

Celebration of Marriage

AND NOW THESE THREE REMAIN:

*faith,
hope
and love.*

BUT THE GREATEST
OF THESE IS LOVE.

1 Corinthians 13:13



saalem
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A GUIDE TO WEDDING PREPARATION

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming wedding! This guide has been prepared to help you plan the details of your wedding service so that it will be both meaningful and be surrounded with prayer. Your wedding is important to us, and we want to help make your day special.

SETTING THE DAY

When setting the date for your wedding, contact the church office (913-888-5051) to be sure that the dates for the rehearsal and wedding are available. It is highly recommended that you allow at least 6 months for adequate planning and preparation.

PLAN FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

The decision to marry is one of the most important decisions you will make in your lifetime. Marriage is a commitment which is not to be entered into lightly. In addition to helping you plan for your wedding day, we also want to help you plan for your marriage. Therefore, all couples being married at Salem are required to participate in a process of pre-marital preparation.

Once the couple has confirmed their date with the pastor they will need to provide their individual email addresses to the Office Administrator, so that they may be enrolled in the premarital process. The process begins with the couple individually completing the online **PREPARE/ENRICH** pre-marriage inventory form. This is not a test. It is simply a tool that will help you prepare for marriage by developing skills that will enrich your relationship. Upon completion of the survey Pastor will be notified and the couple will be contacted to set the meeting date for their initial premarital session. All couples should plan on four 90-minute sessions with Pastor.

WEDDINGS AS WORSHIP

A Christian wedding is, above all else, an act of worship and thanksgiving in which a couple publicly exchanges vows of faithfulness. “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” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 286*). The key to a Christian wedding service is to remember that it is a worship service focusing on God’s love for God’s people. In today’s culture, this dimension gets lost. Consider these possible differences in perspective:

PLANNING TIPS THAT BRIDAL MAGAZINES MAY MISS

1. Pray together as a couple, and ask others to pray for you.
2. Attend weekly worship together.
3. Make the most of your pre-marital mentoring.
4. Remember that a Christian wedding service is first and foremost a worship service.
5. Consider including a celebration of Holy Communion, the church’s clearest and most complete expression of love and union.
6. Plan ways for the wedding congregation to participate in the service.
7. Songs and readings that focus on human love are best enjoyed at the reception.
8. Perfection is not the goal. There will be unexpected blunders and miscues during the service.

SECULAR

- The focus of attention is on the bride and the groom.
- The church is just one of several rented items for the occasion. Some couples ask to have the paraments changed if they don't like the liturgical color.
- The wedding date is often set without any thought to the church year.
- It is the clergyperson who marries the couple by pronouncing them husband and wife.
- The wedding itself is seen as a type of theater. Ushers hand out programs to a passive audience.
- Music is chosen based on the preference of the couple and often tends to have lyrics of a romantic or sentimental nature. The focus of the music is on the love of the bride and groom for each other.
- A wedding is a festive occasion that calls for a party.

CHRISTIAN

- The focus of attention is on God.
- The church is seen as a house of worship. The church year is not interrupted even for festive occasions and liturgical colors are not changed for a wedding.
- Weddings are not scheduled during Holy Week, the most important observance of the Church year.
- It is the exchange of vows that constitutes the marriage. The pastor serves as the primary witness to this exchange, but it is the bride and groom who bind themselves to each other by their promises.
- The wedding is a worship service. Ushers hand out bulletins to the congregation, who actively participate in worship.
- Music is chosen that praises God and highlights Jesus' love for us as the model for love and fidelity in marriage.
- A wedding is a festive occasion that calls for thanksgiving and joy.

WHEN DOES MARRIAGE BEGIN?

Is there a moment in the wedding service to which we can point and say: “There. That is when the marriage takes place.” Yes there is. The marriage takes place when the vows are spoken. The promises that are spoken form the foundation of the marriage.

Many couples choose to write their own vows. This is fine as long as those vows reflect a biblical understanding of marriage and clearly state that the vows are a lifelong commitment. Be careful in choosing these words! Don’t promise too much too specifically. For example, a promise that your love will grow daily is a difficult promise to keep. One cannot promise an emotion. However, one can promise fidelity, trust, and honesty.

Here are some examples of wedding vows that can be used:

1. 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.
2. I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help, and care for you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try to better understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come until death parts us.
3. I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband/wife, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.
4. _____, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward, to join with you and share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

You have the opportunity to choose one or more portions of Scripture to be read at your wedding. The readings that you choose will express how you have experienced the love of God.

The Scriptures speak with the optimism of hope, the passion of integrity, and the promise of grace. They speak through the generations of time because they speak the truth. Choose portions of Scripture that reflect the hope, integrity, and grace of our Christian faith, and so proclaim God's love.

Old Testament

The Creation of Man and Woman

Genesis 1:26-28

Choose Whom You Will Serve

Joshua 24:14-15

Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart

Proverbs 3:3-6

The Beauty of Love

Song of Solomon 2:10-13

A New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The Love of God

Isaiah 54:5-8

The Betrothal of God and Israel

Hosea 2:10-20

The Psalms often add inspiring words about God's faithfulness. Consider the following :

Rejoice in the Lord

Psalm 33

May God be merciful to us and bless us

Psalm 67

We are God's people

Psalm 100

The steadfast love of the LORD

Psalm 117

The LORD keeps watch over you

Psalm 121

Unless the LORD builds the house

Psalm 127

Happy are they who follow in God's ways

Psalm 128

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD

Psalm 150

New Testament

The Epistles (Letters) often give insight into life within a community of faith. These readings do not simply speak of the love between husband and wife. Rather, they speak of love that has as its primary goal the up-building of others within the body of Christ. As a married couple, this can be a model for your life together.

The Love of Christ

Romans 8: 31b-39

The Life of a Christian

Romans 12:1-2, 9-13

The Greatest Love

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Living in Love and Thanksgiving

Colossians 3:12-17

The Love of God

1 John 4:7-12

Though there are very few specific passages in the Gospels about marriage, a reading from the Gospels is nonetheless an important part of the wedding service. The Gospels are a great witness to the love of Jesus.

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-10

Salt and Light

Matthew 5:13-16

Build Your House on Christ

Matthew 7:24-29

What God Has Joined Together

Matthew 19:4-6

Love, the greatest commandment

Matthew 22:35-40

Two Become One

Mark 10:6-9

Loving God

Mark 12:28-31

The Great Marriage Feast at Cana

John 2:1-11

Remain in My Love

John 15:9-17

MUSIC FOR THE WEDDING SERVICE

A wedding is an act of worship. It follows then that the texts of the songs sung and the intent of all music performed at the wedding shall be to express praise and faith in God. Secular music is not always an appropriate alternative. The Worship Director is available for consultation on music selections and will have the final say on appropriate music.

Congregational singing of hymns is one way to actively involve those gathered in a wedding worship service. Here are a few suggestions from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)*.

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright! (ELW 308)
Jesus, Come! For We Invite You (ELW 312)
Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying (ELW 436)
Now the Silence (ELW 460)
Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness (ELW 488 & 489)
Here In This Place (ELW 532)
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father (ELW 585)
This Is a Day, Lord, Gladly Awaited (ELW 586)
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (ELW 631)
Although I Speak with Angel's Tongue (ELW 644)
Beloved, God's Chosen (ELW 648)
I Was There To Hear Your Borne Cry (ELW 732)
Children of the Heavenly Father (ELW 781)
Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life (ELW 816)
Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee (ELW 836)
Now Thank We All Our God (ELW 839 & 840)
For the Beauty of the Earth (ELW 879)
Let All Things Now Living (ELW 881)

Suggestions for Processionals (organ or piano) are:

Trumpet Tune: Henry Purcell
Trumpet Voluntary: Jeremiah Clark
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring: J.S. Bach
Canon in D: Pachelbel
Ave Maria: Franz Schubert
Ave Maria: Charles Gounod

Suggestions for Recessionals are:

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee: Ludwig van Beethoven
Wedding March: Felix Mendelssohn
Allegro Maestoso from Water Music Suite: G.F. Handel

Trumpet Tune: Henry Purcell
Trumpet Voluntary: Jeremiah Clark

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

*This is to be used as a guideline in the preparation of the service.
The couple should review this and be prepared to discuss & plan the actual service
during the 4th pre-marital session with the pastor.*

GREETING

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

The minister will first address the couple asking each person if it is their intent to be married

The minister will then address the assembly asking if it is their intent to care for, pray for and support the couple in their marriage.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The presiding minister leads the prayer of the day.

READINGS

The assembly is seated. Two or three scripture readings are proclaimed. When the service includes communion, the last is a reading from the gospels. Responses may include a psalm in response to a reading from the Old Testament, a sung acclamation preceding the reading of the gospel, or other appropriate hymns, songs, and psalms.

SERMON

HYMN *(Optional)*

VOWS

*The couple may join hands. Each promises faithfulness to the other in these or similar words.
(See p. 4 for vow options).*

GIVING OF RINGS

The couple may exchange rings with these or similar words.

OPTION A: This ring as a sign

Name, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

OPTION B: This ring as a symbol

Name, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow. With all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

ACCLAMATION

The presiding minister addresses the assembly and pronounces the marriage of the couple.

*Other symbols of marriage (i.e. **Unity Candle**) may be given or used at this time.*

MARRIAGE BLESSING

The couple may kneel and the presiding minister will pray for God's blessing upon the couple and their marriage.

Parents or others may speak additional words of blessing and encouragement at this time.

A service with communion continues with the sharing of the peace.

LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING

The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing upon the couple and their marriage.

PRESENTATION OF THE COUPLE

DISMISSAL

SALEM GUIDELINES

CANDLES:

- **CANDELABRA:** The two altar oil burning candelabra are used in the service. Two brass candle lighters are available for use.
- **HURRICANE CANDLES:** Eight glass hurricane lamps are available for use in the windows. You must provide your own seven inch dripleless candles.
- **UNITY CANDLE:** The lighting of the unity candle is not a standard part of the worship service. Many couples like to have this added to the marriage service. The lighting of the unity candle is placed in the service following the exchange of rings. It is the couple's responsibility to purchase the unity candle. Salem has a three candle unity stand for your use.

FLOWERS

Flowers may be used to beautify the service, but should not detract from the wedding party nor should they be placed in front of the altar or be taller than 25 inches. Artificial flowers are not to be placed on the altar. Be sure and check with Salem's wedding coordinator on what is acceptable before placing your final order. Floral arrangements may be placed on the altar pedestals. If a flower girl is part of the wedding party, flower petals may be used (NO seeds). A runner **MUST** be used with flower petals. The runner will have to be rented or purchased.

HOLY COMMUNION

The celebration of the Eucharist is a meaningful and appropriate part of the marriage service. You may choose to include Holy Communion in your wedding. Check with Pastor about factors to consider.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

The marriage license is to be submitted to the church office at least two days before the wedding rehearsal. Application for the marriage license is made at the County Courthouse.

PHOTOGRAPHER

The photographer must consult with the Pastor before the wedding. No flash photographs are to be taken during the service. A camera video may be set up in the balcony.

RICE

For reasons of safety, the throwing of rice or bird seed is not allowed.

VIDEO SLIDE SHOW

If you would like to show a video prior to the service starting, it must be delivered 2 weeks prior to the wedding date. The video format needs to be in mpeg4 video format or Keynote presentation.

WEDDING BULLETINS

Wedding bulletins are the responsibility of the couple and will not be provided by the church.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

Our Wedding Coordinator will be available to assist you during the rehearsal and up to 4 hours prior to the service on the day of the wedding. Arrangements will need to be made if you require her assistance more than 4 hours in advance. She will also review all of the necessary steps you will need to take to insure your wedding day goes smoothly.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is usually the night preceding the wedding. All members of the wedding party should be there promptly at the arranged time. Allow for approximately an hour.

WEDDING DAY

- Make arrangements in advance with the Wedding Coordinator as to what time to open the church for the florist and wedding party.
- Please arrange to have someone responsible to pick up all clothing, wedding gifts and flowers before leaving.
- The latest a wedding will be scheduled is 5:00pm on Sat. & Sun., 6:00pm Mon. - Thu.
- Salem will seat approximately 225 people.
- Center Aisle is 5 feet x 52 feet.
- NO food/beverage is permitted in the church proper during rehearsal/ceremony.
- NO smoking is allowed on the property.
- All wedding party individuals and guests need to be out of the church within 1 hour after the service is finished.

RECEPTION

- Receptions may be held in Luther Hall (seating capacity - 150), Koinonia Hall (seating capacity - 80)
- Tables and chairs are available for use
- It is your responsibility to set up/take down tables and chairs and leave the building in good order.
- NO smoking is allowed on the property.
- Alcohol is permitted but a form needs to be completed and presented to council at least one (1) month prior to the wedding on the Salem campus in which alcoholic beverages are intended to be served or consumed and council approval is required prior to the serving or consuming of alcoholic beverages at the event. Council approval is discretionary and may be denied for any reason.

Wedding Fees	Members	Non-Members
Pre-marital Preparation materials: (Must be paid upon scheduling of wedding)	\$40	\$40
Pastor (Please make check payable to the pastor)	Member's Discretion	\$250
Organist/Pianist (Includes planning, rehearsal, practicing with musicians and ceremony)	\$150	\$200
Soloists/Musicians (if using Salem musicians) (Please make check payable to the musician)	\$75	\$100
Audio Engineer (2 hour minimum) (Please make check payable to the sound engineer)	\$50/hour	\$50/hour
Visual Engineer (1 hour minimum - for slide show) (Please make check payable to the screen engineer)	\$50/hour	\$50/hour
Wedding Coordinator Charge for additional time 4 hours prior to wedding service (Please make check payable to the wedding coordinator)	\$250 \$15 / hour	\$300 \$20 / hour
Use of Church (Please make check payable to Salem) Rehearsal/Wedding Custodial	No Charge \$100	\$300* \$150
Snow Removal (if additional snow removal is required due to your rehearsal and/or wedding, you will be responsible in covering the actual expense. Please make check payable to Salem.)	Actual Expense	Actual Expense

All fees are to be paid at the time of the rehearsal.

The purchase and printing of the wedding program is the responsibility of the couple.

*\$100 non-refundable deposit is required to book the date for the wedding.

Facility Fees	Members	Non-Members
Use of Hall without Alcohol Luther Hall or Koinonia Hall Custodial	No Charge No Charge	\$300** \$100
Use of Hall with Alcoholic Beverages being served Luther Hall or Koinonia Hall Custodial	No Charge*** No Charge	\$500*** \$100
Snow Removal (if snow removal is required, you will be responsible in covering the actual expense. Please make check payable to Salem.)	Actual Expense	Actual Expense

**\$100 non-refundable deposit is required to book either fellowship hall.

***See the Salem Lutheran Church Alcohol Permit and Policy for Serving Alcoholic Beverages.