



Wedding Policies

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Who may be married at Zion?

Marriage within the church is the prerogative of Christian persons. Marriage in Zion Lutheran Church is a privilege afforded couples when at least one partner is an active member of the congregation. Requests from non-members to be married at Zion require approval of the pastor and Congregation Council.

Date and Time of Wedding

Dates and times for weddings held at Zion are to be approved by the pastor and the Congregation Council. Normally, weddings (and receptions, if they are to be held at the church) are to be scheduled a minimum of six months in advance. Consideration will be given to requests based upon the availability of the facilities and the pastor. Weddings held during Holy Week and the week of Christmas are strongly discouraged.

Use of Facilities

Use of any Zion Lutheran Church facilities must be approved by the Congregation Council.

All furnishings and equipment belonging to Zion should be left in the same condition in which they were found. Couples will be required to pay a \$100 facility deposit, which will be returned if all facilities are left in the condition in which they were found. (see **Fees** section)

Smoking is not permitted in the church building.

Off-Site Weddings

Weddings performed by Zion's pastor at a location other than Zion church are subject to the same guidelines (as applicable) as those performed in the church's facilities.

Who Will Officiate?

Pastoral ethics require that Zion's pastor conduct the wedding, unless another pastor is invited to share in the wedding or act on behalf of the pastor of Zion. Any requests for another pastor to officiate must be approved by Zion's pastor and the Congregation Council.

Pre-Marital Counseling

Marriage is a lasting covenant which should not be entered into lightly or for the wrong reasons. For these reasons, pre-marital counseling with the pastor is required for all couples, unless other arrangements are agreed upon. Pre-marital counseling offers the opportunity for a couple to realize the religious significance of the marriage covenant and to learn more about themselves in their relationship with each other and with God.

The wedding couple will meet with the pastor for one or more sessions. These sessions should be completed before the wedding service is planned in detail.

Wedding Ceremony

The wedding ceremony is a service of worship, celebrating and confirming the commitments two people make to each other, the congregation's commitment to support you in your life together, and God's commitment to keep you in the bonds of love. Consequently, all that is done is to be consistent with the present worship practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Zion Lutheran Church.

Generally, the outline for the wedding service as found in ***Evangelical Lutheran Worship*** will be followed. The couple may write their own vows or add things to the service, with the approval of the pastor.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion may be celebrated as a part of the wedding service, if both persons are baptized members of the Christian faith. All those gathered for the wedding ceremony will be invited to receive communion. The couple is responsible for supplying the communion elements (bread and wine) for Holy Communion.

Wedding Music

Normally, Zion's organist and Director of Music will play at all weddings in the church, as he/she is familiar with the instrument. If the organist is ill or on vacation, it will be his/her responsibility to provide a suitable replacement. In cases where an outside organist is desired, permission must be given by the pastor and the Director of Music. Additional musicians or soloists may be utilized. (see **Fees** section) Please note that the use of taped music or pre-recorded accompaniments is discouraged.

Music performed at a service of Christian marriage is understood as an act of worship, offered to God in devotion, thanksgiving and praise. The secular view that such music is for the entertainment of the wedding guests is incompatible and inappropriate with the church's understanding of the nature of Christian marriage. For these reasons, all music used during the wedding ceremony (including prelude and postlude) must be sacred in nature and approved by the pastor and the Director of Music.

It is recommended that the couple meet with the organist and/or musicians no later than one month prior to the wedding to plan appropriate music for the ceremony.

Wedding Rehearsal

A rehearsal helps familiarize the wedding party with the service and the facility. All members of the wedding party, including parents and musicians, should be present for the rehearsal to ensure that the wedding goes smoothly.

The rehearsal is normally held one or two nights before the wedding itself. The date and time must be approved by the pastor. For an adequate and satisfactory rehearsal, please allow at least one hour for a small wedding and at least one and a half hours for a larger wedding. The rehearsal will be conducted by the pastor.

A word of warning: any member of the wedding party (including the couple) may be barred from participating in either a rehearsal or the wedding itself if it is evident that he/she is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Photography

Because the wedding ceremony is a worship service, photographers and wedding attendees are asked to adhere to the following guidelines. No flash pictures are to be taken during the ceremony. Non-flash pictures may be taken during the ceremony from the rear of the sanctuary or balcony only. (This should be indicated in the bulletin.)

Photography in the sanctuary must be completed at least 45 minutes before the ceremony is to begin. Photos may be taken after the service and at other times as arranged with the wedding party and families. If you plan to have photographs which will include the pastor, these should be done first so that the pastor may remove her/his vestments.

The use of a video camera is permitted in consultation with the pastor regarding the location of the camera.

Flowers and Decorations

Only fresh cut flowers may be placed on the altar. No artificial flowers (i.e. silk or dried) or planters are allowed. Flowers may remain on the altar for Sunday worship services only if the flower calendar is vacant for that Sunday. Contact the church's Flower Coordinator for more information.

All decorations should be completed at least one hour prior to the beginning of the ceremony. Bows may be placed on pews, but should be fastened with rubber bands or string rather than tacks. Decorations must be removed following the service.

Rice is not to be used or thrown on the church grounds. Bubbles and balloons being released are strongly discouraged. Confetti or birdseed may be thrown outside only. However, the wedding party must ensure that such material will be swept up or into the street immediately following the wedding ceremony and/or reception.

Paraments on the altar, lectern and pulpit will remain the color of the day or season, regardless of the colors used for other decorations.

Those involved in decorating the church are encouraged to discuss plans with a member of the church's Altar Guild. Information on whom to contact can be secured from the Pastor.

Dressing at the Church

Facilities are available at the church and in the office building for the couple and wedding party to dress. Dressing at the church prior to the service is encouraged to avoid possible problems of inclement weather and travel delays.

Wedding Consultants

Wedding consultants can be helpful. However, if used they should be informed that all activities in the church are under the direction of the pastor.

Marriage License

The marriage license should be delivered to the pastor no later than the beginning of the wedding rehearsal. This prevents the possibility of forgetting it on the wedding day.

Invitation to the Congregation

Since a wedding is a service of worship within the whole worship life of Zion Church, it is appropriate that the wedding be announced in the Sunday worship bulletin prior to the wedding day and the congregation invited to participate in the service.

Bulletins

If bulletins are to be distributed for the service, they may either be prepared by the couple or the church secretary. (See **Fees** section) If you plan to have the secretary prepare and print the bulletins, you must purchase the appropriate amount of bulletin covers. These are available in most Christian book **stores or online**. All information for the bulletin must be received by the secretary at least two weeks prior to the wedding.

Fees

If either of the couple or their immediate family (parent, step-parent, child, step-child) is a member of Zion, there is no fee for the use of the facilities. All others (including those who have been members of Zion but have been removed from the rolls) are considered non-members and will be charged non-member fees. Fees must be paid (by cash or check) in full no later than one week prior to the wedding rehearsal. Two copies of an invoice will be sent from the church office to the couple two weeks prior to the wedding. One copy of the invoice should be included with your payment. All checks should be made payable to "Zion Lutheran Church". The couple will be responsible for any unpaid checks and bank fees.

The following fees apply for **Members**:

Facility Deposit *	\$100
Use of Church	No fee
Candlelight Wedding	\$50
Pastor	Honorarium appreciated
Organist	
Rehearsal and wedding	\$125
Work with soloist	\$35 additional per soloist
Rehearsal with soloist	\$35 additional per rehearsal
No-show fee	\$35
Sexton	
Wedding only	\$95
Candlelight wedding	\$40 additional
Reception at the church	\$75 additional
Bulletin Printing	
150 copies or less	\$50
More than 150 copies	\$75
Sound System Operator	\$25

The following fees apply for **Non-members**:

Facility Deposit *	\$100
Use of Church	\$300
Candlelight Wedding	\$50
Pastor	\$250
Organist	
Rehearsal and wedding	\$125
Work with soloist	\$35 additional per soloist
Rehearsal with soloist	\$35 additional per rehearsal
No-show fee	\$35
Sexton	
Wedding only	\$95
Candlelight wedding	\$40 additional
Reception at the church	\$75 additional
Bulletin Printing	
150 copies or less	\$50
More than 150 copies	\$75
Sound System Operator	\$25

* Deposit will be returned if facilities are left in the same condition in which they were found. A separate check may be written for this amount which can then be returned to you.

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