

# **INSTRUCTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR WEDDINGS**

## **I. MARRIAGE**

A. "Marriage is a holy estate, ordained of God, and to be held in honor by all." It is the joining together of two lives. It is God's intention that those who marry should have joy and happiness, should give themselves to each other and should share their total lives. Therefore, it is proper to have the marriage solemnized in a service of worship in the church.

B. It is also proper for the couple to request premarital counseling from their pastor, and this should be done well in advance of the date desired for the wedding.

The church and the pastor desire to help the couple begin their married life in the best possible relationship with God and each other.

In this counseling, the couple will discuss the meaning of marriage and many of the practical considerations of living together, and will plan the arrangements for the marriage service.

## **II. GENERAL NOTES**

A. The Pastor is to be consulted about all services held in the church (use of the building, worship service and participants, etc...).

B. A wedding director may be secured. Such a director should consult the Pastor before any plans are made.

C. Both members and non-members of the congregation are responsible for securing additional supplies and services: candles, flowers, bulletins, sexton, organist, vocalist, acolyte, crucifer (if desired), etc...

D. Marriage is a service of worship and is properly conducted in the Church. Weddings at home (especially at the Pastor's home) are strongly discouraged.

## **III. WORSHIP**

A. The Christian wedding service is an act of worship and should be planned with the criteria that shape all parish liturgies. Here Christians come together to offer special thanks and praise and ask God's blessing upon this bride and groom as they join their lives together. It is a joyful occasion of worship directed to God and must be Christ-centered in emphasis.

B. Everything is to be an expression of worship to God and appropriate to such an occasion-the music, decorations, processional, liturgy, recessional, words, behavior, attitude, and manner of dress-of both bridal party and guests.

C. The entire congregation should participate in worship. Each one is asked to pray in silence and hear the Word spoken and sung. Each is asked to read the Psalm, sing the hymn and pray the Lord's Prayer-as indicated in the bulletin or in the announcements by the Pastor.

D. Other pastors may participate in the service with the approval of the Pastor and/or congregation council.

#### IV. MUSIC

A. All music used in connection with the wedding shall be appropriate for a Christcentered service of Worship. The same concern for appropriate music must be shown in planning the marriage service as is given to any other service of the church.

B. Any special music requests must be planned with the Pastor and the organist. This includes all music preceding the ceremony.

C. The organist or Pastor will gladly assist the couple in the selection of appropriate sacred music. There are many hymns, vocal solos and organ compositions which are joyful and worshipful. Popular secular selections cannot be used because they are not appropriate expressions of worship.

D. Subject to Minister of Music's availability, Minister of Music will provide organ music, if requested for weddings, consulting with couples or families if requested. The use of secular music is not permitted. For these services, the Minister of Music will receive an additional fee paid by the bridal party. The services of another organist may be used with the permission of the Minister of Music. The Minister of Music will assist in the hiring of substitute musicians if the Minister of Music is not available.

#### V. DECORATIONS

A. All decorations should aid in the worship of God and, in a Lutheran Church, should focus attention upon the altar. Flowers should be placed in the altar vases, as is customary for other Services of Worship. It is not necessary to have any additional decorations. However, additional decorations may be used if the party so desires.

B. The proper paraments for the season of the Church Year will be used.

C. No additional decorations are to be placed on the altar.

D. No chancel furniture will be moved for decorations.

E. If it is desired by the florist, a member of the Worship and Music committee or the Pastor will be present to instruct as to what is proper. The Pastor should be consulted if there are any questions.

F. All flowers for the altar and other decorations should be delivered to the church not less than two hours prior to the time of the wedding.

G. A kneeling pillow or "Prie Diew" for the couple is provided. It is also possible to simply kneel at our altar rail.

#### VI. ACOLYTES AND CRUCIFERS

A. Any Christian approved by the Pastor and instructed by him may light the candles. If a Crucifer is used, this person must be a Christian and should be familiar with the carrying of the processional Cross.

## VII. PICTURES

A. The designated photographer should be instructed that a time exposure with no flash of light involved (and no noise) may be taken provided the photographer is in some very inconspicuous place, like the very back of the church.

B. Usually there is no objection to taking pictures after the service as long as this is done with proper reverence for the house of God. The Pastor will gladly cooperate after the service in re-enacting any part of the wedding. If posing for pictures is desired, frequently the best time is immediately after the service, before the reception. Members of the wedding party should be informed of this at the rehearsal and reminded of this prior to the service.

C. It is not considered good taste to keep the guests waiting a long time at the place of the reception. Thus, a lengthy delay for the sake of taking pictures should be avoided.

## VIII. RECEPTIONS

A. A reception is not mandatory but is a courteous practice. It may be as simple as having a couple (probably with parents) standing in the narthex, an adjacent room, or on the church lawn--receiving the best wishes of the guests. Frequently it is held in a place arranged with some decorations and refreshments. This may be in the parish building, a private home, or any other suitable place.

B. The pastor or director may assist the couple in planning the reception: Where? When? Who will decorate? Refreshments? Who will serve? What custodial services will be needed before and after?

C. Facilities of the congregation may be used for a wedding reception. Scheduling is done through the church office.

D. Care must be taken that equipment and supplies of church and church school not be misplaced or damaged, and that rooms used for dressing or reception be promptly cleaned and ready for church use.

E. Custodial work in connection with a wedding and/or reception is additional cleaning in the church and should be taken care of by the bride's family. They may do it themselves or they may employ the sexton to perform this task for them. It is expected that they make these arrangements with the sexton themselves--time and cost, etc.

*Approved by Music & Worship Committee 9/30/02*

*Approved by Congregation Council 10/13/02*