Palestine Lutheran Church

Wedding Guidelines

 “I will betroth you to myself forever, betroth you with integrity and justice, with tenderness and love; I will betroth you to myself with faithfulness, and you will come to know the Lord” –Hosea 2:19-20

**Marriage – What We Believe**

Marriage is a gift from God and a covenant of life-long faithfulness between a woman and a man. The heart of the wedding service is the exchange of vows of commitment between the bride and groom (and signified in the exchange of rings) before the congregation and God. Ideally, a marriage relationship reflects the love that God has shown through the ages and uniquely revealed in Jesus. Martin Luther called marriage “a school for character”; as Hosea states above, a marriage calls forth such virtues as integrity, justice, tenderness, and love—through the joys and sorrows of whatever life may bring. At a Christian wedding service, the couple is not left to their own efforts to fulfill these promises, but is publicly receiving God’s blessing and support, as well as the affirmation of family, friends, and the Holy Christian Church.

So the wedding is not only a glad occasion—over-flowing with joy, celebrating the Creator’s gifts of life, health love, sexuality, the family—is it a holy moment calling on Christ and the Holy Spirit to bless, strengthen and renew this union day by day.

We believe that the Christian wedding is a sacred service of worship.

Bulletins—Printed bulletins are nearly always used, but the church office does not print or purchase them. Marriage Service Outline

**GUIDANCE ON MUSIC**.

The wedding is an act of Christian Worship, and the music should reflect this. Several

questions to ask yourself are:

1. Is the music consistent with what the Christian Church teaches about marriage?

2. Is the music appropriate for a worship service?

3. Is it tasteful?

The implementation of these guidelines is left to the discretion of the pastor and church musician.

The organist and other musicians may place further restrictions on the music requested relative to their ability and performance style.

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographs in the sanctuary are normally scheduled at least 2 hours prior to the beginning of the service and must be completed at least 30 minutes before the wedding service. Photos during the service may be taken from the back of the sanctuary.

Stationary video recording is acceptable.

Dressing rooms are available for use the day of the wedding.

The fellowship hall is often used by the groom and his friends.

Arrangements for rooms should be made with the Pastor.

Non-Alcoholic Beverages only…**use of alcohol at the church on the day of the wedding may result in the service not taking place.** IMPORTANT

You may bring snacks and non-alcoholic beverages for the wedding party on the day of the wedding.

Clean-Up!

It is important to designate someone who will remove all of your belongings from the dressing rooms and rooms you used immediately following the service. Articles left behind will be placed in the lost and found.

**MARRIAGE LICENSE**

Please bring your completed marriage license to the pastor on the day of your rehearsal.

**SIMPLE WEDDINGS**

Wedding customs in the United States are becoming more costly and burdensome for couples.

According to the publishers of Bride’s and Modern Bride magazines, the average wedding cost is $22,3609 in 2004. We believe that Christian wedding can be both simple and elegant and should not leave a family in debt! The pastors and church staff are available to assist in planning so that your wedding arrangements are not a burden, but a joy.

Possibilities for simple and meaningful church weddings include:

• Have just 2 people stand up with you, a maid or matron of honor and a best man.

• Use flowers from your garden, or your gardening friends’ gardens

• Exchange marriage vows on a Saturday night or Sunday morning during the normal church service! Flowers and musicians will already be in place, and the congregation will love it! You can have a totally free wedding this way.

• Have a potluck reception right in the church fellowship hall. Have your friends decorate the place and ask friends to bring their very favorite food (and recipe!) as their wedding gift to you.

• Visit the Alternatives for Simple Living website at http://www.simpleliving.org/Archives/Wedding/WeddingAlternatives.html

**POSSIBLE SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Old Testament

Genesis 1:26-28 Woman and man created in the image of God

Genesis 2:18-24 Companionship rather than loneliness

Ruth 1:16-17 “Where you go, I will go”

Proverbs 3:3-6 Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart

Song of Solomon 2:10-13 The voice of the beloved

Song of Solomon 8:6-7 Many waters cannot quench love

Isaiah 63:7-9 God’s steadfast love lifts up people

Hosea 2:19-20 God’s “betrothing” us in integrity, tenderness and love

Jeremiah 31:31-34 The new covenant of the people of God

Psalms

Psalm 67 May God be merciful to us and bless us

Psalm 100 We are God’s people and the sheep of His pasture

Psalm 117 The steadfast love of God

Psalm 121 The Lord keeps watch over you

Psalm 127 Unless the Lord builds the house

Psalm 128 Blessed are those who walk in the Lord’s ways

Psalm 150 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord

New Testament

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39 If God is for us, who is against us

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 A living sacrifice and genuine love

1 Corinthians 13 The greatest gift is love

Ephesians 3:14-19 The breadth, length height and depth of Christ’s love

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33 Walk in love as Christ loved

Philippians 4:4-9 Rejoice in the Lord always

Colossians 3:12-17 Clothed in compassion, kindness, meekness and patience

1 John 3:18-24 Let us love in truth and action

1 John 4:7-16 Let us love one another for love is of God

Gospel

Matthew 5:1-10 The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:14-16 You are the light, let your light shine

Matthew 7:21, 24-29 A wise person builds upon the rock

Matthew 19:3-6 What God has united must not be divided

Matthew 22:35-40 Love, the greatest commandment

Mark 10:6-9 They are no longer two but one

John 2:1-11 The wedding at Cana

John 15:9-17 Love one another as I have loved you.

**WEDDING VOWS**

I. Lutheran Book of Worship

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 until death parts us.

 II. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward, to join with you and share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all of our life together be loyal to with my whole life and with all my being.

III. 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.

IV. 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 you as we have been forgiven; and 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 shall live.

V. I, \_\_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband; to share with you both sorrow and joy, and to be faithful to you until death parts us.

VI. I, \_\_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death do us part.

VII. I, \_\_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband; to love and to trust, from this day forward; for better or worse, for richer or poorer; in sickness and in health. As we continue to grow in our love for each other, I shall honor you with my whole self, listen and speak the truth to you, and seek to live each day as a gift of God, as long as we both shall live.

VIII. I, \_\_\_\_\_\_, give myself to you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. By the grace of God, I promise to support and care for you. In the love of Christ, I promise to love and cherish you. With the Spirit’s help, I promise to be faithful to you, as long as we both shall live.

**WEDDING QUESTIONS FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM**

Escorting and Ushering of Guests and Seating

♦ Will there be ushers? (to light candles, hand out bulletins, and usher guests to their seats?) Who will be doing what?

♦ Who will be escorted in? By whom? Escorted out?

♦ Will you seat immediate family and friends of the bride and groom on different sides of the church or together?

♦ Where will special guests sit (parents, step-parents, grandparents, family, etc)…in first, second, third row?

♦ How will family be escorted out (or will they)? Ushers? Bride and groom?

♦ How will guests be escorted out? Ushers? Row by row? “Released” by bride and groom?

♦ Will there be a receiving line? Who will be in it? Where will it be (inside or outside)? What will be the order of the people in the receiving line?

Processional and Recessional

♦ How will the wedding party enter the sanctuary? (As couples down main aisle? Separately? Men from side and women down main aisle?)

♦ How will the bride and groom enter? (bride with father? bride with parents? bride and groom together? bride alone? groom from side?)

Wedding Liturgy

♦ What Biblical texts do you want read? Why? Be prepared to talk with pastor about this!

♦ Would you like a friend or relative to read these texts at the wedding? Who?

♦ Which vows have you chosen?

♦ Will you have communion during your wedding?

♦ How will you be called during the wedding service?

♦ By what name/s do you wish to be presented to the congregation at the end of the wedding service?

♦ Will you kiss at the close of the wedding?

Music

♦ What music will you have during the wedding?

♦ Will you have soloists?

Miscellaneous

♦ Will you have an aisle runner?

♦ Candles? Unity candle? Who lights what when? (parents? bride and groom?)

♦ Flower girl/s? Ring bearer? Will they be standing or seated during the service?

♦ Will you have a guest book?

♦ Will you have your reception at Our Savior’s fellowship hall?

Marriage Service

(ELCA Renewing Worship—2003)

**PRELUDES**

**PROCESSIONAL**

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

**INTRODUCTION**

Dear friends: We have come together in the presence of God to witness the marriage of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to surround them with our prayers and to share in their joy. The Scriptures teach us that the bond and covenant of marriage is a gift of God, a holy mystery in which two become one flesh, an image of the union of Christ and the church. As \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ give themselves to each other today, we remember that at Cana in Galilee our Lord Jesus Christ made the wedding feast a sign of God’s reign of love. Let us enter into this celebration confident that, through the Holy Spirit, Christ is present with us now also; we pray that this couple may fulfill God’s purpose for the whole of their lives.

**DECLARATION OF INTENTION (rarely used, if ever)**

(Minister addresses couple)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will you have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to be your wife/husband, to live together in holy marriage? Will you love him/her, comfort him/her, honor and keep him/her in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful to her/him as long as you both shall live?

I will.

(Minister addresses family)

Will you, the families of \_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ give your love and blessing to this new family?

We will.

(Minister addresses assembly)

Will all of you, by the Grace of God, do everything in your power to uphold and care for these two persons in their life together?

We will.

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. Eternal God, our creator and redeemer, as you gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee by the presence of your Son, so bring your joy to this wedding by his presence now.

Look in favor upon \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and grant that they, rejoicing in all your gifts, may at length celebrate the unending marriage feast with Christ the Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**READINGS**

(Optional) Hymn / Soloists (good place for special music)

**HOMILY – PASTOR**

**VOWS**

**GIVING OF RINGS**

Bless these rings, O God; may they who wear them live in love and fidelity, and continue in your service all the days of their lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**EXCHANGE OF RINGS**

\_\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

**ACCLAMATION**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by their promises before God and in the presence of this assembly, have bound themselves to one another as husband and wife. Those who God has joined together let nothing put asunder.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

**BLESSING**

**UNITY CANDLE**

**(during Unity candle there many times is a special musical piece)**

**PRAYERS**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

**BLESSING**

God Almighty send you light and truth to keep you all the days of your life. May the hand of God protect you; the holy angels accompany you; and the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever. AMEN

Kiss

**RECESSIONAL**

OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS?