



## *St. Matthew Trinity Lutheran Church* **Wedding Policies**

The Church is God's house, a sacred place where Christian people gather regularly for worship. The wedding service is a special worship service in the church. Therefore, the Church Council and Pastor of St. Matthew Trinity Lutheran Church (SMT) have set forth these guidelines for weddings in order that each wedding performed is conducted with reverence and respect. This reflects the church's teachings and beliefs about Christian marriage. We ask that you honor these guidelines, so your wedding will be a memorable worship experience and a witness to Christ's presence among us.

### **Church Attendance**

The congregation of St. Matthew Trinity is the host of your wedding. It is our strong desire that you attend one worship service before the wedding ceremony so that you may be introduced to and welcomed by the congregation. The congregation will hold you its prayers on the Sunday before and after your wedding.

### **Scheduling**

Our church calendar takes precedence over any weddings that might be scheduled. The Lenten Season and Holy Week is the most solemn season of the Church year. Because of this solemn season, weddings are discouraged during this time of the year and will not be scheduled during Holy Week. In addition, weddings will not be scheduled Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. The bride and groom will meet with the Pastor of SMT three to four months in advance of the wedding to confirm the date, time of wedding service and rehearsal, and availability of the sanctuary. In order to ensure the couple planning to get married is aware of and has approved all preparations and changes, all arrangements are to be made by the bride and groom personally.

The staff and Pastor will not deal with any third party in making reservations or in planning a wedding. It is important those making the commitment also handle the details of the wedding personally. Too many misunderstandings can occur in dealing with parents, relatives, and wedding consultants.

### **Ceremony and the Pastor**

The form of the service and the vows to be exchanged are agreed up by the pastor and the couple before the rehearsal. If they choose to have Holy Communion as part of their wedding ceremony, the bride and groom may serve as communion assistants. Pastor must approve of any assisting pastor or outside clergy to be used. Marriage license and wedding rings should be brought to the rehearsal.

### **Rehearsal**

Wedding rehearsals are held the day before the wedding, should begin no later than 6 PM, and last approximately one hour. Everyone who is participating in the wedding should be there. The organist will also be present. Strict punctuality is necessary because rehearsals are often followed by other events or other engagements for the clergy and staff.

### **Photography and Video Recording**

Photography is permitted in the sanctuary prior to guest seating (one hour before the service) and after the worship service. NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY is permitted during the service.

Photography is permitted during the service from the balcony and the rear of the sanctuary. It should be inconspicuous and not interfere with the dignity of the service of marriage. Video equipment must be set up one hour prior to the service. After the service, pictures may be taken in the sanctuary. Please limit this time no more than 30 minutes. Family and friends should be instructed photography during the service is not allowed. Photography by guests distracts from both the purpose and the solemnity of the occasion. A wedding is a worship service and should be respected as such. It may be helpful to make a list of poses to be taken before and after the service for the photographer. This saves time. Pastor is happy to “recreate” any part of the service for a photo after the service.

### **Music**

All music used in the ceremony should be fitting for a worship service. Our church organist is highly qualified to recommend suitable music for the service. It is the policy of SMT that our organist be used for all weddings, unless other arrangements are discussed with the organist. All music used must be approved by the Pastor and the organist.

### **Decorating Flowers**

Flowers on the altar should be similar to those used in a Sunday worship service. Ribbons or flowers may be used at the ends of the pews in special holders available from florists. Flowers may be placed in the narthex or in the windows. Candle lighters and a processional cross are available for use. For safety reasons, runners are not allowed. Potted plants must be in waterproof containers. No flowerpots or containers should be placed directly on the floor or furniture. No nails, tape, tacks, putty or clamps may be used. No decorations on the walls, floor, or woodwork.

The colors used in our church are seasonal to the liturgical church year, therefore, no paraments or banner can be substituted for another color. No church furniture ie: Altar chairs, Advent Wreath, flower stands, Altar candles, shall be moved for a wedding. All decorative items must be removed immediately following the ceremony.

### **Facility Rules**

No rice, birdseed, confetti, bubbles, sparklers, or flower petals are to be used in the church, in front of the church, or on the sidewalk. These objects can be hazardous underfoot and/or difficult to clean up. Bells, streamers on dowels, butterflies, or flags are all possible substitutes. No e cigarettes, tobacco of any kind or alcohol is allowed on the premises. No food or drink is allowed in the sanctuary. Guests should be instructed to turn off cell phones during the service. No living animals of any kind shall be allowed in the building with the exception of service animals.

### **Insurance**

In accordance with SMT Building Use Agreement, event insurance must be procured and on file with church. Quite often homeowner's liability insurance will cover the event.

**Fees and Honorarium**

No one shall be turned away from our church because of an inability to pay. The following rates are intended to honor the work of our staff and for the expenses in maintaining our property.

- Pastor: \$300.
- Organist: \$300.
- Building Use: \$300.
- Sexton: \$150.

The parish hall may be reserved by mutual agreement.

A non-refundable \$100.00 deposit is required to set the date.

*It is our prayer that your wedding be both beautiful and truly Christ-centered, and that this will be the beginning of a wonderful life together.*

**Signatures of the bride(s) and groom(s)**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Sign**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Sign**

A deposit of \_\_\_\_\_ was received to reserve the following date: \_\_\_\_\_.