

# *Wedding Guide*

**Fish Lake Lutheran Church**  
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# You're Getting Married at Fish Lake Lutheran Church!

## Congratulations!

We want to assist you in planning your wedding so that it is meaningful, purposeful, beautiful and memorable.

A wedding is, first and foremost, a worship service. In the very beginning, God made us male and female and ordained marriage as one form of continuing relationship.

Acknowledging that all you are and have is a gift from God, and that your ever-deepening relationship is blessed by God, you have a clearer vision of the deep meaning and purpose of the wedding service.

At Fish Lake Lutheran we believe God must be central to your marriage. God wants you to love one another as He has loved us. In John 15 we read these words: *"You did not choose me, I chose you"* and *"this is my commandment, that you love one another."* Jesus, our Lord, loved the Church (that is, the people, His followers) so much that He gave Himself totally and without reservation; He gave His very life. It is the ever growing giving of yourselves to each other that allows your love to reach out in acceptance and understanding. Your marriage in a worship setting is your acknowledgment that your love for each other is part of God's love for us.

God wants to live within your marriage relationship, enabling your love to grow deeper day by day for as long as you shall live.

With this understanding, you will want to plan your marriage ceremony in such a way that the worship service reflects the unity of your personalities as God's children, the Church is your recognition that here is where God's people come together to join you in asking for His blessing upon your marriage, and then thank Him for that blessing.

A Christian understanding of marriage performed in God's House suggests that the pastor demonstrate God's involvement in your marriage. Your marriage is not an island unto itself but a place where God works through the two of you and God must be at the center.

The members of your wedding party and marriage ceremony also have a very definite stake in your marriage.

10. No flash pictures are to be taken during the ceremony. Please inform your family, friends, and photographer of this policy. Remember to tell your wedding party what time to be here and ready for pictures. Pictures should be completed at least ½ hour before wedding time. Video and still cameras must be stationary. “Wandering” during the ceremony is disruptive and disrespectful.
11. No food or beverages are allowed at any time in the sanctuary.
12. There are absolutely no intoxicating beverages or illegal substances allowed on the church property. Our church building is smoke-free. If the pastor deems the behavior of any members of the wedding party as unacceptable, they will not be allowed to participate in the wedding. Smoking is permitted in the church parking lot only.
13. Rice may not be thrown either inside or outside the church building or on the church grounds. Outside the building, birdseed may be thrown or bubbles blown.

They are there to support and encourage you and to share in your joy. Your love for each other is an example of how we love one another and has tremendous influence on what others expect from their own marriage relationships.

In your wedding ceremony, you have the opportunity to share with others the deep love you have for one another. Use this opportunity to invite God and your family and friends to a service of joyful celebration and worship, sharing with all your special relationship to Jesus Christ through your special love relationship with each other.

May God richly bless you and your marriage with His special gift for a growing love for each other and for your Lord. May your wedding service reflect that special relationship.

### **Scheduling Your Wedding**

Weddings are officiated for **Active** and **Connected** members of Fish Lake Lutheran Church after satisfactory completion of three pre-marital counseling sessions with the pastor.

#### **Active members of Fish Lake Lutheran Church:**

- financially contribute to on-going local & global ministries, as well as towards the general maintenance and upkeep of the church facilities.
- attend worship at least on a quarterly basis.
- are involved in, or supportive of, a variety of ministry areas within the congregation in service and fellowship.
- include those who have been received as members at Fish Lake Lutheran Church at least six months prior to beginning their wedding planning.

#### **Connected persons of Fish Lake Lutheran Church:**

- are **immediate family** members of active members of Fish Lake Lutheran Church. *Immediate family* includes **children** and **grandchildren** of an active member of Fish Lake Lutheran.

All others are considered **non-members** of Fish Lake Lutheran Church. **Non-members** have no previous or current relationship with Fish Lake Lutheran, which means that non-member weddings are scheduled at the discretion of the pastor.

### **Wedding Fees**

Please refer to separate Fee Schedule.

## Pre-Marital Counseling

All wedding couples are required to attend *three* pre-marital counseling sessions with the pastor. Throughout these meetings you will be asked to discuss your relationship in terms of *Family, Friends, Finances & Faith*. Communication tools and techniques will be emphasized as well as the importance of being grounded in Christ as you enter into this blessed union by God. At one of these meetings you will also spend time planning and structuring the order of service with the pastor. We ask that prior to your meetings with the pastor you discuss together what scriptures, music, and vows you would like to use in your service. You can find suggestions later in this guidebook.

### Questions to expect during pre-marital sessions include:

1. How well do you know each other and how well are you suited for each other?
2. What does our love mean to us? How has our love been tested or challenged?
3. Are we ready to establish a home of our own? What expectations do we have of each other in home building? What will make our home a Christian home?
4. Do we have a sound spiritual foundation? Have we discussed our religious values and feelings? Do we attend church regularly together?
5. Are we emotionally, mentally, and physically ready for the full meaning of sex in our marriage?
6. Have we read over the marriage service? Are we ready to accept the marriage vows?
7. Why have we chosen to be married by a minister in a church?
8. What discussions do we need to continue before we are ready to make our marriage vows?

## Wedding Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal will be held on the **Thursday night prior to the wedding.**

842 O, Worship the King  
865 Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven  
From All That Dwell Below the Skies  
836 Joyful, Joyful

There are many wedding processions, recessions, hymns and vocal solos – space does not permit us to give you an entire list. Feel free to use others as well.

## Other Matters to Consider

1. If clergy other than Fish Lake's pastor are to participate, arrangements must first be made with Fish Lake's pastor.
2. The church seats 225 including the balcony. There are 13 pews on one side of the church and 11 on the other.
3. The length of the sanctuary aisle is 55 feet. Before deciding to use an aisle runner, please consider the following: *they are difficult to attach to the carpet, they wrinkle and bunch up when walked on (which could be a problem especially for those who already have difficulty walking), and the blue carpet is a beautiful background for a wedding gown.* The aisle runner is to be provided by the wedding party.
4. The church's Fellowship Hall is available for wedding receptions. Seating arrangements can be made for 125-200. It is suggested that you have a caterer prepare and serve your meal. Your caterer must be in contact with the wedding coordinator about the policy of the kitchen use.
5. The building areas available for use are the two dressing areas, the sanctuary and the narthex (gathering area). The areas that you are allowed to use for preparation must be left clean and neat.
6. Dressing, preparation and picture taking can begin no more than 3½ hours prior to your scheduled wedding time.
7. The altar is to contain the brass cross and candlesticks only; do not move these objects or remove them from the altar. Flower arrangements and other candles may be placed on stands at the sides of the altar. Roses to be presented to parents may be laid on the altar table. A live single flower in a bud vase may be placed on the altar table as a memorial.
8. Altar flowers may be left for Sunday service.
9. Do not put any type of tape on the pews (speak with the custodian/housekeeper). There are 6 pew candle stands. Each candle stand holds 3 candles ¾ inch in diameter. Use soft wire to attach decorations to the pew candle stand itself. Rubber bands work well and may be used to attach decorations to the ends of pews. Church provides candles at cost to the couple (*see fee schedule*).

expressive of God's love for you, your prayers for His blessing, and your praise and thanksgiving to Him for His gifts of life and love. Some music is clearly very suitable for this purpose, other music is just as clearly unsuitable, and some may be a matter of debate. One convenient guide is to ask yourself if the music would seem appropriate for a service of worship.

The family and friends gathered with you may participate in the service by singing hymns of praise and worship. In this way, they are able to share in the joy and blessing of this special day.

### **Suggested Wedding Processionals**

Trumpet Voluntary in D Major – Purcell  
Trumpet Tune – McCabe  
Trumpet Tune in D Major – Johnson  
Voluntary – Stanley  
Processional of Joy – Beethoven/Hopson  
Aria in F Major – Handel  
Arioso – Handel

### **Suggested Wedding Recessionals**

Allegro Maestoso (from the “Water Music”) – Handel  
Trumpet Tune – Purcell  
Trumpet Voluntary – Goodwin  
Psalm XIX – Marcello  
“God of Grace” – arr. Manz

### **Suggested Congregational Hymns**

*(The hymn numbers are from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship red hymnal)*

533 Open Now the Gates of Beauty  
    O Perfect Love (alternate tune: Welwyn)  
585 Hear Us Now  
631 Love Divine  
640 Our Father By Whose Name  
689 Praise and Thanksgiving  
502 The King of Love  
781 Children of the Heavenly Father  
800 Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart  
838 Beautiful Savior  
835 All Creatures of Our God and King  
839, 840 Now Thank We All Our God

## **The Wedding Service**

The message of worship and rejoicing that you wish to express through your marriage ceremony may be communicated in many ways. Here is an example of the order of service from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (red hymnal) found on pages 286-291.

### **A Marriage Celebration**

Prelude  
Solo/Hymn (optional)  
Processional  
Solo/Hymn (optional)  
Greeting and Prayer  
Scriptures  
    *Old Testament Scripture Reading*  
    *New Testament Scripture Reading*  
Meditation  
Solo (optional)  
Exchange of vows  
Exchange of rings  
Lighting of Unity Candle (optional)  
Solo/Hymn (optional)  
Blessing  
Prayers  
Lord's Prayer  
Benediction  
Presentation of the Couple  
Recessional  
Postlude

There are many options for the order of your marriage service and the elements included in it. Your pastor will help you make choices of scripture, music and service order to express your personalities, your relationship to each other and your relationship to God.

***You are also encouraged to consider celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Communion as part of your marriage service.*** As you are being united as one, Holy Communion also unites all the gathered family of God as one body—the Body of Christ. This can add a special feel to your service. Discuss this option with the pastor if you're interested.

### **Suggested Scriptures**

The pastor invites you to choose scripture meaningful to you to be included in the worship service. You may use the passages listed on this page, or choose other passages that are particularly meaningful to you. These suggestions are by no means exhaustive.

### Old Testament

Genesis 1:26-28  
Genesis 2:18-24  
Proverbs 31:10-31

### New Testament

Matthew 7:24-29  
Philippians 2:1-4  
Romans 15:5-6  
1 John 3:18-24  
1 Corinthians 13  
Ephesians 5:21-33  
Colossians 3:12-17

### The Wedding Vows

Any of the vows printed here are appropriate for expressing your commitment to each other during the service. Additional wedding promises are available from the pastor. If you wish to write your own vows or change the wording of existing vows, we ask you to discuss this with the pastor.

1. *I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.*
2. *I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, as my wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, 'til death do us part, according to God's Holy ordinance, and thereto I pledge you my faithfulness.*
3. *\_\_\_\_\_, 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 life together, to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being, as long as we both shall live.*
4. *I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, 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 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.*
5. *I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, 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 as we have been forgiven; 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 both shall live.*

### The Unity Candle

The lighting of the Unity Candle is a beautiful way to symbolize your unity as one through the marriage ceremony. The burning candle is also a reminder to you and your guests how important it is to keep the candle of love burning in your marriage. The following explanations can be added to your wedding bulletin to explain the significance of the candle lighting:

*The two outside candles have been lighted to represent our lives to this moment. They are two distinct lights, each capable of going their separate ways. To bring peace and happiness to our home, these lights must be merged. This is what the Lord meant when he said, "on this account shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one." From now on, our thoughts shall be for each other as well as for ourselves. Our plans, our joys, and our sorrows shall be shared. We each take a candle and together light the center candle to represent the union of ourselves into one flesh. As this one light cannot be divided, neither shall our lives be divided, but be a united testimony in a Christian home.*

**- or -**

*The two outside candles have been lighted to represent our lives to this moment; each capable of going their separate ways. As the center candle is lit, the single flame represents the union of ourselves and our lives into one flesh.*

If you choose to add this tradition to your wedding service, please bring your own (dripleless) candles. The unity candle itself must be no larger than 3 inches in the diameter including extra decorations near the base in order to fit in the church's unity candle stand, or you can provide your own holders which could have a special place in your new household.

### The Wedding Music

The selection of music for your wedding service should be made on consultation with the church organist and/or with the pastor. Plan to confer before you make any decisions or arrangements involving music or musicians. Please be sure your soloist knows that he or she will need two copies of the music if accompaniment is required.

Fish Lake Lutheran Church recommends that you choose wedding music which will enhance the reverent spirit of the occasion. The congregation is assembled at your wedding to join you in worshipping God and seeking His blessing upon your new home. Let the musical selections be