



# Wedding Policies & Procedures

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
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Cedar Falls, IA 50613  
(319)-266-3541  
[www.bethlehemcf.org](http://www.bethlehemcf.org)

# *Table of Contents*

Congratulations  
Meaning of Marriage  
Reserving Date and Facility  
Pre-Marital Classes  
Guest Minister  
Marriage License  
Decorations  
Physical Facilities  
Personal Valuables  
Guest Book Table and Gift Table  
Pictures/Videos  
Marriage Service Bulletin  
Scripture Selection  
Wedding Music  
Wedding Rehearsal  
Wedding  
Wedding Reception  
Reception Guidelines  
Wedding Fees  
Fee Schedule

# *Congratulations . . .*

...on your upcoming wedding. Your engagement is an important time and we are excited that you have chosen Bethlehem to be a part of your future marriage. We are excited with you as you prepare to take one of the most important steps of your life, joining in a lifelong partnership with the one you love.

This packet has been prepared to aid you in the planning of the worship service on the occasion of your wedding. It fully explains the wedding policies of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, please contact the Pastor, who is responsible for final interpretation and administration of this policy.

## *Meaning of Marriage*

Our Lutheran hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, explains our Lutheran understanding of a marriage in the following way:

*Marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and mutual strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family. God created us male and female and blessed humankind with the gifts of companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. Jesus affirmed the covenant of marriage and revealed God's own self-giving love on the cross. The Holy Spirit helps those who are united in marriage to be living signs of God's grace, love, and faithfulness. Marriage is also a human estate, with vows publicly witnessed. The church in worship surrounds these promises with the gathering of God's people, the witness of the word of God, and prayers of blessing and intercession.*

The wedding policy and procedures of Bethlehem have been developed to reflect this understanding of marriage.

# Reserving Date and Facility

Contact the church office at 319-266-3541 as soon as possible to determine available dates. When a particular wedding date has been requested, it is considered ***tentative*** until the church office receives a non-refundable \$150 deposit and the Wedding Information Form. **No dates should be announced until confirmed by the church office.**

- Weddings are not to be scheduled on the holidays of Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Eve, Thanksgiving Day, during Holy Week or on Sundays.
- Saturday weddings may be scheduled up to 5:00pm when the reception will not be held at the church. Weddings with a reception at the church must begin no later than 2 pm so that the wedding party, guests and all items brought into the church are off of the grounds no later than 6:00pm. This makes it possible for the facilities to be put back in order on Saturday evening for Sunday services.
- The date and time for the rehearsal should also be scheduled, which is generally held from 5 – 6pm the day prior to the wedding.
- Scheduling exceptions may be made in consultation with the church office and officiating pastor.

## *Pre-Marital Classes*

Counseling with the Pastor is an important aspect of preparing for your marriage. Dates and times for these sessions are arranged with the Pastor. We recognize that many couples are dealing with busy schedules or traveling over distances. For this reason, although four to six sessions would be ideal for this preparation, we have created a way for this to be done in three sessions, with some work being done at home by the couple in between these sessions. Sessions focus on building lasting, loving relationships that are equipped to manage and resolve differences and conflicts. These sessions will also include a pre-marriage inventory, and will allow for time to discuss the actual ceremony itself.

## *Guest Minister*

Bethlehem's Pastor will officiate at all weddings. If a family desires another ordained minister to participate in the wedding, arrangements need to be made with Bethlehem's Pastor.

## *Marriage License*

You must apply for a marriage license at the office of a County Clerk/Recorder. Marriage licenses are valid for 90 days from the date of issuance. You must be married on or after the issuance date, and on or before the expiration date. You should bring your marriage license to the Pastor before the day of the wedding, preferably at the time of rehearsal.

# *Decorations*

Seasonal decorations when present, cannot be moved for the wedding. These decorations may be present around Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Paraments of the church season will also be present on the altar. If you would like to change these paraments to white for your wedding, this needs to be arranged before the rehearsal. A time to decorate should be scheduled with the pastor/church office. The church office will also designate a time for flowers to be delivered. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to remove all decorations as soon as the wedding concludes.

- There are 8 rows of pews in the sanctuary.
- Candelabras that use oil candles are provided and located at the front of the church.
- A unity candle may be used, which the bride and groom are responsible for furnishing, along with the candleholder.
- Disposable aisle runners may be obtained from most florists if desired.
- Real flower petals are not to be dropped in the aisles by flower girls. **Silk petals** are to be used. Real petals stain the carpet.
- The bridal party is responsible for making arrangements for the removal of all floral decorations after the ceremony.

# *Physical Facilities*

Please care for and leave the church building in the best possible condition and have your guests do so also. It is best to ask your parents, ushers, or best man to see to these details for you.

Fees charged for building use cover operational costs of the facility, including utilities and additional janitorial services, as well as staffing provided by individuals.

- Bethlehem is available to members and non-members providing they comply with the Wedding Policy. The sanctuary will seat 224 people. There is overflow available into the Fellowship Hall.
- Nothing shall be thrown in or outside the church.
- No smoking is allowed on the church property.
- No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the church property.
- No furniture will be removed from the altar, without prior authorization.
- Rooms are available at the church for the bride, groom, and attendants to dress.

# *Personal Valuables*

Every reasonable effort will be made to assist the wedding party in protecting personal property. However, Bethlehem Lutheran Church is not responsible for items brought to the church for a wedding and will not be liable if items are lost, stolen, or damaged. It is suggested that purses, cameras, and other valuables not be left unattended.

## *Guest Book Table & Gift Table*

Tables are available thru out Bethlehem Lutheran Church for the guest book and gifts. White linens from the church are available or you may furnish your own. Arrangements for setting up these tables are to be made with the church office/pastor.

It is important to designate an attendant to keep your gifts, cards, and guest book secure during the service and to remove them from the church immediately following the ceremony.

## *Pictures/Videos*

Formal pictures of wedding party may be taken either before or after the wedding service. Your photographer and/or videographer should consult with the pastor at least one hour before the service regarding the placement of equipment. During the ceremony, camera, and video technicians must remain stationary – no movement is permitted near the altar.

## *Marriage Service Bulletin*

If a bulletin is to be used, please provide a bulletin to the pastor at or before the rehearsal.



# *Scripture Selection*

Part of your conversation with the Pastor will concern the selection of scripture passages to be read during the wedding service. We encourage you as a couple to select scriptures that help to set the tone for your wedding and your marriage. Two or three lessons are usually read. The following is a list of suggestions, but you are encouraged to choose Scripture readings that have particular meaning for you.

## **Old Testament**

Genesis 1:26-31 First creation account  
Genesis 2:18-24 Second creation account  
Joshua 24:14-15 Our household will serve the Lord  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 Everything has its time  
Song of Songs 8:6-7 Love is as strong as death  
Isaiah 63:7-9 God's mercy remembered  
Psalm 33 The greatness and goodness of God  
Psalm 100 A psalm of thanksgiving  
Psalm 117 Universal call to worship  
Psalm 127 God's blessings in the home  
Psalm 128 Family is reward for devotion to God  
Psalm 150 Praise for God's surpassing greatness

## **New Testament (Epistles)**

Romans 8:35, 37-39 Inseparable from God's love  
Romans 12:1-2, 9-13 New life in Christ  
Romans 15:5-6 Live in harmony, glorify God  
1 Corinthians 13 The gift of love  
Philippians 4:4-9 Rejoice in the Lord  
1 Colossians 3:12-17 The Christian life  
1 John 4:7-12 God's love

## **Gospel Readings**

Matthew 19:4-6 Unity in marriage

Matthew 22:34-40 The greatest commandment

Luke 12:22-31 On anxiety

John 2:1-11 The wedding at Cana

John 15:9-12 Love one another

## *Wedding Music*

When choosing music, it is important to keep in mind that the Christian wedding is a worship service. Since music selections are expected to complement the Christian tone of the ceremony, numbers from the pop charts are generally not appropriate. All music is to be selected in consultation with the pastor, organist, and wedding coordinator. Song lyrics will be reviewed by the pastor at your initial meeting. Soloists and other musicians may practice before or after the rehearsal.

You should contact Bethlehem's pianists/organists (contact the church office for possible musicians) as soon as possible to schedule their services, and they are available to consult with the bride and groom about music for the processional and recessional, as well as organ accompaniment for special music during the service. Guest organists may be used, but must consult with Bethlehem's organist for instructions.

## *Wedding Rehearsal*

A rehearsal is usually held the day before the wedding. All members of the wedding party should be present. If everyone is aware in advance of their place in the wedding, it will save last minute directions. We ask that children be monitored and supervised at all times.

## *Wedding*

The wedding party should arrive at least TWO hours before the wedding time unless other arrangements are made with the wedding photographer.

## *Wedding Reception*

The church facilities are available for receptions. We ask that refreshments be handled by a professional caterer or a person responsible for the overall coordination of the reception. There is absolutely no smoking or alcoholic beverages on the church premises; this includes champagne toasts.

Use of the kitchen facilities and equipment must be cleared in advance with the church office. Kitchen use does not include paper plates, napkins, or other disposable items. The services of a kitchen coordinator, arranged by the wedding hostess, are required.

The Fellowship Hall is not outfitted with a sound system, so parties will need to make their own arrangements for sound equipment.

Twelve circular tables, two-eight foot tables, one six-foot table, and approximately 100 chairs are available for your use. Wedding parties are expected to set up the tables and folding chairs, and to return them to their proper storage carts/cabinet at the conclusion of the reception. Those using church facilities must accept full responsibility for any damage incurred to the building or equipment during that use.

## *Reception Guidelines*

If using the kitchen, please wash and dry all dishes used and return them to the correct cupboard. Take all extra food and beverage items with you unless specific plans for usage have been made. Wipe counters and leave kitchen clean and ready for the next use. Leave used dish cloths and towels in the sink. They will be picked up and laundered.

Sweep floors and wipe up all spills. Report any damage to equipment or property promptly to the kitchen coordinator. All decorations should be removed after your event.

Janitorial services will vacuum the sanctuary or chapel, their respective lobby areas, and any dressing areas used, and will empty trash cans in said areas. Janitorial services will clean the restrooms and will mop the Fellowship Hall.

A separate contract will be signed if you would like to utilize Bethlehem's Fellowship Hall for your wedding reception.

# Wedding Fees

While there is much joy in participating with you in your marriage celebration, it does mean extra time and work for the church staff. In addition, there are costs associated with using our facility. A wedding fee schedule is enclosed. In determining fees, to qualify as a member, either the bride or groom must be listed on Bethlehem's membership roster at the time the wedding is scheduled. The membership rate also applies if the parent(s) of the bride or groom are current members of the church.

Your \$150 non-refundable deposit will be applied toward all fees incurred. The remaining balance is due at the church office **one month** before the wedding date. Individual fees for the pastor and organist are to be paid directly to them at the rehearsal. This will be collected by the wedding coordinator.

In the event the wedding is postponed or cancelled, and notice is given at least 30 days prior to scheduled date, Bethlehem will issue a full refund. The refund will be mailed within 30 days of cancellation notice.

# Fee Schedule

**Church Fees** – due 1 month before wedding

## **USE OF CHURCH**

- Member \$100.00
- Non-member \$300.00

## **USE OF FELLOWSHIP HALL FOR RECEPTION**

- Member \$250.00
- Non-member \$500.00

## **CUSTODIAL SERVICE**

- Member / Non-member \$125.00

**TOTAL FEES** \$\_\_\_\_\_ (minus \$150)

**Individual Fees** – due at the rehearsal

## **PASTOR HONORARIUM**

- Member Suggested \$175.00
- Non-Member \$300.00

## **ORGANIST**

- Consultation, rehearsal, \$150.00  
& wedding

## *In Summary*

Your marriage celebration can be a beautiful event without being extravagant. There is much beauty in the simplicity of a service that is both joyous and religious. The attitudes and values you bring to this event will play a large part in making it the memorable experience you want it to be.

Once a wedding date has been confirmed, please set up your initial meeting with the pastor. If you have any questions regarding the information in this handbook prior to that, feel free to contact the church office and we will be happy to help you.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Cedar Falls, IA 50613

(319) 266-3541

## Bethlehem's Wedding Information

Bride's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup> Marriage yes no

Children \_\_\_\_\_

Church Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup> Marriage yes no

Children \_\_\_\_\_

Church Membership \_\_\_\_\_

I have received & agree to the policies stated in the Bethlehem's Wedding Handbook. \_\_\_\_\_

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### FOR CHURCH USE ONLY

Wedding Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Officiating Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Organist \_\_\_\_\_ Custodian \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses \_\_\_\_\_

Date called in \_\_\_\_\_ Deposit Received \_\_\_\_\_

License received \_\_\_\_\_



# Bethlehem's Wedding Planning Worksheet

BRIDE \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ age \_\_\_\_\_ Church Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Marriage yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ Children \_\_\_\_\_

GROOM \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ age \_\_\_\_\_ Church Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Marriage yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ Children \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICIATING PASTOR \_\_\_\_\_

REHEARSAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

WEDDING DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_ DOORS OPEN \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS AFTER MARRIAGE \_\_\_\_\_

FLORIST \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DELIVERY TIME \_\_\_\_\_

PHOTOGRAPHER \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ START TIME \_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC Organist \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Soloist \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Songs \_\_\_\_\_

## GUEST BOOK TABLE

Who's responsible? \_\_\_\_\_

Location? \_\_\_\_\_

## GIFT TABLE

Who's responsible? \_\_\_\_\_

Location? \_\_\_\_\_

## PROGRAMS

Who's responsible? \_\_\_\_\_

UNITY CANDLE / SAND \_\_\_\_\_ AISLE RUNNER \_\_\_\_\_

ATTENDANTS

Best Man \_\_\_\_\_

Maid of Honor \_\_\_\_\_

Groomsmen \_\_\_\_\_ Bridesmaids \_\_\_\_\_ Flower Girl \_\_\_\_\_ Ring Bearer \_\_\_\_\_

USHERS

How Many \_\_\_\_\_ Instructions (light candles, aisle runner, etc) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

RESERVED SEATS (How many on each side to reserve?)

Bride \_\_\_\_\_ Groom \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY List who will be ushered in as part of the processional. The usual order is grandparents of the groom (paternal, then maternal), grandparents of the bride (paternal, then maternal, parents of the groom, mother of the bride.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_ ushered by \_\_\_\_\_

PROCESSIONAL

- o Groom enters at the side with the pastor and waits at the front of the church
- o Groom is escorted in by his parents
- o Men wait in front while the women walk down the aisle alone
- o Couples (including best man & maid of honor) walk in together
- o Couples walk in together while the best man and groom wait at the front of the church, maid of honor walks down alone
- o Bride escorted by father
- o Bride escorted by both parents

CEREMONY ITSELF

- a. Who will give the Bride away? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. How do you wish to be addressed? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Will you kneel for the wedding prayer? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Scripture selections? \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Scripture readers? \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Will there be special vows or traditional? \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Will there be communion? \_\_\_\_\_ With couples alone? \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Marriage certificate signed during service? \_\_\_\_\_ After the service? \_\_\_\_\_
- i. After the lighting of the unity candle, will the couple remain at the candle as music is sung or played, or will they return to their former position? \_\_\_\_\_
- j. Flowers for parents after lighting unity candle? \_\_\_\_\_
- k. Will there be a kiss? \_\_\_\_\_
- l. How do you wish to be presented? \_\_\_\_\_

RECEIVING LINE

- Couple to greet guests as they are dismissed from their seats
- Receiving line at the church. Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- Receiving line at the reception

Who will be in the receiving line and in what order? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

GIFTS

- Who is responsible?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Gifts to be removed after the ceremony starts.
- Gifts to be removed after the ceremony ends.

CLEAN-UP

- Who is responsible?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Who will deliver church flowers to reception site?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Contact person day of wedding?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# *Typical Order of Service*

1. Prelude music and seating of guests – guest book closed 5 minutes prior to ceremony start time
2. Lighting of the candles (often done beforehand for pictures)
3. Seating of the family
4. Groom escorts in his parents (optional)
5. Groom stands up front
6. Aisle runner is rolled out (optional)
7. Wedding party enters, spacing is about 2/3 up the aisle before next person starts
8. The flower girl and ring bearer enter
9. Pastor asks congregation to rise
10. Bride and father stop at first pew
11. Giving away of the Bride
12. Welcome
13. Opening prayer
14. Statement of purpose
15. Scripture readings
16. \*Special music – worship song, hymn, or solo
17. Intentions
18. Wedding Vows
19. Blessing of Family
20. Exchange of Rings
21. Lighting of the unity candle/unity sand/or other symbol
22. \*Special music – worship song, hymn, or solo
23. Announcement of marriage
24. Blessing of the Bride and Groom
25. Prayer
26. Benediction
27. Introduction of couple
28. Kiss
29. Recessional