

WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE

Wedding Blessings!

We congratulate and celebrate with you on your journey of becoming one. We are glad your faith is important to you and has led you to choose Bethel Lutheran Church as the place for your wedding. The pastoral and support staff at Bethel will help you with the important decisions that you will be making. We are here to be of service to you and to celebrate the partnership into which this brings us.

This booklet is designed to help you prepare for your wedding celebration, answer questions, and outline steps that are necessary to make your wedding all it can be. Please read this booklet carefully and contact us with any comments or questions as soon as possible.

Also, please know that all couples married at Bethel will need to attend the Lutheran Social Service (LSS) pre-marriage workshop—or be involved in some other pre-marriage counseling. Workshops are held at Bethel and other locations throughout the year. *(Please see us for details.)*

We look forward to serving you, and we pray, not only for your wedding ceremony, but also for your life together as a committed couple.

In the Love of the Savior,

The Pastoral and Support Staff
Bethel Lutheran Church

Rehearsal Date/Time: _____

Wedding Ceremony Date/Time: _____

Location: Downtown ☐ Highlands ☐

SOME FIRST STEPS

In this wedding packet, you will see “Wedding Information” and “Wedding Music Information” forms. Please complete these forms and return them to the church office **one month prior to the wedding**. We ask that wedding fees be paid no later than **one month prior to the wedding**.

The following arrangements should be completed before making further plans for your wedding:

1. SETTING THE DATE AND TIME

As far in advance of the wedding as possible, call the church office (715-386-8821 between 8:30 and 4:30 Monday through Friday) and ask for the administrative assistant who takes care of weddings. He/she will assist you with reserving the church and determining the date for your wedding.

Note that 3pm is the latest start time for a Saturday wedding at the Highlands campus. This allows the altar care team, custodian and others to prepare for Saturday evening worship.

2. THE PASTOR

The pastors at Bethel want to help you with your wedding and marriage. Pastors are assigned weddings depending on other scheduled responsibilities. Your pastoral preference therefore may or may not be granted.

If you wish a clergy-person from another congregation to participate in the wedding, you should first consult with the pastor from Bethel who will be presiding at your wedding.

3. OUR VALUES FOR WEDDINGS AT BETHEL

Marriage is meant to be a covenant of lifelong faithfulness, grounded on God's steadfast love. God's amazing faithfulness and covenant to us is our model. (Ephesians 5:21-23)

A marriage celebration is a worship service and should be structured to glorify God. The pastors at Bethel Lutheran will not perform “walk-in” marriages. A minimum waiting period of one month is required on all marriages.

Any final decisions regarding the worship, music, and liturgy rest with the pastor. Also, the pastor reserves the right to refuse to perform a marriage if he/she feels they cannot in good conscience be involved.

4. MUSICIANS

The organist of Bethel will normally play at all weddings where organ music is desired. If the organist is not available, the church will recommend another organist/pianist who is familiar with our instruments. **It is the responsibility of the bride and/or groom to contact the musician(s) of the church to schedule the date and discuss the music.**

Should the couple desire another musician, arrangements must be made in advance with our church organist/music director. Before other contacts are made, please read the section about music in this brochure, and discuss your plans with the pastor.

5. REHEARSAL

Rehearsals are usually planned if there is music involved, with a processional and recessional, and more than four persons in the wedding party. This time should be arranged with the pastor at the same time the wedding is scheduled. Rehearsals take less than one hour, and are usually held the day or evening before the wedding.

6. THE LICENSE

Wisconsin Law requires couples to secure a license to marry. It must be applied for a minimum of five working days and not more than 30 days before the wedding at any Clerk of Court office in the state. Only one person need apply, but he/she must have proof of age for both persons. There is a fee for the license. **The license should be brought to the church office at least one week prior to the wedding.**

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

1. THE ORDER OF SERVICE

Sacred Threshold is a book that can help with selecting scripture verses and setting an appropriate tone for your worship service. Copies can be borrowed from Bethel's pastors as you plan your wedding.

The usual order of service is as follows:

Prelude	Exchange of Rings
Processional	Unity Candle (or other symbolic item)
Invocation	Music
Welcome	Prayers and The Lord's Prayer
Prayer	The Marriage Blessing
Scripture Readings	Presentation of the Couple
Music	Recessional
Wedding Message	Postlude
Marriage Vows	

The wedding service allows for a variety of options. We encourage you to read the service carefully and to discuss together what the service says about marriage. You may wish to modify the service or even construct your own by writing your own vows, prayers, and liturgy. This, of course, should be done in consultation with the officiating pastor.

Assisting ministers, family or friends may also be used in the service to read the lessons or to assist in prayers. You may wish to invite your parents to lay on hands for a blessing. If you choose to celebrate communion as part of your wedding, be sure to check with the pastor beforehand about having someone to prepare the elements, do the serving, and clean-up afterwards.

2. SOME SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES

Each wedding ceremony should include at least one scripture reading (most have two or three readings). Please choose scriptures that are meaningful to you as a couple. If the following scriptures are not what you're looking for, please ask your officiating pastor for more ideas.

Old Testament Lessons:

Genesis 1:26-28
Genesis 2:18-24
Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a
Song of Solomon 2:10-13
Song of Solomon 8:7
Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalms 33, 100, 117,
127, 128, 136, 150

The creation of man and woman
Two shall become one
God's new covenant
Love in the spring
Unquenchable love
God's steadfast love
God's faithfulness

Gospel Lessons:

Matthew 5:13-16
Matthew 7:24-29
Matthew 19:4-6
Matthew 22:35-40
John 2:1-11
John 15:9-12
John 15:12-16

Salt of the earth and light of the world
A house built on rock
Faithfulness in marriage
The greatest commandment
The wedding at Cana
Remain in my love
Love one another as I have loved you

Epistle Lessons:

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39
Romans 12:1-2
I Corinthians 12:31-13:13
Ephesians 5:21-33
Colossians 3:12-14
I John 4:7-19

The love of Christ
A living offering
The greatest is love
Subject to one another
Put on love
Living in God's love

3. MUSIC AND THE WEDDING

Your wedding ceremony is a service of worship. It is a gathering of family and friends, in God's presence, to hear your vows and celebrate your faithfulness to each other and God's faithfulness to you. The music you select should contribute to this spirit of worship, praise, and thanksgiving. The music may be instrumental or vocal, and may be sung as a solo, duet, small ensemble, full choir, or as congregational hymns.

Please check with Bethel's music director first before making decisions about music, musicians or arrangements. The music director can provide numerous options for your consideration. Please feel free to request music that you would like to have considered.

We recognize musical tastes are diverse. The Bethel staff tries not to make artistic judgments; however, we do reserve the right to refuse any song or music that is inconsistent with the values of a Christian marriage commitment and/or worship service.

4. CONGREGATIONAL HYMNS

The use of a congregational hymn can be an effective way to involve the guests as participants in the wedding celebration. Please talk with the pastor about suggestions that are appropriate and acceptable to you.

5. SOME POSSIBLE VOWS

- A. I take you _____,
to be my wife/husband, from this day onward,
to join with you and share all that is to come,
and I promise to be faithful to you, until death parts us.
- B. _____, I take you
to be my wife/husband from this time onward,
to join with you and to share all that is to come,
to give and to receive, to speak and to listen,
to inspire and to respond,
and in all circumstances of our life together,
to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being.

- C. I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband.
I promise before God and these witnesses,
to be your faithful wife/husband,
to share with you in plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health,
to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you,
so that together we may serve God and others,
as long as we both shall live.
- D. I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband,
and these things I promise you:
I will be faithful to you and honest with you;
I will respect, trust, help, and care for you;
I will share my life with you;
I will forgive you as we have been forgiven;
and I will try with you to better understand ourselves, the world and God;
through the best and the worst of what is to come
as long as we both shall live.
- E. I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband.
I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health.
I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.
- F. _____, do you take _____ to be your wife/husband?
Do you promise to be true to her/him in good times and in bad,
in sickness and in health,
to love her/him and honor her/him all the days of your life?
- G. I, _____, take you, _____ for my lawful wife/husband,
to have and to hold, from this day forward,
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death parts us.
- H. _____, do you take _____, for your lawful wife/husband,
to have and to hold, from this day forward,
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death do you part?

(Couples are also welcomed and encouraged to write their own vows.)

6. SET-UP

If an aisle runner is desired, it must be provided by the couple.

Paraments on the altar are to remain in place. Flowers may be placed on stands right next to the altar or on the floor. It is inappropriate to place flowers on the altar.

Please feel free to ask the custodians, florist, or office staff if you have questions concerning decorating the church pews, communion railing, or altar. In order to prevent damage to our sanctuary fixtures, tape or tacks are not used during decorating.

Also, please clean up afterwards in any rooms you use.

7. USHERS

A minimum of two ushers (more if more than 100 guests) are necessary to light candles, seat guests, etc. Groomsmen or bridesmaids may be used as additional ushers. Ushers should be mature and responsible.

8. BULLETINS

It is helpful to have a printed program to inform guests of the order of service and the names of the participants in the wedding. You should plan the program with the pastor, and the pastor will approve the final copy. Bethel Lutheran does not provide for printing of wedding bulletins. Please contact a local print shop for this service.

9. PHOTOGRAPHY

The wedding party should control both the time and the cost of the pictures, not the photographer. **We encourage most pictures to be taken before the wedding**, but the photographic session should be completed at least 30 minutes prior to the service. If taking pictures after the service, please be aware that on Saturday, there is a worship service at the Highlands campus starting at 5:30 PM. **Custodians need one hour to prepare for the evening worship service.**

If you wish to have all pictures taken after a wedding at the Highlands Campus, please book the ceremony for no later than 1:00 PM.

Because your wedding is a worship service, we ask that you speak with your photographer to request that they be respectful of the worship experience.

You might also consider having an “unplugged” wedding ceremony. A message can be placed in your bulletin asking that guests refrain from using their cameras during your ceremony. If you wish, the pastor can make a statement such as: “Welcome, friends and family! (Couples names) invite you to be truly present at this special time. Please, turn off your cell phones and put down your cameras. The photographer will capture

how this moment looks -- I encourage you all to capture how this sacred moment feels with your hearts,”

10. VIDEOTAPING

You are free to contract with a company/person of your choice to videotape your wedding. Please talk with the pastor for more information and details. **While Bethel equipment is sometimes used to capture wedding video images, Bethel is not responsible for the quality or service provided by any videography service provider.**

11. OFFSITE WEDDINGS

Bethel pastors prefer that weddings be held at one of our two campuses as these facilities help participants to celebrate the importance of God in marriage. Pastors may, at their option, perform marriage rites at other suitable locations.

Offsite ceremonies often present unpredictable challenges for the pastor and other participants. If you are planning an offsite ceremony, please contact your pastor to discuss these arrangements. Due to the unique nature of offsite weddings, the pastor's honorarium will be \$250.

12. SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES

A wedding is a worship service of the church. Participants and guests should conduct themselves accordingly.

Make certain you and your entire wedding party arrives at the church at least ten minutes prior to the rehearsal. (We **WILL** begin on time whether everyone is present or not.)

The upstairs lounge at the Downtown campus or the music room at the Highlands campus will be available for the bride and her attendants. You may also utilize the small sink and refrigerator attached to the Downtown lounge, or the Highlands kitchen. The groom and groomsmen may use a room in the south wing (Downtown) or youth room (Highlands) as a dressing area if needed. Following your ceremony, please check the rooms you have used to be sure personal items are not left behind and rooms are clean.

Please remind your family and friends not to throw rice, natural flower petals or birdseed in the church building or outside of the building. Those items are hazardous to birds, damaging to carpet, and difficult to clean up. Artificial flower petals may be used.

Smoking, or use of alcohol or drugs on church property before, during or after your wedding is prohibited.

A COUPLE'S CHECKLIST FOR THE CHURCH

- _____ Have you studied this booklet carefully?
- _____ Has the church been confirmed with a specific date and time?
- _____ Have you contacted the pastor?
- _____ Has the rehearsal date and time been set?
- _____ Has your entire wedding party and both families been notified of dates and times?
- _____ Has the organist/musician(s) been confirmed for the wedding and rehearsal?
- _____ Has the music for your wedding (organ, soloists, hymns, etc.) been agreed upon?
- _____ Has the premarital workshop or counseling been arranged?
- _____ Have you returned the information sheet and paid your fees?
- _____ Have you prepared honorarium payments to musicians?
- _____ Have you purchased the wedding license and provided it to the church office at least five days prior to the ceremony?
- _____ Has the florist been arranged with a specific time to decorate?
- _____ Has the photographer been secured and arrangements for pictures made?
- _____ Has the videographer been arranged?
- _____ Do I have a Guest Book?
- _____ Have I arranged for a gift box and gift table?

WEDDING FEE SCHEDULE

(All fees must be paid one month prior to wedding to the Downtown campus address below)

The following is a summary of financial expenditures that could be involved in a wedding held at Bethel. Additional fees may apply if a reception is to be held at the church.

Use of Bethel Facilities:

The fixed fee for use of either the Downtown or Highlands campus is \$600 for active members or \$900 for inactive or non-members. The child of an active member is considered to be a member.

Includes: Sanctuary and dressing areas
 Custodial fee
 Audio technician (sound and lighting only)
 Pastor's honorarium

Offsite Weddings:

As mentioned in Section 11, the pastor's honorarium for offsite weddings is \$250.

Additional Fees:

We encourage you to use live music for your ceremony. Your pastor can assist you in identifying an organist/pianist, vocal or instrumental soloists or ensembles that often assist during weddings at Bethel. You are encouraged to consider (but you are not required) to use musicians associated with Bethel as they are familiar with our equipment and processes. Please note that arrangements for these services are between the couple and the selected provider(s). Bethel is not responsible for the quality or performance of these services. Customary payment of honorariums to these individuals is in addition to the fixed facility use fee paid to Bethel as described above.

Summary Fee Checklist

1. Weddings held at Bethel Downtown or Highlands (payable one month before the wedding date):
 - \$600 for members
 - \$900 for non-members
2. Offsite wedding fee: \$250 (payable one month before the wedding date)
3. Honorariums are paid by the couple directly to musicians at their agreed upon performance rate



CONNECT. GROW. SERVE.

WEDDING INFORMATION

Please return this information to Rita (rfitzsimons@bethelhudson.org) as soon as possible

Bride's Name _____
First Middle Last Preferred Phone

Address _____
Street City, State Zip Code

Groom's Name _____
First Middle Last Preferred Phone

Address _____
Street City, State Zip Code

Couple's preferred email address _____

Address after the wedding _____
Street City, State Zip Code

Preferred phone _____

Bride's Parents Name(s) _____ Phone: _____

Groom's Parents Name(s) _____ Phone: _____

LSS Marriage Workshop Scheduled for _____
Date Location

Wedding Date _____ Time of Ceremony _____

Rehearsal Date _____ Time of Rehearsal _____

Location: Downtown ☐ Highlands ☐ Offsite ☐ (_____)

Photographer _____ Date/Time of Session _____

Pastor _____ Participating Clergy _____

Organist/Pianist _____ Soloist _____

Florist Name/Phone _____ Providing Aisle Cloth? (Florist – Self – None)
(Circle)

Wedding will be videotaped by _____ (This is your responsibility to arrange)

WEDDING INFORMATION (continued)

Please return this information to Rita (rfitzsimons@bethelhudson.org) as soon as possible

ATTENDANTS (Please print these names as you wish them to appear on the wedding license.)

Maid/Matron of Honor _____ Best Man _____
(Witness) (Witness)

Please check the following items needed:

Altar Candelabra – ☐ (candelabra holds 14 candles)

Guest Book Table ☐ Gift Table ☐

BETHEL LUTHERAN WEDDING MUSIC INFORMATION

Couple's Names: _____

Wedding Date and Time: _____ Location: Downtown ☐ Highlands ☐

Phone Number: _____ Rehearsal Date and Time: _____

Pastor: _____ Organist/Pianist: _____

Please check all instruments being used during the ceremony:

Organ ☐ Grand Piano ☐ Others (please specify): _____

List all vocalists and the location where they will be singing from (balcony or front):

Please list any other microphone or sound system needs that you might have:

If you have any other questions or comments, please contact Bethel at 715-386-8821.