

Calvary Lutheran Church
2508 Washington Ave. S.
Bemidji, MN 56601
(218) 751-1893 www.calvarybemidji.org

A SPECIAL WORD TO THE BRIDE AND GROOM

So, you're getting married! Congratulations! One thing is certain: your upcoming marriage will mean many hours, perhaps weeks or months of careful and thoughtful preparation on the part of both of you. Because you will become busy as your wedding day approaches, it is important that you take time now, early in your wedding planning, to do some serious thinking and planning for the wedding service itself.

Both of you, together with Calvary Lutheran, want your wedding to be a significant, Christian event. May this booklet be helpful and be a blessing as both of you prepare for this very important day in your lives.

WHY A WEDDING?

The transition from life as single persons to life as a married couple involves many emotional, legal and social changes, which are not always as easy as they might seem. For that reason society has developed rituals to help persons in that transition from single life to married life. While rituals are sometimes thought to be empty forms, they are actually valuable means of supporting, guiding and educating people in times of transition.

The wedding is a central ritual in this process and our immediate concern here. Rather than being just "the bride and groom's wedding" it is a public event, involving parents, family and community, signaling and supporting the changes that are taking place. Marriage changes your legal and social status and you will enter a relationship that will have profound effects on your emotional life. You will have new legal responsibilities and privileges. You will, for example, no longer be 'datable', as you were when you were single. In the wedding ritual, this change of circumstance is announced to and affirmed by the public while guidance on how to live a married life is also presented.

WHY A CHURCH WEDDING?

A Christian's whole life is lived in relationship to God; therefore, at such a crucial time of transition as marriage, Christians have found it desirable to come before God in worship and to ask God's blessing upon the marriage. The church, therefore, has provided us with a service of marriage by which to do just that. A church wedding is first and foremost a worship service, during which a man and a woman become husband and wife. It is

the element of worship that gives shape to a church wedding and distinguishes it from a civil wedding.

The nature of the Christian wedding service as an act of worship guides us in deciding what is appropriate for that service. Since this service is a reflection of the relationship of the bride and groom to their Lord, it should not become a display or production to impress friends or to conform to social conventions, but be an act of joyful worship. Since we know God and approach God through Jesus Christ, what we do should be Christ-centered rather than human centered.

SETTING THE DATE

Reading through this booklet will give you a good idea of what we together will do to ensure both healthy relationships and a meaningful worship service. In order to reserve a date a \$150 non-refundable deposit needs to be mailed in along with your signed contract. (The deposit will be applied to your balance due if marriage occurs when scheduled.) A Prepare premarital inventory (\$35) will be administered prior to the premarital encounter weekend. Until these things are completed, your wedding will be tentative since we cannot commit to your wedding until we are confident that this is going to be a good marriage.

PREMARITAL ENCOUNTER WEEKEND

This is a 12 hour retreat (Saturday & Sunday) offered at Calvary at least once a year. Information will be mailed to you regarding the date(s) of the premarital encounter weekend. We offer information on various topics that will help give you the tools you need to have a happy, healthy relationship. You will also get a chance to meet with a wedding coordinator to get started planning for your special day. The cost is \$100 per person and needs to be paid when you register. By attending this event, you will receive a coupon for a significant reduction in your marriage license.

If you are unable to make this encounter weekend, the pastor who will preside at your wedding will meet with you but the fee will increase to \$300 for premarital counseling and you will not qualify for the reduction in your marriage license fee.

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

The marriage rite in the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)* hymnal (p. 286) provides considerable opportunity for you to give your personal touch to the service. Both bride and groom should look over the options that follow in order to arrive at decisions that satisfy both.

OUTLINE OF THE MARRIAGE LITURGY

Prelude
Processional Music
Welcome
Opening Prayer
Reading of Scripture
Sermon
Song or Hymn
Exchange of Vows/Promises
Exchange of Rings
Announcement of the Marriage
(Unity Candle & Song)
Prayers
(Holy Communion)
Lord's Prayer
Final Blessing
Introduction of New Couple
Recessional Music
Postlude

HOLY COMMUNION

Since Holy Communion is the central worship service of the Christian church, it is most appropriate for two Christians to unite themselves in marriage in the context of this service, the sacrament of unity. Just as man and woman become one flesh in marriage, so the church is reestablished as the one body of Christ in Holy Communion. Holy Communion is also a source for the love and forgiveness needed to sustain a Christian marriage. In Holy Communion, Christ is most concretely present at the beginning of a couple's married life.

In deciding whether or not to have communion at your wedding, you should remember the following:

1. The wedding ceremony itself is very short; even with communion it will not be unnecessarily long.
2. All present should be invited to partake, not just the wedding couple or wedding party.
3. All who believe that Jesus Christ is present in this meal will be welcome to come and receive the gift of grace offered.

CORPORATE WORSHIP

Christian worship is congregational worship and there are important people to involve in this planning process.

The CONGREGATION assembled may have responses to make and hymns to sing. Involving them in this day is important emotional support for your marriage.

The PRESIDING PASTOR will preach and preside over Holy Communion. Other ASSISTING MINISTERS can be used to read Scripture, read prayers and sing or play special music. Another family's pastor may also be an assisting minister if that is desired.

The PARENTS of both the bride and the groom are invited to give their blessing to the marriage after the exchange of vows. This blessing replaces the traditional giving away of the bride and better reflects the equality of the relationship. Parents should be made aware of this part of the service before the rehearsal. (This is optional for your wedding, see Appendix 1.)

SCRIPTURE

You help shape the service by selecting the Scripture readings. If Holy Communion is celebrated, 3 lessons can be read. Without Holy Communion, 2 lessons are preferable. Picking your favorite Bible stories to be shared would be a nice sharing of your faith on this day. Some suggestions are given here but feel free to explore other Scripture lessons.

FAITH

Proverbs 3:3-6
Galatians 3: 23-29
Galatians 5:22-26
Matthew 22:34-40

LOVE

Psalm 150
1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13
John 15:9-12

KINDNESS

Colossians 3:12-17
1 Peter 4:7-11

GOD & YOU

Matthew 19: 4-6
Mark 10:6-9
Romans 12:9-21

A brief sermon or reflection will be based on the lessons you select.

THE VOWS

The heart of the wedding service is the promise of lifelong fidelity which the bride and groom make to each other. The vows "will include the promise of lifelong commitment and an expression of the complete sharing that marriage implies." (ELW Minister's Edition p. 46) You may use the

form printed in the service on page 288 in the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnal or select from those listed in Appendix 2.

THE PRAYERS

It is appropriate to have additional prayers in the service such as you desire. For example, you can offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the homes in which you were raised, you can ask that your marriage be blessed with children, or you can pray for some other special concern. Writing these prayers and asking someone to share them makes your day special.

SELECTING MUSIC

The selection of music for a wedding is sometimes a point of contention between the couple and the church. The problem arises because of confusion concerning what we are trying to accomplish. **A Christian wedding is a worship service**, and all that we do should be guided by that fact. Since the object of our worship is God, and since Christ is our mediator, all our actions, words, music, etc. should direct us through Christ to God the Father. Any music or texts that we use should be in harmony with such an understanding. “Music selected should embody high standards of quality and in general 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” (*Lutheran Book of Worship* Minister’s Edition p. 38). Some suggestions for music can be acquired upon request.

It is also important to remember that our worship is congregational worship. Although solo, small group and choral music has a strong place in our tradition, it should not be used to the exclusion of congregational hymnody and singing. Also, parts of the liturgy that belong to the congregation should not be taken from it and given to a soloist. For example, the congregation should not be deprived of saying the Lord’s Prayer during the service.

The presiding Pastor reserves the right of approval for all music used at the service. Music needs to be submitted & approved by the presiding Pastor one month prior to wedding.

Where to Begin

1. The music at a wedding has the same relationship to the service as the music on Sunday worship and should be similar in nature.
2. An appropriate wedding song reaffirms the couple’s belief that their marriage is a God-given gift in need of God’s blessing.
3. Look first at congregational hymns, with the idea that they be sung by the congregation. You may choose not only hymns specifically written for weddings (ELW # 585-586) but also other hymns that

meet the standards mentioned above. For congregational singing, it is most important that the music be familiar, though the words may be new.

4. Hymns may be sung by soloists, small groups or choir and may even involve the congregation singing refrains.
5. Psalmody sung by the congregation or soloist should not be overlooked.
6. Usually popular or secular music doesn't fit in a Christian wedding. Although an occasional piece may fit, most pieces distract from the worship nature of the service by placing human beings at the center of attention; the understanding of love expressed in most falls short of the Christian understanding based upon Christ's love for us. If you feel that such music must be used, it may be played at the reception, or as prelude or postlude.

COMMON PROCESSIONAL & RECESSIONAL SONGS

Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring—Bach	Wedding March—Mendelssohn
Arioso—Handel	Psalm XIX—Marcello
Bridal Chorus—Wagner	Horn Pipe—Handel
Air on G String—Bach	Trumpet Voluntary in D Major—
Meditation from “Thais” -	Purcell
Massenet	Trumpet Tune in D Major— Pur-
Air from Water Music Suite—	cell
Handel	Ode to Joy—Beethoven
Aria in F Major—Handel	Arioso—Bach
Canon in D—Pachelbel	Prelude in Classic Style—Young

WEDDING COORDINATOR

Calvary will provide a person to help answer the practical questions of your day. After the date is approved, the wedding coordinator will contact you and serve as a resource for you in planning your wedding. They will lead the rehearsal (pastors are not at the rehearsal) and will be in attendance the day of the wedding. They will also be in attendance at the reception if held at Calvary.

PHOTOGRAPHS

No flash pictures are permitted during the ceremony. Video or audio recordings of the service are permitted provided they are not intrusive. Pictures can be taken before the service.

FLOWERS

Flowers can be placed on either side of the altar on the flower stands provided. No flowers can be placed on the altar.

UNITY CANDLE

The use of a unity candle is permitted in discussion with the pastor. If you do use one, please do not extinguish the individual candles and pick a song that is an appropriate length to light one candle.

WEDDING LICENSE

Secure the wedding license at any Minnesota County courthouse no earlier than 6 months before your wedding. **It is due in the church office 1 week prior to your wedding.** Make sure you have a signed letter stating that you attended our Premarital Encounter Weekend for your discount.

WEDDING BULLETINS

Bulletins can be purchased at religious bookstores, a print shop or designed by a friend for a unique token of the day. (The church office does not copy the wedding bulletin.)

DECORATING

Decorating the church or fellowship hall for receptions can only be done on Friday afternoon prior to the rehearsal or on the day of the wedding. The wedding party will be responsible for the conduct of participants and will see to removal of decorations and picking up the facility when the wedding/reception is complete. No candles can be placed on the rock walls. Please note that no masking tape or duct tape can be used to secure decorations. If any rental items are being dropped off, the couple is responsible for returning those items to the rental companies. Calvary is not responsible for any left or unreturned rental items.

Appendix 1

PARENTAL BLESSINGS

1. Do you vow to support, love and encourage your children in their new life together? If so respond together, We do.
2. Name/s, will you help your children in their marriage together? If so respond together, we will with God's help.

Appendix 2

WEDDING VOWS

_____ I give myself to you OR I take you, _____

1. ...to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.
2. ...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, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.
3. ...to be my wife/husband, to share my joys and sorrows, my dreams and my fears, to join you as a partner from this day forward pledging my fidelity, trust and love, all the days of my life.
4. ...to be my wife/husband, and these things I promise to you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will obey, 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 parts us.
5. ...to be my wife/husband from this time forward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.
6. In the presence of God and this community, I (see above) to be my wife/husband; to have and to hold from this day forward, in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.
7. _____, I choose you to be my wife/husband. I promise to remain true to you in all circumstances of life – in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, in failure as well as in success. Growing with you in Christian love, I will try to be patient and kind and develop a love that keeps no record of wrongs but always rejoices in truth. I promise to cherish and honor you above all others as my beloved and my friend until death parts us.

Please feel free to mix and match these suggestions. Please let the pastor presiding at your wedding know of your choice in advance.

Wedding Fees at Calvary Lutheran

Fees are determined on a tier schedule based on church involvement. **Active members (AM)** are those who have been received as members at least one year prior to beginning their wedding planning. **Connected persons (CP)** are those whose immediate (parents, children and siblings) family are active members of Calvary. **Non-members (NM)** have no current relationship with Calvary Lutheran Church. Non-member weddings may not schedule until 9 (nine) months before the date of wedding.

Item	AM	CP	NM
Use of Worship Space	\$0	\$100	\$350
Use of Fellowship Hall	\$0	\$100	\$300
Pastor's Fee	\$175	\$175	\$175
Prepare Inventory	\$35	\$35	\$35
Premarital Encounter	\$200	\$200	\$200
Custodian: Worship Space	\$50	\$50	\$75
Custodian: Fellowship Hall	\$50	\$50	\$100
Wedding Coordinator	\$125	\$125	\$125
Reception Fee	\$50	\$50	\$100
CLCW Reception Servers	\$100 - \$200 (according to size)		
Calvary Organists	\$100	\$100	\$100
Calvary Soloist	\$75	\$75	\$75

If taped & recorded music is used a \$100 sound technician fee will apply.

\$150 non-refundable deposit is due to reserve the date and space.
Balance due one week prior to wedding day.

ALL FEES SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

COUPLE CHECKLIST

1. Selecting the Date
 - set the date with the church office
 - \$150 deposit made
 - return signed contract to church office

2. Complete Premarital Requirements
 - take Prepare Inventory: (done online)
 - register for Premarital Encounter Weekend
 - send in \$100 per person registration fee

3. Select musicians & plan wedding music
 - select an organist/pianist & schedule a meeting time
 - secure other musicians if needed
 - submit music to Pastor for approval
 - decide on processional & recessional

4. Planning order of service
 - choose Scripture
 - choose vows
 - choose assisting ministers
 - choose ushers (minimum of 3 per 100 guests)

6. 1 week prior to wedding:
 - obtain marriage license and turn into church office
 - pay fees (Made payable to Calvary Lutheran)

Please Note

All participants in the wedding (grandparents, ushers, musicians, etc.) need to attend the rehearsal. This will help make the wedding day run smoothly. Please bring the unity candle and bulletins to the rehearsal.

The building will be open on the wedding day for you to change here and to have pictures taken. When you schedule the building to be open, you need to arrive on time. If late, a \$25 building use fee will be charged for each hour you are late.