



Preparing for a Wedding

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
Waukesha, WI

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding! This guide has been created to help you prepare for a wedding at St. Luke's Lutheran Church. We celebrate with you as you enter into marriage, seeking the blessings of God and the support of the gathered community as you make your promises.

Marriage is one of the Ministries of this Church

St. Luke's Lutheran Church wants to serve you by helping you enter into your marriage. It is one of the many ministries we do well. Weddings in the St. Luke's community are worship services filled with joy and hope. As we gather for a wedding, we call on God in prayer, praise and thanksgiving.

Our ministry with you begins before the ceremony. We walk with you as you prepare for your special day by providing pastoral time to you. If you choose to be married at St. Luke's, one of our pastors will meet with you to plan your big day, to strengthen your relationship, to pray with you, and to get to know you.

Who May Be Married at St. Luke's?

If you want a Christian wedding, you may be married at St. Luke's. Membership is not a requirement. We are in the community to serve. This ministry is offered by our community of faith for those who wish to be supported by the Christian ministry St. Luke's offers. In addition, our pastors are able to serve you in other locations, as well.

How Do You Begin Planning a Wedding at St. Luke's?

We invite couples to explore weddings at St. Luke's by reading this information and then talking with one of our pastors to arrange a date for their ceremony. Our pastors will work with you to arrange a date for your ceremony. While most weekends are available and appropriate for weddings to happen, there are times in the year when our ministry is not able to accommodate every request. Examples of weekends that our wedding ministry is not available include Holy Week and weekends when other large events are already scheduled. You secure your date by paying the wedding deposit. Usually, we are able to accommodate most requested dates.

Who will Preside at Your Wedding?

A St. Luke's pastor presides at all weddings held at St. Luke's. If you wish to have an additional Christian pastor participate in your wedding service, please talk with St. Luke's pastor about this. We will call the other pastor to make that invitation for you. Our pastor will still preside at weddings, as the one called to our community of faith to do these ministries.

Preparing For Your Wedding

Prior to your wedding, our pastor meets with couples being married at St. Luke's three or four times. These meetings are central to our ministry to you. It is our way of getting to know you, providing you with structured times of Christian reflection on your relationship, hopes and dreams, and equipping you with relationship tools to strengthen your relationship. We will use a relationship-strengthening tool called *Prepare-Enrich* during our meetings. We'll also discuss the order and logistics of the ceremony at these meetings. Please schedule your first meeting with the Pastor three months prior to your wedding. Other meetings, to meet our pastor and work on the planning process, can and should begin earlier.

Musicians and Music for the Ceremony

Normally, St. Luke's organist provides music for weddings. You will need to contact our organist as soon as you have your wedding scheduled to check on his/her availability. At least three months prior to your wedding you should meet with him/her to discuss music. The normal fee for the organist will be \$150. This fee covers one music consultation, playing at rehearsal if needed, and the wedding service. If a separate rehearsal is needed with a soloist, the fee will be raised by \$50. Normally, the organist will provide a fifteen-minute prelude, and a postlude music that continues until all people have left the nave.

Guest musicians and soloists are welcome to be a part of the wedding ceremony. All musical selections are to be discussed with the Music Director of St. Luke's and chosen for appropriateness within a Christian worship service. We strongly discourage recorded music at your wedding ceremony. Secular music – music not written for use in the church is not allowed in a wedding service.

If you are wondering whether a vocal 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:

Does the music/text reflect praise and/or thanksgiving to God?

Is the song based on, or does it reflect a scriptural theme?

Is this song in the form of a prayer?

Since the wedding service is a worship service, it is appropriate for those gathered to sing together. A hymn also adds to the sense of participation in the service by those attending. Hymns may be sung in place of other vocal music or instrumental processional and recessional.

The License

Prior to your wedding, you need to present your marriage license from the state of Wisconsin. You should deliver it to the church office no later than seven days prior to your wedding. Please check with the local courthouse early enough to meet any waiting period requirements.

Planning the Ceremony

As a Christian ceremony within a Lutheran congregation, there are basic elements of the service that will be consistently followed. These allow us to keep the proclamation of God's love through Jesus Christ central to our gathering. At the same time, our wedding service opens doors to possibilities and does not exclude creativity. Our pastor will discuss options with you as you meet to plan your wedding.

Decorations for the Ceremony

St. Luke's worship center is a beautiful place to be married. We invite you to place floral arrangements and other decorations you may wish in our worship center. Because of the sanctity of our altar area, we ask that only real flowers be used in the area around the altar (in the chancel area.) Please discuss your decorating hopes with our pastor.

Rehearsals

Couples regularly have a rehearsal prior to the ceremony, unless it is a very small wedding. These rehearsals usually happen the night before. They can also be done the morning of the ceremony, or an hour and a half prior to a service. Rehearsals typically take about an hour, once they are underway. Our Pastor will schedule an hour and a half for this on his/her calendar.

Offsite Weddings

Weddings in other locations are a beautiful way to celebrate a marriage. Our Pastor is available to travel to nearby venues and perform the ceremony in that space. A rehearsal can also be arranged in that space, if the couple makes those arrangements with those responsible for scheduling and communicates this with our pastor. Note that if the wedding is farther than a ten or fifteen minute drive (one way) from the church, there will be an additional fee for mileage and time. Venues that are fifteen minutes to thirty minutes away will be an additional seventy-five dollars. If the venue is thirty minutes to an hour away, an additional one hundred fifty dollars is charged. If the couple wishes to do a destination wedding, beyond an hour from the church, special arrangements can be made. Time of drive will be calculated using google maps, with St. Luke's set as the originating location.

Using a Unity Candle

We honor requests to use unity candles and other symbols of unity during your ceremony. If you make use of a unity candle, you will need to provide it along with two tapers (side candles) and any needed stands for the candles. Please feel free to include floral or greenery arrangements around your candles, if you choose. We do ask, however, that all candles used be dripless.

Ushers

Ushers are the first line of hospitality at a wedding service. A minimum of two ushers, four is always preferable, is necessary in order to seat and dismiss worshipers. Ushers should be mature people, as the nature of their task requires confidence and decisiveness. Ushers should be present at the rehearsal to be oriented to their tasks. It is the couple's responsibility to communicate with ushers their responsibilities.

Bulletins

Printed bulletins help inform guests of the order of worship and the names of participants in the worship service. Couples can provide their own or may request that the church prepare them on their behalf. All costs of bulletin preparation and printing are the responsibility of the couple.

Photography and Videotaping

Weddings are big days to be remembered and photography is an important part of the day. We invite you to take pictures before or after the ceremony. If doing pictures prior to the service, you should plan to be done 30 minutes before the wedding service is scheduled to begin. When doing photos after the service, please be done within an hour following the service. Videotaping the ceremony is best done from the balcony on a stationary tripod. Please instruct your photographer, family and friends not to use flash photography during the wedding service.

Changing Rooms

We provide wedding parties with two rooms in which to change clothes and gather prior to the

wedding. These rooms can be locked and keys can be provided to you to secure your belongings, if arrangements to do so are made prior to the rehearsal. To make it easier for you, you can bring gowns and other supplies to the church at the time of the rehearsal. At the end of the wedding, the keys must be returned.

Throwing Rice or Bird Seed

Originally the throwing of rice was believed to increase fertility, connecting female reproduction to the life-bearing grain. When it was discovered that rice is fatal to the birds who later eat it from the sidewalks, people started throwing birdseed. While this may be more ecologically sound, it has lost its original symbolism. It is St. Luke's policy that rice, birdseed, confetti or other similar material may not be thrown anywhere on church property. Bubbles may be used outside.

Inviting the Pastor to Your Reception and/or Rehearsal Dinners.

Our pastor wants to celebrate with those known in the congregation. However, it is not always possible for him/her to attend your rehearsal dinner and/or your wedding reception. This can be due to prior commitments, emergencies or for other reasons. If you would like the pastor and/or the musicians and their spouses to attend such events, please invite him/her well in advance (at the same time you send your other invitations is customary). This will give him/her time to respond to your invitation. If an invitation is not received early, our pastor will not know if his is invited.

Fees: Covering a Portion of St. Luke's Costs

St. Luke's provides a valuable ministry to couples being married in our community. We charge minimal fees to cover a portion of what it costs to have a wedding. The following fee chart reflects current fees for weddings at St. Luke's. These fees are subject to change. Couples are asked to pay fees charged no later than seven days prior to their wedding, according to the fee schedule in place at the time of the ceremony.

When you schedule your wedding at St. Luke's, you will be asked to pay a non-refundable facility use fee of \$250 to reserve the sanctuary for the date of your wedding. This fee is non-refundable. Your date will not be fully scheduled until payment of this fee has been received by the church office.

You are responsible for making checks payable to necessary individuals or groups involved in your wedding. All checks must be brought to the church office no later than seven days before your wedding. All monies paid are non-refundable if the wedding is canceled seven days or less prior to the scheduled date of your wedding.

Fees

Sanctuary/Chapel	\$250
Pastor	\$250

Organist	\$150	may be more, depending on what is asked for.
Copying Fee (bulletins)	\$35 + cost of stock	
Prepare/Enrich Inventory	\$35	

*Offsite fees may be additional, if the drive is more than fifteen minutes (one way) from St. Luke's.