

Wedding Planning Guide
Evangelical Lutheran Church - Black River Falls, WI



Wedding Blessings!

We congratulate and celebrate with you on your journey of becoming one. We are glad your faith is important to you and has led you to choose Evangelical Lutheran Church as the place for your wedding.

Not only is the ceremony for family and friends, but God is pleased when you make it a service of worship that is centered in Christ and is dedicated to His glory. A couple desiring a church wedding wants more than a legal ceremony. Standing before the altar, a couple wants their wedding to be...

- A statement of faith, that marriage is part of God's plan
- A prayer for God's blessing
- A celebration for the whole family and guests
- An expression of the couple's desire for God's lifelong presence in their home

This booklet is designed to help you prepare for your wedding celebration, answer questions, and outline steps that are necessary to make your wedding all it can be. Please read this booklet carefully and contact us with any comments or questions as soon as possible.

Some First Steps

1) Wedding Date and Reservation Form

Please contact the church office as soon as possible to request a date for the marriage service, preferably six months or more before the anticipated wedding date. Once you have confirmed availability with the office, please fill out the **Request for wedding reservations** form and return it. The church office staff will place the wedding on the church calendar.

The wedding date is not 'reserved' until your form is received.

2) Pre-marriage counseling

At the heart of Christian marriage is a promise to reflect and receive God's abiding love towards one another within the marriage relationship and outwards in service to the world. This love is reflected in a mutual passion and care for one another, a respect for each individual in the relationship and a commitment to one another and the relationship over time that establishes trust and stability.

A good marriage begins when both partners know each other well, when they have spent much time discussing their hopes and plans for marriage, and when they promise with their whole heart to "love, comfort, honor, and keep" each other for the rest of their lives.

Your pastor will want to meet with you for pre-marriage counseling well in advance of the wedding as well as discuss plans for the marriage service itself. A 'prepare' questionnaire (fee of \$35.00) will be used which will assist you in identifying strengths and growth areas in your relationship. Normally, you will meet with the pastor four times for these sessions.

3) The License

Wisconsin Law requires couples to secure a license to marry. It must be applied for a minimum of five working days and not more than 30 days before the wedding at any Clerk of Court office in the state. Only one person need apply, but he/she must have proof of age for both persons. There is a fee for the license. **The license must be brought to the church office at least one week prior to the wedding.**

- 4) Arrangements for musicians and music are the responsibility of the couple to be married. Please communicate who will be your musician with the church office. If you are planning to use pre-recorded music, please contact the church office of best format.

Wedding Fee Schedule (updated 3/2023)

The following is a summary of financial expenses that could be involved in a wedding held at Evangelical Lutheran Church. Additional fees may apply if a reception is to be held at the church.

All fees are fixed for use of Evangelical Lutheran Church includes the sanctuary and dressing areas, custodial fee, audio technician (sound and lighting only), and the Pastor honorarium.

All fees are to be paid to ELC as described below one month prior to wedding.

\$150.00	Custodial Fee
\$100.00	Audio/Technology Fee
\$50.00	Wedding Coordinator Fee
\$175.00	Pastor Honorarium
\$100.00	Organists Fee

Planning Your Wedding

The order of service

Because your marriage service is centered in Christ and is intended to praise God, it is a worship service. Your plans will want to reflect careful planning of a worship service that will assist you and your guests to bring glory to God.

The usual order of service is as follows:

Prelude

Processional

Invocation

Welcome

Prayer

Scripture Readings

Music
Wedding Message
Marriage Vows
Exchange of Rings
Unity Candle (or other symbolic item)
Music
Prayers and the Lord's Prayer
The Marriage Blessing
Presentation of the Couple
Recessional
Postlude

**Additional elements may be added to the worship service in consultation with the pastor. Assisting ministers, family or friends may also be used in the service to read the lessons or assist in prayers. You may wish to invite your parents to lay on hands for a blessing.

Suggested Scriptures

Each wedding ceremony should include at least one scripture reading (most have two or three readings). Please choose scriptures that are meaningful to you as a couple. The Scriptures you choose to have read are a way of telling others about your own faith, love, and understanding of marriage. If the following scriptures are not what you're looking for, please ask for your officiating pastor for more ideas.

Old Testament Lessons:

Genesis 2:18 - 24	Two shall become one
Proverbs 3: 3 - 6	Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart
Jeremiah 31: 31 - 34	God's new covenant
Song of Solomon 2: 10 - 13	Love in the spring
Song of Solomon 8: 7	Unquenchable love
Isaiah 63: 7 - 9	God's steadfast love

Psalms:

Psalms 67	May God be merciful to us and bless us
Psalms 100	We are God's people, the sheep of God's pasture
Psalms 117	The steadfast love of the Lord
Psalms 121	The Lord keeps watch over you
Psalms 127	Unless the Lord builds the house
Psalms 128	Blessed are those who walk in the Lord's ways
Psalms 136	Give thanks and praise to God and His goodness

Psalm 150

Let everything that breathes praise the Lord

New Testament:

Romans 8: 31 - 35, 37 - 39
Romans 12: 1 - 2, 9 - 18
1 Corinthians 12: 31 - 13:13
Ephesians 3: 14 - 19
Ephesians 5: 1 - 2, 21 - 33
Philippians 4: 4 - 9
Colossians 3:12 - 17
1 John 3: 18 - 24
1 John 4: 7 - 19

If God is for us, who is against us
A living sacrifice and genuine love
The greatest gift is love
the breadth, length, and depth of Christ's love
walk in love, as Christ loved us
rejoice in the Lord always
clothed in compassion, kindness...patience
let us love in truth and action
let us love one another for love is of God

Gospel:

Matthew 5: 1 - 10
Matthew 5: 14 - 16
Matthew 7: 21, 24 - 29
Matthew 19: 3 - 6
Matthew 22: 35 - 40
Mark 10: 6 - 9
John 2: 1 - 11
John 15: 9 - 17

the beatitudes
Salt of the earth and light of the world
a house built on rock
faithfulness in marriage
love, the greatest commandment
they are no longer two, but one
the wedding at Cana
love one another as I have loved you

Music

Music selected for weddings should embody high standards of quality and reflect the praise of God, God's steadfast love in Christ as the foundation of and model for marriage, and the asking of God's presence and blessing. Whenever music is employed in the service, and by whatever instruments or voices, it should be high-quality examples of the art of composition and the mood of the service.

When you keep in mind the worship of God and the Christ-centered orientation of the wedding service, the music you choose needs to lift up the presence of God in our lives and relationships. You will want to watch closely such things as themes and messages in the music, quality of the music, and difficulty for soloists and instrumentalists.

Arrangements for musicians and music are the responsibility of the couple to be married. Plan ahead!! Spend time with your organist, soloist and pastor in choosing the very best music you can. The following list of musical pieces may offer you a start in planning your musical selections.

Processional pieces:

"Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"	Bach
"Jesus Shepard Walk Beside us"	Bach
"Beautiful Savior"	arr. Christiansen
"Trumpet Tune in D Major"	Purcell
"Trumpet Voluntary in D Major"	Purcell
"Water Music Suite"	Handel
"Open Now thy Gates of Beauty"	Manz
"Praise to the Lord"	Manz
"Hymne"	Vangelis
"Air"	Bach
"Canon in D"	Pachelbel

Recessional pieces:

"Wedding March"	Mendelssohn
"Trumpet Tune in D Major"	Purcell
"Trumpet Voluntary in D Major"	Purcell
"Finale"	Handel
"Tocatta in F Major"	Buxtehude
"Open Now thy Gates of Beauty"	Manz
"Praise to the Lord"	Manz
"Joy"	Bach

Vows

The vows you choose to make to each other are shared publicly with your guests. They reflect your commitment to each other, but also make a statement about what your relationship will be like in the future. Following are possible vows for you to use or you may write your own.

I take you _____ to be my wife/husband/partner, from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come. I promise to be faithful to you, until death parts us.

In the presence of God and this community, I take you _____, to be my wife/husband/partner, to have and hold from this day forward, in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as long as we both shall live.

_____, I take you to be my wife/husband/partner 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 with all my being.

I take you _____ to be my wife/husband/partner 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. I will try with you to better understand ourselves, the world, and God, through the best and worst of what is to come as long as we both shall live.

Pictures/Audio Visual

We encourage most pictures to be taken before the wedding. Any departure from this must be approved by the pastor. It is imperative that all picture taking is completed 30 minutes before the service to allow for ushering guests and other preparations.

Sound/Technical System:

A sound/tech person is part of the wedding package and a fee of \$100.00 is required. The church will assign this individual to handle all microphones, sounds and any other technology needs for your wedding.

If the wedding takes place outside the church and you hire a DJ/sound person on your own, then this fee will not be required.

Bulletins

It is helpful to have a printed program to inform guests of the order of service and the names of the participants in the wedding. You should plan the program with the pastor who will approve the final copy. You are responsible for printing your own bulletins.

Set-up

Flowers may be placed on stands right next to the altar or on the floor. If flowers are going to be donated to the church for Sunday service, please let the pastor know.

If an aisle runner is used, it is to be furnished by the couple. The aisle runner needs to be 55 feet long. Many florists sell a runner if needed.

Our church provides the Christ Candle and Altar Candles. Our church also has candelabras for the front and along the aisle if interested. The couple would need to

purchase 36 standard taper candles, 5" tall for the candelabras. You are responsible for setting and cleaning up decorations.

Wedding banners are available for you to use. Please indicate on the registration sheet if you wish to use them and which ones you have selected. Any other decorations that are attached to the pews, chairs or surrounding areas, must use soft wire or twine. In order to prevent damage to our sanctuary fixtures, tape or tacks are not permitted for decorating.

General Policies

A wedding is a worship service of the church. Participants and guests should conduct themselves accordingly.

Rice, natural flower petals, or birdseed are not allowed to be thrown in or outside the church facility. These items are hazardous to birds, damaging to the carpet, and difficult to clean up. Artificial flower petals may be used.

Smoking and the use of alcohol or other drugs on church property before, during or after your wedding is prohibited.

Reception Policies

Please inform the pastor if you wish to have your reception at Evangelical Lutheran Church. The family will then need to coordinate the arrangements with the church office. Even if you use a caterer, your reception must be planned with the knowledge of the Wedding Coordinator. The family is to take all remaining food from the reception immediately following the reception. No alcoholic beverages may be served on church property.

Wedding Fee Schedule (updated 3/2023)

The following is a summary of financial expenses that could be involved in a wedding held at Evangelical Lutheran Church. Additional fees may apply if a reception is to be held at the church.

All fees are fixed for use of Evangelical Lutheran Church includes the sanctuary and dressing areas, custodial fee, audio technician (sound and lighting only), and the Pastor honorarium.

All fees are to be paid to ELC as described below one month prior to wedding.

\$150.00	Custodial Fee
\$100.00	Audio/Technology Fee
\$50.00	Wedding Coordinator Fee
\$175.00	Pastor Honorarium
\$100.00	Organists Fee