

Wedding Policy for Zion Lutheran Church of Auburn

Revised by the Voters 08/03/2014

PRELUDE

God instituted marriage at creation and our Lord Jesus reaffirmed the sanctity of marriage as he said, "What God has joined together, let no one separate." We believe that marriage is to be a lifelong union between one man and one woman. Those entering marriage should do so with the highest reverence for this holy estate. The wedding service and the premarital relationship of those desiring to be married are to reflect such esteem of matrimony.

The wedding service should be one of many worship services in which the two standing before God's altar have their thoughts turned to their Creator and Savior, for in Him alone will they have the power to love and forgive. He alone will sustain them when the burdens of life become difficult. It is therefore proper that wedding preparations begin with a prayer and determination that the wedding and subsequent marriage honor God in everything.

The following items 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 document, feel free to consult the church office.

CONSENT FOR THE CHURCH WEDDING.

Usually one of the members of the marriage will be a member of the congregation. Each couple desiring to be married must meet with the pastor before he consents to perform the marriage. Requests for weddings by two non-members will be approved on a case by case basis by the board of Elders of Zion Lutheran Church. Such requests should be submitted in writing to the elders through the pastor

We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24-25), and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the church (Eph. 5:32). We further believe homosexual unions come under categorical prohibition in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10) as contrary to the Creator's design. Our pastors will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy.

COHABITATION

Engaging in sexual relations outside of the commitment of marriage is a sin. (Hebrews 13:4, 1 Cor. 6:9-10, 18) Living together as husband and wife without being married is an open sin. Couples actively engaged in open sin are not to be married at Zion Lutheran Church. Through repentance such sin may be forgiven. The appropriate fruit of repentance is that the couple end this sinful arrangement until their marriage. Another appropriate response would be to seek an immediate civil marriage through an official of the state or a private wedding which may later be celebrated in a church service blessing a civil marriage.¹

WEDDING DATE AND TIME

After you have selected a tentative date and time for your wedding it is necessary to contact the church office to clear that date and time on the church calendar. Please plan no part of your wedding until after you have determined the availability of the church and the pastor. The solemnization of public Church weddings is discouraged during the season of Lent and no wedding will be solemnized during Holy Week.

PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

We expect all couples being married to meet together with the pastor prior to their wedding for at least four hours of premarital counseling. These sessions include a discussion of the Biblical model for marriage, issues in modern marriages, and planning the wedding service. In addition to this, a pre-marital inventory may be given. The cost for scoring this inventory is to be paid by the couple.

CLERGY PARTICIPATION

¹ A private "non-public" wedding shall ordinarily include the bride and groom, two attendants, and if desired immediate family members only (parents of the bride and groom, brothers and sisters with mates of the bride and groom. A private wedding will not include wedding music, processional, recessional, organist or other externals often associated with weddings.

Normally the called pastor of Zion Lutheran Church will officiate at all weddings. Other clergymen of churches in fellowship with our church may be invited to participate if there is a compelling reason for doing so and with the approval of the Board of Elders. Couples making such a request should do so in writing to the Board of Elders. The Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church should extend the invitation to any other clergymen. Clergymen from denominations not in fellowship with our church are not allowed to participate in weddings at Zion.

THE WEDDING SERVICE AND MUSIC

A wedding service is as much a worship service as is the Sunday morning service. This is the basic principle that guides the planning of all weddings at Zion. All aspects of the service must honor the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The pastor has final approval of all music for the service. The head organist will gladly assist the couple in selecting appropriate music. Any solos or congregational hymns must be distinctively Christian and doctrinally sound.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO

Because they disrupt the beauty of the worship service and the attention of the worshippers, there should be no flash pictures taken during the service (From the Invocation through the Benediction). Pictures with flash may be taken during the processional and recessional. Similarly video equipment will not be allowed in the chancel area. A video may be taken if it can be done without distraction. Please inform your guests of this.

DECORATIONS

Any decorations of the church must be done tastefully the day of the wedding. Any exceptions to allow for earlier decoration must be approved by the pastor. Tacks and nails should not be used on any of the church furnishings. No church furnishings (flower stands, banners, lectern, baptismal font, etc.) are to be moved without the prior approval of the pastor. **Flowers** may be arranged for use on the retable. Such flowers should be real and not artificial. **Candles** for the retable are furnished. Candelabras and pew candles can be used at an additional fee. A stand for a unity candle is available if needed. If you desire to have additional candles or a unity candle, the couple must provide these.

SERVICE FOLDERS

The church office will print a bulletin for the worship service if requested. The cost of the bulletin cover is the responsibility of the couple.

RICE, FLOWERS, ETC.

No seed (rice or birdseed) is to be thrown outside on the church grounds. Flower petals should not be thrown inside of the church.

CHURCH CLEANING:

The church custodian will ensure that the church is properly cleaned before and after any wedding.

THE REHEARSAL

The rehearsal shall normally be scheduled for the day prior to the wedding. The pastor directs the rehearsal. Any special requests concerning the service should be discussed with the pastor prior to the rehearsal. Please see that all members of the wedding party are present on time at the rehearsal so that we can begin promptly at the scheduled time. Those present should conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with the setting.

HONORARIA AND FEES.

There are no fees for the services of the called pastoral staff in connection with a wedding. It is the responsibility of the couple to arrange for and pay any musicians including the organist. A cleaning fee of \$50 (\$60 if pew candles are used) is to be paid to the custodian. For weddings where neither the bride nor groom is a member of Zion a fee of \$150 for the use of the facility has been established.

LEGAL MATTERS

The couple must have a valid license before any wedding may be performed. The marriage license must be given to the pastor preceding the ceremony. It is suggested that you give the license to the pastor at the rehearsal.