



“THE TWO WILL  
BECOME  
*one flesh.*”

MARK 10:8, NIV

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## **Planning a Wedding at St. John's Lutheran Church**

So, you've decided to get married?! Congratulations!

Marriage is a holy and special bond. The wedding celebration is an act of joyful worship. It is a reflection of your relationship with the God of love and an occasion for asking God's blessing on your life together.

You are, "By your promises" planning to bind yourselves together in the presence of God and the congregation as husband and wife. This is a wonderful experience that you are planning for your family and friends. The information in this booklet is intended to give you all the information necessary to make this occasion a meaningful one and assure you that the wedding and surrounding tasks run smoothly.

## Setting the Date

All weddings are scheduled at the discretion of the pastor. Weddings may occur during regularly scheduled worship services or at other times that will be scheduled around regularly scheduled worship services. Weddings will not be scheduled during Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday - the dates of which change each year).

## Pre-Marriage Counseling

A wedding is just the beginning of your marriage, the beginning of living in a life-long relationship with one another and with Jesus Christ and the Church. Couples being married at St. John's are **required** to participate in marriage preparation activities. This may include one or more of the following options:

1. Complete the nine week **Financial Peace University**. The number one source of conflict in relationships is money, so there needs to be discussion about money. Completing this nine week class together with help you to put all your cards on the table, learn to talk about money together and develop a plan for how to handle money in your life together. When you do that, you'll also learn a lot about that person's habits and develop better communication skills. Go to [www.daveramsey.com](http://www.daveramsey.com) to find a class that works for you.
2. **Pre-Marriage Coaching with the Center for Human Development**. Every important decision in life is best handled with planning and preparation. Your marriage is one of the most important decisions that you will ever make. We want to help you prepare for this most wonderful march down the aisle of matrimony. Whether this is your first marriage or you have previously lost a mate; if there are children involved or your nest is empty, we can help ensure a more harmonious move into the marriage relationship. Marriage Coaching is proven to increase the success and longevity of your relationship. Call 1-800-236-3792 or <http://www.chdevelopment.org/services/pre-marriage-coaching/>
3. If you are unable to complete one of the above options, it may be possible to complete the pre-marriage requirement with the pastor. This includes completing the Prepare inventory that will cost you \$35 at the time of administration and a minimum of four follow up sessions with the pastor. The pastor reserves the right to ask for additional counseling activities if it is deemed necessary. Note that due to the pastor's schedule, evening and weekend appointments are generally not available.

The purpose of the pre-marriage preparation is to help you establish a solid foundation for your marriage and your lifetime together. These options are designed to help you be prepared for the commitment that you are making. Marriage preparation can help couples avoid some of the pitfalls of marriage and create a more satisfying and long-lasting relationship. Now is the time to establish a pattern of open, honest and effective communication that will bring a lifetime of joy and understanding to your marriage.

## Planning the Wedding Service

A wedding is, first and foremost, an act of worship to our loving God who calls two people together in marriage. Therefore, only those actions appropriate to worship are permitted. The following is the standard order for marriage.

### Seating of the Parents

The service general begins with the parents of the bride and groom being seated. If there will be a unity candle as part of the service this is generally when the mother's light the taper candles.

### Processional

- The groom enters (unless he has escorted his parents).
- The groomsmen and the bridesmaids enter from the rear doors and process down the aisle to the front.
- The pastor asks the congregation to stand and the bride, generally escorted by her father or another family member, follows.
- Generally one piece of music is chosen for the entire procession.
- After everyone is up front the pastor will ask the congregation to be seated and continue with the worship service.

### Greeting

#### Declaration of Intention

-The minister addresses the couple in these or similar words, asking each person in turn:  
*Name, will you have name to be your wife/husband, to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her/him, comfort her/him, honor and keep her/him, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her/him as long as you both shall live?*  
*Response: I will.*

- The minister address the assembly in these or similar words. *Will all of you, by God's grace, uphold and care for name and name in their life together? **We will.***

#### Prayer of the Day

Wedding Party is seated in the front pews for the scripture reading and sermon message.

*Optional: Special Music if desired.*

#### Scripture Readings

- You should **choose two or three scripture readings** to be proclaimed.
- This is an appropriate place to include others in your wedding service as scripture readers, perhaps baptismal sponsors (godparents) or friends or family that have good speaking voices.
- See the suggested scripture readings list

*Optional: Special Music if desired.*

#### Sermon Message

*Optional: Special Music if desired.*

The Wedding Party returns to the front

### **Vows**

- You will be asked to join hands and declare your promises to each other.
- The standard wedding vow is as follows: *I take you, name, to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.*
- You may also choose to write your own vows. They should be consistent with the biblical understanding of marriage and should make clear that the promises are a life-long commitment.

### **Giving of Rings**

#### **Acclamation of Marriage**

*Optional: Symbols of oneness in marriage may be used such as a unity candle.*

- You are responsible to provide your own unity candle along with two tapers (side candles). There is a stand available for you to use.
- Any other symbol of unity needs to be approved by the pastor
- Special music is recommended during this time
- Two witnesses will be asked to sign the marriage license during this time

### **Prayers**

*A service may include Holy Communion at this point.*

#### **Lord's Prayer**

- The congregation will be invited to join in praying the Lord's Prayer. The words to the prayer should be included in your wedding bulletin:  
*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen*

### **Benediction**

#### **Introduction of the couple**

#### **Kiss**

#### **Recessional**

- Music is played as the wedding group processes out.

#### **Receiving Line**

- Generally the Bride and Groom along with their parents greet the wedding guests in the entry way. The rest of the wedding party is not usually a part of the receiving line. It is suggested that you stand near the offices so that guests can easily get to the bathrooms or the coat racks on the other side of the entry area.

## Suggested Scripture Readings

*You should select two or more scripture readings to be read during the wedding service.*

*The following is a list of scripture passages couples frequently request. **You do not have to pick from this list.** It is merely suggestions to stimulate your thinking.*

### Old Testament Readings:

Genesis 1:26-31

Genesis 2:18-24

Ruth 1:15-18

Ecclesiastes 4:9-11

Psalms 33: 1-5

Psalms 34

Psalms 67

Psalms 100

Psalms 103

Psalms 117

Psalms 128

Psalms 136

Psalms 150

Song of Solomon 2:8-16

Song of Solomon 8:6-7

### New Testament:

Matthew 5:1-12

Matthew 19:4-6

Matthew 22:35-40

Mark 10:6-9

John 15:9-17

Romans 8:31-39

Romans 12:1-2, 9-8

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Ephesians 3:14-21

Ephesians 5:2, 21-33

Colossians 3:12-17

1 John 3:18-24

1 John 4:7-19

## Guidelines for Music

Whether you are selecting special music or congregational hymns, remember that your wedding is a worship service. Therefore it is important to choose music that speaks of your Christian commitment to each other and God's presence in your relationship. There is room for personal taste and variety of music styles, of course, but **all music should be appropriate for worship.** Purely secular music is best left to be used at your reception or wedding dance.

If you are wondering about whether or not a music selection is appropriate for your wedding, here is a tip: If you can answer "yes" to any of the following questions, the music is probably appropriate:

- 1. Does the music/text reflect praise and/or thanksgiving to God?**
- 2. Is the song based on, or does it reflect a scriptural theme?**
- 3. Is this song in the form of a prayer?**

If you are not sure your music is appropriate, check with the pastor.

# Church Policies

## Flowers

Flowers and decorations can add beauty to your wedding. As you consider flowers and decorations for your wedding please keep in mind that this is a worship service and that all decoration should enhance rather than detract from that focus. Flowers or other objects may not be placed on the altar, nor should they obscure the altar, pulpit, or cross. There are plant stands available to place flowers behind the altar and to the sides. The chancel furniture (altar, candles, etc.) may not be moved.

## Candles

The church has two altar candles which use liquid paraffin. They will be provided for your wedding. If you wish to use additional candles and/or a unity candle, you will need to purchase those candles. A unity candle stand is available for you to use.

## Paraments (altar cloths) and banners

These items are designed and used according to the church year. They are not decorations. Thus they will not be changed for your wedding in order to coordinate with colors you have chosen.

## Aisle Runners

**Are not allowed.** The aisle runner originally had a practical purpose of keeping the bride's train clean when church floors were dirt. That is no longer the case in our churches today. Aisle runners are not only difficult to roll out but have become a hazard for tripping and therefore they will not be allowed.

## Other Decorations

Decorations may be placed on the pews; Command® brand hooks may be used, however no other adhesive substances may be used to secure them. No tape is allowed. Any additional items to be used in the worship space must be approved by the pastor. **All decorations and personal items need to be removed from the sanctuary the same day as the service.**

## Rice, Birdseed, Confetti, etc.

We ask for your cooperation in not scattering rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals or any other object inside or outside the church building. Please advise your family, wedding party, and guests of this requirement. Should the throwing of any of these items occur, an additional fee for clean-up will be charged.

## Building Use

The building is here for the purpose of worship and fellowship. We ask that you respect its sacred nature and the commitment that has made it a beautiful place to worship and to gather. Please take care to leave it as you found it. If you discover that any damage has been done, please report this immediately to the custodian or pastor so that it can be repaired promptly. **Please remove all items from your wedding on the day of the wedding.**

## **Alcohol and Smoking**

First and foremost, the church is a place of worship. We ask your cooperation in helping to keep your church holy. Please do not bring alcoholic beverages onto the premises (church or grounds). Also, please advise your family, wedding party and guests that smoking is not allowed on the premises (church or grounds).

## **Children in a wedding**

Children, while cute, can be unpredictable in their behavior especially during a wedding. It is strongly suggested that you avoid having children participate in your wedding service. If you do choose to involve children, please limit the number to one flower girl and one ring bearer. Please note that the church policies do not allow flower girls to drop flower petals on the floor.

## **Musicians**

The church does not provide a musician. You are responsible for making all arrangements with any musicians desired for your wedding. Our church organist is Marsha Martens (659-5166). You may ask her if she would be willing to play for your wedding and you are responsible for negotiating the appropriate fee with her or any musician you select. Please inform your musician if there will be any special music and who the singers will be so that the musician can coordinate the necessary rehearsals.

## **Ushers**

A minimum of two ushers is recommended (more if you expect more than 150 guests), in order to seat and dismiss worshipers. Ushers should be mature people, as the nature of their task requires confidence and decisiveness. Ushers should attend the rehearsal.

## **Photography and Videography**

Your pictures should all be taken prior to the wedding service. Your photographer will generally need about 1 ½ hours for this and you should have all pictures completed 30 minutes prior to the service. If you wish to have your service recorded on video, the camera must be mounted on a tripod and started prior to the service. The videographer should check with the pastor for appropriate placement of the camera and should not be moving around during the service.

## **Rehearsals**

A rehearsal is not required. However, if you wish to have a rehearsal, please advise the pastor and all members of the wedding party. The purpose of the rehearsal is to walk through the wedding service. This may also be done earlier in the day of the wedding. Forty-five minutes is ample time for a rehearsal and all wedding participants are urged to be prompt.

## **Bulletins**

Couples generally want a bulletin to handout to their guests with the order of worship and the names of participants in the wedding service listed. **The church does not provide these.** Please have it approved by the pastor prior to printing them. If you need ideas, the pastor has several examples available for you to look at. You can often purchase these along with your invitations or bulletin covers can be purchased from office supply stores.



## **Sanctuary**

The worship spaces holds 180 people comfortably in the pews. We can accommodate additional people with chairs placed in the back or in the narthex (entry area). Chairs may not be placed in the aisles.

## **Officiant**

All weddings at St. John's will be officiated by the pastor of this congregation. If you wish to have another person officiate at your wedding or participate in the wedding service, this must be approved by the pastor in advance.

## **Invitations**

It is not necessary to invite the pastor to the rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception. If you want the pastor to attend, please send an invitation well in advance. This will give the pastor time to respond to your invitation and avoid any surprises. The pastor does not assume to be invited unless an invitation is received in advance. Please understand that the pastor may not be able to attend due to scheduling conflicts and other ministry responsibilities.

## **On Your Wedding Day**

Since your wedding day tends to be a full day with hair appointments, pictures and all the other preparations, you may want to consider providing food and bottled water for your wedding party to eat for lunch at the church. Often times a family friend is more than happy to help out with this. You don't need a lot of food but some sandwiches, veggies and water. This way everyone has a chance to get some lunch and stay hydrated.

## **Marriage License**

For all but the blessing of a civil marriage, couples must secure a license to marry from the state of Wisconsin. The License may be obtained at the County Clerk's Office of the county where one of you resides **5-30 days prior to the wedding**. You will need certified copies of your birth certificates; a social security number; proof of residency (driver's license, state ID card, passport etc.); if previously married, a death certificate or divorce judgment papers. There is a fee and both of you need to be present to apply for the application. The wedding license **should be given to the pastor at the beginning of the rehearsal**.

You will also need the following information:

### **Officiant**

Name: Rev. Rebekah Tarras  
Mailing Address: B3750 State Hwy 13, Spencer, WI, 54479  
Phone: (715) 659-5158  
Email: sjlcpastor@frontier.com

### **Location of the Wedding ceremony:**

- \* St. John's Spencer is located in the township of Brighton, Marathon County
- \* St. John's Riplinger is located in the township of Unity, Clark County
- \* If the wedding is at another location make sure you know the township, village or municipality where the wedding will take place.

## Fees

The following fees should be paid at or before the rehearsal.

	<b>Members</b> <i>as defined by the church constitution at the time the wedding is scheduled</i> (Suggested Gifts)	<b>Non-Members</b>
<b>Use of Chapel</b> (includes building use and additional services of the custodian)	<b>\$200</b> <i>payable to St. John's Lutheran Church</i>	<b>\$425</b> <i>payable to St. John's Lutheran Church</i>
<b>Use of Fellowship Hall for Receptions</b> (meal are not included)	<b>\$50</b> <i>payable to St. John's Lutheran Church</i>	<b>\$200</b> <i>payable to St. John's Lutheran Church</i>
<b>Pastor</b>	<b>\$100</b> <i>payable directly to the pastor</i>	<b>\$200</b> <i>payable directly to the pastor</i>
<b>Organist</b>	<b>\$75</b> <i>payable directly to the organist</i>	<b>\$100</b> <i>payable directly to the organist</i>
<b>Trained Sound System Technician</b>	<b>\$50</b> <i>Payable directly to the sound technician</i>	<b>\$50</b> <i>Payable directly to the sound technician</i>

## Wedding Information

The following information should be completed and given to the pastor when you meet to discuss final arrangements two to three weeks prior to the wedding.

Bride's Name (first, middle, last) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation/Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Place of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Place of Confirmation: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been married before? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, date that marriage ended \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Names \_\_\_\_\_

Any special family concerns that pastor should be aware of?

Groom's Name (first, middle, last) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation/Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Place of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Place of Confirmation: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been married before? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, date that marriage ended \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Names \_\_\_\_\_

Any special family concerns that pastor should be aware of?

Date of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Wedding (if other than the church): \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_

How many attendants will be in your wedding? \_\_\_\_\_

How many guests are you anticipating? \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture Readings: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reader(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Organist/Pianist/Musician: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Soloist/Other Musicians: \_\_\_\_\_

Music Selections: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Will you be using the standard vows or writing your own? \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be lighting a unity candle? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you obtained a marriage license? \_\_\_\_\_

Photographer: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of pictures: \_\_\_\_\_

Videographer: \_\_\_\_\_

What time do you need the building open on your wedding day? \_\_\_\_\_

Address after Wedding (include city and zip): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other details: