



## MARRIAGE / WEDDING MANUAL



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This manual has been prepared to help you plan for your wedding at Concordia Lutheran Church. It reflects current policy, as approved by the pastors and the Elders, and it has been put together to assist and direct you.

We want to help you further prepare for one of the most important and enduring human relationships you will ever have; a relationship God intends you to have for life. It is our aim to assist you as best we can for life-long love and faithfulness to each other and to God. We take marriage very seriously as do you. Our aim is to seek and to follow God's Will. It is our prayer that God will bless your marriage as you seek to do His Will.

We trust that what follows will enable you to plan a meaningful wedding service, as well as to bless the beginning of your marriage. If you have further questions after going through this manual, please do not hesitate to contact the church office at any time. **God's blessings to you!**

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## **POLICY**

### **Making Arrangements for Marriage**

Concordia's pastors will consider requests to conduct the marriage service of **members**, and will agree to such a request after an initial meeting with the couple. At least **six months' notice** is requested so that preparation and planning for the wedding can be meaningful and unhurried. Please call the church office as soon as possible to get on the schedule and to set up your first meeting with the pastor you choose to conduct your wedding.

### **Preparation and Counseling**

Because God began marriage, and because we want the best for husband and wife-to-be (and their families), we have a thorough preparation. An important part of that preparation is marriage counseling. It is customary to do four sessions, and we require a minimum of three sessions before the wedding, usually being held two to four weeks apart. These sessions are most often conducted by the officiating pastor, but can also be done at a Christian counseling facility such as Cross Connections. The pastor you choose to do your wedding can further discuss this process to you.

### **Living Together**

While living together is common and widely accepted today, it is not right according to what God has communicated in the Bible. It is not the way He wants relationships to be; it is sinful behavior. Because all our positions of faith are based on the Bible, living together is not something we agree with or accept. While living together does not automatically mean that a couple cannot be married at Concordia or by their pastors offsite, it raises important issues that must be discussed and resolved with the pastor before he agrees to conduct the ceremony.

### **Fees & Honoraria**

The fee for the marriage ceremony is **\$350** (bride and/or groom being a member). This fee covers the pastor presiding over the wedding, marriage counseling, the church, the organist, and the custodian. **There is a separate fee if you wish to use either Centennial Hall or our school gym for a reception.** Ask for details. The fee for off-site ceremonies is **\$150**, which includes payment for the officiating pastor and any counseling.

Church fees are due at least **two weeks prior to the wedding**. They may be left with the church secretary at any time before the wedding (Monday-Friday; 8 a.m - 4 p.m.), or with the pastor.

It is customary for the bridal couple to give an honorarium to the officiating pastor, soloists, and/or musicians. Amounts vary and are at the couple's discretion.

### **Facility Usage**

Following are some guidelines for the use of Concordia's facilities:

- 1) Any rooms used should be left in the same condition they were found.
- 2) There is no smoking inside of any Concordia buildings.
- 3) No red liquids should be used, as red dye cannot be removed from carpets.
- 4) Do not use thumbtacks or tape on the walls. Command Strips can be used, if necessary.
- 5) Glitter or decorative sprinkles should not be used.
- 6) Specific rooms may have guidelines that will be communicated at the time of room approval.

***No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises during the rehearsal or wedding.***

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES - ISSUES TO CONSIDER**

In Lutheran practice, the wedding takes place within a service of worship, especially when done in the church sanctuary. In that respect, God is the primary focus of the service, as worshipers praise Him, hear His Word, and pray to Him. Everything that takes place in the wedding service is guided by this principle.

### **Scheduling**

A date for the wedding may be scheduled with the church office secretary. In order to avoid disappointment, we encourage couples to schedule as soon as possible. Because of our Saturday worship service at 5:00 p.m., weddings should not begin between 2:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Also, we do not conduct weddings during Holy Week (*the week before Easter*).

### **Other Clergy**

As a rule, Concordia's pastor(s) preside at weddings here. If the couple wishes for another pastor to participate, this should first be arranged with our officiating pastor, who will subsequently issue a formal invitation to any other clergy participants.

### **Organist**

Ordinarily, Concordia's organist is used, though you may speak with the pastor if you would like to have a guest musician. It is the couple's responsibility to contact the organist in ample time to schedule. Please let the church office know when this is completed.

### **Music**

Please note that "Here Comes the Bride" is NOT acceptable for use. Christian weddings have always focused attention on God in Christ, whose blessing on this new life together is sought. Christian weddings have music which supports, reinforces, and celebrates that principle. It is important that the Good News ring out clearly throughout the service. The words which are sung and the music which is played need to be clearly and distinctively Christian. It is not enough that there be some reference to love or marriage. The words sung at Christian weddings are to be words that are centered in Christ, and words that build up the faith. Anything else reduces the importance of the wedding worship service to a social celebration.

Music may be traditional or contemporary. Accompaniment CD's may be used instead of the organ. Other instruments, including our grand piano, may also be used. Please check with the pastor.

Please speak with our organist about appropriate music, or with the pastor if another organist is to play. Our organist will meet with you, play sample selections, and help pick your wedding service music.

The use of a soloist may also be arranged. Generally, the soloist has his/her own repertoire. If vocal music is desired, the organist and the soloist work together to plan and rehearse that music.

### **Wedding Banner**

Concordia has a wedding banner that can be hung on the front wall of the Sanctuary, if requested. If not specified, the banner will be whichever banner is up for the current church season. Please check with the church secretary to see what banner is scheduled to be up, if you so desire.

**The Church Paraments** (*altar, lectern, pulpit hangings*)

Paraments remain the color of the church year season or church festival. If you have a question about what the color will be, please ask.

Advent- Blue	Lent- Purple
Christmas- White	Easter- White
Epiphany- White	Pentecost- Red
Epiphany Season- Green	Pentecost Season- Green

**Aisle Runner**

Concordia does not own an aisle runner. If you wish to use one, you may choose to purchase one at a local craft store, or consult with your florist. Concordia's center aisle is 40 feet long (from the front to the glass doors of the overflow).

**Aisle Pew Candles**

We have ten aisle pew candles available for your use, upon request. The wedding couple is responsible for providing the 10"- 12" dripless taper candles for them.

**Unity / Marriage Candle**

The unity candle candelabra consist of three candles: the larger center candle represents the marriage unity / couple, and it may depict oneness in Christ. If you choose to add this into your service, the larger candle is lit during the wedding by the bride and groom, from the two smaller candles (representing them or their families). Those smaller candles are lit before the service either by the usher(s) or by a representative of each family, such as the mothers.

Concordia has a unity candle stand, but the wedding couple is responsible for purchasing the three candles. They may be purchased locally at various stores.

**Picture Taking & Videotaping**

Flash pictures are not permitted during the worship service. Although this is a common restriction, the photographer and wedding guests should be so advised; however, the wedding photographer may take non-flash pictures from the back of the sanctuary, its perimeter, or from the balcony. Videotaping is allowed from the same locations, and also from an unattended tripod at the side of the chancel. Pictures may be taken before or after the service, as well.

**Flowers**

There are two flower stands in the chancel which are used for worship services, including weddings. These will normally suffice, but if desired, extra floral arrangements may be placed in the church with the pastor's approval. Flowers may NOT be displayed on the altar. Flowers in the chancel are normally live, not artificial.

Couples should notify the church as to when the flowers will be delivered and who will be delivering them. You may choose your own florist. After the wedding, the flowers go with the couple unless the bride and groom have signed up with the church to provide flowers for the weekend worship services.

**Other Decorations**

Other decorations are not normally used. Direct any questions about this to the pastor.

**Dressing Rooms**

If members of the wedding party wish to dress at church for the wedding, facilities are available. Please ask for specific details.

**Confetti, Rice, Bird Seed, Balloons, Bubbles, etc.**

The use of these is not allowed inside the Sanctuary or Family Center, but may be used outside.

## **THE WEDDING SERVICE**

The pastor will work with the couple on preparing a meaningful and appropriate wedding service. Speak with the pastor or church secretary about when the church will be open for you to prepare for the service, take pictures before the ceremony, etc. Saturday services must begin no later than 2pm so that pictures, removal of flowers, etc. can be completely finished in the Sanctuary no later than **4pm** to have set-up time for evening worship.

### **Seating**

Seating may be done formally with ushers escorting each person/couple to a seat either by offering his arm to a woman (if a man is with her, he follows behind), or by preceding the person/couple to a seat in the church. For smaller weddings, ushers may be omitted, in which case the wedding guests simply take a seat without assistance or direction.

The front pews (one on either side) are left unoccupied in most cases, in the event that one of the wedding party needs to sit down. The second pew on either side of the center aisle is for family: the right side (as one faces the altar) for the groom's family; the left side for the bride's family.

Shortly before service time (usually five minutes before), a designated usher seats the grandparents and parents of the groom, followed by the seating of the bride's mother (and possibly her father, if he is not accompanying her down the center aisle into church).

Members of the bridal party, along with the pastor(s), enter the church in one of two ways as the service begins:

- 1) Pastor, followed by the groomsmen, best man and groom. Then the women and the ring bearer and flower girl (if used) enter from the main church entrance.
- 2) Pastor, followed by the groom. Then the rest of the wedding party enters in pairs, either from the main church entrance or from either side of the back of church, meeting at the center aisle. In either case the bride then enters on her father's (or another person's) right arm.

### **Wedding Rehearsal**

A rehearsal may be scheduled, and is recommended for all but very small weddings. It will be scheduled through the pastor or church office and is usually held the evening before the date of the wedding, with all the participants attending. The pastor will go over the service and walk through various parts of it with all the participants. The rehearsal usually lasts about one hour.

### **Wedding Folder/Bulletin**

Couples often like to have a wedding folder or bulletin, but it is not necessary. If used, it usually consists of an outline of the service, a listing of participants, perhaps a message from the couple, and other information as deemed appropriate. This bulletin can be a nice keepsake for bride and groom, family, and especially for those who cannot attend the wedding.

If used, the couple needs to buy the folders (unfolded; unprinted, except for the cover), available online or at a local Christian bookstore. The church will print the folders at no cost, or the couple may have them printed professionally. For church printing, you must supply the blank bulletins to the church office two weeks prior to the wedding.

If the church prints the bulletins, all information required must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to the wedding date. You will need to submit all of the information and wording requested for your bulletin, and may use the sample as a kind of worksheet to gather that information. Please see the sample bulletin included later in this packet. A digital submission of information is preferred, created in Microsoft Word, a text editor, or typed into the body of an email to be sent to the church. Please email the submission to Katherine Grepke at kgrepke@concordiachurch.org.

## **SAMPLE WEDDING SERVICE**

Since the marriage ceremony takes place within a worship service, the following guidelines will prove helpful to you. The service usually lasts between 20-35 minutes, depending upon which options are used. A wedding longer than this is usually due to the number of musical pieces played or sung.

### **The Worship Service**

*Here is an outline of a wedding service as it is celebrated at Concordia.*

*Optional parts of the service are indicated with an asterisk\*.*

*Other additions and changes to the service are possible.*

*Please speak with the pastor about these.*

### **Pre-Service Music**

Organ, piano, vocal, other instrumental, or CD music is appropriate. We have a grand piano available as well. A CD player is also available and integrated into our sound system.

### **Processional**

This is the piece of music during which time the wedding party enters the church and comes to their places at the front. Sometimes the bridesmaids come in during one piece, and the bride to another.

### **\* The Welcome**

The pastor can, at your request, speak a word of welcome prior to the beginning of the actual worship service, once all have arrived at their places.

### **Invocation**

Pastor speaks the following to begin the worship: “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” With these words, God’s presence is asked, and our Christian faith is declared.

### **Prayer**

Pastor prays: “Eternal God, our Creator and Redeemer, as you gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee by the presence of Your Son, so by His presence now bring joy to this wedding. Look in favor upon (**name**) and (**name**) and grant that they may rejoice in all Your gifts, and at last celebrate with Christ the marriage feast which has no end. Amen”

### **\* Giving of the Bride - Parental Blessing**

Historically, this began when women were considered property; now, when used, the question indicates the family’s role in marriage. The pastor asks: “Who gives this woman to be married to this man?” The bride’s father (or other family member, as requested) answers: “I do / We do / Her mother and I do,” etc. A question to the parent(s) or families may be used instead (or in addition). Example: “In order to give witness to the spirit of this marriage, I now ask your families: Will you wholeheartedly support this marriage, and do you give your children your blessing? If so, answer, WE WILL & WE DO.” Family then answers.

### **\* Hymn**

It is appropriate for the congregation to sing a hymn of praise to God. Check our hymnal (**Lutheran Service Book**), especially #858-861. There are other suitable hymns, as well.

### **Scripture Readings**

Usually two readings from the Bible are read at this time. The pastor or another designated person may do this. You may choose from the included list if you wish, make requests, or the pastor will choose the readings. Usually one reading comes from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament (More than two readings may be used.).

<b>Old Testament:</b>	Genesis 1:26-31; 2:18-24 Psalms 33, 100, 117, 127, 128, 136, 150 Isaiah 63:7-9 Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:7
<b>New Testament:</b>	Matthew 7:24-27 John 2:1-10; 15:9-12 1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13 Ephesians 5:21-33 Colossians 3:12-17

### **\* Solo or Hymn**

An additional hymn or special music may be placed in this spot.

### **Wedding Address**

The pastor gives a brief message, appropriate to the occasion. It is addressed to the wedding couple and the guests. This is based on one of the Bible readings listed earlier, or upon a selected verse. Suggested verses: Genesis 24:58; Joshua 24:14; Ruth 1:16,17; Psalm 23; Psalm 37:5; Psalm 37:39; Isaiah 25:9; Jeremiah 32:38; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 28:20; John 6:68; Romans 15:5,6; Romans 15:13; 1 Corinthians 11:11,12; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; 2 Corinthians 9:8; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 5:21-33; Philippians 1:27; Philippians 2:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; James 1:17; Jude 20,21.

## **Marriage Vows**

### **1) Question of Intent and Life-Long Faithfulness Options** *(may or may not be used)*

- A) (Name), will you have this woman/man to be your wife/husband, to live with her/him in holy marriage according to the Word of God? Will you love her/him, comfort her/him, honor her/him, and keep her/him in sickness and in health and, forsaking all others, be husband/wife to her/him as long as you both shall live? If so, answer, "I will."
- B) (Name), will you taken (Name) to be your wife/husband? Will you be guided by the counsel and direction God has given in His Word and love your wife/husband as the Lord loves you? Will you be faithful to her/him, cherish her/him, support her/him, and help her/him in sickness and in health as long as you both shall live? If so, answer, "I will."

### **2. Vows** *(Usually repeated phrase by phrase after the pastor. They can be memorized or read)*

- A) I, (Name), in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you, (Name) to be my wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death parts us, and I pledge you my faithfulness.
- B) I take you, (Name) to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, until death parts us.
- C) I take you, (Name), to be my wife/husband, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help, and care for you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven, and I will try with you better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come until death part us.
- D) I, (Name), in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you (Name) to be my wife/husband. I promise to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.
- E) The couple may write their own vows, using the above for ideas, or simply expressing their own thoughts. If the couple composes their own vows, they will want to include promises of life-long love and faithfulness. Pastor will review the vows with the couple.

### **\* Exchange of Rings**

Rings are not necessary, but the bride, groom, or both, may exchange a ring as a symbol of their marriage. If a ring / rings are used, one of the following is repeated after the pastor:

- A) Receive this ring as a pledge and token of wedded love and faithfulness.
- B) I give you this ring as a sign (symbol) of my love and faithfulness.

### **Pronouncement of Marriage**

The pastor declares: "Now that (Name) and (Name) have committed themselves to each other in holy marriage, have given themselves to each other by their solemn pledges, and have declared the same before God and these witnesses, I pronounce them to be husband and wife, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. What God has joined together, let no one put asunder/separate."

### **\* Blessing**

The pastor may speak a blessing. For example, "*The almighty and gracious God abundantly grant you His favor and sanctify and bless you with the blessing given to Adam and Eve in paradise, that you may please Him in both body and soul and live together in holy love until your life's end.*"

\* **The Unity Candle**

If a unity candle is being used, it is often done at this time, though the family candles are usually lit earlier in the service. Please see earlier information regarding the unity candle. The pastor explains the significance of the ceremony before the bride and groom light the candle. Sometimes a solo is sung at this time.

**Prayers**

Prayers are offered for the bridal couple, all who are married, families, and others, upon request.

\* **Solo**

Sometimes the Lord's Prayer is sung as a solo, or another song may be used, if desired.

**The Lord's Prayer** *(For clarity, the words are printed in the service folder, if one is used.)*

This prayer is spoken by all or sung by a soloist. We use the traditional version:

*"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen"*

**Benediction**

The worship concludes with the blessing: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord look upon you with His favor and give you peace. Amen"

\* **Silent Prayer**

The wedding couple may choose to have a brief moment of prayer at this time.

\* **Kiss**

The couple may kiss. It should be a brief kiss, appropriate for church.

\* **Introduction of the Newly Married**

Pastor introduces the bridal couple in a way that is agreeable with them. For example: "Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to introduce to you Mr. and Mrs. Tom Smith / Tom and Sally Smith / Tom and Sally Johnson-Smith."

**Recessional**

This is the piece of music that is played as the bridal couple and the attendants exit the sanctuary. A hymn may be used to close the service, if you so wish. This is most appropriate.

**Dismissal**

The parents of the bridal couple leave first, usually escorted by an usher. Afterwards, the wedding guests leave, with or without the direction of the ushers. If the couple chooses to have the guests be directed out, they may be ushered out row by row, either by the ushers or by the wedding couple.

\* **Receiving Line**

The receiving line is usually formed outside the sanctuary in the Family Center. Some couples wait until the reception. This should be determined by the number of wedding guests and the time of the service itself. On Saturdays, preparation for congregational worship begins at 4 p.m.

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR MARRIAGE LICENSE APPLICANTS

*From the office of*

*Clerk of the Allen Circuit and Superior Courts*

*Allen County Courthouse – 715 S. Calhoun St. – Fort Wayne, Indiana – 46802*

*More information: <http://www.allencounty.us/marriage-licenses> or [www.allencountyclerk.us](http://www.allencountyclerk.us)*

## **Residence**

For Indiana residents, at least one applicant must *reside in Allen County and provide documentation of residency*. If applicants reside in a different Indiana county, you cannot apply in Allen County. Out of state residents may apply for a license in Allen County **only** if the marriage is performed in Allen County.

## **Location and Times**

You may start the application process online at [www.in.gov/judiciary/marriage](http://www.in.gov/judiciary/marriage). Starting your application online will save you time in the Clerk's Office. Applicants who wish to be married will still have to appear in the Central Services Division, Room 201 – Second Floor, Allen County Courthouse, 715 South Calhoun Street, to complete the process and receive the marriage license. You may apply Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. The Courthouse is closed on Saturday, Sunday, and all legal holidays. Visit our website to view the legal holiday calendar. Allow a minimum of thirty minutes to complete the application process.

**Reminder:** Electronic devices, including cell phones and cameras, are banned from the Allen County Courthouse.

## **Fees**

Indiana residents: \$18.00 Residents of any other state: \$60.00

A certified copy of your marriage license, for legal proof, may be obtained for \$2.00.

## **Required Documents** *(one or more of the following for each individual)*

- Valid operator's license or other state ID showing date of birth and *current Allen County address*;
- Certified copy of birth certificate;
- Passport, military identification, discharge papers; or,
- Baptismal certificate, transcript of school record (different than a report card or diploma from a school). Both must indicate date of birth.

If the applicant does not have an updated driver's license, or the identification does not provide an address, applicant must show proof of an Allen County address.

## **Age**

Applicants under 18 years of age must have special consent. Call for complete requirements.

## **Marriage Ceremonies**

Marriages may be performed by a member of the clergy, (including a minister, priest, bishop, rabbi, imam, etc.) a judge, a magistrate, a clerk of the circuit court, or a clerk or clerk-treasurer of a city or town. If you wish to have a Judge or the City Clerk perform your marriage ceremony, please contact the following:

- Allen Circuit Court (260) 449-7602 Rm. 308, Courthouse, 715 S. Calhoun St., Fort Wayne
- Allen Superior Court (260) 449-3412 Rm. 208, Courthouse, 715 S. Calhoun St., Fort Wayne
- Fort Wayne City Clerk (260) 427-1221 Rm. 110, Citizens Square, 200 E. Berry St., Fort Wayne

## **License Validity**

You will receive the application the same day you apply, and it expires sixty (60) days after being issued. The application is valid only if the marriage is performed within the State of Indiana. Call Central Services Division at (260) 449-7245, if you have additional questions.

