

Zion Lutheran Church Wedding Guidelines & Policies

Adopted 8/13/2019



Congratulations on making this life-changing decision to become married. This is truly an exciting time in your lives! We at Zion join in your excitement and intend to provide a meaningful space and worship service for this blessed occasion. Please read through the information included in this booklet; it is compiled to answer many of your questions as you consider the details of your wedding day. Call the church office if you have further questions.

Our Wedding Philosophy

While a wedding day is a wonderful day in the life of a couple, it is important to remember that it is just that – a day. Therefore, we at Zion, as we plan a wedding with a couple, spend more time supporting, encouraging, and preparing a couple for their marriage, rather than just for their wedding.

So, understanding the importance we place on a marriage being lived in and supported by the Church, we welcome you to contact us about your wedding.

The Wedding Service

Weddings can be held in just about any place imaginable, and your choice of holding your wedding at Zion Lutheran Church holds some distinct implications. A wedding in a church shows that God is a part of your new relationship. The wedding service itself is a unique occasion for the bride and groom to make promises to each other in the presence of God and a worshiping community of faithful people. The policies and guidelines in this booklet reflect this philosophy.

The pastor will make every effort to personalize your service and will offer your involvement in some of the details. You will be given the choice of which Scriptures will be read and which vows you wish to choose to emphasize your commitment to one another.

Holy Communion is an option, provided it is offered to the entire worshiping community and the couple believes none will feel excluded.

The Pastor's Role

Both the wedding service and the rehearsal are led by a pastor of Zion Lutheran Church. Normally, Zion's pastor is present and participates in any wedding held in our facility.

Ministers of other congregations may assist and are welcome to do so upon the request of the couple.

Pre-marriage Counseling

A minimum of three counseling sessions with the pastor will be required. Please call the office no later than three months ahead of your wedding to schedule your appointment. Each session will last about one hour. These sessions provide an opportunity for us to become better acquainted so that a more personalized wedding can be planned. More importantly, these sessions are intended to help strengthen your relationship with each other

Here at Zion we use a program called Prepare and Enrich. Prepare and Enrich has led the way in helping couples explore and strengthen their relationships. The main component of the program is an online survey you each complete separately in about 30-45 minutes. Prepare and Enrich is not just any survey. The items you respond to are intended to help you identify the unique strengths and potential growth areas of your premarital relationship. When the survey is completed a confidential copy of the results is given to the pastor as an aid in the premarital counseling .

Zion's Church Facility

Zion's beautiful sanctuary provides a wonderful setting for weddings. Its seating capacity is about 375.

Zion has a bride's room located in the Library/Conference room which has many large mirrors as well as a private bathroom. The church can be available for dressing and pictures prior to the wedding.

Please assign someone to clean up each space after the wedding ceremony. This will facilitate the timely refund of your deposit, depending on any pending custodial issues.

Getting Your Wedding on the Church Calendar

Be sure to reserve the church prior to arranging for other details. No weddings will normally be scheduled earlier than 6 weeks after receiving deposit & reserving the date. Contact our church office to schedule a meeting with the pastor to converse about and schedule your wedding.

The usual day for weddings is Saturday, although Fridays are not unknown. A Saturday wedding needs to start no later than 3:00 pm to allow for our normal service at 5:30 pm. If a Saturday 3:00 pm timeslot is chosen, all pictures must be taken PRIOR to the wedding. Evening weddings may be possible upon consultation with the pastor.

Because some church events are unpredictable—a funeral, for instance—there may be a need to adjust spaces for the wedding rehearsal. Rest assured that great care will be extended to all parties in this unlikely event.

Only a few times each year, the church is unable to schedule a rehearsal or a wedding. Here are some dates to stay away from: certain church festivals, Holy Week (prior to Easter), Pentecost, synod assembly, day after sauerkraut supper, Dec. 23-26, Dec. 31-Jan.2

Scheduling the Rehearsal

Generally, the rehearsals happen on the evening prior to the wedding—sometimes as early as 5:00 pm. Rehearsals usually take one hour. Out of respect for all, please notify your wedding party of the time and ask them to be prompt. The following participants should normally attend the rehearsal: bride and groom, all attendants, ushers, readers, parents of the couple.

The organist may choose to attend the rehearsal so that entrances and exits can be practiced.

The Church Staff

Zion's staff is dedicated to making your wedding a joyous occasion.

Zion's pastor: each ceremony scheduled at Zion will be conducted by Zion's pastor. If the couple wishes to invite other clergy to participate in a wedding held at Zion, the service will be amicably shared. Please talk to Zion's pastor before inviting other clergy.

Zion's musicians: Normally, Zion's music staff should be asked to serve as the accompanist for your wedding. They will help you in your selection of appropriately worshipful music and optional guest musicians. All music must be cleared through them and, if needed, through the pastor.

Zion's custodial staff: these irreplaceable people clean the church before and after the wedding service. They also hold the keys for locking and unlocking the building and any rooms you wish to use. Please notify the church as to when you wish the building to be opened on the day of your wedding.

Policies for You to Know

Alcohol – No alcohol or other intoxicating substances are allowed on the church property or in the parking lots at any time. Violation of this and other policies below will result in the automatic loss of your deposit and possibly an immediate cancellation of your wedding service at Zion.

Smoking – Zion and its premises are a non-smoking area.

Rice and birdseed – Please do not use rice, birdseed, balloons, or any other confetti-type material on the church grounds. This is for ecological and safety purposes, while also preventing undue maintenance expenses.

Photography – see page 5.

Chancel Furnishings – The seasonal colors and banners which decorate the sanctuary, the baptismal font, the large wooden cross during Lent, the altar candles, and any other items or furniture that are central to our faith will remain in place during the wedding ceremony.

Music for Your Wedding

Because your wedding takes place within a worship service, all music needs to keep God as the central character. Please consult with our organist or pastor if you have questions about a hymn or song.

Flowers

If flowers will be a part of your wedding, the couple is responsible for contacting the florist and making specific arrangements that are in keeping with the appropriate simplicity of a worship service. Any flowers that will be placed at the front altar must be live.

Nails, tacks, staples, or tape are not allowed on the pews or any other woodwork. Decorations must be tied with ribbon or fish line, or else held by rubber bands.

Petals dropped by a flower girl will need to be silk so that shoes will not grind them into the carpet.

Be sure to put aside all florist boxes before the service begins.

Candles

The chancel candles which enrich each of Zion's weekend worship services will be used for your wedding at no cost to you. You may bring your own wedding or unity candle. But for safety purposes, no other candles will be permitted.

Usually, the candles are lit about 10-15 minutes prior to the wedding service. The couple may choose to appoint someone as acolyte and they should be at least 13 years old.

Bulletins

You may wish to have printed bulletins to help others feel at ease about names and procedures. Not only do they help with hospitality, but they make a nice keepsake for your special day.

If you wish to have Zion print your bulletins, you will need to provide the copy-ready information to our office manager at least two weeks prior to the wedding.

Receiving Line

There are many ways to meet and thank your wedding guests. The pastor will visit with you in advance about the most appropriate idea for space and time utilization.

If you wish to have a receiving line in the back of the church (the narthex), Zion recommends that the receiving line consist of only the couple and parents.

Photography or Videotaping

Because of the specialness of this day, photographs are important. We will do all we can to help make the photographs intimate and unique while not being distracted from God's worship.

In keeping with the dignity of worship, we ask these things:

No flash photography during the service

Videotaping equipment can be assembled on the balcony

The photographer remains in the back few pews and out of sight after the wedding party has processed into the sanctuary.

The photographer and videographer may not put equipment past the first pew towards the altar. This distracts the congregation and pastor from the worship service.

Receptions

Zion's dining hall can be available to you if you reserve it through the office. Please contact the Office Administrator for information.

The pastor and musicians do not assume that they are invited to a rehearsal dinner and/or wedding reception unless they are invited. (And they need not be invited.) But if so, please do so in advance so that appropriate arrangements may be made

The Marriage License

The state of Iowa requires a marriage license to be signed by at least one witness, the couple, and the officiating pastor. Please obtain the license from the courthouse. There is a three business day waiting period before the wedding can take place.

Bring your license to the rehearsal. We will not conduct the rehearsal if we do not have your license in hand.

After the wedding, the church office will send the document on to the courthouse.

Fee Schedule

Refundable deposit	\$150 due 4 weeks out
Use of Building	Member: \$0 Non-member: \$225
Pastor honorarium	Member: \$0 Non-member: \$175
Prepare and Enrich Survey	\$ 35
Organist (wedding and rehearsal)	\$ 150
Soloist	Varies
Instrumentalists	Varies
Bulletins (if provided by church)	Bulletin cost plus 10 cents per page
Reception Space at church	See Office Administrator
Custodian	\$75

(All fees and payments are to be made before the day of the rehearsal.)

Typical Wedding Service

Prelude
Seating of Parents
Processional (entrance of wedding party)
Greeting
Declaration of Intention
Opening Prayer
Reading of Scriptures
Meditation on Scriptures
Marriage Vows
Exchange of Rings
Unity Symbol (optional)
Blessing
Prayers
Lord's Prayer (printed in bulletin)
Benediction
Introduction of the New Couple
Recessional
Postlude

Zion's Staff

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Patrick Hoffman, Custodian

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

www.zionlutheranclinton.org