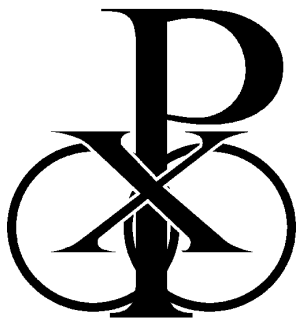


*Making Your
Wedding
Arrangements*



*Approved by the Board of Elders
Dec. 1, 1998 ~ June 10, 2003*

*Zion Lutheran Church
Hiawatha, Iowa
(319) 393-2013*

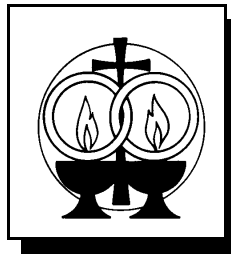
*Zion Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod*

*201 First Avenue
Hiawatha, Iowa 52233-1601
Church: (319) 393-2013
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*It is our prayer that your wedding will be a blessed experience
for you. We will do everything possible to make it a
spiritually uplifting occasion. May God's richest blessings be
yours throughout your marriage.*

Our Understanding of Marriage

The mission of the church is stated by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV) "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, {20} and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Our only goal in participating in a wedding service is proclaim Christ and what he teaches. We believe that by leading you to a deeper understanding of Christ and his promises, particularly as his Word relates to married life, we will help you to build a solid foundation for a life long marriage.



God established the institution of marriage in creating man and woman. He created marriage to be a life long commitment. Here are some of the significant words of Scripture relating to marriage.

Genesis 2:24 (NIV) For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Matthew 19:2-9 (NIV) Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. {3} Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" {4} "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' {5} and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? {6} So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." {7} "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" {8} Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. {9} I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Ephesians 5:22-33 (NIV) Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. {23} 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. {24} Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. {25} Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her {26} to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, {27} and to

present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. {28} In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. {29} After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- {30} for we are members of his body. {31} "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." {32} This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church. {33} However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

The marital relationship is not a private commitment, but a public one. Thus Jesus warns people that "What God has joined together, let man not separate." Society is to be informed that two people have made this joint commitment, and is to assist a couple in maintaining their marital vows.

Sexual relations outside of this public commitment are always forbidden by Scripture.

(1 Cor 6:18-20 NIV) Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. {19} Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; {20} you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

(Eph 5:1-3 NIV) Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children {2} and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. {3} But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

(see also Matthew 5:27-28; Matthew 15:19; Acts 15:29; Romans 13:13; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3)

So serious is this matter as it relates to marriage that it is considered, along with deserting your spouse, the only Scriptural reason for obtaining a divorce. Thus, in accordance with Scripture, we also take this matter seriously as we counsel with couples desiring to be married.

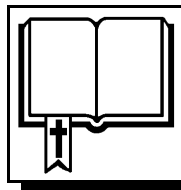
We recognize that in our world today many couples are already living together, and frequently have children, prior to making a marital commitment. Many people also have been divorced in our culture and seek to be married again.

Christ Jesus certainly forgives us all our sins. It is for our forgiveness that he died on the cross, and it is our joyful task as a Church to be able to

proclaim God's forgiveness. However, the forgiveness of Jesus is to be presented by the Church only to those people who recognize that they have done wrong, repent of their ways, and want to change their lives.

(Acts 26:20 NIV) I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

(Mat 18:15-18 NIV) "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. {16} But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' {17} If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. {18} "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.



Since our goal in marriage is to proclaim Christ, those couples who approach us for marriage who have been living together or have previously been married will receive additional counseling regarding God's will for marriage. Statistical studies have demonstrated that those couples who have either lived together prior to marriage or have

been divorced, have a much higher potential for marital failure (between 80 & 90 percent) than those couples who have followed God's plan in approaching the sacred estate of marriage. Such couples may be asked to change certain behaviors, move up their wedding date, or change their living arrangements prior to the church consenting to perform the marriage.

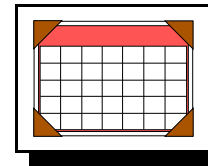
Couples who do not demonstrate a trust in God's Word regarding marriage, or whose actions indicate an unwillingness to conform to His will, will not be married. Couples, from whatever background and regardless of past mistakes, who demonstrate a trust in God's word regarding marriage and a willingness to allow His Word to shape their lives, will be married.

Our goal is the goal that Christ has set for us. To preach Him, and to help couples make Christ a part of their marital relationship. What follows in the rest of this manual reflects this basic understanding of marriage, and the mission of the church.

Pre-Marital Arrangements

Preparation Time

Couples should plan for a minimum time period of around three months for initial consultation, pre-marital counseling, possible adult instruction classes (see below), and planning of the wedding ceremony.



Because of the seriousness of marriage and because the church's role is to clearly proclaim Christ through this activity, exceptions to this three month rule will be decided by the Pastor after consultation with the Board of Elders. We do not believe it is in the best interest of a couple to assist them in a hastily arranged marriage, nor can the church properly exercise its duty to clearly proclaim God's will in regard to marriage when the couple allows no time for this process.

Pre-Marital Counseling

A minimum of 3 counseling sessions after the initial consultation will be required of all couples seeking marriage at the church. There will be a \$35.00 fee for this counseling which offsets the cost of the **Prepare-Enrich** scoring fee.

The first and second sessions must be separated by two weeks to allow for scoring of the marriage counseling instrument. At the pastor's discretion, additional counseling sessions may be required. When one or both of the individuals seeking marriage is not a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Adult Instruction is also be required.

Adult Instruction

Scripture admonishes Christians to seek Christian spouses. *(1 Cor 7:39) "A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord."* Many are surprised to learn from statistical studies that couples holding common religious beliefs is one of the **best predictors** of a successful marriage.



Since our goal is to proclaim Christ, we ask individuals from other religious, or non-religious backgrounds, to complete an 11 week course in Christian Education prior to marriage. We **do not require** individuals to join our church in order to be married. We do ask them, as a bare minimum, to agree to commit themselves to God's plan for marriage.

We believe it is important, as several statistical studies have proven, that couples strive to achieve a common religious understanding as part of their marital relationship. Even if people do not join our congregation, we believe that we as a church have accomplished our goal to proclaim Christ as long as couples give us the opportunity to share Christ with them in this manner, and conform their lives to the scriptural principles of marriage.

Setting A Date

It is surprising how many couples arrange for a wedding reception before they arrange for the wedding itself. You should clear possible wedding dates with the **Pastor, congregational calendar, and church organist**, prior to making other wedding arrangements. Again it should be stressed that a minimum of three months should normally be allowed between initial consultation and the actual ceremony.

Saturday weddings will be scheduled for no later than 3:00 p.m. to allow for preparations for our Saturday evening worship. If pictures are to be taken after the service, an earlier time may be necessary. Other days of the week are also possible.

Wedding Service: Music & Participants

MUSIC



Experience has shown that this is a very sensitive area to couples and their families. The couple needs to keep in mind that by involving the church in their wedding ceremony the church needs to keep its involvement consistent with its mission.

We regard the wedding ceremony as a worship service. The primary

function of all services is to proclaim Christ. Within this special setting we seek God's blessing for a marriage, we allow people to praise God for His blessings, and pray that God would continue to guide and strengthen this couple within the bonds of marriage.

The Pastor and church organist will assist you in selecting music that is both consistent with these goals, and has personal meaning to you and your family. However, any music used inside the sanctuary must be consistent with the teachings of our church. The words of sung music, or the commonly understood origins of music, must be specifically Christian. While marriage involves speaking about our human love for each other, the music of the Christian service moves beyond human love and direct us to God's love. **There are no exceptions to this rule.**

Songs which speak only of a couple's love, parents love, or reflect upon a sentimental moment, when used in the context of a Christian wedding service, detract from the message we as a Church are trying to proclaim. Scripture teaches that marriage is to be a reflection of the love between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32). It teaches that true love flows from God through us, and does not originate within us. *(1 John 4:10-11 NIV) This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. {11} Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

Songs which leave God out of the formula for marital love, particularly in the context of a Christian wedding ceremony, are proclaiming a message contrary to what our Church is trying to teach through the ceremony. This is particularly true in a culture which, for the most part, has set aside God's plan for marriage as demonstrated by our high divorce rate and the common practice of living together prior to marriage.

Musical Style is not particularly significant. We allow contemporary as well as traditional music, so long as it performed in a tasteful and respectful manner.

To assist you in the selection of music we direct you to our congregational organist, who will normally be used for wedding ceremonies and should be contacted at least 6 weeks prior to the ceremony. When guest organists are used, with the approval of the Pastor and congregational organist, they should not alter the organ instrument settings.

Hymns, when sung at a wedding, can add deeper meaning to the ceremony allowing the congregation to participate add at their voice of

praise. Though not required, this practice is highly recommended.

PARTICIPANTS

Since we do regard the wedding service as a worship service the rules governing joint worship which are established by our denomination and practiced by our congregation are applicable. Clergymen or lay people from other denominations may not participate in the service in any role normally carried out by the Pastoral office. This would apply to the reading of Scripture, offering prayers at the worship service, delivering the message or conducting the rite of marriage.

Clergymen from other Missouri Synod congregations are welcome to participate, however such arrangements must receive prior approval and be coordinated with the Senior Pastor of this congregation. Participation of Missouri Synod lay people within the service is not our normal practice.

The roles of Acolyte (lighting candles), Cross bearer, Usher, Musician, and of course Brides Maids/Groomsmen may be selected by the couple. Their conduct within the service shall be governed by church protocol.

Wedding Service: Structure, Content & Folder

STRUCTURE

A true worship service allows God's people to respond to his grace and promises with praise and prayer. Accordingly our wedding services will include multiple opportunities for the congregation to make a response.



There are an ever growing number of symbolic events which are being found in many wedding services. While most are not objectionable in character, their addition may lengthen the service and lead to fatigue and fainting among the members of the wedding party. The simpler the service, the better.

We have a standard worship format used by our congregation for the conduct of wedding services. The general outline of the service is as follows:

BASIC SERVICE OUTLINE

Processional
Invocation and responsive prayer
Psalm
Scripture reading
Sermon
Rite of marriage
Prayer
Benediction
Recessional

Into this basic outline the couple may insert special music, a solo or two, congregational singing, lighting a unity candle, etc. A service following this general outline lasts about 30-35 minutes. Greeting afterwards may take up 30 minutes depending on the number of guests.

CONTENT

Alterations in the basic **Rite of Marriage** (the vows) are discouraged. If couples wish to write their own vows they **must be consistent** with the content and outline in the Rite of Marriage. Vows written to avoid certain Scriptural teachings regarding the relationship of men and women in marriage are not acceptable. Any substitution for the traditional vows must be approved by the Pastor at least one month prior to the actual ceremony and be written in close consultation with him.

The Pastor will ask the couple to assist him in the selection of a Psalm and two or three Scripture readings. The sermon will usually be based on one of the selected Scripture readings. Some Psalms you may wish to consider for your wedding are listed below.



Psalm 67 (May God be gracious to us and bless us ...)
Psalm 100 (Shout for joy to the Lord ...)
Psalm 111 (Praise the LORD. I will extol the LORD)
Psalm 121 (I lift up my eyes to the hills--)
Psalm 127 (Unless the Lord builds the house ...)
Psalm 128 (Blessed are all who fear the Lord ...)

It is common practice in our worship to use portions of the Psalms or even to bring verses from various Psalms together in a common theme. You might consider using selected verses of multiple Psalms for your service.

Some suggested scripture readings are (generally select 2) Gen. 2:18-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9, 13-16; John 15:4-12; Romans 8:26-32; 1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 5:21-33; Philippians 2:1-9 or 4:4-12; Colossians 4:12-19; 1 Peter 4:8-11; 1 John 4:7-19.

You are free to use other portions of Scripture that may be more appropriate or personal.

Couples generally have two musical insertions into the service. It is recommended that one be placed after the readings and before the sermon, and one after the sermon. If a unity candle is used the second musical piece may be placed during the lighting of the unity candle.

Younger couples may wish to have a brief ceremony where the bride is given away (older traditional), or the parents give their consent and blessing to the marriage of their children (newer). Normally this brief ceremony is located between the Invocation and Psalm, but may also be placed in the rite of marriage itself.

FOLDER

If couples want special ordered bulletin covers, they will have to cover the cost of the bulletins, otherwise, a basic bulletin will be supplied on white, ivory, or light gray paper. We can also print on special paper purchased at Office Supply stores. The special worship folders are available at Christian bookstores, or may be ordered through the church office from various Christian publishing houses. We have catalogs on hand from which you could select a bulletin cover.

The worship folders will normally be printed by the church. If printing is to be done elsewhere the Pastor must receive a proof-copy for approval prior to final printing. The folder should include the names of those in your wedding party. Care should be given in the printing of the bulletin to select readable fonts and inks/toner.

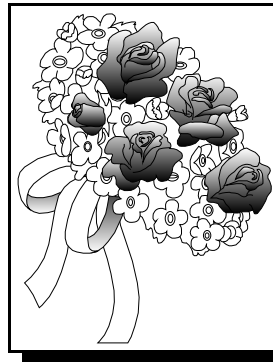
Wedding Rehearsal

A rehearsal will be required for most weddings at the church. This allows all involved to have a more comfortable feel for what will occur during the ceremony. The Pastor will be in charge of the rehearsal and will work

with the couple to set a time and date that is convenient for all parties involved. All musicians should be present at the rehearsal.

If there is to be a rehearsal dinner, and the couple wishes to invite the Pastor and his wife, please give ample notice time. Make clear when extending the invitation if Pastor's children are included in the invitation. (It is definitely NOT expected that all Pastor's family should attend, but often couples are not clear as to who is included in the invitation.) It is also customary that when the Pastor does attend the rehearsal dinner that he offers a dinner prayer, unless some other family member is designated. Please make your expectations in this regard clear to the Pastor.

Miscellaneous Decorations and Flowers



The altar paraments are the color of the church season and are not changed for weddings. Altar furniture should not be moved. The wedding party is responsible for all flowers and decorations. This includes setup and removal of decorative arrangements. For Saturday weddings this must be done quickly to make ready for our regular 6:00 p.m. worship services.

Due to the size of our sanctuary simpler is generally better with regard to decorating. Two pedestal arrangements of flowers seem to work the best. Some couples make use of additional candelabra, baskets, bows, etc.. Before these are ordered their use and placement should be cleared through the Pastor. The Bridal party will be responsible for an aisle runner if one is to be used. The length of the aisle is 77 feet (door entrance to the first step of chancel).

Real Flower petals may not be thrown as the bride enters as this causes stains in the carpeting. Silk petals may be used as an alternate.

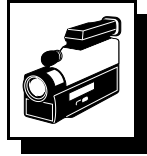
Pictures and Video Tapes



No flash pictures will be permitted during the ceremony itself. The wedding bulletin will contain an announcement to that effect. This practice not only detracts from the service, but has occasionally ruined the pictures of the professional photographer.

Flash pictures of the couple and bridal party entering and leaving the sanctuary may be taken. During the ceremony the professional photographer may take non-flash pictures from the back of the church.

Video taping of the service is permitted as long as the camera is stationary throughout the service. Consult with the Pastor to find the best place to position a camera. The couple may want to investigate renting a camera with remote microphones to clearly pick up their voices during the service.



Post Wedding Activities

Because of the difficulty of clean up we ask that no rice, birdseed, confetti, etc. be thrown at the church. Small bottles of bubbles have become a popular substitute for celebrating.

It is in the best interest of the couple and the church facilities that any car decorating not be done in the Church parking lot. Couples may want to have someone responsible for your departure vehicle during the service to prevent well meaning guests from causing problems.

Facilities Usage

The church (nave) seats around 300 people and is air-conditioned. The Family life Center and other areas of the church are also air-conditioned. The Family Life Center can also accommodate dinners of up to 300 people. Under no circumstances are alcoholic beverages permitted on the church premises, including the parking areas.

The dressing area for the women in the wedding party is the lower Sunday School area. A door adjoins the ladies rest room. Men may use any of the other classrooms or the youth room to dress. Again, we ask that you return the rooms to the condition in which you found them.

Particularly on Saturday weddings a custodian should be present to help in cleaning and setup for Saturday services and Sunday activities. The fee for this is listed later.

Family Life Center Receptions

All arrangements for wedding receptions in Zion's fellowship hall will be made through the Zion Lutheran Church Women's group. The pastor or church office can provide the name and phone number of the proper contact person.

The Family Life Center can hold up to 300 people. The church can provide the following:

1. Tables for cake, punch, etc.
2. Chairs in conversation circles or at tables
3. Ladies to make punch and coffee and refill punch bowl and coffee pots. (The couple may ask family members or friends to fill these duties.)

The church also has the following items available for use at receptions in the church fellowship hall:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Coffee sets</i> | <i>Glass trays</i> | <i>Thermos coffee servers</i> |
| <i>Punch bowl and ladle</i> | <i>Nut dishes</i> | <i>Coffee Makers</i> |
| <i>Silver trays</i> | <i>Candle holders</i> | |

The bridal party is expected to provide:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Cake and Punch ingredients</i> | <i>Nuts, Mints, other food</i> |
| <i>Tea/Coffee if desired</i> | <i>Floral decorations</i> |

The follow items are also available if you do not wish to provide disposable items:

Plates, Cups, Forks, Tablecloths

With the exception of the cake and flowers, all supplies may be brought the night of the rehearsal.

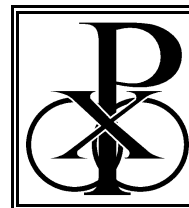
Suggested Minimum Fees

- Use of Family Life Center by members. No Charge
- Use of Family Life Center by non-members. \$75.00
- Organist. \$150.00
(Additional if working with other musicians)
- Soloist. \$50.00
(Additional if more than one solo is sung)
- Custodian. \$75.00
(Make check payable to Dan Hoffmann)
- Zion Lutheran Church Women (if serving). \$75.00
- Pastor. (Couples discretion)

We suggest that thank you notes and fees be brought to the rehearsal. We ask that you have separate marked envelopes for each individual or group.

In Closing

The Marriage Symbol



The X and P (Chi and rho) are actually the first two Greek letters in the word "Christ". The two rings intertwined with this symbol represent Christ at the center of a marriage relationship, where "two become one flesh", a joining together by God which man should never separate.

Sadly in our world today the sacred and blessed institution of marriage has been sorely abused, with the result of broken lives and families. Few would argue with this observation, but where is the solution to this problem?

The solution lies with a return to God, seeking his guidance and help in marriage. Our marriage guidelines are designed not only to help couples understand God's will and promises, but through the worship service to proclaim to all present what marriage should be.