

WEDDING POLICY & INSTRUCTIONS

Zion Lutheran Church, Cadillac MI

MARRIAGE and the MARRIAGE SERVICE

Congratulations on your engagement! You are entering into a time of planning that includes your wedding day, but the planning isn't only about your wedding day. You are entering a time of preparing for marriage, which is the main concern of the church. We, at Zion, are excited to work with you in preparing both for your wedding ceremony and your marriage.

Within these pages you will find information to help you prepare for both your wedding and marriage. As you read these pages, there are a few things to keep in mind. First, because you are seeking a Christian wedding ceremony, you will be asked to **find a church home** if you don't already have one. Because we believe God sustains and nurtures us and our relationships in marriage, we feel it is important for you to be connected to a worshipping Christian community.

Second, you will read within these pages information about your wedding day. It is important to remember that the **marriage service is a worship service** of Zion Lutheran Church. As such, it will contain many of the same elements of Sunday worship: there are readings from the Bible, an address (sermon or homily), and prayers.

Finally, the purpose of the marriage service is to share your joy with the congregation and to enable the congregation to join you in invoking God's blessing upon your marriage. There is a temptation to view the wedding ceremony as individualistic and "my wedding." However, the **focus of the marriage service is on God** and His sustaining love that guides and directs our relationships.

We rejoice that you have chosen to call upon God's blessing in your relationship. Our hope and prayer are that the pages which follow will enable a faithful beginning to your marriage.

PREMARITAL CONVERSATIONS

This is the first step in planning for your wedding at Zion Lutheran Church. Please call to set up an appointment for premarital conversations as soon as possible.

**No wedding date can be set
until the couple attends the first session.**

You will attend **four sessions**, which are completed before the rehearsal. These may take several months to schedule and complete, depending upon the couple's availability and on the parish ministry and worship schedule.

Topics covered:

- * An understanding of the Marriage Service of Lutheran Worship and of music for the Marriage Service.
- * Arrangements and details for the couple's Marriage Service.
- * Reflection and conversation on the life experiences of the couple: the personalities, family history, and expectations that each partner brings to the relationship.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS

It is advisable to make wedding arrangements as far in advance as possible. As soon as the date of your wedding is considered, contact the church to make certain the pastor and building are available.

It is expected that the pastor or pastors of this congregation will preside at the Marriage Services in our church. We invite those who are clergy or musicians to assist in the service.

OFFICIATING CLERGY

Guest clergy of your choice are welcome to participate in your wedding. The invitation to do so will be given by the pastor or pastors of Zion Lutheran Church.

MUSIC

The music for the wedding should be in keeping with the dignity, beauty, and sacredness of the Marriage Service. There is much secular wedding music, which though it may be beautiful and acceptable for use at a reception, is not appropriate for a church wedding.

It is expected that the church organist will be consulted to play for the service. The church organist is most familiar with the instrument and understands the type of music that is acceptable.

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

We are pleased to invite your family and guests into our church home as our guests too. This building has been dedicated as a house of God. Its primary purpose is worship and prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.

Decorations may not be tacked on, nailed, or taped onto the building or any of the furnishings. We highly discourage runners on the carpet since they can cause stumbling. It is the responsibility of the wedding family to arrange for the flowers and their containers. (**Artificial flowers should not be used on or at the altar.**) It is the responsibility of the family to remove all flowers following the Marriage Service. If you wish to leave them for Sunday services, please let the Parish Administrator know well in advance that you wish to donate the flowers for that Sunday.

Please refrain from sprinkling real flower petals on the carpet, as this may stain the carpet.

REHEARSAL

Approximately 45 minutes should be allowed for the rehearsal. All members of the wedding party; including parents, ushers, organist, and soloists; should be in attendance and PROMPT.

PHOTOGRAPHS and VIDEOS

We request that no pictures be taken after members of the bridal party have entered the Nave and reached the front of the church, nor are pictures to be taken during the ceremony unless it be done from the balcony or the back of the Nave without flash. Pictures may be taken as the wedding party processes and recesses. After the service is concluded, pictures may be taken as desired. Video taping must be done from one location without auxiliary lighting. The location is to be agreed upon before the rehearsal by the pastor or pastors of Zion Lutheran Church, the couple, and the cameraman.

Professional photographers generally observe these rules without incident. Friends and relatives of the couple are often unacquainted with them. It is helpful to state in the bulletin that no pictures are to be taken during the wedding ceremony.

RECEPTION

If a reception is to be held at the church, it should generally end no later than 9:00 p.m. on Saturday in order to allow time for the church to be prepared for worship services and Sunday school the next morning. Exceptions must be discussed with the pastor or pastors of Zion Lutheran Church. Please consult the Building Use Policy for church use in planning a reception at the church.

Use of the Fellowship Hall must be arranged in consultation with the Parish Administrator. Rules and charges for use of the Fellowship Hall may be found on the Building Use Policy and Wedding Fee Schedule.

Kitchen equipment is available for nonmembers and members, but must have Church Council approval for use. The kitchen and Fellowship Hall are to be left in the same condition as you found them.

The throwing of rice, confetti, or bird seed is not permitted! Also, please reconsider the use of balloons since they are a great threat to birds and the environment. Bubbles are an acceptable alternative.

MISCELLANEOUS

The marriage license is to be delivered to the church office during the week prior to the wedding ceremony. No marriage will be performed without a license.

Weddings will not be scheduled during Lent and Holy Week or Christmas.

The florist/caterers are to be instructed, when employed, to remove all equipment immediately after the wedding ceremony and reception are concluded.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Financial arrangements are established in the Wedding Fee Schedule (found on page 8).

It is not the policy of the church to look upon weddings as a source of revenue. However, there are expenses connected with the operation of the various areas used for a wedding and reception.

A date cannot be set until a deposit is paid. All fees for nonmembers are to be paid to the Parish Administrator one week prior to the rehearsal.

The pastor or pastors of Zion Lutheran Church are self-employed and receive remuneration from Zion Lutheran Church for services. There is no set fee for member weddings. You may give an honorarium, if you choose, but none is required. For nonmembers, the fee for the pastor or pastors may be found on the Wedding Fee Schedule.

WEDDING FEE SCHEDULE

	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nonmember</u>
1. Sanctuary	Free	\$ 200**
2. Deposit	None	\$ 100**
3. Pastor	Honorarium	\$ 100
4. Organist	\$ 100	\$ 100
Additional for practice with soloist	25	25
5. Custodian	\$ 50	\$ 50
6. Reception	No Charge	\$ 200
7. Parish Administrator	No Charge	\$ 25

*** Half of the Sanctuary fee (\$100) is used as a deposit and is nonrefundable.

If the fees are paid by check, separate checks will be required for the church, organist, pastor, custodian, and Parish Administrator.

Approved by Congregational Council - October 19, 2010