the church an additional parking fee will be charged.

How long are we able to remain in the building? Wedding parties are permitted to arrive 2 1/2 hours prior to the start of the ceremony and are permitted to remain 30 minutes after the conclusion of the ceremony for pictures.

May we use silk flowers in the church? St. John's worships a living God, maker of all creation and therefore discourages the use of artificial flowers in worship.

Can we have a receiving line after our service? Receiving lines are discouraged for sake of time following the service.

Can we invite outside clergy to participate in our service? Guest pastors may be invited to assist in the worship service; however details should be discussed with the St. John's pastor who will preside over the service. The pastors of St. John's Lutheran Church have first right of refusal.

Service Folder The wedding party is responsible for developing and printing the service folder for the wedding service. A sample copy is available in the office or by email for reference. Please submit a copy of the service folder to the office for proof reading no later than 30 days prior to the date of the service. St. John's is able to provide the service of printing service folders at the cost of \$60. St. John's does not supply folder covers. If St. John's is printing the service folder, information must be submitted to the office no later than 90 days prior to the date of the wedding.

Can we throw rice in the church? The following are not allowed on St. John's property: birdseed, bubbles, rice, rose petals, and runners. Items in the sanctuary essential for worship, such as the baptismal font and the Christ Candle, may not be moved. There are no exceptions.

May we bring beverages to the church? Alcoholic beverages may be brought into the building only with permission from the church council. Requests must be submitted to the church council in writing no later than 90 days prior to the date of the wedding. It is inappropriate to arrive at the rehearsal or wedding under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

How do we select the music for our wedding? Three major musical elements are necessary in the wedding ceremony and include: Pre-service music, Processional, and Recessional. A consultation with the organist is included in the wedding fee. During the meeting with the organist you may bring suggestions of appropriate pieces and/or hymns for your wedding service. If you do not have suggestions the organist will play several pieces for you and will allow you to choose pieces you would like to use. To schedule a consultation with the organist, call the church office at 210-223-2611 no later than **eight weeks** prior to the wedding date. If you choose not to meet with the organist the following pieces will be played for your service: Pre-service music: Bach, Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring; Processional: Clarke, Trumpet Voluntary; and Recessional: Handel, Allegro Maestoso. It is at the discretion of the Minister of Music to determine the appropriateness of all music for the wedding service. The organist of St. John's Lutheran Church has first right of refusal.

Can we use secular music in our wedding? At St. John's we consider the wedding ceremony to be a sacred worship service. Secular music such as: Wagner's Bridal Chorus, Mendelssohn's Wedding March and music from popular idioms does not convey the spirit of a sacred worship service and are not used in services at St. John's.

Can we have a soloist and/ or instrumentalists in our wedding? It is the responsibility of the wedding party to book a soloist and/or instrumentalist if one is desired for the ceremony. The selections must be given to the organist at the time of the wedding consultation for approval. The soloist or instrumentalist is required to schedule a rehearsal with the organist. A fee of \$25 is added to the fee for the organist for any rehearsals with soloists and instrumentalists. Any additional rehearsal that is required with the soloists will be provided at the cost of \$25 per half hour or any part of a half hour.

Can we use recorded music? The use of recorded music in any form does not agree with St. John's vision of a worship service and is prohibited.

August 2007

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