



WEDDING GUIDE

Zion Lutheran Church

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Congratulations and blessings!

The congregation is honored that you have chosen to celebrate your wedding at Zion Lutheran. The pastor and staff anticipate sharing your joy in this life-changing event and are here to help you prepare a wedding that will express your love for each other and your trust in God's blessings. This guide describes Zion's wedding policies and services to help you prepare for your wedding day.

The wedding ceremony is one of the worship services of a Lutheran congregation in which we receive God's blessings. All weddings performed at Zion Lutheran will be conducted in ways compatible with the traditions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Members and non-members are invited to schedule a wedding at Zion Lutheran. We hope this guidebook will help you in the planning of your celebration of your marriage.

First Steps in Planning your Wedding

The following arrangements should be completed before making further plans for your wedding.

The Date

Contact the church office to set the date for your wedding. It is helpful to do this as far in advance of the wedding date as possible. Once you have contacted the church office, your information will be passed on to the Pastor. **Please, do not formally announce your dates, reserve a facility for the reception, or order invitations until after you have approval from the Pastor and have completed a wedding agreement form. Non-members will also need to turn in their non-refundable deposit at this time.**

Saturday weddings must be held no later than 4:00 p.m. You may schedule your weekday ceremony between 12:00 noon – 7:00 p.m. Receptions must conclude by 10:00 p.m., or at an earlier agreed upon time. Rehearsals are typically held at 6:00 pm on the evening before the wedding unless different arrangements are made.

Weddings are primarily reserved for **active members** of Zion Lutheran. Active members are defined as members *who worship regularly and are regularly involved in the life of Zion Lutheran*. Active members must be in good standing. Zion will consider non-church members on a case by case basis. We encourage couples to see the importance of an active life in the community of faith.

Our primary commitment will always be to Zion Lutheran Church's ministries. As you choose a date for your wedding, please remember that we will not remove seasonal decorations, such as Christmas poinsettias or Easter flowers, to accommodate wedding decorations. Also, we will schedule weddings only for dates and times when the church is officially open, no worship services are occurring, and when other church ministries are not using the needed facilities.

We are unable to schedule weddings on the following days:

- Sundays
- New Year's Eve and Day
- Ash Wednesday
- Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday)
- Memorial Day weekend
- Fourth of July weekend
- Labor Day weekend
- German Fest Weekend, usually last weekend of October
- Thanksgiving weekend
- Saturday(s) before the Christmas program
- Christmas Eve and Day

The Pastor

Generally a pastor of Zion Lutheran Church or another ELCA pastor will preside at weddings. (*See Visiting Pastors for the exceptions*). She or he will ensure appropriate use of the liturgy and facilities in keeping with the policies of the congregation and within the tradition of the ELCA. The pastor's church and personal schedule will determine if he/she is available. Zion Lutheran Church requires that the couple meet with the Officiating Pastor (and/or the Visiting Pastor) at least twice. These meetings are an opportunity for the pastor and couple to prepare for the wedding, so that the ceremony will truly represent the gift of God's love.

It is not necessary to invite the Pastor to the rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception. If you want the Pastor to attend, please extend the invitation and any expectations at least a month in advance. If you would like the Pastor to pray, bless or other pastoral acts at the rehearsal dinner or wedding reception, please discuss additional compensation with the Pastor. Please understand that the pastor may not be able to attend due to scheduling conflicts and other ministry/personal responsibilities.

Please remember that the Pastor is both pastor and agent of the State of Wisconsin while officiating a wedding and needs to abide by such laws, rules, regulations and guidelines.

If you are planning an off-site wedding (not at Zion Lutheran Church), you will need to compensate/reimburse the pastor for all travel expenses, including but not limited to mileage, rental car, hotel, airfare, and meals, etc., in addition to the officiating fee.

Note: The pastor and wedding coordinator are not responsible to ensure that the couple stays on task and completes necessary paperwork, including but not limited to marriage license, scheduling meetings with pastor, musicians, and/or wedding coordinator, payments, bulletin information, and order of service.

Visiting Pastor

If you would like another pastor to share in your service, please clarify this at the time of reserving your wedding date along with the other pastor's contact information. While Zion Lutheran welcomes clergy from other denominations, participation of other clergy members is only at the invitation of the Zion Lutheran pastor. With the exception of an ELCA pastor, the Zion Lutheran pastor **must be present and participate in officiating your wedding at Zion Lutheran Church.**

Wedding Coordinator

All weddings (except for a very small private wedding) will utilize the services of Zion's wedding coordinator. The wedding coordinator should not be confused with a personal attendant. Rather, the wedding coordinator is primarily a pastoral assistant. The coordinator can be of assistance to you by answering questions regarding the wedding process if and when the pastor is not available. The primary task of the wedding coordinator is to assure that your wedding service flows as smoothly as possible. The coordinator will assist the pastor in conducting the rehearsal, and be on-site to assist the pastor and the wedding party on your wedding day until the service is over. The wedding coordinator will be available no more than 2-3 hours prior to the wedding unless prior arrangements have been made at least one month in advance.

Please, provide your service providers such as bridal consultants, caterers, florists, and photographers with the contact information for the Wedding Coordinator. It is your responsibility to familiarize them with Zion Lutheran's policy. As the representative of Zion Lutheran Church, the Wedding Coordinator will generally have final approval of all aspects of the wedding service unless it is a matter requiring the officiating minister.

Marriage Preparation

Couples being married at Zion are expected to participate in marriage education. Please plan on meeting with the Pastor at least 3 to 4 months before the wedding. Follow up appointments will be made at that time. Please note additional costs may be incurred for inventories, books and workbooks, as determined by the Pastor and the Couple.

Rehearsal

The purpose of the rehearsal is to walk through the wedding service. 45-60 minutes is ample time for a rehearsal. ALL wedding participants are urged to be prompt. Have respect for the pastor's and wedding coordinator's time. *If you haven't done so already, please make sure to bring your marriage license to the rehearsal.* The organist or musicians are not required to be at the rehearsal, unless prior arrangements and appropriate compensation has been made.

The Wedding Service

A Christian marriage is a witness to God's love in Christ and recognizes God as the one who established and blessed the home. The marriage service, therefore, becomes an opportunity to witness to the Christian faith. It becomes a celebration of the Gospel (Good News in Jesus) for all who attend. Remember that marriage in the Church is not a private matter. By virtue of the fact that the facilities of the Church are used and the Pastor called to serve the congregation is involved, it becomes a worship service in the Church. First and foremost, the wedding service is a public act of worship and praise and should be observed. **The wedding service is not simply a spectacle to be watched. Rather, the wedding is a Christian worship service.**

The words, the music, the readings, the movement down the aisle, and the gestures (such as giving and receiving of the rings) are simple but profound ways of expressing faith in God and in each other. Happiness, joy and generosity should abound as a response to God's love through Jesus. Plan the wedding service so that everything you say and everything said to you is meaningful and reflects the love and faithfulness rooted in God's steadfast love.

In keeping with the nature of Christian marriage, we expect that couples desiring to be married at Zion Lutheran Church or by a Zion Lutheran pastor have a commitment to Christ and are active members of a worshiping community. All couples must also fulfill the requirements for marriage at Zion and in the State of Wisconsin.

Order of Wedding Service

An order of the wedding service is provided at the end of this guide along with suggestions for music and scripture readings. The order of service follows the Lutheran tradition of worship which includes a message/meditation/homily. Please discuss with the Pastor at least 2 months prior to the wedding if you have any questions.

Music

Music for the wedding service should be planned with care so that it reflects the Christian faith. All musical selections for the wedding service will be approved by the Pastor. Please discuss with the organist/pianist their ability to play specific pieces of music.

Consider singing hymns for part of the service. Zion Lutheran has the Evangelical Lutheran Book of Worship (ELW - cranberry hymnal). CDs, and MP3 files must be approved by the Pastor. Depending on the type of music, a media specialist from Zion Lutheran Church may be needed (compensation provided by the wedding couple).

Please see the following Appendix for music suggestions.

Organists, Instrumentalists and Vocalists

Zion has 2-3 organists/pianists depending on the time of the year. If you wish to have them play for your wedding, you may obtain their names and contact information from the Pastor or Church Administrative Assistant. It is **YOUR Responsibility** to contact the organists/pianists or any other musicians or vocalists you wish to include in your wedding service. Please contact them as soon as your wedding date has been confirmed by the Pastor.

Church organists/pianists, instrumentalists and vocalists are not paid by the congregation for such services. **Payment is to be made by the wedding couple directly to the musician(s).** Fees need to be negotiated with the musician(s) prior to the wedding (*see chart on Wedding Agreement for information on organist/pianist fees*).

If such vocalists and/or instrumentalists will be performing with the organist/pianist, they should learn and prepare the approved music in advance of the ceremony and meet with the organist/pianist **before the rehearsal day**. At or before this meeting, musicians should provide original copies of the music to the organist/pianist in the desired key. It is not the job of the organist/pianist to teach music to vocalists or instrumentalists. You will need to compensate the organist/pianist for any additional rehearsal time with other musicians.

Marriage License

Couples must secure a license to marry from the State of Wisconsin. **Prior to applying for a marriage license, you must have a wedding date and officiant scheduled.**

Application for a marriage license can be made in any county in Wisconsin and the license may be filed with the Register of Deeds in any county in Wisconsin. Please check with the County Clerk's office for documentation needed to apply (driver's license, birth certificates, social security number, divorce or death record from previous marriage), fees, and for their specific office hours.

The couple should be prepared to let the County Clerk's Office know the date of the wedding ceremony; the county where they will be married; the municipality (city, village or township - please verify the locality before you apply); and the name of the officiant, along with the officiant's address and phone number.

Application must be made between 3 and 60 days prior to the wedding. The day of application is not included in the three-day waiting period (i.e. If you apply on the 20th, you can be married on the 24th). **Both of the parties must complete the application together and in-person.**

Please bring the marriage certificate to the pastor at least the Monday before the wedding date.

Bridal Party

The front of the sanctuary is not very large and becomes quickly congested. There is limited room for a large bridal party. Please keep this in mind when you pick attendants. Two to four attendants is preferred.

Ushers

A minimum of two ushers should assist in handing out bulletins and seating people.

Sanctuary Occupancy

The sanctuary holds 8 people comfortably in each pew. The sanctuary can accommodate up to 240 people. Additional guests can be accommodated in the balcony (not handicapped accessible) or with chairs placed in the back (spacing limited).

Handicap Accessible

There is an elevator located in the Gathering Area for those guests needing more assistance. Please have an extra usher/greeter for both the lower level and the sanctuary level to assist guests with the elevator. There is no elevator to the balcony area. One row of pews is shorter to allow space for wheelchairs in the sanctuary.

Flowers

You may wish to place flowers on the altar for your wedding. There are two brass vases for that purpose. The liners for the vases may be picked up at the church and delivered to the florist of your choice the week of your wedding. Please schedule a time with the church office to pick up the vases. You may also have your florist use other containers if so desired. If you wish to leave the flowers on the altar for the following Sunday, please let the church office or pastor know at least two weeks ahead of time.

If you have a flower girl that is to drop flower petals, we recommend using silk petals. You are responsible for cleaning up any flowers and petals following the wedding service.

No rice, birdseed, or confetti is allowed to be thrown in or outside the church building. No fireworks on church property.

Please do not hang flowers or other decorations on the walls, in the choir loft, on the piano, or on the organ.

Altar Paraments

The paraments (altar cloths) at Zion are designed and used according to the church year. They are not decorations. Thus the paraments may not be changed for your wedding in order to coordinate with the colors you have chosen. At times, other banners, paraments and decorations are used in front of the church to emphasize liturgical seasons or thematic worship series. These, too, are not to be changed for weddings.

Wedding Candles

If your service is to include the lighting of a unity candle, you will be responsible for purchasing that candle and two taper/dinner candles. The church has a stand for your unity candle or it can be set on the altar.

The church has 16 tall wooden pew candle holders that may be used. You will need to furnish the candles. The wedding party is responsible for setting up and taking down the wooden pew candle holders and returning them to their storage area in the balcony.

Photography and Videotaping

Flash pictures are NOT to be taken during the wedding service.

Please notify your photographer that once the wedding begins he/she is not allowed to move about the sanctuary taking pictures. Such movement is disruptive and disrespectful of the couple and the atmosphere of worship.

The Zion Lutheran Church building was erected in 1924, long before the advent of video cameras. There are no real appropriate places to set up for video cameras. The balcony offers one vantage point or the camera can be set by the side door off of the chancel area. Once again, the person taking pictures or doing videography may not move about during the wedding service.

Please instruct photographers and videographers that they must use the existing house lighting in the sanctuary during the wedding service. Additional lighting equipment is not allowed.

All equipment needs to be in place at least 30 minutes before the ceremony. It is the responsibility of the couple to inform the photographer/videographer of these requirements.

Aisle Runner

If you are buying or renting an aisle runner, the length of the aisle runner is 55 feet from the base of the chancel to the back of the sanctuary. Remember, aisle runners are difficult to roll out and are a hazard for tripping. If you do use an aisle runner, you will need to bring long pins to attach it to the carpet.

Pew Bows

The church has 15 rows of pews on each side for a total of 30 pews. If you place bows or ribbons on the ends of the pews, they must be tied or elastic used and NOT taped. Taping removes the varnish. Please inform your florist. If you are going to decorate, please check with the church office to schedule your decorating time to avoid conflicts with scheduled events.

Bulletins

The choice of whether or not you will have a bulletin is up to the discretion of the couple. If you choose to have one, you may purchase a bulletin cover (Christian bookstores, office supply stores, and craft stores have a variety of covers made especially for weddings). The church office will layout and print your bulletins. You will need to provide the church office with all the information needed to complete the bulletin. You may email it to the church office at office@zionstratford.org. The pastor will proof the bulletins and make any appropriate and necessary changes before the bulletin is printed.

Submit all information at least three weeks prior to your wedding along with paper and number of copies to be printed.

Alcohol and Smoking

The church is a place of worship. We ask for your cooperation, as well as that of the bridal party, family, friends and guests, in keeping the church a holy place for worship. **There are absolutely no intoxicating beverages or illegal substances allowed on church grounds (which includes the parking lots and sidewalks).** Smoking is prohibited in the church building. Please ensure guests dispose of cigarette butts appropriately.

If the pastor deems the behavior of any member of the wedding party or guests as unacceptable that person will be asked to leave (this includes the bride, groom, and family members). The wedding may be delayed, postponed or canceled if the couple is under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances or has abusive or aggressive behavior.

Pets

Pets are not allowed in the wedding service. Exceptions will be made for trained/certified guide or service dogs or K9 police or rescue canines.

Security

The church is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. The church is open to the public. There are no locked places or rooms for the bridal party, family or guests to keep their belongings secure.

All vehicles need to be removed from the church parking lots before worship on Sunday morning (8:00 a.m.). Please be respectful of the church neighbors before, during, and after the wedding service.

Reception

Couples are welcome to hold their wedding reception in the Family Center. There is no charge for the use of this room for active Zion members in good standing. You will need to provide your own food, coffee, cups, plates, napkins, utensils, decorations, etc. **No alcoholic beverages are permitted.**

Receptions need to conclude by 10:00 p.m. No exceptions.

All guests and the bridal party need to obey Village of Stratford ordinances, including but not limited to noise levels.

Non-members will need to complete a Building Use agreement form and make necessary deposit(s) for the use of the Family Center for a wedding reception.

Cleaning Up

The wedding party is responsible for picking up everything that is used for the wedding. It is important to designate someone to help with cleaning up the sanctuary and making sure all decorations, flowers, candles, etc. are returned to their proper places. Please assign someone to check the dressing rooms, bathrooms, and other places your party used to make sure nothing is left behind and to assist with cleanup. All decorations, etc. need to be cleaned up and taken out of the church after the wedding service and before you leave the premises to go to the reception. The church will be locked following the departure of guests and bridal party.

Zion Lutheran Church is not responsible for items left in the church, and these items may be thrown away.

Suggested Preparations for the Ceremony

You should be prepared to discuss the following preparations with family, attendants, florist, photographer and the Wedding Coordinator.

All decorating, photography and set-up must be completed 30 minutes before the service. Seating of guests will begin at that time.

Dressing before the Ceremony

Up to three hours before the ceremony, the couple and attendants may dress in their assigned rooms. Please have your attendants clean up these rooms and check out with the Wedding Coordinator before they leave the church.

Processional and Recessional

Please provide the Pastor and Wedding Coordinator with a detailed plan for the processional, which includes the seating of parents and grandparents and the entrance of attendants. Depending on the make-up of your wedding party, you may use this as a guide for the entrance order:

1. Groom's grandparents
2. Bride's grandparents
3. Groom's parents
4. Bride's parents (if not walking the bride down the aisle)
5. Minister, groom, best man, and groomsmen
6. Bridesmaids
7. Maid/Matron of honor
8. Ring bearer and flower girl
9. Bride

You should also decide who will participate in the recessional. We recommend that only the bridal couple, the attendants, and the parents leave while the recessional music plays.

The individuals assigned to remove decorations from the Worship Center will be responsible for picking up those petals as well as gathering any bulletins, tissues, etc. that guests leave in the pews.

Appendix 1 - Order of Wedding Service

Following is the order of your marriage service according to the Lutheran tradition and the elements included in it. The pastor will help you make choices of scripture, music, and service order to express your personalities, your relationship to each other, and your relationship to God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Prelude - may be instrumental or vocal
Processional
Invocation and Greeting
Declaration of Intent
Prayer
Scripture Readings and other readings
Message/Meditation
Music (optional)
Exchange of Wedding Vows
Blessing and Exchange of Rings
Lighting of the Unity Candle (optional)
(instrumental, solo, or congregational music can be played during this time)
The Pronouncement of Marriage
Wedding Blessing and Prayer
Lord's Prayer
Benediction
Introduction of the Couple
Recessional

Appendix 2 - Recommended Music

Processional

- Canon in D - Pachelbel
- Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring - Bach
- March (from Occasional Oratorio) - Handel
- Prince of Denmark's March (Trumpet Voluntary) - Clarke/Purcell
- Processional in C - Hopson
- Processional (from Water Music Suite) - Handel
- Trumpet March - Lully-Wolff
- Trumpet Tune in C - Lau
- Solemn Processional (from Water Music) - Handel
- Wedding Processional an Air - Bach-Leupold

Recessional

- Allegro (from Symphony No. 4) - Boyce
- Allegro Maestoso (Water Music) - Handel
- God of Grace - arr. Manz
- Hornpipe (from Water Music) - Handel
- Psalm 19 - Marcello
- Prelude in Classic Style - Young
- Now Thank We All Our God - Post
- Rigaudon - Campra
- Rondeau (Theme from Masterpiece Theater) - Mouret
- Trumpet Tune - Clarke/Purcell
- Trumpet Finale - Manfredini-Wolf

Other Music Selections

If you are wondering about whether or not a music or vocal selection is appropriate for your wedding, here is a tip: if you can answer “yes” to any of the following questions, the music is probably appropriate:

1. Does the music/text reflect praise and/or thanksgiving to God?
2. Is the song based on, or does it reflect a scripture theme?
3. Is this song in the form of a prayer?

Inappropriate for use in the church is *Wagner’s Wedding March* from the opera “Lohengrin,” *Mendelssohn’s Wedding March* from “Midsummer Night’s Dream,” and the *Breaking Dawn* wedding song from the movie “Twilight.” These songs are not in keeping with the intent of a worship service to praise and thank God and to acknowledge God’s presence through Jesus Christ in your relationship.

The best choices from music are the hymnal. Congregational singing is strongly encouraged. Other acceptable music suggestions include:

- A Nuptial Blessing - Proulx
- Love - Van Dyke
- The Greatest of These - Moe
- Wedding Hymn (Ptolemy) - Handel
- Wedding Prayer - Dunlap
- On Eagle’s Wings - Joncas
- My Heart Ever Faithful - J.S. Bach
- The Gift of Love - arr. Hopson
- And Now We Join - Halfvarson
- All the Glory - Gaither

- Author of Love - Clark
- Where There is Love - Haas
- Wedding Song - Stookey
- Two Candles - Salisbury
- Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us - Bradley
- Parent's Prayer Davis
- Irish Blessing - Stookey
- In this Very Room - Harris
- The Prayer - Sager and Foster

Music choices need to be pre-approved by the pastor before they are finalized.

Appendix 3 - Scripture Readings

Choose 2-4 scripture readings for your wedding service. You may want to choose readings from both the Old and New Testaments. You may also select scripture readings other than those listed below that you find meaningful to you and your relationship to each other and/or God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. You may also include other readings/poems from Christian or secular authors with approval of the pastor.

Old Testament

- Genesis 1:26-28
- Genesis 2:18-24
- Psalm 33:1-5
- Psalm 67
- Psalm 100
- Psalm 117
- Psalm 127
- Psalm128
- Psalm 150
- Song of Solomon 2:10-13
- Song of Solomon 8:6b-7
- Ruth 1:16-17
- Proverbs 3:3-6
- Proverbs 3:5-7
- Proverbs 31:10-12

New Testament

- Matthew 18:21-22
- Matthew 19:4-6
- John 2:1-10
- John 15:9-12
- John 17:20-26
- Romans 12:1-2
- Romans 15:1-6
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-18
- Ephesians 3:14-19
- Philippians 1:27-2:4
- Philippians 2:1-4
- 1 John 4:7-11

My Wedding Notes and Questions

Zion Lutheran Church
Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Hands

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