

### **Section 3 – Christian Rite of Marriage Policy**

(Adopted November 7, 2005, Revised April 6, 2009, June 1, 2009, August 3, 2009)

#### **Overview:**

There are various kinds of weddings. A wedding doesn't have to be a Christian service, nor does a marriage have to be a "Christian relationship". We at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church are concerned only with Christian weddings, which are first and foremost a service of worship. The invited guests are participants in the worship that asks God's blessing upon the couple. It is appropriate for the marriage service to take place within the context of Holy Communion, for the bride and groom to choose Lessons from the Holy Scripture, for the congregation to join in a responsorial Psalm (read or sung), and the singing of appropriate hymns. Also, the entire church premises should be treated with the utmost respect by all.

#### **Procedures:**

The following is basic information on the celebration of marriage at St. John's to help prospective brides and grooms begin planning their special service.

The Pastor - After the initial meeting with the Pastor, the date and time of the wedding will be listed on the church calendar. The prospective bride and groom will need to meet with the Pastor three (3) times in the months preceding the marriage to consider the Christian commitment they are making to each other and to plan the service. The Pastor will conduct a wedding rehearsal at the time of prospective bride and groom's choosing should they so desire. St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and its Pastor cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of these counseling sessions.

The Organist and Music - The congregation of St. John's employs a very capable Organist who will provide music for the wedding. The Organist's services include music consultation, wedding rehearsal, and all keyboard / piano / organ music before and during the wedding ceremony. Since the Christian Rite of Marriage is a service of worship, **no secular music of any kind is permitted.** Favorite love songs and ballads should be used at the reception. It is not guaranteed that St. John's Organist will play at every wedding; however, she will provide a qualified substitute and oversee all music that is chosen. The Wedding Coordinator will set up a date to review the music that has been chosen with the Organist. **Note: All music must be selected at least four (4) weeks prior to the wedding.**

Wedding Coordinator - This service is required since many small and large important details are addressed. Wedding coordinators are not required for weddings with a total attendance of twelve (12) or less.

The Soloist - Any Soloists will need to contact the Organist well in advance of the wedding to schedule a rehearsal. If the Church is asked to provide a Soloist, the fee for his or her services will be charged. If the prospective bride and groom provide their own Soloist, the fee should be handled personally. Again, note that no secular music is permitted in the service.

Fees - Members of St. John's are not charged for the use of the building for weddings; however, there is a modest fee of \$100 for building expenses. Non-members are charged a non-refundable fee of \$400 for the use of the building and building expenses payable at the time of reservation. Note that

weddings of twelve (12) persons or less could be held in the Chapel. Both members and non-members are responsible for the fees listed below, should the services be required.

**Fees payable directly to St. John's:**

- Pastor (non-members only) - \$150
- Organist - \$200 with no Soloist; \$250 with Soloist / Ensemble
- Custodian -\$100 (Special requests may require additional fees.)
- Aisle Candles and Candleholders - \$20
- Bulletins - \$0.50 per Bulletin, St. John's prints
- Reception in the Undercroft (members only) - \$250
- Building Expenses – Members, \$100; Non-members, \$400, nonrefundable

**Fees payable to individuals:**

- Wedding Coordinator - \$125
- Soloist (provided by the Church) - ranges from \$100 to \$200

Checks should be made payable to St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church for all of the above except the wedding coordinators and soloists. St. John's staff members will in turn be paid by St. John's for their work. **Checks for wedding coordinators and soloists should be made payable directly to the individual(s) providing the service and submitted to the church office two (2) weeks prior to the wedding.**

Wedding Reception - The Undercroft is available for the wedding receptions of St. John's members for the modest fee of \$250. This fee does not include breakage. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted. Again, the entire church property should be treated with respect. The custodian will set up the Undercroft as directed. A check in the amount of \$250 made payable to SJELC should be presented at the time of reservation.

Marriage License – The Pastor must have the Marriage License in advance of the wedding. The prospective bride and groom should bring it to the wedding rehearsal if not submitted to the Pastor at an earlier date.

Photographs - Photographers may take pictures before and after the service at will, and also during the processional and recessional. **No flash pictures are to be taken during the service.** Time exposures may be taken during the service from the rear of the Sanctuary **only**. The photographer must check with the Pastor before the service so that the wedding is not disrupted in any way. If there is to be video recording, that must be done from either the east or west transept (near the nave) **only**, except during the processional and recessional. The name and address of the photographer and videographer should be given to the Wedding Coordinator at least one month prior to the wedding. This is so the Church's policy on photography and videography can be mailed to them well in advance of the wedding.

Bulletins - There are excellent wedding Bulletins available; these greatly aid invited guests in worship. Bulletin covers may be purchased at an area store, and the church office will print the bulletins at a cost of \$0.50 each. The Bulletin contents will be discussed with the Pastor and should reflect the prospective bride and groom's choices for worship. Bulletins will need to be proofread and approved

by the Pastor or Organist at least two (2) weeks prior to the wedding. **Full names of all members of the wedding party are to be used.**

Flowers - The florist **must** deliver and set up in the Sanctuary **no less than one hour and a half before the service.** Two (2) vase stands to flank the altar or two (2) stands which will take arrangements in flat containers at either side of the altar (or to be used singly behind the altar) are available. No floral arrangements are to be placed on the altar. Aisle candleholders are also available. Each wrought-iron holder has a small ring onto which ribbons or flowers may be attached. Often the wedding party dresses at the church, and their flowers are delivered here; adequate facilities for this are available. For planning purposes, the main aisle in the Sanctuary is seventy-five (75) feet in length.

Aisle Runners - Aisle runners are not permitted.

Throwing Rice and / or Bird Seed - These are not permitted. In this time of deep concern for food shortages in our world, it is not keeping with our Christian ideals of concern for the hungry to throw rice. Birdseed can be slippery underfoot. Also, because of ill effects on our environment, balloon launches are not permitted.