

A Manual for Planning Your Christian Wedding



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PLANNING A CHRISTIAN WEDDING

A Christian wedding is an occasion of great joy and happiness. A Christian bride and groom desire to begin life together with the blessing of their gracious and loving God, so they come to God's house to be united in marriage. We at Peace Lutheran Ministries pray, individually and as a congregation, for Christ's blessing on the home you are establishing.

A SACRED SERVICE

Because it is a special day for you, we can easily lose sight of this important goal in the wedding service. It is very human to let other things, such as the flowers, the gowns and dresses, the music, or you yourselves become the primary objects of attention. The real focus of worship can easily be lost. We need to remember that, first of all, marriage is an ordinance of God. *"Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' "for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."* (Gen. 2:22-24) We are asking God's blessing by being married in a Christian church.

Your wedding is first and foremost, a sacred service. It is a service of worship which is Christ-centered, honoring and glorifying our Lord.

By emphasizing the Christ centered character of the ceremony, you are not only pleasing God and yourselves, but also those you invited to worship with you. When discussing details with the pastor you will note, therefore, that there are certain standards concerning Christian worship which are upheld so that the proper emphasis might be maintained. Because the wedding is a public ceremony of the church, the pastors have a responsibility to the congregation to see that worship is carried out in a reverent and dignified manner.

In accord with God's will and institution of marriage, and your desire to exchange your vows in church while asking God to bless your marriage, the living relationship of the couple prior to marriage should reflect the teachings of God's Word and beliefs of this church.

The following items in this manual are to assist you and your family in planning your wedding. Please use this as your guide, and, in matters that are not mentioned in this manual, feel free to consult the church office or pastor.

SETTING THE DATE AND TIME

After you have selected a tentative date and time please fill out the *"Application for Christian Marriage."* **A wedding date will not be reserved until this form and all required fees are filled out and returned to the church office, and a meeting takes place with a pastor.** Please refrain from planning further details until you have determined the availability of the church and the pastor. After the completed form is returned, one of the pastors will contact you to set up an appointment.

PREMARITAL PREPARATION

Couples being married will meet together with the pastor prior to their wedding for at least 4 sessions utilizing the "Prepare" online assessment tool. The intent is to learn more about you as a couple as well as to talk about specific areas of your relationship that may be strengthened. These sessions will also include planning of the details of your wedding.

CLERGY PARTICIPATION - Because of our understanding of church fellowship as part of the LCMS (*Lutheran Church Missouri Synod*), clergymen from other denominations are not permitted to participate in Lutheran worship services, including weddings.

If your spouse-to-be is a member of another LCMS congregation and you would like to have that pastor participate, please discuss this with the pastor.

ORGANISTS AND SOLOISTS

One of Peace's regular organists is normally used at all wedding ceremonies where organ music is requested. For this service there is a fee indicated on the "Application for Marriage" Form. Any request for a guest organist must be approved by the Music Director of Peace Lutheran Church, Delores Kohler (715-623-2048). She can also recommend a soloist if you wish. Guest soloists, as well as their vocal selections, must be approved by the Music Director.

CUSTODIAN AND WEDDING ASSISTANT

Peace Lutheran provides a person to make sure the building is open and ready for you, as well as someone to be on hand to help the day of your wedding, if needed. We also will clean following the service. *(These services are included in your fees.)*

CHURCH FURNISHINGS, DECORATIONS, PARAMENTS

You have chosen to be married in church to thank God for bringing you together, to ask His blessings upon you, and to keep the service Christ focused. Keeping Christ in your lives will be the greatest wedding gift you can receive. Weddings occur within the church year calendar. Therefore, church furnishings, seasonal decorations, and the colored paraments are not allowed to be replaced, changed or removed.

UNITY CANDLE

Lighting of a unity candle is optional for the couple. If used, the candle represents the light of Jesus Christ whose presence they seek throughout their marriage. The congregation provides a Unity Candle Stand but the candles must be supplied by the couple. *(Candle sizes - 7/8" and 3/1/4")* As an alternative to using the large candle stand, often couples purchase a unity candle that comes with its own small stand that can be placed on the altar.

AISLE CANDLES

These are permitted and may be obtained from your florist. The length of the aisle is 66 feet.

FLORIST ARRANGEMENTS

Neither the florist nor a wedding consultant, if one is engaged, play any part in the directing of the rehearsal or wedding. We have no preference among local florists. Flowers are used as a part of Christian worship to give glory to God. The church has altar vases which may be used for the altar bouquets. The liners for these vases may be picked up with permission of the church office during the week prior to the wedding. Any other decoration of the church should be made tastefully the day of the wedding. Tacks and nails may not be used on any of the church pews or furnishings.

Quite often the couple chooses to share the beauty of their flowers with the entire congregation by leaving the bouquets, which they have furnished for the weekend worship services. This is a fine gesture, which is appreciated by the congregation.

Floral arrangements other than the normal vase of flowers behind the altar and flowers carried by the bridal party must be approved by the officiating pastor prior to the rehearsal.

FLOWER GIRLS

Flower girls may be used but no dropping of flower petals, feathers, etc., is permitted.

PHOTOGRAPHER & VIDEOGRAPHER

Since your wedding is first and foremost a worship service, all photographers and videographers, both professional and amateur, are asked to respect the worship service and the place. While pictures are important, you will not want anything to detract from the worship service. **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY IS PERMITTED DURING THE WEDDING SERVICE.** Flash pictures are permitted during the processional and recessional. During the processional and recessional photographers and videographers may station themselves no closer than halfway down the aisle. After the processional any pictures or videos during the service are to be taken from the rear portions of the church or far sides. Posed pictures may be taken before or after the wedding. From Labor Day to Memorial Day weekend, any photos taken after the service must be finished by 4:00PM to allow for cleaning and preparation for the 6:00PM worship service.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

Wedding rehearsals are normally scheduled for the evening before the wedding. The pastor directs the rehearsal. You should have discussed any special requests concerning the service prior to the rehearsal. Rehearsals help us understand the events as they will take place, and they remove some of the nervousness, which often results from weddings.

Your rehearsal is important, and you should make every attempt to have the total wedding party present, including parents of the wedding couple and ushers. Please be prompt and plan to have the rehearsal begin at the time appointed since there may be multiple rehearsals on the same evening.

It is not necessary for the soloists or musicians to be present at the rehearsal although they may wish to practice prior to or after rehearsal. Attire may be informal but in good taste.

REHEARSAL DINNER AND WEDDING RECEPTION

The pastor and his family do not presume to be invited to the rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception. If you wish to invite them, send an invitation ahead of time as with the other guests. This also applies to the organist, soloist, and others. Be sure to be specific about including spouse and/or family members, if that is your intent.

SMOKING AND ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Smoking is not permitted in the building. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on the premises.

RICE, BIRD SEED, CONFETTI

These can be dangerous to walk on and difficult to clean up. Therefore they are not to be thrown either inside or outside the building.

ATTIRE

Recognizing that the wedding service is an act of worship, all wedding attire should be appropriate for such a worship service. Questions about attire may be directed to the pastor.

WEDDING MUSIC

The pastor and organist are responsible to the church for seeing to it that what is said and sung and played at your wedding is in harmony with Christian principles of worship. It is for this reason that we are concerned with what is done musically and are careful that the music at

your wedding is Christ centered. Some popular music is not appropriate for a church service.

Music in the service is not merely an added attraction. It too, like the sermon and prayers, must turn the thoughts of the listeners to things spiritual. It should be religious in form and content and direct the hearts and minds of the hearers to God. It should add, not take away from, the dignity, beauty and sacredness of the service at the altar.

There are many wonderful pieces of Christian music that can be used. The organist will be happy to meet with you in advance to select music for your wedding. Time spent in carefully selecting music to fit the Christ centered theme of your wedding will be well spent in terms of worship and in the message you proclaim to the congregation, your friends and relatives.

WEDDING SERVICE BULLETIN

A wedding service bulletin may be printed listing the Order of Service and the names of all participants. Most couples print their own worship bulletin. If you would like the church office print the type and print the bulletin, this can be done for an optional fee. It is your responsibility to purchase the folder covers. They may be purchased online.

ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES

Obtain from the Langlade County Clerk's office well in advance all of the most recent information regarding applying for and obtaining a marriage license. The regulations change from time to time.

Be aware of the fact that it is illegal for a clergyman to perform a marriage ceremony without possession of a valid license from the couple to be married. Please submit this to the church office a week in advance of the wedding ceremony.

The license you will obtain is mailed back to the County Clerk's office by the pastor after the ceremony.

CONCLUSION

May God bless not only your preparations for your wedding service, but your entire married life together. As you enter holy matrimony according to His plan and design, and live in it on that basis with the strength and help of His love and Word, you can count on having a life filled with His blessing.

The pastors are willing to answer any questions you may have regarding these guidelines. We look forward to helping you plan for your life together as husband and wife under God's grace and love.

SAMPLE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR PLANNING A CHRISTIAN WEDDING

PRELUDE (MUSIC) _____

PROCESSIONAL (MUSIC) _____

INVOCATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS _____

WEDDING SERMON _____

SPECIAL MUSIC (OPTIONAL) _____

EXCHANGE OF VOWS (TRADITIONAL OR WRITE YOUR OWN)

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

SPECIAL MUSIC (OPTIONAL) _____

UNITY CANDLE (OPTIONAL) _____

SIGINING OF MARRIAGE DOCUMENTS

PRAYERS

BENEDICTION

RECESSIONAL (MUSIC) _____

SPECIAL MUSIC (OPTIONAL) _____

Please include the following announcement in your wedding bulletin:

(WE REQUEST THAT NO FLASH PHOTOS BE TAKEN DURING THE WORSHIP SERVICE.
THANK YOU.)

This worksheet should be filled out and brought with you to one of your counseling sessions with the pastor. Please discuss it with him before you have it printed. We hope that it helps you in planning your Christian wedding service.

SAMPLE OF ACCEPTABLE RELIGIOUS WEDDING MUSIC

There is an abundance of appropriate organ and vocal music available, and just a beginning of this list of available music is suggested here.

PROCESSIONAL AND RECESSIONALS (Organ)

Marcello, B.	Psalm XIX
Pachelbel, J.	Taccata in E Minor Fantasia
Bach, J.S.	Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring
Purcell, H.	Trumpet Voluntary in D Major
Purcell, H.	Trumpet Tune in D Major
Manz, P.	God of Grace
	Now Thank We All Our God
	O That I Had a Thousand Voices
	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
Buszin, W.	Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus
Micheelsen	Lobe Den Herren
	(Praise to the Lord)
Fleischer	Our God, Our Help, in Ages Past
Clarke	Trumpet Voluntary
Handel, G.	Festal March
	With Trumpets and Horns
Bach, J.S.	Sheep May Safely Graze
Beethoven	Ode to Joy
	Praise the Father

VOCAL MUSIC

The Lord is My Shepherd - H. Smart
O Perfect Love
Father, We Come Today
Praise My Soul the King of Heaven
Wedding Prayer
Whither Thou Goest
Entreat Me Not to Leave Thee
One Hand, One Heart
Wedding Song (There is Love)
The Lord's Prayer - A. Malotte

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

(From the Lutheran Service Book)
Alleluia! Let Praises Ring! #822
Lord Jesus Christ Be Present #902
O God, Our Help in Ages Past #733
Let us Ever Walk with Jesus #685
O Father, All Creating # 858
Lord, When You Came as Welcome Guest #859
Gracious Savior, Grant Your Blessing #860
Christ Be My Leader # 861
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty #790

BIBLICAL MARRIAGE TEXTS

The following Bible passages would be appropriate readings for a wedding service. If you would like to choose one or more of these for use in your service, please consult with your pastor. Typically 3 readings are used, one from the Old Testament, an Epistle, and a Gospel reading.

OLD TESTAMENT

Gen. 2:18-24. The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs] and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman, ' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Num. 6:24-26. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.

Josh. 24:14. Now fear the Lord, and serve Him with all faithfulness.

Josh. 24:15. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

Ruth 1:16-17. Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.

II Sam. 7:29. Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign Lord, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever.

Psalms 33:22. May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in You.

Psalms 37:5. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him; and He will do this.

Psalms 37:39. The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; He is their stronghold in time of trouble.

Psalms 67:1. May God be gracious to us, and bless us and make His face shine upon us.

Psalms 91:1. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psalm 103:17-18. But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear Him, and His righteousness with their children's children - with those who keep His covenant and remember to obey His precepts.

Psalm 124:8. Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 127:1-2. Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat - for he grants sleep to those he loves.

Psalm 128:1-6. Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem, and may you live to see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel.

Psalm 144:15. Blessed are the people of whom this is true; blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.

Prov. 1:33. But whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.

Prov. 3:3-6. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Prov. 8:17. I love those who love Me; and those who seek Me find Me.

Prov. 15:16. Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil.

Prov. 18:22. He who finds a wife, finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord.

Prov. 30:8-9. Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Prov. 31:10-12. A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

Eccl. 4:9-12. Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Isa. 25:9. In that day they will say, Surely this is our God; we trusted in Him, and He saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in Him; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.

Jer. 32:38-39. They will be My people, and I will be their God. I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them.

GOSPEL

Matt. 6:33. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matt. 7:24-27. Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

Matt. 18:20. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Matt. 19:5-6. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.

Matt. 28:20. Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Luke 10:5. When you enter a house, first say, Peace to this house

John 2:1-11. On the third day a wedding took place in Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied, "My time has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water;" so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

John 6:68. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

John 14:27. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 15:1-8. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener". He cuts off every branch that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even

more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches". If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15:9-15. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

EPISTLE

Acts 16: 30-31. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

Rom. 12: 9-12. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Rom. 14:19. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Rom. 15:5-6,13. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Gal. 6:2. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Eph. 5:21-33. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. To make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a

profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Phil. 2:2. then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Col. 3:14-19. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Heb. 13:5. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

James 1:17. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

1 Peter 3:7. Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Peter 5:7. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Jude 1:20-21. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.