

The Wedding Worship Service
as celebrated at
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church



Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Dear friends,

Congratulations on your engagement and your upcoming wedding. Marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and mutual strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family. God created us and blessed humankind with the gifts of companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children.

Marriage is also a human estate, with vows publicly witnessed. The church in worship surrounds these promises with the gathering of God's people, the witness of the word of God and prayers of blessing and intercession.

Planning the Wedding

It is important for couples to openly and honestly speak about their wishes for the wedding day to ensure that everything goes as planned and your life after the big day continues to be blessed with love, care and happiness.

In the Lutheran tradition a wedding is, first of all, a worship service and its focus is on God and the promises and gifts given us by God, our creator. As you plan your wedding, this understanding of the nature of the marriage service is very important to keep in mind. Still you can personalize the service to reflect your personality and your wishes. You can select the music, the hymns, the readings from Holy Scripture and the vows that are to be made. However, there are certain boundaries for what can and cannot take place in a church wedding. Therefore, as you start your planning it is important, well in advance, to discuss these issues with the pastor and the organist.

Officiating Pastor

Normally the presiding minister at your wedding is the pastor of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church. After consultation with the pastor, you may include clergy from another parish or denomination as an assisting minister in your worship service.

The Wedding Questionnaire

As you book the time for your wedding you will receive a questionnaire from the church office about your personal status and history, about the worship service, and about the people who are to participate with you in the service.

The personal questions are for parish records only. They are identical to the ones you will be asked for on your marriage licence. Some of the questions on the form about the worship service pertain to the various options available to you, so some of the questions may not need to be answered. If you have any questions, please contact the pastor.

The Worship Service

Involving Others

Family members and friends can make a real contribution to your wedding celebration and to the service. Besides serving as bride's and groom's attendants, a relative can serve as an acolyte, an assisting minister, or a reader rather than just be a spectator. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church welcomes and encourages such participation!

Flowers and Other Decorations

Flowers add beauty to a festive celebration. Please advise your florist that the church is available one hour prior to the wedding for placing of flowers; for other times, arrangements need to be made well in advance.

Potted or cut live flowers are the only flowers allowed to be used in the chancel area. Flowers on the altar at a Saturday wedding are usually left in place for Sunday worship to remind the congregation of the wedding. The couple is remembered in our prayers.

Decorating the pew ends along the centre aisle is often done with ribbon bows, floral greenery, or other appropriate decorations. Decorating the pews is normally done following the rehearsal. For weddings during the evening or during the high holidays of Easter and Christmas, a candelabra set is also available.

Bulletins

Most weddings at the church, and some outside the church building, provide a worship bulletin for the guests. It contains the order of worship and hymns requested, as well as the names of who is presiding, the organist, and all other participants in the service. If space allows, it can also include the words of the vows that are to be made. You would need to provide the covers for these bulletins and arrange for their typing and printing. The pastor will gladly help you in the design of your worship bulletin or provide sample bulletins.

Photos and Video

Because Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church views the wedding as a religious service, we have certain guidelines for taking photos and video during the service. According to the guidelines only an official photographer using a non-flash camera may take photos during the worship service. Please, advise the photographer to meet with the pastor no later than 15 minutes before the service to review the guidelines.

Your guests will be able to take photos during the processional and recessional and during the signing of the licence. Following the worship service you are free to take as many photos in the church as you wish, and the pastor will be available to restage any part of the service, as requested.

Many couples like to have a videotape of their wedding. It is suggested that you consult the pastor regarding the best locations for camera placements. The video camera should be left in one place throughout the ceremony but may be moved during the processional, recessional and signing of the marriage licence.

Celebration of Holy Communion (optional)

The Sacrament of the Holy Communion is usually celebrated as part of the worship liturgy and it can be included in your wedding worship service, too. In Lutheran tradition Holy Communion can be celebrated if the following three conditions are met:

- Both bride and groom are baptized in the name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- At least one of the wedding couple must be an active, communing member of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
- All baptized members of the assembly present at the wedding worship service must be invited to come and receive Holy Communion. Holy Communion cannot be a private affair for only the bride, groom and the wedding party. Guests should honour the rules of the faith tradition they are from in making the decision to join in receiving Holy Communion.

Outline of the Wedding Worship Service

(The order of the service will be found on page 286 in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship)

Gathering

Entrance

- a hymn, instrumental music or song during the procession

Greeting

Declaration of Intention

Prayer of the Day

Word

Readings

- two or three scripture readings

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Marriage

Vows

Giving of Rings

Acclamation

- a hymn or other music may follow at this point

Marriage Blessing

Prayers of the People

Signing of the Register

Meal (if celebrated)

Sending

Peace

Blessing

Dismissal

- a hymn may be sung or instrumental music played as the wedding group and the minister(s) depart

Bible Readings

Two or three Bible readings are read during the wedding worship service. A list of the more popular ones are found below.

Genesis 1:26-31	created in God's image
Genesis 2:18-24	created for each other
Song of Solomon 2:10-13	love in the spring
Song of Solomon 8:7	unquenchable love
Isaiah 63:7-9	God's love for God's people
Romans 12:1-2	a living sacrifice to God
Romans 12:9-13	let love be genuine
I Corinthians 12:31-13:13	Paul's hymn of love
I Corinthians 13:4-8a,13	Paul's hymn of love (short version)
Ephesians 5:21-33	honour one another
Philippians 4:4-7	rejoice and give thanks
I John 4:7-12	God is love
Matthew 5:1-12	the Beatitudes (blessings)
Matthew 19:4-6	one flesh
John 2:1-10	Jesus at the wedding at Cana
John 15:9-12	love one another

Wedding Music

Music in a Christian worship should express the worship of God. The music for the wedding should be chosen with this in mind and it should be chosen with care so as to fit into the worship service with style. The singing of hymns is part of all worship services and an appropriate way of giving thanks to God for the love the bride and groom have found in each other. Please, consult with the organist for the appropriate and available music and hymns for your wedding. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church restricts the playing of the church organ to our organist or to one who has training on large church organs. Zion's organist is the final arbiter in determining those qualified to play our church organ.

Wedding Vows

Your wedding vows will be very special to you. Years from now, when all else fades into a blur, your wedding vows —especially if you have chosen to commit them to memory— will come back to you.

Here are some suggestions:

Vow #1:

I take you, *name*, 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 until death parts us.

Vow #2:

In the presence of God and this community, I Name take you, *name*, to be my wife (husband); to have and to 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. This is my solemn vow.

Vow #3:

I take you, *name*, to be my wife (husband), and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come, so long as we both shall live.

Vow #4:

I take you, *name*, to be my wife (husband). I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful wife (husband), 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.

Vow #5:

Name, 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 be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being, so long as we both shall live.

Sometimes, couples choose to write their own vows. If you wish to consider this option, please take to heart a couple of words of caution: Don't use large words, complicated sentences, or make your vows too long. Remember, you have to be able to speak them! Vows must meet the legal requirement that marriage reflects a life-long commitment of fidelity. That's why they must conclude with words like "until death parts us" or "so long as we both shall live."

Blessing by Parents

In addition to the blessing given by the pastor, your parents may also add their blessing to your marriage. We suggest that they stand in their places and, at the appropriate time in the service, speak an affirming "We will" to the following question:

"Will you the families of *name* and *name*, give your love and blessing to this new family?"

Additionally there is an opportunity for a blessing/affirmation by the whole community gathered. The whole congregation is asked to say "we will" to the following:

"Will all of you, by God's grace, uphold and care for *name* and *name* in their life together?"

Marriage Licence

Make sure you have a valid marriage licence. They do have a time limit to them.

The Marriage Licence (with the large envelope) and ALL the wedding fees in CASH, in separate marked envelopes, must be in the Church Office no later than ONE (1) WEEK prior to the wedding date, as listed on page 7. This is necessary in order to complete the paperwork for your wedding.

Wedding Rehearsal

A wedding rehearsal is held at a mutually agreed upon time one or two days before the wedding. Everyone who has any part in the service should be at the rehearsal, which should take approximately one hour.

The rehearsal is an important event for the wedding worship service. Often this is the first time all the information regarding scripture readings, vows, music, participants and other details come together. The rehearsal will make it easier for everyone to enjoy the wedding day itself.

Wedding Day Timetable

A wedding worship service will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes depending on the complexity of the service planned and whether Holy Communion is celebrated or not.

Receiving Line

Most couples usually receive their guests at the reception following the wedding, but you are welcome to use the church for a receiving line if you wish. The receiving line usually includes the bride and groom together with their parents and followed by the attendants.

Confetti

Please ask your guests not to use confetti in the church building or on church property.

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Accessibility and Comfort

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church's facilities are wheelchair accessible via the main entrance on Upton Road and via the office doors on the south-west side of the building. A wheelchair-accessible washroom is available in the narthex area of the church just to the right of the kitchenette.

The church building is air conditioned during the summer months, and the entire building is a smoke-free area.

Hall Rental

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church offers a fully accessible hall space that can be used for your wedding reception. The hall space seats 100 guests comfortably. Wine, with appropriate license, can be served in Zion's hall. For hall rental inquiries speak with the office manager at 705-753-8703.

Nursery

A nursery is available in the office wing.

Fees and Honoraria

The honoraria amounts reflect the time and effort that has gone into preparing for your wedding, as well as the cost of maintaining the building.

\$300 *The building:*

There is a set honorarium of \$300.00. This honorarium is a gift to the ministry of Zion Lutheran Church. If this presents any hardship, please speak with the pastor.

\$150 + *The musician:*

Zion's musician's involvement with your wedding is in addition to their normal responsibilities for the congregation. Many hours will go into selection, practice, and presentation of the music chosen for your wedding. The honorarium for the musician is \$150.00. If the musician will be working with a soloist, an additional \$50 is expected to reflect the additional work that is necessary to prepare the music.

\$50 *The custodian:*

The custodian will ensure that the church is open for your wedding, help with whatever set-up is needed, and clean the church and narthex after the wedding. The honorarium for the custodian is \$50.00.

\$200 *The Pastor:*

Our pastor will assist in planning the service, provide such counsel and marriage preparation as is necessary, plan for the preparation of a guide to worship and the completion of legal documents direct the rehearsal and preside at the wedding. The honorarium is \$200.

Marriage Preparation Course and Some Reading Material

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church highly recommends a marriage preparation course. There are courses available for you to take in most communities and a call to the library or community newspaper should help you find some local ones.

Finally, some things to keep in mind

- The verb to wed originated in the verb to promise. The vows you make to each other are rooted in God's promise of faithfulness to God's people.
- The wedding service, in the church or outside the church building, is celebrated as an act of worship.
- Planning your wedding service deserves the same care you devote to planning your reception.
- Give as much attention to your own feelings, desires as to those of others. After all, it's *your* wedding! As Grandmama used to say, "Suit yourself, and one person's pleased!" It is, after all, your wedding!
- A word of welcome or a word of thanks, spoken at the church by a member of the wedding party, sets a lovely tone for the day.
- In recent years, wedding costs have gone through the roof. Nonetheless, your pastor—who experiences numerous weddings in the course of ministry— can help you to consider alternatives that are less costly, potentially more personal, and as celebrative as anything else that can be!
- What family traditions / cultural traditions are important in your lives? How do you incorporate some of them in your wedding ceremony or in your wedding day celebrations?
- Please be considerate of all who are part of your wedding worship service and be on time, both for rehearsal and for the wedding itself.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your wedding service, do not hesitate to call the pastor.

*The congregation of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
wish to extend our congratulations on your upcoming wedding.
May the blessing of God be with the two of you
as you plan this special day and in your continued life together.*

the Rev. Brad Mittleholtz
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