

Marriage at Bethlehem Lutheran Church

It is our joy and privilege to walk with you as you prepare for marriage. These guidelines reflect our commitment at BLC to make plans that reflect a Lutheran Christian understanding of marriage:

“Marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and mutual strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family. God created us male and female and blessed humankind with the gifts of companionship the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. Jesus affirmed the covenant of marriage and revealed God’s own self-giving love on the cross. The Holy Spirit helps those who are united in marriage to be living signs of God’s grace, love and faithfulness.

Marriage is also a human estate, with vows publicly witnessed. The church in worship surrounds these promises with the gathering of God’s people, the witness of the word of God, and prayers of blessing and intercession.” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, page 286)

Making Arrangements for a Wedding at Bethlehem Lutheran Church

- Call the pastor at the church office - (585) 223-0634 - to select a date for the wedding and the rehearsal. The church office will identify the additional people that you will be working with for the ceremony, including a wedding coordinator and musician.
- Schedule an appointment with the wedding coordinator to plan the details of the wedding. The wedding coordinator will be present at the rehearsal and at the wedding to be sure that all matters discussed proceed as planned.
- Contact the musician to get your dates on the calendar, now. Six to eight weeks before the wedding, schedule an appointment with the organist to select the music. If a soloist is desired, but has not yet been identified, please discuss this with the organist at this time.
- Schedule counseling appointments with the pastor who will want to discuss the wedding service, and will also discuss matters pertaining to the preparation for marriage itself

Guidelines for Weddings

License:

- Apply for a marriage license no less than twenty-four (24) hours and no more than sixty (60) days prior to the wedding date. (You may obtain your license at any town hall in New York State - it is not mandatory that the license be applied for at the town hall in Perinton.) ***Bring the license and all checks (made out to the individual recipients) to the rehearsal***

Use of Facilities:

- Arrangements for the date and time should be made through the pastor. If an alternate location for your ceremony is desired, you are responsible for making

those arrangements. If an additional member(s) of the clergy (other than that of Bethlehem Lutheran Church) is to participate, s/he is responsible for making those arrangements through the pastor

- No charge is made to members for the use of the church. The fee for non-member use of the facility is \$TBD
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church currently has a seating capacity of 220 people in the sanctuary, with additional seating available in the Narthex (50), if necessary.

Music:

- The organist of the church shall play for all services. Since the marriage service is an act of worship, the organist has the responsibility for approving the music to be used and can suggest appropriate selections. Arrangements for vocalists or additional instruments are to be made through the organist. (Remember to keep the wedding coordinator informed of any additions or changes to the details you discuss.) See attachments.

Flowers / Additional Ornamentation:

- The recommended dimensions for altar flowers are **14" high x 20" wide**. (This is an excellent size for taking to the reception for the head table, too.) You may also provide an arrangement for the plant stand, which will be placed at the front of the sanctuary. Please do not place any flowers / ornamentation on the altar rail.
- In addition to flowers, your florist will provide a crash (aisle runner) and pew decorations, if desired. You may decorate the pews down the center aisle according to your preference - every pew, only the 'family' pews or every other pew. If pew decorations are used and pew clips are not available through your florist, please use masking tape rather than cellophane tape to attach them.
- Any requests for additional decorations must be discussed with the wedding coordinator.

Candles:

- The church provides the candles used on the altar. Plans for use of additional candles (i.e. Unity Candle Ceremony) will be discussed with the wedding coordinator. We recommend purchasing high-quality, beeswax, non-drip candles. A good florist should be able to provide something.

Photographer:

- The wedding coordinator will inform the photographer (whether a professional or a family member/friend) of the church policy concerning photography.
- Flash pictures may be taken at the very beginning of the ceremony, during the Processional, and again as the newly married couple are leaving the sanctuary. Non-flash photographs may be taken during the service, as long as the photographer remains inconspicuous at the rear of the sanctuary.
- After the Recessional, the wedding party and family members may assemble in the sanctuary for pictures. Make a list of specific shots you would like to capture (i.e. four generations of men in the groom's family, grandparents only) - add it to

the list of more expected shots (i.e. couple with bride's family, couple with groom's family), and give a copy to the photographer prior to the day of the wedding.

Videographer:

- The wedding coordinator will inform the videographer (whether a professional or a family member/friend) of the church policy concerning videography.
- The video equipment can be set-up in one of two places in the rear of the sanctuary. The videographer may stand inconspicuously at the rear of the sanctuary.