

Wedding Information Guide

Congratulations! Your wedding day is a special day to you—and to us. The congregation of Ascension Lutheran Church will be happy to work with you. We are here to serve you and work with you as you plan your special day.

Carefully read through this booklet and mark any items about which you have questions. Feel free to call the church office; we will attempt to supply the answers you need. The church office is open from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, most days. The phone number is 605/692-6565. If there is any issue not addressed in this guide, Ascension Lutheran Church's pastor will have final authority.

MARRIAGE AND THE CHURCH

Marriage does not belong exclusively to the church. It belongs to all humanity. It is a social contract, governed and regulated by the state. In addition, to the Christian, it is much more.

- We believe that marriage is a life-long relationship based on the promise of faithfulness of two individuals to each other.
- We believe that marriage is rooted in the steadfast love of God and that God's faithfulness and self-giving love are the models for the relationship of marriage.
- We believe that God, along with the church, desires marriage to be characterized by faithfulness, joy, love, growth, and fulfillment.

The Pastor

Ascension Lutheran Church is open to member and nonmember weddings. One of Ascension's pastors will officiate at all member weddings, and normally at non-member weddings. If you have a preference for an officiating pastor, please state that on the wedding information form. The pastors will attempt to comply as their schedules allow, but also reserve the right to substitute for one another as necessary.

Regarding guest pastors: Proper etiquette is for the pastor of Ascension to extend the invitation to the guest pastor. If you wish to have another pastor involved, we ask that you first speak to Ascension's pastor before any invitation is extended.

The Date

Call the church office to set a tentative date for your wedding. Do this as far in advance of the date as possible. You may pick up a copy of the wedding information form in the church office.

Your wedding and rehearsal date will be placed on the master calendar after you have had an initial visit with one of the pastors at Ascension, the wedding coordinator has cleared the date, and we have received a completed wedding application.

For nonmembers, a non-refundable deposit of \$300 is required when the information form is returned. This is the use of the sanctuary fee listed on the cost worksheet.

The following holidays are established as official holidays of Ascension Lutheran Church. Weddings and rehearsals will not be scheduled on these days:

- New Year's Day or weekend
- President's Day weekend
- Holy Week
- Memorial Day weekend
- Independence Day weekend
- Labor Day weekend
- Thanksgiving week
- Christmas week

Generally, Saturday weddings are scheduled no later than 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon and no sooner than 7:30 p.m. in the evening because we have a 5:30 p.m. worship service on Saturdays.

The Wedding Coordinator

The services of a wedding coordinator are a part of every wedding at Ascension Lutheran Church. The Ascension wedding coordinator will be in charge of details regarding the wedding. Those details include such matters as flowers, candles, ushers, seating of guests, receiving line, rehearsal, etc. The wedding coordinator will normally be at the church for the rehearsal and wedding. Couples may choose to hire their own wedding planner but his/her duties will remain outside of the sanctuary and gathering area.

The wedding coordinator will arrange a meeting with the couple soon after they have filled out a form and returned it to the church office. The wedding coordinator will also meet with you one month prior to your wedding and at that time you will give her the necessary checks calculated from the Wedding Costs Worksheet.

Marriage preparation/counseling

Even more than helping you have a beautiful wedding, we want to help you have a holy marriage. All couples being married at Ascension participate in marriage preparation/counseling sessions.

Couples should schedule weddings at least six months in advance so pre-marital counseling can take place; preferably, plan to have your counseling begin at least three months before the wedding date.

Couples who do not live locally will be asked to arrange for pastoral counseling where they live.

The Marriage License

South Dakota law requires couples to secure a license to marry. It must be applied for a minimum of five days before the wedding at the Register of Deeds office. The couple, together, needs to go to the Register of Deeds Office, and will need to show a photo ID, such as a driver's license. There is a fee for the license and must be paid for in cash. The license should be brought to the church office by the Wednesday before the wedding and given to the church secretary.

Wedding fees

You will receive a Wedding Cost Worksheet, outlining Ascension Lutheran Church's wedding fees. Please go over this worksheet when you meet with the wedding coordinator.

Music and Musicians

Music is an important part of any wedding. As the wedding is first of all a time of worship to God, the music you select should be music appropriate for worship. The music staff of Ascension Lutheran Church will be pleased to share their professional experience and to assist you in selecting just the right music for your wedding.

We ask you to give the regular staff organist of Ascension Lutheran Church the courtesy of first option to play at your wedding. It is up to you to contact the organist well before your wedding date. If you wish to have a different musician for your wedding, please discuss your wishes first with Ascension's organist.

Keep these things in mind:

- Vocalists are to arrange a separate rehearsal with the organist.
- Music should be supplied to the organist at least one month prior to the wedding.
- The use of pre-recorded music is discouraged.
- Obey copyright laws. All music used by organists, vocalists or printed in bulletins must be legally printed, not photocopied.
- It is appropriate to pay all your musicians (even friends and family) rather than giving them a personal gift. Consider their many costs for instruments, lessons, music, practice time.
- Playing or singing at your wedding is an honor you should give only to musicians who are proficient, experienced, and comfortable doing it. If you're not sure, consider honoring them with a different role in your wedding.

Sound Technician

A trained sound technician must be present at every service to operate Ascension's sound system. Using the soundboard requires special training, so a technician

approved by Ascension Lutheran Church staff must operate it. The technician is also responsible for setting up microphones and practicing with musicians. The wedding coordinator will contact and assign the sound technician, or may serve as the sound technician.

It is the couple's responsibility to coordinate the organist and/or soloist's rehearsal with the sound technician. Most soloists rehearse with the sound technician one hour before the wedding.

The Liturgy for Marriage

The wedding ceremony is a worship service. The focus is on God. Generally, we follow the order for marriage in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship book. The rite is characterized by variety and flexibility, so that it may be adapted to many situations and be open to creativity. The presiding pastor at your wedding will discuss the liturgical options with you.

Assisting ministers may be used in the service to read the scripture or to assist with Holy Communion. These assisting ministers may be lay people.

Holy Communion

As baptized Christians, you may want your marriage set in the context of the celebration of Holy Communion.

Because it is a sign of unity, the entire congregation will be invited to participate. All are welcome to the Lord's Table believing that Jesus died for our sins and is present in the meal.

Celebrating marriage in the context of Holy Communion enriches the meaning of both. Marriage often involves a festive meal; Holy Communion always does. Marriage is a sign of intimacy and union and communion; so is Holy Communion. Christ, the bridegroom, celebrates with his bride, the Church, the heavenly wedding banquet which knows no end.

There are a variety of options for serving communion. Please speak with the wedding coordinator or pastor if you desire to celebrate the sacrament at your wedding.

Guidelines for selecting music

Because your wedding is a worship service, it should embody high standards of quality and the texts should reflect the praise of God, the steadfast love of Christ for His church as the foundation and model for love and fidelity in marriage, and the invocation of God's presence and blessing.

Music used in the marriage service may be instrumental and/or vocal. It may be organ music or other instrumental music, such as stings, brass, or woodwind, performed by a

soloist or an ensemble. It may be music with text sung by a single voice, duet, small ensemble, full choir or congregational hymns. Pre-recorded music is discouraged.

While there are many appropriate contemporary songs, it should be remembered that recordings of such music are made under ideal conditions with sophisticated electronic equipment and mixing devices. Renditions of these selections on an organ or by the most talented amateurs, especially in non-studio settings, will not sound like the recorded selections.

In summary, if you can answer “yes” to the following questions, the music is probably appropriate:

- Does this music/text reflect praise and/or thanksgiving to God?
- Is it based on, or does it reflect a scriptural theme?
- Does it express the love that comes from God and is a part of your relationship?

All music must be discussed with the organist and pastor.

Congregational hymns

Because the wedding service is a worship service, we encourage congregational hymns at your wedding service. Hymns may be sung in place of other vocal music. If you choose to use a hymn and it is not printed in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship book, remember to abide by all copyright laws pertaining to its printing and distribution.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal takes about an hour and generally the pastor and the wedding coordinator will conduct it. The rehearsal usually takes place the evening before the wedding.

The rehearsal is important and everyone in the wedding party, including parents of the couple, should be present. The couple is responsible for seeing that everyone is in the sanctuary at the appointed time. Please bring the following items with you to the rehearsal: any unpaid fees, unity candle, taper candles and stand (if providing your own) and bulletins.

Decorations

Please be aware that any seasonal church displays in the gathering area and sanctuary need to stay and will not be moved.

If floral decorations, candelabra, and an aisle runner are desired, the couple provides them. Because real flowers express life, it is recommended that they be used in the chancel. For liturgical reasons, it is preferred that flowers be placed on flower stands rather than on the altar. The congregation is not permitted to hold candles. Be sure to put plastic under any wax candles used.

No rice, birdseed, loose balloons or confetti throwing is allowed. Bubbles are a welcome alternative. Flower petals are allowed on aisle runners, but cannot be thrown outside. If you are using an aisle runner in the sanctuary, the aisle is 42 feet long.

All items used for decoration need to be removed immediately following the wedding.

Bulletins

It is helpful, but not necessary, to have printed bulletins to inform guests of the order of service and the names of participants in the wedding. The couple is responsible for the printing and cost of bulletins. The church does not provide this service. Please include in the bulletin the sentence: ***“No flash photography during the ceremony and please turn off your cell phones.”***

Photography/Videography

Each wedding is a worship service of the Church. All photographers—professional and amateur—are asked to reverence the ceremony and the sanctuary by following these policies:

- Arrange to have any formal pictures taken before the ceremony. Photography should be completed forty-five minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin.
- The photographer will not be allowed to take flash pictures after the procession. During the procession, the photographer may kneel to take the photo, but may not stop the procession to do so. Non-flash pictures may be taken at any time as long as the photographer remains inconspicuous.
- Videographers should remain stationary, located in the back or along the side no farther forward than the front row of chairs.
- Photographers not acquainted with Ascension Lutheran Church should plan to discuss with the wedding coordinator or the pastor the above regulations for photography during the worship service.

Additional Notes

The fellowship hall is available for the wedding party's use. You may bring food and drink. Please limit eating and drinking to this area. ***There is to be no alcohol. Ascension's policy is to maintain a smoke- and alcohol-free environment. If alcohol is detected, the pastors reserve the right to cancel the wedding.***

Assign one person to pick up dressing areas, nursery, and fellowship hall.

It is suggested the ushers begin seating guests as they arrive. The guest book will be closed at least five minutes before the ceremony begins.

It is the responsibility of the wedding party to arrange for the care of their personal property before, during, and after the ceremony. Leave all valuable personal

belongings and gifts in the care of parents, friends or attendants during the service. The church cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items.

Reception

The fellowship hall of the church is usually available for wedding receptions. If you wish to use the church facilities for your reception, you should request this as soon as possible. All receptions can be catered. Please visit with the wedding coordinator for reception details.

WEDDING POLICY AGREEMENT

I/We have read and discussed with the wedding coordinator and understand the contents of this wedding information guide.

I/We agree to abide by the terms and policies set forth by Ascension Lutheran Church.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Wedding Coordinator's signature

Date

(Approved, Ascension Lutheran Church Council, January 17, 2008; Revised March 23, 2017)