

Woodlake Lutheran Church Wedding Planning Guide

Marriage is the life-long commitment of two people to share their lives together in mutual love, honor and faithfulness. A wedding is the beginning and outward expression of this commitment, a joyous occasion which includes making public vows of faithfulness, prayers, scripture readings and music.

Many Christian people choose to make their vows in a church ceremony. A “church wedding” has at its focus the goodness and provision of God who creates and sustains all of life. This means that we will take every care that all parts of the wedding ceremony will be worshipful and celebratory.

Next steps:

A couple preparing for their wedding will want to both prepare for their wedding day, and imagine what will look like, and make preparations for their life together. The Office Coordinator will answer questions about the availability of the sanctuary and chapel on the requested date, as well as help the couple get in touch with the Wedding Coordinator. Preparing for the wedding will involve meeting with our Wedding Coordinator, the Officiating Pastor, and the Curator of Music and Worship (Primary Musician). The Wedding Coordinator will walk through the guidelines and expectations in the Wedding Guide, answer questions, and help the couple to begin thinking about what their wedding day will look like. The Wedding Coordinator will then put the couple in touch with the Officiating Pastor and Curator of Music and Worship

The Officiating Pastor will set times and dates for the couple to meet for pre-marital counseling, as well as plan the ceremony, along with the Music Director. If the couple has 12 hours of pre-marital counseling, they are eligible for a discount on their marriage license through the State of Minnesota. The pastors at Woodlake use the Prepare/Enrich Program and other similar inventories. You should plan for five sessions of pre-marital counseling.

Wedding Service

The general order of worship follows the ELW (Evangelical Lutheran Worship) pp. 286-291 and is available on an attached sheet. This order may be amended in consultation with the pastor and musician. *The Wedding Service Worksheet includes suggestions for scripture readings and hymns. The list is not exhaustive, but provides a starting place for music a couple might consider.*

Woodlake asks that music for your ceremony be suitable for a service of worship. It is our responsibility as a house of God to set and maintain standards in this regard, but we also strive to be flexible and ensure that you feel your ceremony is a comfortable and suitable expression of you as a couple. YouTube, Spotify and Google serve as great starting places for you in your search for the perfect music. Perhaps you'd like your music to be traditional, time-honored, and classic in feel. Perhaps you'd like something more modern and sentimental. Either choice has wonderful potential.

In looking at songs with words, consideration should be given to the context of church and worship. It is helpful to ask the question, “What does this song glorify?” As long as the text of your song represents or glorifies human love in a positive way and leaves room for God, it is welcomed by us in the service. Further, in the spirit of worship, it is asked that no recordings or tracks are used. Woodlake’s Curator of Music and Worship will be happy to assist you in finding music, but it is your responsibility to purchase, download, and deliver this music to the musician. Most popular sheet music can be downloaded and printed at www.musicnotes.com.

The general outline of a wedding dictates the following musician opportunities (Read through this section and collect some thoughts before your initial correspondence with Woodlake’s musician):

Prelude – Music of your own choosing or the musician’s choosing. You are not present in the space for this music, but it sets the tone for your ceremony.

Processional – One or two selections, to which you and your wedding party will walk down the aisle. Envision what tone you want to set – it could be softer and more sentimental (usually piano), or more formal and triumphant (usually organ). If you would like to have your own separate piece to walk in to apart from your wedding party, that can work nicely. The gap between the two processional songs leaves a nice down moment for people to know when to stand and face you for your entrance. But it also works nicely to have one selection with a swell or crescendo for your entrance.

Unity Candle – A solo or hymn works nicely to fill this space. If you have a friend who sings, they could sing something here. Or consult the worksheet for a hymn that might fit, if you feel your assembled friends and family will sing a hymn well. A solo or hymn can also occur in the ceremony as a standalone piece apart from the unity candle.

Recessional – This music occurs when the couple has kissed and is presented to the assembly, usually to applause. The couple and wedding party leave the church down the aisle to this music. This selection is generally upbeat, and can be suited to either piano or organ.

Postlude – Usually left up to the musician. This is filler music while the remaining people leave the sanctuary. It is typically upbeat in tone.

Guidelines for outside pastors

Woodlake will permit outside pastors to officiate at weddings, as long as the wedding is cleared with the Office Coordinator and the Wedding Coordinator, and the Officiant agrees to follow our church’s guidelines. They couple will still use the church’s Wedding Coordinator and Music Director, as well as consult with the Music Director about appropriate music. There may be occasions where it is advisable for a pastor from Woodlake to co-officiate with an outside pastor.

Guidelines for participants in the service

Family and friends may participate in the wedding ceremony in a variety of ways:

1. They may do the scripture readings or other readings at the beginning of the service
2. They may provide special music
3. They may participate in the prayers of the church
4. They may serve as ushers or participate in a special ritual marking the marriage.

If you have questions or ideas regarding participation in the wedding ceremony, please check with the Wedding Coordinator or Officiating Pastor.

Photography and videography

Flash photography is not permitted during the wedding ceremony. Flash photographs may be taken before or after the ceremony, and during the processional and recessional, but not during the service itself. Video cameras are permitted, but should remain unobtrusive in one area of the church. If you are taking pictures before the ceremony, your photographer should be done by ½ hour before the start of the service.

Wedding Programs

As a general rule, our church does not provide programs for weddings. Couples are responsible for their bulletins, but we ask that you run the final order of service by the pastor and Wedding Coordinator before you go to print. Be sure to bring a few copies of the program/order of service to your wedding rehearsal.

If you would like us to provide a printed program for your wedding, please ask at your first session with the Wedding Coordinator or at one of the sessions with the Officiating Pastor. We will show you some samples, and there will be a small additional fee.

Flowers and other decorations

The main sanctuary seats approximately 600 worshipers, with 21 pews on each side. If an aisle runner is used, it should be at least 90 feet long, to reach from the baptismal font to the narthex. (The font is permanently anchored at the head of the center aisle and will not be moved.) The chapel seats approximately 85 worshipers, with 9 pews on each side.

Flowers are permitted in the Sanctuary and/or Chapel, but are not to be placed directly on the altar. We have three options for candles in the sanctuary: Candelabra, pew candles, and unity candles. First, we have two candelabra, each with 14 candles. This candelabra is placed behind the altar. Second, we have 14 pew candle holders placed in the center aisle, 7 on each side, every third row. Finally, we have a stand for a unity candle and two individual candles. The unity candle is placed on a table on the pulpit side in the sanctuary. All candles, which are 10 or 12 inch tapers, will be provided by the wedding party. Unity sand is also permissible, but you will need your own containers and sand.

Rice is not permitted to be thrown inside or outside the sanctuary. If there is an aisle runner, flower petals may be permitted to be thrown along the center aisle. For specific requests regarding particular decorations, please check with the Wedding Coordinator.

Conduct at the wedding

Before, during, and after the wedding ceremony, we expect conduct appropriate to worship in a church. There will be no smoking in the building, and no alcohol anywhere on the premises. The Fireside Room will be available to the wedding party before the ceremony, as well as the Youth Room (for the men) and Rooms 1-2 (for the women). Please let us know when you will be arriving on the day of the ceremony.

The week of your wedding

Seven days before your ceremony you need to bring the following to the Office Coordinator

1. Your marriage license
2. Your final payment to the church (you may do this earlier, or in installments, if you would like)
3. A few copies of your wedding program

Wedding Rehearsal

The Wedding Coordinator will conduct the wedding rehearsal the evening before the wedding. The Officiating Pastor may also be present. The Wedding Rehearsal will last no longer than 60 minutes. At the rehearsal, the Wedding Coordinator will rehearse the service, as well as help familiarize the wedding party with the building and describe the policies and procedures for the weekend.

General roles and duties of the...

1. *Officiating Pastor* – Conduct all premarital sessions. Help plan the wedding service, along with the Music Director.
2. *Primary Musician* – Consult with couple regarding worship music. Practice with soloists and/or other musicians.
3. *Wedding Coordinator* – Conduct initial interview with couple, and help them complete the worksheet. Answer questions. Review policies and procedures. Conduct the Wedding rehearsal. On the day of the Ceremony, the Wedding Coordinator will guide the participants in the wedding through all aspects of the wedding service.
4. *Office Coordinator* – Will make appointments for the couple, make the reservation for the Sanctuary/Chapel, take the fees to be given to the financial coordinator (and may type bulletin/worship folder, if applicable).
5. *Custodian* – Will set up for service before the wedding rehearsal (candles, tables, and other special requests for the sanctuary). Will be available some time on the day of the wedding and will take down the sanctuary after the wedding. The wedding party is responsible for clean up of the Fireside Room and other rooms that are used.

Fees

The fee you provide Woodlake will include the Officiating Pastor, the Primary Musician, the Wedding Coordinator, a Custodian, and some administrative costs. (There may also be a Building Fee). The fees for the pastor include the premarital sessions, worship planning, rehearsal and the wedding service. The fee for the wedding coordinator includes the initial consultation, the wedding rehearsal, and four hours of time on the day of the wedding. The musician fee includes one hour of consultation/email/correspondence between you and the musician, the musician's practice time to prepare for the ceremony, a brief rehearsal with any soloists before the ceremony, and the ceremony itself.

\$100 Sanctuary (for members)

\$300 Sanctuary (for non-members)

\$250 Pastor (negotiable for members)

\$225 Musician

\$125 Wedding Coordinator

\$75 Custodian

\$25 Supplies

\$25 Bulletins (if applicable)

Fees for extra musicians (i.e. soloists, accompanists other than the primary musician) will be set according to the musician's professional guidelines

*If the couple are active members of Woodlake, the Pastor's fee may be treated as an honorarium, and the amount is at the discretion of the couple.

Reception

The Fellowship Hall and Fireside Room are available for receptions with the payment of the appropriate additional fees. The Fellowship Hall holds 16 round tables, with eight at each table. The Fireside Room holds seven round table with eight at each table.

Attachments

1. Personal Data
2. Service Data

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