

# WEDDING POLICIES

Trinity Lutheran Church

203 N. Harth Ave.

Madison, South Dakota 57042

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## 1. PASTORAL CONCERNS

As a Christian pastor, I have concerns that you have given careful and prayerful thought to your marriage. When you ask a pastor to participate in your marriage service, you are, in effect, asking us to give Blessings to your marriage and are asking us to keep you in our prayers. We trust you have the approval and support of your families. We ask you to be honest with us when giving answers to questions. To commit yourself to marriage is your decision. If needed, we are available to assist you in that decision and in building a solid foundation for your marriage.

## 2. APPLICATION

Each couple will fill out and sign an APPLICATION FOR MARRIAGE form after the initial interview with the pastor. This will include wedding/rehearsal dates, preliminary plans and names of participants in the marriage service.

## 3. PRE-MARITAL SESSIONS (Subject to change)

In an effort to provide consistency, to uphold the sanctity of marriage and to assure the best pastoral care for couples wishing to be married, the pastors in Lake County (includes city of Madison) affirm the following guidelines:

- a. A period of preparation before the day of the marriage ceremony, usually a time period of at least four months for adequate preparation. This preparation is most effective when completed a month to six weeks before the focus shifts to the details of the wedding day ceremony.
- b. At least four wedding preparation sessions devoted to the use of a premarital inventory or evaluation instrument, as well as instructions on the biblical understanding of marriage, human sexuality, and marital harmony. Two sessions will be with a Trinity approved professional (A list of approved professionals and their charge is available in the office or through the wedding coordinator). One of those sessions with the approved professional will be to review and discuss the Prepare / Enrich inventory program or the pre-marital program of the professional's choice. The other session with a professional is general pre-marital preparation session. The other two sessions will be with the pastor. The 1<sup>st</sup> session being a general information session and the other session will be after the review of the Prepare / Enrich study or professional choice study is done with the professional.

Here at Trinity, we currently use the Pre-Marital Inventory program "Prepare / Enrich", for which a nominal charge is made. That fee is currently \$35.00. That fee may differ if the professional's study is different or may be included in their fee charge. The inventory is for the couples benefit only. If the couple refuses to do the inventory or if the inventory results indicate potentially disastrous problems in the marital relationship, the pastor, on the basis of personal conscience, may choose not to be involved in conducting the marriage service.

#### 4. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

For couples who are complete strangers to the pastor, this community or state, it is our standard policy that they bring a letter from their home pastor, assuring us that proper pre-marital preparation has taken place. We may then preside at their wedding in good conscience. A 30 day waiting period will still apply in all but extreme circumstances and these will be defined by pastoral ethics and practices.

#### 5. SCHEDULING

No wedding will be finalized on the church calendar until the couple has met with the pastor and wedding coordinator along with completing the application form. A tentative date may be placed on the church calendar, in pencil, by the church secretary, prior to the pastoral and wedding coordinator meeting, to hold the date and time for a couple of weeks. When the application form is completed and after meeting with the pastor and wedding coordinator, the date/time will be finalized on the calendar.

*\* BE CAREFUL OF MAKING PREMATURE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF A WEDDING DATE BEFORE CHECKING WITH THE PASTORS AND CHURCH SCHEDULE.*

Generally, on Mondays through Fridays, a wedding may be scheduled at any time of day. On Saturdays, due to the Worship Service at 6:00 p.m., weddings with a reception at the church will not be scheduled after 1:30 p.m.; those without a reception will not be scheduled later than 4:00 p.m. Likewise, weddings can be a part of Sunday Morning Worship Services. Receptions for these should be delayed until afternoon.

Holy week, the week before Easter, is the one time of the year when weddings will not be scheduled since all the attention of the church is directed toward the mystery of redemption.

#### 6. VARIOUS FEES AND SERVICES (Subject to change)

**There is a \$125.00 non-refundable deposit fee to be paid at finalization of the date of the wedding. This fee will be applied towards the wedding coordinator fee. Checks must be made payable to Trinity Lutheran Church.**

##### **Sanctuary Fee:**

Members pay no fee for use of the church worship center. A member is either the bride or groom and have been a Trinity member for 1 year. Former parishioners who are independent but their parent are still members will pay \$100.00. Non-members will pay: \$150.00 for a small informal wedding (less than 100 people in attendance), \$250.00 for a medium size wedding (100-200 people), and \$500.00 for a large wedding (over 200 people). Checks will be made payable to Trinity Lutheran Church and given to the wedding coordinator during the final meeting prior to the wedding.

##### **Pastor:**

Members pay an honorarium between \$75.00 and \$100.00. Non-members pay an honorarium of \$150.00. This is payable to the presiding pastor.

##### **Organist:**

It is your responsibility to find your organist. Please consult your organist on their fee. The wedding coordinator will contact our head organist to arrange a visit with the organist of your choice about the use of the organ. Musicians other than the organist and any soloist honorariums are the responsibility of the bride & groom.

## **Wedding Coordinator (required for members & non-members):**

**This does not include any wedding details other than listed in the policy.**

Wedding only: \$125.00 for up to 10 hours. If additional time is needed past the 10 hours there is a \$30.00 per hour fee.

Wedding with reception at church: \$250.00 for up to 20 hours. If additional time is needed past the 20 hours there is an additional \$30.00 per hour fee. (This fee does not include payment to the WELCA for use of the silver service, china, table skirts and linens.)

### **Custodial Fee:**

Sanctuary: \$75.00.

Fellowship Hall Reception: An additional \$75.00 (This fee does not include payment to the WELCA for use of the silver service, china, table skirts and linens.) This fee is due at the final meeting with the wedding coordinator and is made payable to the custodial service.

### **Video Taping:**

If you would like to have the church video tape your wedding, the church system is available for a fee of \$125.00 and only for the wedding ceremony. This fee will include one copy of a DVD or video tape. A check for \$75.00 will be made payable to the church for the use of equipment. The other check for \$50.00 will be made payable to the Trinity video technician as an honorarium. The wedding coordinator will schedule the Trinity video technician. Payment will be made through the wedding coordinator at the final meeting with the coordinator. You may also hire your own video technician but they must use their own equipment not the church system.

### **Screens:**

If you would like to use the screens in the narthex and the fellowship hall for your wedding to run a slide show the member fee will be \$50.00 and the non-member fee will be \$75.00. This fee will be made payable to the church for the use of the equipment. You will need to schedule a onetime meeting with the multimedia coordinator to get the instructions on using the screens properly. You will also need to have your slide show and music accompanying the slide show pre-approved by the officiating pastor.

### **Fellowship Hall:**

Members: \$150.00

Non-members: \$300.00

This is a utility fee and you must contact the WELCA president for any fees associated with the silver service, china, table skirts and linens. Also this fee does not include any catering fees including servers.

## **7. WEDDING COORDINATOR (Subject to change)**

- ~ Sets up an initial meeting with the wedding couple.
- ~ Sets up a meeting with the pastor.
- ~ Reviews the wedding policy and provides a tour of the facility.
- ~ Informs and shows couple the equipment for use for the wedding and reception if held at the church.
- ~ Has a final meeting with the couple two weeks prior to the wedding for times needed for decorating, photography and delivery of flowers and food and any final payments.
- ~ Sets up any equipment including guest table/tables with linens, candelabra's, unity candle table, wedding banner/banners.
- ~ Works with the head organist and custodial service, runs the sound system, and schedules the Trinity video technician if requested.
- ~ Conducts the rehearsal; coordinates the wedding and reception if held at church. She will be available 1 hour prior to the wedding to assist with any last-minute church details and stay until the last guest has left.
- ~ Take care of all wedding flowers left from wedding

## 8. BUILDINGS POLICY

- a. Smoking, alcoholic beverages, and illegal drugs are prohibited.
- b. Throwing of rice and/or bird seed is not permitted inside or outside the church buildings.
- c. No candles may be used on the pews, window or window ledges. Altar candles are provided by the church. The couple must purchase suitable "dripleless" candles for the candelabra and unity candles.
- d. Decorations shall not be attached to the pews or other furnishings by pinning, gluing, or nailing.
- e. Altar paraments are the seasonal color and are not changed for occasional services such as weddings or funerals.
- f. Pews and other items in the upstairs worship area shall not be moved without first asking permission.
- g. All room are to be left uncluttered and in the arrangement found. Removal of decorations, rental equipment, clothes and any food must be done by the family prior to the next scheduled event including church services.
- h. The church is not responsible for any items left at the church.

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## 9. MARRIAGE LICENSE

The church office needs some time to finish filling out the marriage license. Please bring your marriage license to the office at least **five working days** prior to your wedding date. Allow an extra day if a legal holiday falls on a Friday. If acquired at the Lake County Courthouse, it may be most convenient to drop it by the church office immediately after.

*\* CHECK WITH THE REGISTER OF DEEDS OFFICE FOR ANY REQUIREMENTS AND CHANGES IN SOUTH DAKOTA STATE LAW REGARDING LEGAL MARRIAGES (minimum age, time validity of the license etc.)*

## 10. REHEARSAL

A full rehearsal involving all major participants in the marriage service is required for all but the most "informal" ceremonies. Usually, it is held a day before the wedding. It must be held before any rehearsal suppers and/or "bachelor parties" and the like. Please schedule your rehearsal date with the wedding coordinator during the initial interview as part of the application process. All participants (except the soloists) should be at the rehearsal.

## 11. WEDDING BULLETINS

If wedding bulletins are desired, it is the couple's responsibility to purchase and have them printed. The church office does not have ability to do this. Several print shops in Madison can meet your needs.

## 12. PHOTOGRAPHERS

We strongly encourage that you take your wedding pictures before the ceremony. To expect guests to wait an hour or more after the ceremony and before the reception starts, while pictures are taken, is not realistic nor considerate of their needs and time. To help assure good poses and pictures, schedule time appropriately. Don't rush the photographer. Pictures should be done and equipment out of the chancel area (raised area at front of sanctuary) at least 30 minutes before the service begins. Photographers or participants are not to move any of the chancel/altar furnishing for pictures.

## 13. MUSIC FOR THE WEDDING

Music plays an important role in the marriage service. Because you have chosen a Christian wedding, the music you select reflects your belief that God is the author and sustainer of your love for each other. The time for a special romantic song is at the reception. The marriage service is the time for music that speaks of God's love and his sustaining power in your life

together.

It follows then that a wedding is not just a "ceremony" but a "worship service" of the congregation. All of the elements of a worship service are usually present; (1) reading of Scripture, (2) a meditation, (3) prayer, and (4) a fellowship of people. The marriage service is to honor God and His love for his people. Thus all the music for a wedding should incorporate one or all of the following elements;

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1. Music/text reflecting praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Music/text reflecting a Scriptural text.
3. Music/text appropriate for a Sunday morning worship service.

The music should turn our thoughts to God and enhance rather than detract from worship. Any religious music of a joyful or prayerful character is suitable. The singing of hymns should be encouraged as well. Hymns may also be used as processional and recessional.

#### **14. PASTORAL CONCEPTS ON THE SERVICE OF MARRIAGE**

- a. A marriage is first and foremost a SERVICE OF WORSHIP AND PRAISE! The congregation and invited guests should not be considered mere "spectators" but active "participants" who come together to worship and praise God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Marriage is a joyful occasion for worship, and those who celebrate it rejoice in the gifts of God – life, health, love, sexuality, family – all that God our Creator declared from the beginning to be "very good".
- b. Marriage is not an exclusively "Christian" possession. Almost every culture and religion has some form of ritual which binds man and woman together as husband and wife. Marriage is a COMMITMENT TO FAITHFULNESS between a man and a woman and done with society's sanction. In the Christian faith it is also grounded in the steadfast love of God. God's abiding faithfulness to his people is the model for marriage. As God is faithful, so should we be to Him, ourselves and each other.
- c. Marriage is a social and legal contract but its real basis is the commitment a man and woman make to each other. Contrary to popular understanding, the basis for marriage is not love. Human love is changeable and, as such, cannot be depended on as being reliable as the foundation for a life-long partnership. One cannot promise to be "in love" years in the future, but a person can promise to be faithful and make a commitment to that faithfulness. For human beings, faithfulness and love need not go together. It is in God's love that our love and fidelity are joined. It must be in God's steadfast love, in his self-giving love in Christ Jesus, where we seek to ground our covenant of faithfulness as well as our emotions of love. In the flux of human experience our vows of fidelity, grounded in the love of God, abide forever.
- d. Thus, it is not the Minister who "performs" the marriage. Rather, it is the wedding couple. Both church and state have interest in marriage. For this reason, the wedding is done in the presence of witnesses. But, the marriage is concluded by the groom and bride. The couple marries each other by an exchange of vows of faithfulness and commitment. The presiding minister is the principal witness to their action. Nonetheless, the couple is not left on their own to fulfill their promises. God's blessings and ever-present support of all of us are asked in prayer after the vows.

- e. The presiding minister must be ordained and legally authorized in this State to preside at weddings. The presiding minister is normally one of the pastors on staff at Trinity Lutheran Church. The pastoral staff or church council may designate or give permission for another ordained pastor to preside under special circumstances. If a guest pastor presides, one of the pastors of Trinity Lutheran Church must also be present and have some part in the service (i.e. scripture readings, prayers etc.).
- f. Assisting ministers may be other clergy with the approval of the pastoral staff. Interns who are associated with the church may also serve as assisting ministers, but shall not be the presiding minister, unless authorized by the Synodical Bishop.

**NOTES and REMINDERS:**

- 1. As you plan your wedding and reception, remember to discuss all your plans with the pastor. The pastor has final approval over all services in this congregation, weddings included, because they are an act of worship in themselves. No ceremonies or music is permitted at Trinity Lutheran Church that violates the Christian faith or the Lutheran expression and confession of the Christian faith. While the pastors are fairly open regarding music and varying aspects of the ceremonies, they are still the final authority. Be sure to fully discuss everything connected to the service in the final Pre-Marital session.
- 2. The MARRIAGE LICENSE must be given to the church secretary at least **FIVE WORKING DAYS** prior to the wedding. The License will be signed by the pastor, the best man and maid of honor either during the service or immediately following and prior to any activities at the reception.
- 3. Inform the pastor if you desire him/her to give a table prayer at the reception.
- 4. If you desire wedding "bulletins", it is your responsibility to have them printed.
- 5. Real flowers are required on the altar.
- 6. All outstanding bills are to be paid four weeks before the wedding. Dated \_\_\_\_\_ Initialed\_\_\_\_  
If not paid in full, wedding date not guaranteed.

We, the undersigned, understand the policy and agree to abide by the agreed policies.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Photo Release**

I hereby give my consent for Trinity Lutheran Church to use my photograph and likeness to be used in its publications, including its website. I release them from any expectation of confidentiality for the wedding party and myself and attest that I am responsible for informing all involved. I authorize Trinity Lutheran Church, its assigns and transferees to copyright, use and publish the same in print and/or electronically.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Board of Trustees  
April 14, 2015  
Adopted by Church Council  
April 14, 2015