

**ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**11007 South 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue**  
**Worth, IL 60482**  
**(708) 448-6555 Fax (708) 448-6594**

## **WEDDING GUIDELINES**

We are glad you have chosen to celebrate your wedding at St. Mark! We rejoice with you in the love you have found for each other and the decision you have made to pledge your faithfulness to one another within the community of God's people. Your coming to a Christian church to marry says something about how you see marriage in relationship to Christ.

This booklet contains statements about the Christian understanding of marriage, and policies and guidelines of our church which grow out of that understanding. Also included are some practical reminders and hints about weddings at St. Mark. Please read it through to the end.

A Christian wedding is a worship service. It is neither a fashion show nor a musical production. It is a time to joyfully give thanks and praise to God for all His good gifts. Guests are not merely spectators who watch the proceedings, but active participants who worship and celebrate with you.

Christian marriage is a covenant (or contract), the basis for which is the lifelong commitment that the man and woman make to each other. Contrary to popular understanding, the basis of this commitment is not romantic love. Romantic love, while it is a wonderful experience, is changeable and cannot be depended on as a reliable and trustworthy foundation for marriage.

One cannot promise to be "in love" even one year from now, but one can make a commitment to live with the other, to be faithful to the other, and to serve and care for the other as long as one lives, regardless of what one's feelings and emotions may be.

It is important to understand that the Pastor does not "marry" the couple. Each member of the couple marries each other by virtue of their lifelong commitment to each other. The Pastor is there to witness their vows, and to give the blessing of the church to their union. (Paraphrased from the article in marriage in the Manual on the Liturgy—Lutheran Book of Worship)

## **THE WEDDING SERVICE**

Because a Christian wedding is a worship service, everything in it should reflect that worship and the presence of Christ in the couple's life and community.

The Order for Marriage from the Lutheran Book of Worship is as follows. You may follow the below exactly, or adapt to your liking, always within the bounds of being a Christian worship service. The Pastor will help you create your service. (We welcome other religious leaders to be involved in your wedding service, too.) Please note: \*indicates a good place for music.

## **\*Prelude**

### **1. The bride, groom and wedding party stand in front of the Pastor. A welcome is said by the Pastor.**

*Pastor: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."*

*Congregation: "And also with you."*

*Pastor: "Let us pray. Eternal God, our Creator and Redeemer, as you gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee by the presence of your Son, so by his presence now bring your joy to this wedding. Look in favor upon \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and grant that they, rejoicing in all your gifts, may at length celebrate with Christ the marriage feast which has no end. Amen."*

### **2. One or more lessons from the Bible are read.**

### **3. \*Wedding Sermon.**

### **4. The Intensions**

*Pastor: "The Lord God, in His goodness, created us male and female, and by the gift of marriage founded human community in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come.*

*"Because of sin, our age-old rebellion, the gladness of marriage can be overcast and the gift of family can become a burden.*

*"But because God, who established marriage, continues still to bless it with his abundant and ever-present support, we can be sustained in our weariness and have our joy restored.*

*"\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, if it is your intention to share with each other your joys and sorrows, and all that the years will bring, with your promises, bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife."*

### **5. The Vows**

**The bride and groom face each other and join hands. Each in turn promises faithfulness to the other in these or similar words:**

*Bride/Groom: I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/ husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us."*

Examples of alternative vows are available from the Pastor. The couple is welcome to write their own vows with the following guidelines:

- The promises should indicate the complete sharing which marriage implies
- The promises are to be clearly those of a lifelong commitment.
- Don't promise more than you can deliver; for example, it is unrealistic to say, "I promise my love for you will grow every day."
- The promises are to be discussed with the presiding Pastor.

### **6. The exchange of rings.** *Bride/Groom: "I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness." (While this is said, the bride/groom places a ring on the other's finger.*

## 7. The Announcement of Marriage;

*Pastor: “\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, by their promises before God and in the presence of this congregation, have bound themselves*

*to one another as husband and wife. Blessed be the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Those whom God has joined together, let no one put us under. Amen.”*

## 8. \*The Lighting of the Unity Candle (Optional)

## 9. The Blessing.

**The bride and groom kneel on the kneeler and join hands. The Pastor places his/her hand on the hands of the couple.**

*Pastor: “The Lord God who created our first parents and established them in marriage, establish and sustain you, that you may find delight in each other and grow together in holy love until your life’s end. Amen.”*

## 10. The Prayers.

**The bride and groom remain kneeling together, while the congregation stands. Prayers follow. You are welcome to write your own prayers, suggest prayer petitions ahead of time to the Pastor, or use any art of the following prayer:**

*Pastor: “Let us bless God for all the gifts in which we rejoice today. Lord God, constant in mercy, great in faithfulness, with high praise we recall your acts of unfailing love for the human family, for the house of Israel, and for your people, the church.*

*“We bless you for the joy which your servants \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have found in each other, and pray that you give to us such a sense of your constant love that we may employ all our strength in a life of praise to you, whose work alone holds true and endures forever. Amen.*

*“Let us pray for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in their life together.*

*Faithful Lord, source of love, pour down your grace upon \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, that they may fulfill the vows they have made this day, and reflect your steadfast love in their lifelong faithfulness to each other. As members with them of the body of Christ, use us to support their life together; and from your great store of strength, give them power and patience, affection and understanding, courage, and love toward you, toward each other, and toward the world, that they may continue together in mutual growth, according to your will, in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

*“Let us pray for all the families throughout the world. Gracious Father, you bless the family and renew your people. Enrich husbands and wives, parents and children more and more with your grace, that strengthening and supporting each other, they may serve those in need and be a sign of the fulfillment of your perfect Kingdom, where with your Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign, one God through all ages of ages. Amen.”*

\*The Lord’s Prayer (sung or said)

Benediction

\*Introduction of the new couple

Recessional

\*Postlude

## **READINGS**

The couple may choose any Scripture they desire for the service. It is customary (but not required) to choose two readings, at least one from the New Testament. These may be read by the Pastor, or by a friend or family member. The Pastor may offer some suggestions, including those that are most often used. But please do not feel limited to the ones the Pastor suggests. The Scripture you choose should be meaningful to you.

## **COMMUNION**

Communion is an excellent way to celebrate Christ's presence in your marriage. The following guidelines apply to the use of Communion in your wedding:

The Communion practice at St. Mark is called "open Communion." Baptized Christians who understand that Jesus Christ is really present in and with the bread and wine are welcome to take Communion at St. Mark.

Communion should be a unifying factor. It should be celebrated where a majority of the assembled congregation will participate, including the wedding party.

## **WEDDING SCHEDULING**

You may schedule your wedding to be held at any time in the week, as long as it does not disrupt scheduled ministries at St. Mark.

## **MUSIC**

Because a wedding is a worship service, the music used in the service, both vocal and instrumental, should be religious in nature, emphasizing the spirit of Christian love and God's presence. There is a large variety of beautiful and appropriate Christian music available. If you desire, you may consult with the Pastor or the Director of Music Ministry for help in selecting such music. Musical selections should be discussed with the Pastor.

## **ORGANIST / VOCALIST**

The church organist will normally be available to play for weddings. If that person is unavailable, an alternate organist may be arranged. The Pastor can give you the names and numbers of organists. Organist fees generally are in the range of \$100-\$125 for the wedding only, depending on the individual organist. Vocalist or instrumentalists fees are \$75 to \$100. It is not necessary for the organist, vocalist, or instrumentalist to attend the rehearsal. If you want a musician to attend the rehearsal, an additional payment of \$50 should be given to them. Contact should be made with the organist and vocalists at least four weeks prior to the wedding to discuss your wedding music. Naturally, should you require extra musical requests or additional rehearsals; the organist's fee should be increased accordingly. Our organist, can be contacted at the church before and after the 8:00am Sunday service. People available to provide quality vocal solos are: Debborah Bartosik, (708) 903-0627, Tom Cameron, (708) 974-3667, Suzanne Noonan (708)422-4361 and Susan Trygstad (708) 873-9236. As with the organist, fees vary depending on the individual soloist.

## **REHEARSAL**

The wedding rehearsal is usually scheduled the evening before the wedding. Other evenings for the rehearsal are also appropriate for a wedding. Once again, consult the Pastor for availability of the church for rehearsal. The bride, groom, and all attendants, ushers, and parents are to attend so that the wedding goes smoothly. Rehearsals last approximately an hour after the time they begin, so please ask everyone involved to arrive promptly as scheduled.

## **WEDDING BULLETINS**

If you desire a bulletin (program), you may have this done at any printer, or on your own. Additionally, our church office will also print it for you. A typed, proofread copy of what you want printed should be in the office at ***least two weeks before*** the wedding so that the office staff has time to produce a quality bulletin. Cost is \$40 per 100, if the church furnishes the bulletin cover or \$20 if you furnish the bulletin cover. Blank bulletins are available from most any Christian bookstore.

## **FLORIST**

The Pastor will be happy to suggest a florist to you. If you do hire a florist, please tell them that they must call the church (708) 448-6555 well in advance and arrange for a delivery time on the day of the wedding. (The church is often closed much of Saturday. Unless special arrangements are made, they will be locked out.) Flowers may be left for Sunday worship, or taken with you as you choose.

You may attach flowers or ribbons to the pews, but we ask that you do not use nails, tacks, or adhesive tape of any kind, as it tends to damage the wood.

An aisle runner (50-foot) may be secured from the florist.

## **PHOTOGRAPHER / VIDEOGRAPHER**

If you want the Pastor to be included in a picture after the service, please inform him/her beforehand. (Many times the Pastor needs to begin preparing for the next appointment.)

Photography, whether professional or not, should not distract from the worship service. Therefore, we ask that you let your guests know beforehand that there should be no flash or auxiliary lighting photography during the worship service. Flashes are allowed during the procession and recession. Video taping is encouraged, and should be done so that cameras are stationary (we recommend use of a tripod) and used with available light. We request that those taking photos/videos visit with the Pastor before the service.

## **MARRIAGE LICENSE**

Your license must be purchased no less than one day nor more than sixty days before the wedding. You may get your license from the County Clerk's office located at:

10220 South 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Bridgeview (708) 974-6150  
18 North Clark Street, Chicago (312) 443-5663  
16501 South Kedzie Avenue, Markham (708) 596-8000

## **AUDIO TAPING OF YOUR SERVICE**

We will be happy to make an audio cassette recording of the service for you if you will provide a 90-minute tape, and let the Pastor know your wish prior to the wedding date.

## **FEEES**

1. There is no charge for the use of the church by St. Mark members. Fee for non-members is a \$150 non-refundable deposit upon booking the church at St. Mark.
2. There is a \$60 custodial fee to clean the church before and after the wedding service, which is divided between the Altar Guild and church custodian. Please make out 2 separate checks for \$30 dollars each, one to St. Mark Altar Guild and one to Sue Muersch. For a Sunday wedding, the custodial fee is \$75.
3. If a reception is to be held in the church Fellowship Hall, the fee is \$90 for members and \$160 for non-members (with coffee privileges but without use of cooking facilities). For use of kitchen and cooking facilities the fees are \$125 for members and \$195 for non-members. Please note restrictions for use of the hall on the actual user agreement which you may obtain by contacting the church office (708) 448-6555.
4. ***All fees are to be paid in cash and given to the Pastor (together with the marriage license) at least two weeks prior to the wedding.***  
This will give you one less item to remember as the day approaches.
5. The honorarium for the Pastor's services is between \$125 and \$200.

## **PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING**

There will be at least two sessions of pre-marriage counseling prior to the wedding. We request that you schedule your wedding far enough in advance to allow time for the sessions.

The cost of the "Prepare" pre-marital inventory is \$35 per couple. (Make check payable to "Prepare".) After the inventory has been assessed, two sessions with a Pastor are scheduled to cover topics such as realistic expectations, personality issues, equality of roles, communication, conflict resolution, financial planning, leisure activities, sexual relations, children, family and friends, and religious orientation.

## **UNITY (OR WEDDING) CANDLE**

If you desire to use a unity (or wedding) candle as part of your service, you must provide it. It can be purchased at a Christian bookstore, candle store, or card and gift shop. Don't forget to take it with you after the service.

## **WEDDING LOCATION**

The church sanctuary is a place set apart for the people of God to gather for worship and for the special events of life where God's presence is sought and celebrated. Therefore, we feel the church sanctuary is the best place for weddings. You are encouraged to celebrate your wedding with the signs and symbols of God's presence in church.

## **OTHER POLICIES**

No smoking is allowed in the church building or in the foyers.

Because it tends to fill the birds, we ask that no rice be thrown following the wedding. We also request that no birdseed, rose petals or confetti be used.

If you have questions, please feel free to call the church at (708) 448-6555. Our fax number is (708) 448-6594.

We hope this manual is helpful as you prepare your wedding service and your lifelong marriage to one another. The Pastor and St. Mark staff are here to serve you, so please ask for assistance when you have a question or concern. Please call or visit the Pastor to arrange the first session.

*PLEASE FILL OUT THE SCRIPTURE AND MUSIC  
CHOICES ON THE BACK PAGE OF THIS BOOKLET  
AND **RETURN THE PAGE TO THE PASTOR.***

Scripture Readings – Scripture is a vital part of your ceremony. Below are listed some suggested passages. Please check the ones that you may want to include in your service.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Corinthians 13   | <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 7:24-25  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 2:18-24    | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark 10:6-9      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colossians 3:12-17 | <input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 22:35-40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 12:9-13     | <input type="checkbox"/> John 15:9-12     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 John 4:7-12      | <input type="checkbox"/> John 2:1-10      |

Others:

Musical Selections:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Lord's Prayer               | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Suite by Handel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lohengrin (Bridal Chorus)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mendelssohn           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trumpet Voluntary in<br>D Major | (Recessional)                                  |

Solo Selections: (Please list)

Other selections:

Will you use a Unity Candle?  yes  no

Do you wish to have your marriage announced in the Sunday church bulletin?  yes  no

Do you wish to join St. Mark?  yes  no

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding date \_\_\_\_\_