

## Where to Begin

Congratulations on your engagement! As you make plans to enter into the life-long commitment of marriage, it's a good thing to take note of where marriage starts and of what it consists. For Christians marriage has its beginnings "in the beginning": the book of *Genesis* tells us that among other things God also created man and woman and that he created them for each other. We believe that God created marriage as part of the order that he brought to his creation. Marriage, therefore, is a woman who wants to have the close and intimate relationship of husband and wife - it is something God created for just such a relationship. Therefore, as Scripture says of everything else God created: "It is good." God also adds to your marriage the protection of the Sixth Commandment ("You shall not commit adultery.") so that you and others should respect the place of honor that God has given marriage.

As Christians we also understand that marriage consists of the public promise of life-long faithfulness between a man and woman. At the heart of your marriage will be the vows you make to each other on your wedding day and live out each day of your life together. You should, then, make those vows with all seriousness and every intention of keeping them with God's help.

The fact that you have chosen to have your wedding service in a Christian church implies the following:

- 1) You believe that this church teaches and confesses and that it is important to you and will be important in your life together.
- 2) You are publicly asking God's blessing on your marriage and are asking for Jesus Christ's presence at the center of your marriage.

3) You are asking for the prayers of God's people as they ask God's blessings for you on your wedding day.

If any of these are not the case, your wedding would take place more appropriately elsewhere.

## SCHEDULING AND PREPARATION

The first step in preparing for your wedding service is contacting the pastor to arrange for an initial meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to determine that it is appropriate for the pastor to conduct your wedding in the church. This is a brief meeting and should take place at least ten weeks prior to your desired wedding date in order to allow time for premarital counseling and *before* you make other arrangements. After this initial meeting the desired wedding date will be tentatively set and is then contingent upon completion of the pre-marital counseling sessions described below. Weddings in the Britton Lutheran Parish are officiated by the pastors on a rotating basis in the order in which the request is received. Wedding dates are placed on the parish calendar (as described above) with a policy of first-come, first-served. Weddings are not scheduled in the parish during Holy Week.

The second step is to contact the wedding coordinator who helps with the details of both the service and the reception. A meeting with her is helpful and should take place not long after the meeting with the pastor. Her name and phone number are:

Sandy Peters

605-448-2751

We want to do everything we can to help you be faithful to your wedding vows. Therefore, pre marriage counseling of three meetings beyond the initial meeting with the pastor is required. A special "inventory" will be given to the couple at the first session. The inventory is then used as a guide for discussion in the pre-marital counseling sessions. There will be a \$10 fee for these materials, payable to the church. The inventory and two of the three counseling sessions will cover such topics as: expectations in marriage, communication, family, faith and religion, and responsibilities. The last counseling session will cover plans for your wedding service (Scripture selection, music, etc.).

In planning a church wedding, as service of worship, it is helpful to know these things:

1. Consumption of alcoholic beverages or the use of tobacco in any form is not permitted on or around the church premises.
2. Pictures should be taken in such a way as to not distract from the service. The service may be videoed from the balcony or at a stationary position at the door of the sacristy. The video person at the sacristy door should check beforehand to ensure a good view.
3. Seating capacity is between 225 and 275.
4. No red punch/juice.
5. Rice, bird seed or confetti is not throw inside or on the grounds. Should this take place, there is a \$10 charge for the clean-up.
6. The Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW, green hymnal) marriage service is to be used.

7. The altar paraments will remain the color of the season. (In other words, they will not be changed.) First Lutheran's wedding banners will be hung for weddings there.
8. Fresh flowers or live plants only are used in the altar area. They may be placed on the Re-Table, the shelf above the altar and/or the flower stands flanking the altar. Flowers are not placed directly on the altar, and the rail is not to be decorated. Bridal flowers and non-altar flowers can be of silk. If you plan to leave the altar flowers for Sunday morning, it is asked that they be fresh or live.
9. Music used in the wedding service is to be previewed by the pastor since each piece should be appropriate to a wedding service in the church.
10. There is a unity candle holder, at First Lutheran, available for use. It holds a pillar candle with a 3' base and two 6" tapers. Candles are furnished by the bride and groom
11. First Lutheran's floor candelabra and oil candles are available for use. Whether or not the oil candles are used, a \$10 fee is charged for the use of the candelabra. First Lutheran has aisle candles, but use is not encouraged.
12. Bulletin covers may be purchased through the parish office. Most cost in the neighborhood of \$8 per hundred and printing is available at \$.10 per copy. Please contact the Parish Secretary for more information.
13. The pastor will lead a rehearsal. It may take place on the evening prior to the wedding or early on the day of the service and should take place when all participants can be present.

14. A guest book should be closed five minutes before the service to allow the wedding to begin on time. Guest who have not signed it can do so at the reception.

15. It is customary to pray the table grace at the service so the food service may begin as guests come to the reception.

16. First Lutheran bride and attendants often use the "Friendly Room in the church basement as a dressing room and men use "The Upper Room".

17. WELCA serving groups work all the weddings with receptions. Though they do not cook, they will slice cake, cut pickles, put salads in bowls, or assemble sandwiches. The serving group will prepare leftover food for the family to take home, clean the kitchen and clear the serving table. The church kitchen may be used by family or friends for the preparation of wedding foods. Just check with the coordinator so it is not being used at times which would interfere with other preparations and church activities. Be sure to leave the kitchen clean and neat.

## EXPENSES FOR CHURCH WEDDINGS

1. The serving group receives \$100 for their services no matter the size of the reception or the kind or amount of food served.

2. The parish organist fee is \$100. The organists are familiar with the organ and are aware of church traditions. If you prefer another organist, it is best if they can practice prior to the rehearsal.

3. A \$50 janitorial fee is charged for weddings with receptions. It is \$25 for weddings without receptions. Cleanup following the wedding, along with movement of chairs and tables, is included.
4. As noted above, there are also separate fees for certain items.
5. In addition, \$100 is charged for non-member weddings and non-member anniversary parties.

Checks for the janitor, organist and soloists should be made out to them and given to the coordinator the day before the wedding. She also receives the check for the serving group, made out to WELCA, and one for the use of such things as candelabra, table cloths, rice, etc. She will see that the checks are delivered to the appropriate people.

#### OTHER ASSISTANTS

In addition to the coordinator the ladies of the WELCA a bride will find it helpful to have:

**A personal attendant**, asked to collect wedding party personal effects following their departure from the church.

**A flower pinner**, who has a complete list of recipients, and can find them to pin on flowers before pictures are taken.

**Two coffee pourers**

**Two cake servers**

**Two couples** to be hosts for the reception

**Six servers**, to refill the punch bowl, serve the bridal table, refill the coffee pots on the tables, pour more punch at the tables, and clear empty tables

**Two persons** to receive gifts

**Two persons** to remove gifts from the church

It is helpful for the coordinator to have a list of these assistants and for them to be "on duty" when guests come into the Fellowship Hall.

## AVAILABLE FOR USE AT THE RECEPTION

### BEVERAGE SERVICE

Coffee Pots:      One          75 cup                      One          42 cup

                                 Two          55 cup                      One          30 cup

24 Insulated servers

Silver Service: 2      Each comes with tray, 2 pots, sugar bowl, tongs and creamer

Punch Bowls:      1 glass with 2 ladles

Punch Making: 3 large pails

Pitchers for punch

Receptacle for used cups

36 large glasses for use on the bridal table

### FOOD SERVICE

Cake Serving: 2 silver cake knives

2 silver cake servers

Corelle Winter White plates (2 sizes)

Silverware

4 pair buffet flatware holders

4 2-tier trays

6 large trays

4 medium trays

20 glass trays

6 large glass serving bowls

12 small glass serving bowls

The above are available at no charge and are washed and put away by the WELCA serving group.

If you wish to use paper plates and cups, you may do so at your expense. Please do not use foam or hard plastic.

Table Cloths: White cloths for guest tables are available for rent at \$3.00 a piece. White cloths and lace cloths with plastic overlay are available for the serving tables.

If you do not wish to use the plastic overlay, there is a \$12 laundry fee for each large table cloth and \$6 laundry fee for each small table cloth.

Candle Holders:



1 set      Single holders, glass

2 sets      Double holders, glass

20   Single star holders, glass

We hope that this information will be helpful as you make plans for your wedding.