

WEDDING GUIDELINES

Faith Lutheran Church, ELCA
2740 Fuller Ave. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505



Phone Numbers

Pastor Kevin Sullivan
Office 616.361.2679

Coordinator: Marcy Devries 616.292.2626
Church Organist/Pianist: Ann Marie Kaufman 616.337.3654
Church Office: 616.361.2679

Guidelines and fees effective March 2018

The Wedding

Faith Lutheran Church will provide wedding services only for **active members** of this church— and, by extension, to the close relations of active members (children, grandchildren, children via guardianship*). Here the word “active” is used to designate those **members** who have participated in worship, communion and made a “gift of note” at least once in the previous year (as per our constitution and bylaws). Those wishing to be married at Faith Lutheran will participate in pre-marriage counseling sessions either with the pastor of this church or, in some cases, with another pastor or approved pre-marriage counselor. Couples wishing to become active members of Faith Lutheran Church in order to be married here should sign up for **membership classes** as well as **pre-marriage counseling sessions** well in advance of their planned wedding in order to ensure there is time to complete each series. It will be left to pastor’s conscientious discretion to decide which eligible couples (as described above) who have applied for such services she or he feels prepared to perform these services for. The pastor is free to preside at ceremonies of same-gender couples so long as they fall within the stated conditions listed above.

*In some special circumstances the pastor may preside at wedding services for those **sponsored** by an active member of this congregation.

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

The Marriage Service is an integral part of our congregation’s ministry and reflects the whole life and purpose of our community: to worship God, giving God thanks for God’s love for us in Jesus Christ. The Marriage Service is one of the worship services of a Lutheran congregation. Receiving God’s blessings in the Marriage Service is a small part of our lifelong walk with God in Christ. Faithfulness in worship is an important part of our overall faith journey. If you are not now members of a congregation of faith, we invite you to seriously consider becoming one. We also invite you to join us for worship on Sunday mornings. All weddings performed at Faith Lutheran Church will be conducted in ways compatible with and traditions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). ***Presiders other than the pastor of Faith Lutheran Church are required to consult with the pastor prior to the service and submit a copy of the service to be used.*** When two Marriage Services are scheduled on the same day, they are scheduled with a minimum of two hours (if one is in the Chapel) or three hours (if both are in the Sanctuary) between the start of one and the beginning of the next. Knowing the tentative date and time of your Marriage Service allows us to make commitments to other couples. Please contact the church office as many months in advance as possible.

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

When couples preparing for marriage wish the pastor of Faith Lutheran Church to preside at the wedding, they should plan to meet with the pastor on 4 - 6 separate occasions for pre-marital counseling and wedding planning. Each session will last approximately one hour. Sessions will focus on the following:

- The importance of Christian faith and life in Christ in the marriage
- Maturity and readiness for marriage
- The spiritual meaning of the Marriage Service
- Specific plans for the order of service, vows, lessons, etc.

MUSIC

Though permitting a fairly wide discretion, the music selected for use during the service should "reflect the praise of God, God's steadfast love in Christ as the foundation of and model for marriage, and the asking of God's presence and blessing." Selected music ought not "cloud communication of the context and mood of the service with musical triteness or associations bordering on sentimentality."¹ Questions of musical appropriateness may be directed to the pastor or the organist of Faith Lutheran Church. The couple is encouraged to choose music from a wide variety of church music, both traditional and contemporary, provided by the organist. Use of recorded music is prohibited.

Contact the organist at least 30 days in advance of wedding rehearsal.

THE REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is scheduled the day before or two days before the Marriage Service. To alleviate anxiety on the part of the bride and groom, the pastor, coordinator, and organist work as a team, doing their best to be aware of the needs of the worship service and plans of the couple. The pastor, coordinator and organist are responsible for seeing that the wedding is celebrated in good order, reflecting the dignity required of any worship service conducted in the facilities of Faith Lutheran Church.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

In keeping with the worshipful mood and context of a worship service, pictures only by the photographer (no flash) are permitted during the service. Guests at the wedding, family or friends, are requested not to take pictures during the service. Times for taking pictures prior to the wedding must be scheduled with the coordinator by rehearsal. Persons videotaping the service and photographer must speak with the coordinator regarding when and where pictures may be taken, before, during and after the wedding ceremony.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

To ease last-minute pressure before the wedding, we ask that you bring your marriage license to the church office sometime during the week prior to the wedding service. If this is not possible, the marriage license must be presented to the presiding pastor before the wedding service.

THE FLORIST

Flowers are permitted at the entrance to the chancel area. Flowers are permitted on either side of the altar area. It is not permissible to have flowers strewn down the aisle during the wedding service. If there are questions about flowers, please talk to the coordinator or officiating pastor.

OTHER CHURCH POLICIES

- Faith Lutheran Church is a smoke-free environment. There is to be no smoking anywhere inside the church facility at any time.
- Church fixtures and furnishings are to remain in place and are not to be moved.
- The usual seasonal décor is to remain undisturbed and any additional decorations must be pre-approved by the Pastor and/or Wedding Coordinator.
- Use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted on Church premises.

Other Church Policies

- Food, snacks, sandwiches, etc. may be eaten in the kitchen area. No food or drink is permitted in the Bridal Room, Library/Lounge or Sanctuary.
- For environmental, safety, and custodial considerations, we ask that neither bird seed or rice be used on church premises.
- The church will be opened two hours prior to the wedding ceremony and not more than two hours following the ceremony's conclusion. All personal or rented property must be promptly removed from the premises during this time and is not the responsibility of Faith Lutheran or its representatives.

GOD'S BLESSINGS

We pray God will bless you as you plan for your marriage and begin your new life together as husband and wife. We welcome continued ministry with you in the name of Christ our Lord.

FEES

A non-refundable deposit of \$100.00 will be required to reserve the date for the wedding. Half of the balance will be due 60 days prior to the wedding. The remainder of total sum is due 30 days prior to the event. Checks are to be made out to: *Faith Lutheran Church*. Note on the check or envelope the date of the wedding and the last names of the marrying couple.

Sanctuary Weddings	Member Fee	\$ 700.00
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Chapel Weddings	Member Fee	\$ 600.00
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