

## **Wedding Policies at First Lutheran Church**

September 13, 2016

This church understands marriage as a covenant of mutual promises, commitment, and hope authorized legally by the state and blessed by God. The trust and mutuality afforded by marriage is one of the most beautiful, abiding, and transformative forms of human relationship.

### **Who may be married at First Lutheran Church?**

Members of First Lutheran church may be married at First Lutheran and should contact one of the pastors to make plans for a wedding.

### **What kind of preparation is required?**

Couples are required to participate in pre-marital counseling prior to the wedding. These discussions are meant to provide the pastor an opportunity to get to know a couple (and vice versa) and to assess their readiness to enter into a life-long covenant.

Pastors retain the right to decline to perform any marriage as a matter of personal judgment and discretion. Other pastors of the ELCA may officiate at weddings at First with the permission of the current pastors of First Lutheran.

### **May a same-sex couple be married at First Lutheran?**

Yes, same-gender couples and couples of transgender identities may be married at First Lutheran and should follow the same steps listed on this page.

### **How do we plan the wedding ceremony?**

A wedding guide is found on the church website. The wedding ceremony is a worship service and is planned in conjunction with a pastor and the Director of Worship and Music.

### **How do we make arrangements for music at our wedding?**

All musical arrangements must be made with our Director of Worship and Music. Normally one of the church musicians will play the organ for the wedding. Our musicians will assist with selection of music and with the hiring of soloists, a choir, or instrumentalists. Details and fees for additional musicians must be worked out with the church musicians well in advance of the date of the wedding.

### **Other Details:**

#### **Flowers & Decorations**

Floral decorations should be in keeping with a service of worship. The church vases on either side of the altar may be used for flowers just as they are on Sunday mornings. Flowers may not be placed on the altar.

## **Candles**

The two altar candles are used for all weddings and are all that are really necessary for a simple, yet elegant wedding. If other candles are desired, candelabra may be rented from the florist or First Lutheran's candelabra may be used. There is a small fee for the special candles required for the First Lutheran candelabra. Nebraska State law requires hurricane shields or wax servers to be used in public buildings.

## **Rehearsal**

A wedding rehearsal lasting about one hour, conducted by the officiating pastor, is normally held on the evening before the wedding.

## **Seating**

The seating capacity of the sanctuary is about 275. The Chapel cannot comfortably seat more than 75 people.

## **Cloth Runner and Flower Petals Prohibited**

A cloth runner down the center aisle has proven to be hazardous and unsafe on stone floors. The use of such a runner is prohibited. The scattering of real or artificial flower petals is also prohibited.

## **No Smoking or Alcoholic Beverages**

No smoking is allowed in the building. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed at weddings.

## **Marriage License**

Nebraska State law requires a marriage license to be secured from the County Clerk's office. Please bring the license to the church on or before the day of the rehearsal so that it can be prepared for signatures on the day of the wedding.

## **Photography**

In order to ensure the dignity of the ceremony we ask photographers and videographers to respect some limits, remaining discreet and unobtrusive. This generally means that they should remain in the side aisles or at the back of the church except during the procession, when photographers may be in the center aisle. We request the photographers not take flash photos during the ceremony. If you desire time in the church before or after the ceremony for picture-taking, please be sure to arrange this time in advance with the Church Office.

## **Fees**

The basic fee for a wedding is \$500. If the Activity Center is used for the reception the fee is an additional \$100. This fee covers the cost of the space, cleaning, and honoraria for the primary musician, and pastor.

## **Contact**

To inquire about being married at First Lutheran Church, please contact our church office at 402-488-0919.