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GUIDELINES FOR A CHRISTIAN WEDDING SERVICE

CONGRATULATIONS!

By requesting this manual you have indicated something significant. You have given the "signal" that it is your desire to be united in marriage before the Lord and with His blessing.

At Messiah we believe there are few events as sacred and spiritual as marriage. In truth, some of God's greatest promises are to those who unite a household under His will and purpose.

At Messiah we recognize:

- the purpose of marriage: "That two may become one"
- the power of marriage: "For two are stronger than one"
- the primacy of marriage: "What God has joined together . . . let no man separate."

We also believe in the planning of marriage! Will you consider this truth: This year 2.3 million couples will be married within the United States. Of these, only one-half will come to know God's full blessing for their union. The other one-half will conclude prematurely in divorce.

After many years of working with couples, it is our desire to assist you, not only in the planning of a marriage ceremony, but in the purposeful work of preparing for a marriage that can last a lifetime.

To this end, we offer this manual, our time, and our prayers. May God bless you richly in your journey!

In His Service,

Pastor John Kunze

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GETTING STARTED

To help you get the best possible start in planning your marriage ceremony and counseling, the following steps should be taken:

Step 1 - Set the Date and Time:

Contact the church office (402-489-3024) as soon as you have a wedding date in mind to check if that date is available (at least four months prior to your anticipated wedding date if possible). When you call, the church will be tentatively reserved in your name. (**Note:** dates are reserved on a first-come/first-served basis.) An \$80.00 deposit will "lock in" your wedding date. A Wedding Coordinator will be assigned at least six months prior to your wedding. If you wish to discuss plans or details with a coordinator prior to that assignment, please call the church office and a coordinator will meet with you.

Step 2 – Meet With the Wedding Coordinator:

Your Wedding Coordinator will send you a worksheet to complete. As soon as possible after receiving the worksheet, schedule a meeting with the Wedding Coordinator. The Coordinator will review wedding guidelines and counseling requirements, and begin the process of planning your ceremony details. At Messiah, the Wedding Coordinator is very knowledgeable in the customs and guidelines used in performing weddings at our church. Your coordinator will:

- meet with you one to six months prior to your wedding and thoroughly review your worksheet, the marriage process, and the ceremony
- answer questions that you have or find someone who can answer them
- assist the pastor at the wedding rehearsal and be present to assist at the wedding

Step 3 – Arrange for Pre-Marital Counseling:

As soon as possible, you should begin the process of marriage counseling. Two forms of counseling are **required**. (One from Section A and all of Section B)

A. All wedding couples are required to participate in *either*:

1. The pre-marital class: "Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts"

"Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts" is a five-week class offered each year. The church office can provide you with information on start times. Approximate cost for class materials is \$130/per couple.

OR

2. Family Life Conference/Weekend to Remember

"Family Life Conferences/Weekends to Remember" are usually held in Omaha and Lincoln in February or March and other locations throughout the year. For information and to register and get Messiah's group discount, go to www.familylife.com/weekend or call 1-800-FL-TODAY. Be sure to enter the group name, Messiah, in the appropriate field on-line or mention "Messiah" group to the Guest Services Representative when calling. Messiah's group discount rate is \$250/couple. This does not include lodging, meals, or parking. Contact their website or the church office for more information.

OR

3. Professional Counselor

Participate in pre-marital counseling sessions. **Note:** Messiah can refer couples to a Christian marriage and family counselor. Contact the church office for a list of suggested names or other options.

AND

- B. In addition to one of the options listed above, all wedding couples being married by a Messiah pastor are required to take the "Prepare-Enrich" Marital Inventory and receive marriage counseling with the pastor who will be performing the wedding ceremony. Pastoral counseling, generally two sessions, is designed to learn more about the couple and go over the inventory.

The "Prepare-Enrich" Marital Inventory should be taken a minimum of four months prior to the wedding. Arrangements should be made with the Wedding Coordinator staff person at Messiah to authorize your on-line access to the "Prepare-Enrich" Inventory. The website and login access code will be e-mailed to you. The inventory will take about one hour to complete. The \$35 cost will be prepaid by Messiah (unless other arrangements need to be made) and will appear as one of your wedding fees due at the time of your rehearsal.

Pastor Counseling – After results of the inventory are printed and given to the pastor who will be performing your marriage ceremony, arrangements should be made to meet with him. Your Wedding Coordinator will have provided you with a "Pastor Needs to Know" sheet to take to the first session. Additionally, time will be spent with marital couples reviewing the results of the "Prepare-Enrich" Inventory. One and a half hours should be allotted for these sessions. Additional sessions may be required.

Step 4 - Meet with the Director of Worship Arts:

Without question, one of the most important aspects of a wedding ceremony is the music to be selected and used. As soon as possible after meeting with your Wedding Coordinator, a meeting should be scheduled with Messiah's Director of Worship Arts, Chase Reihmann, chase.reihmann@messiah.us. At Messiah, the Music Director is responsible for the approval of all music and musicians to be used in the wedding ceremony. Additionally, the Director of Worship Arts can assist in recommending appropriate music and in lining up accompanist, soloists, and instrumentalists as needed.

Weddings are an incredibly special time and one of the biggest milestones we have in our lives. At Messiah, we really want to strive to give you the best experience, help keep it God-centered, and try to eliminate anything that might cause a hiccup during the ceremony. By utilizing live musicians for the ceremony, there's much more flexibility if something takes longer in the processional or recessional, and it eliminates the possibilities of a CD or mp3 not working on the day of wedding. For those reasons, we ask that the music for the weddings be live musicians rather than CD or mp3 so that we can best serve you and your family in making the day go smoothly and beautifully.

Step 5 – Bring to the Rehearsal:

- Marriage license, if not delivered to the church previously
- Service Folders/Bulletins
- Payment for services provided by Messiah
- Pastor's honorarium
- Unity candle and tapers

Optional:

- Candelabras and candles
- Guest book and gift table items
- Wedding attire (tuxes, gowns)
- Pew bows
- Bubbles, bells, etc.

Secure storage is available.

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

ORDER OF SERVICE

Processional (Lighting of candles, seating of grandparents and parents, entry of wedding party)

Invocation

*Parental Giving

Scriptures

Sermonette

Promises

**Song

Vows

Rings

Candles (Optional)

Roses (Optional)

Pronouncement

Blessing

**Song

Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Benediction

The Introduction as Husband and Wife

Recessional

**Parental Giving placement may vary.*

**Song placements are optional.*

PROCESSIONAL OPTIONS

As you plan your wedding, you will be asked to think through the activities that precede the actual "start" of your wedding ceremony. One of the most frequently "asked-about" portions of the ceremony is the wedding procession. Following is a list of the most commonly-used approaches to the wedding procession (please consider each option and be prepared to indicate a preference):

Option 1: Traditional Procession

Groom and groomsmen enter from behind the altar and take their place at the altar facing the bride and her party. Music begins and the bridal party processes one at a time to the altar, turning to face the bride. The congregation rises and the bride processes to the altar. The bride is escorted into place at the altar by her groom, and the wedding party turns to face the front altar.

Option 2: Traditional Procession Variation

This option provides for the same instruction as Option 1 with one variation. In this variation, the groomsmen move from the front altar area to "meet with" the bridesmaids at the halfway point in the main aisle. The couple then processes to the front where they take their place and turn to face the bride.

Option 3: Procession As Couples

In this option, the wedding party processes in as "couples." The groom alone, with the pastor, awaits the wedding party as the processional music begins. The congregation rises when the bride processes to the altar. The bride is escorted into place at the altar by her groom, and the wedding party turns to face the front altar.

PARENTAL GIVING

Note that the Parental Giving printed in the Order of Service reflects the traditional order. Your pastor will discuss the couple's preference when he meets with them.

The couple may choose to select a form of parental giving that allows for the parents of both couples to participate. In this option, both sets of parents are invited to stand, and the following paragraph is used:

"Names of couple," today we recognize that you both have been blessed by God with the gift of parents who care deeply about you and love you with all of their hearts. Today we recognize that you desire their blessing upon your marriage.

"Names of parents," you have watched (names of couple) grow up. You have celebrated with them the good times in life. You have helped carry them through difficult times.

You have seen them mature in body, mind and soul. Do you, on this day, place your blessing beside God's blessing for this marriage? Answer by saying, "I do!!"

WEDDING SCRIPTURES

Old Testament Readings:

1. Genesis 1:26-28, 31a Male and female He created them.
2. Genesis 2:18-24 And they will be one flesh.
3. Song of Solomon 2:8-10; 14; 16a; 8:6-7a For love is as strong as death.
5. Jeremiah 31:31-32a; 33-34a I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and Judah.

New Testament Readings:

5. Romans 8:31b-35; 37-39 Who will separate us from the love of Christ?
6. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not boast, it is not proud.
7. Ephesians 5:2a; 21-33 (longer) or 2a; 25-32 (shorter) This mystery has many implications, and I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church.
8. Colossians 3:12-17 Above all have love, which is the bond of perfection.
9. 1 Peter 3:1-9 You should agree with one another, be sympathetic and love the brothers.
10. 1 John 3:16-24 Our love is to be something real and active.
11. 1 John 4:7-12 God is love.
12. Revelation 19:1; 5-9a Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Gospel Readings:

13. Matthew 5:1-12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.
14. Matthew 19:3-8 So then, what God has united, man must not divide.
15. Matthew 22:35-40 This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is similar to it.
16. Mark 10:6-9 They are no longer two, therefore, but one body.
17. John 2:1-11 This was the first of the signs given by Jesus; it was given at Cana in Galilee.
18. John 15:8-12 Remain in my love.
19. John 15:12-16 This is my commandment; love one another.
20. John 17:20-26 (longer), 20-23 (shorter) May they be completely one.

WEDDING VOWS

1. I, _____, in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you, _____, 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.
2. I, _____, in the presence of God and these witnesses, take thee, _____, to be my wedded wife (husband) and pledge thee my love and faithfulness till death us do part.
3. _____, I take you to be my wife (husband) from this time onward, 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.
4. I take you, _____, to be my wife (husband). I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband (wife), to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.
5. I take you, _____, 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 the worst of what is to come as long as we live.
6. I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife (husband). I promise to love you, respect you, and trust in you always as we share all that is to come in our life together. I promise to be an inspiration and consolation to you. I will give you my loving concern and compromise in our decisions of each day. To make a Christian home for us will be my responsibility and my joy. Before God and these witnesses I promise to be faithful to you and honest with you, from this day forward.
7. I take you, _____, to be my wife (husband), loving you now and in your growing and becoming. I will love you when we are together and when we are apart; when life is peaceful and when it is in disorder; when I am proud of you and when I am disappointed in you; in times of leisure and in times of work. I will honor your goals and dreams and help you to fulfill them. From the depth of my being, I will seek to be open and honest with you; promising to be faithful and love you for all the days of my life. I say these things, believing that God is in the midst of them all.
8. With all my heart, _____, I want you to be my wife (husband). I choose you as the one I need to mature my love of God and my neighbor. I pledge you, _____, to appreciate and participate in your spontaneity, to encourage and support your interests. I covenant to love you in the midst of the everydayness of life; to comfort you in time of sorrow; to share with you the responsibility of building a Christian home; to accept your personhood; to allow you to differ; to give you the freedom to be creative. I will join with you to seek the meaning and fulfillment of our lives under God, promising to be faithful and love you for all the days of my life.

WEDDING PRAYERS

1. The Prayer:

Almighty, everlasting God, our heavenly Father, grant that by your blessing ___ and ___ may live together according to your Word and promise. Strengthen them in faithfulness and love toward each other. Sustain and defend them in all trials and temptations. Help them to live in faith toward you in the communion of your holy Church and in loving service to each other that they may ever enjoy your heavenly blessing; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

1. The Prayer:

Gracious God, who brings us together in the relationship of love, we pray that _____ and _____ will share the joys, the ecstasy, the abiding peace and the rich rewards of marriage. May their love and understanding grow with the years. May they seek each other's happiness, recognize each other's needs and hopes, and each help the other to become a person more pleasing to Thee. Help them to be sweetheart, helpmate, friend and guide, that together, they may meet the cares and problems of life more bravely. And as time takes away their youth, may they find contentment in the greater joy of rich companionship. May their home truly be a place of love and harmony where Your Spirit is ever present. Bless their wedding day we pray, and walk beside them, Father, through all their life together. Amen.

3. The Prayer - Our Wedding Prayer

Dear Lord, we have come here today to join these two people, _____ and _____ into one. We ask Your forgiveness that they may have a fresh start in their new life. We ask that you accept their union and help them live in peace and happiness together, and stay as one body, that they may never divide into two. Help them follow Your ways and not their own, that they may do as You wish, so Your Heavenly doors may be open to them at all times. We ask this in the Lord's name that Your love will never fail nor alter in this happy hour of matrimony, and thank You, Lord for making this all possible. Amen.

4. The Prayer:

Lord God of our fathers, constant in mercy, great in faithfulness, with high praise this day we recall your acts of unfailing love, all that in your tenderness you have done for the family of man, your great goodness to the house of Israel, your many acts of love to your people the church. We bless you for the joy that your servants _____ and _____ have found in each other, and for the hope and trust with which they have been established in a new relationship.

Give to us such a sense of your constant love that we may employ all our strength in a life of praise of You, whose work alone holds true and endures forever. Amen.

5. The Prayer:

Gracious Father, You provide in family life a means to renew people for living of each day. Make Your purposes for marriage known to all the families of the world and especially to us who celebrate at this wedding. Enrich husbands and wives, parents and children, more and more with Your grace that, strengthening and supporting each other, they may serve those in need and so move the world closer to the fulfillment of Your perfect kingdom, where with Your Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, You live and reign, one God through all ages of ages. Amen.

DISMISSAL OPTIONS

Along with the wedding processional, the dismissal practices at wedding ceremonies vary greatly. Following is a list of the most commonly-used approaches to the wedding dismissal (please consider each option and be prepared to indicate a preference):

Option 1: General Dismissal

This option is designed to provide the most time-effective release of wedding guests. The approach assumes that a receiving line or time of some sort will be provided for at the wedding reception. In practical terms, this is accomplished through an announcement made by the pastor prior to the recessional. The pastor indicates to wedding guests that they will be released without an usher following the service conclusion. Guests are instructed that a receiving line or time will be provided for at the reception and are encouraged to join the wedding couple there.

Option 2: Traditional Dismissal

This option provides for a receiving line to be formed by the wedding couple and their parents immediately following the recessional. Ushers are instructed to provide for an orderly dismissal of guests. Please note that the unique design of Messiah's sanctuary may require up to six ushers for dismissal, depending upon the size of the wedding.

Option 3: Couple Dismissal

This option provides for guests to remain seated following the wedding recessional. The wedding couple then re-enters the sanctuary and dismisses the wedding guests. Please note that the unique design of Messiah's sanctuary may require that several ushers assist the wedding couple, depending upon the size of the wedding.

POLICIES and PROCEDURES

To assure that wedding ceremonies at Messiah remain Christ-centered and are of the highest possible caliber, a variety of policies and procedures have been established. It is our hope that the following will provide answers to questions that are commonly asked about weddings at Messiah.

Selection of Officiant:

Pastors at Messiah consider participation in the wedding ceremony to be a privilege and an honor. They are available to perform weddings throughout the year, with the exception of their personal vacation schedules. Couples may indicate a preference for one of our pastors for their ceremony (every effort will be made to honor that preference) or, where there is no preference, leave the choice up to the pastors. Preference for a specific pastor should be indicated at the time your wedding is scheduled or at your first meeting with the Wedding Coordinator. In all cases, the pastor seeks to schedule weddings according to their calendars in such a way as to promote an equal balance in their officiation/participation.

On occasion, we are asked about the participation of other clergy in weddings held at Messiah. It is our policy that other Lutheran Church Missouri Synod pastors may participate in the service. This should be cleared through one of Messiah's pastors at the time your wedding is scheduled.

Participation in the wedding ceremony on the part of non-Missouri Synod pastors is not an option at Messiah. Resolutions of our national church body (The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) clearly prohibit the invitation of clergy from other church bodies to participate in our worship services. Note additionally, that such resolutions do not apply to the arena of the wedding reception, where participation on the part of other clergy is acceptable.

Off-Site Weddings:

If you are planning a wedding out of the church building, please contact a pastor first to go over these details. Couples holding off-site weddings will still be asked to participate in the pre-marital counseling program. Additionally, a Wedding Coordinator will be assigned to assist you with wedding preparations as needed.

Music Selection:

Music will play an important part in your marriage ceremony. Because you have chosen a Christian wedding, the music to be selected should reflect a biblical view of marriage. It should point to God as the author and sustainer of the marriage relationship. Selection of all music for the wedding ceremony must be cleared through Messiah's Director of Worship Arts. Please note in advance that songs that are purely secular in nature or do not reflect a biblical view of marriage will not be approved. Note additionally, that there is a tremendous volume of Christ-focused music that our Music Director can share with you.

Vocalists and Instrumentalists:

The Music Director at Messiah can assist our wedding couples with lining up capable soloists and instrumentalists. In cases where the instrumentalists and vocalist requested are from outside of Messiah, approval must be cleared through the Director of Worship Arts.

Wedding Times:

Occasionally Messiah will receive more than one request for a wedding ceremony on a particular date. It is our general policy to limit weddings to one per day. On occasion, exceptions can be made for more than one wedding on the same day—exceptions will be determined by the pastors and wedding coordinators. Please note that, with pastoral permission, weddings can start at any time. Your Wedding Coordinator will work with you to determine how you can best be served.

Video:

Three video cameras are mounted in the sanctuary and can be used to capture live video of your wedding ceremony. Because of the sensitive nature of the video equipment at Messiah, it is a requirement that one of Messiah's camera operators be involved in the production of your video. This video will be a compilation of your ceremony from three vantage points, not a keepsake, and will be ready for you to take with you as you leave for the reception.

Sound Operators:

In most instances, any wedding or worship service involving the use of any musical instrument, vocalist(s), or necessitating the use of tape cassette equipment will require the use of a qualified Messiah sound operator. The Music Director and Wedding Coordinator will schedule a qualified sound operator.

Wedding Coordinator:

When your wedding date is decided, you will be asked to meet with a Wedding Coordinator to review your wedding planning worksheet and procedures and guidelines for weddings and to answer questions. The Wedding Coordinator is there to help you remember all details involved in the wedding service so that your wedding will be as hassle-free as possible. This person will also help conduct the wedding rehearsal and review specific details about the ceremony. On the wedding day, this person will set up the dressing rooms and line up the wedding party when the wedding is about to begin.

Flowers:

Flowers are a wonderful way to beautify the wedding service. Consultation with a florist will give you ideas of how to use flowers in the service. Although artificial flowers are allowed in the service, real flowers are to be on the altar, as this is a reminder of our living Lord Jesus Christ. All floral arrangements on the altar should have protection under the vases to protect the altar from damage. If you wish to leave the flowers for the following Sunday services, please indicate this on your wedding planning worksheet, and your Wedding Coordinator will let the church office know.

Chancel Area:

The chancel area is always intended to focus our attention on our Savior Jesus, the sacrifice He made for us on the cross, and the abundant gifts of His grace and salvation, therefore, all decisions regarding the altar area are made with this mind. The following items are generally changed or removed for each wedding: the paraments (cloth) pieces hanging on front of the altar) are changed to white, the Baptismal font is removed, and the pulpit/lectern is either removed or placed on the main floor when a scripture reader is part of the wedding worship service. The altar will not be removed from the chancel area.

At special times of the year, the chancel area will be decorated for the season (i.e. Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, etc.). When a wedding is scheduled during or around these special times the decorations cannot be changed or taken down. Respectively, if decorations have already been removed, they cannot be put back up. Your wedding coordinator can provide general timelines for when decorations are put up and taken down.

This policy cannot cover every possible scenario and/or question regarding the chancel area; therefore, please talk with your wedding coordinator about specific questions or concerns. Any questions about the chancel area not addressed in this policy will be answered by the Senior Pastor through your wedding coordinator.

Aisle Decorations:

Bows can be used for the wedding with proper protection to the pews. Because tape, tacks and nails are not allowed, pew bow holders are provided. Messiah has several sets of pew bows if you wish to consider their usage.

Please discuss the use of any aisle candles with your Wedding Coordinator. We wish to protect your wedding guests from potential injury and the sanctuary from damage.

Candles:

Wax can damage church property, so use of canister candles is encouraged. If you wish to have candles lit during photography prior to the service, you will need two sets of candles. One set is used for your photography, and the second set is used for the wedding. Candelabras may also be used. Ask your Wedding Coordinator about Messiah's candle stands. All candles must be provided by the wedding families.

Unity Candle: (Optional)

The unity candle is a way to symbolize the joining of two separate individuals from two separate families now becoming one. It symbolizes the flame of love and the light of life. The single flame is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual commitment. The unity candle is actually three candles. Arrangements for using Messiah's gold or silver unity candle holder should be made with your Wedding Coordinator.

Binding Cloth: (Optional)

Binding symbolizes the union of the couple as one. The cloth represents Christ as being the center of the couple's lives as well as surrounding and protecting them. The marriage is complete and the two have become one. The holding of hands represents the sacrifices each person will make throughout their marriage and that they will cling to each other and Christ through all trials and tribulations. It is a visible sign of commitment and spiritual growth within the marriage. Speak with your Wedding Coordinator and Pastor about this option.

Photographers:

Pre-wedding photographs should occur well in advance of the wedding ceremony to assure that the sanctuary is clear of photography equipment at least 45 minutes prior to the beginning of the service.

If the couple does not wish to see each other prior to the wedding ceremony, your Wedding Coordinator can make arrangements to honor this request. Family and other photos can be taken following the ceremony and prior to leaving for the reception.

Flash photography is not to be used during the worship service, but video photography during the wedding service may occur. (Also see Video section above.) One location for the video camera is towards the back of the church near the media and sound station. Additionally, an un-manned camera may be set up in the front of the church off to the side of the altar area. Please check with your Wedding Coordinator with questions you might have. Because weddings at Messiah are a worship service, we request that no flash

photography be allowed during the service. You may wish to add the statement "Flash photography during the service is not allowed." to your bulletin/service folders.

Rice, Birdseed, Confetti, Bubbles:

Throwing rice, birdseed, small candies, confetti, rose petals, or other such items is not permitted. These items tend to make walking surfaces slick, uneven and, as a result, create a potential danger to the guests.

Bubbles (preferably outside), small bells to ring, and notes of appreciation are all appropriate items to give guests to help celebrate the completion of the wedding.

Service Folders/Bulletins:

Service folders are a nice way to let your wedding guests know who the members of your wedding party are and their relationship to you. It is also a way to help your guests follow the order of the service. There are several formats for service folders. Your Wedding Coordinator can provide you with samples. We encourage you to e-mail a sample of your service folder to the Pastor performing your ceremony and your Wedding Coordinator at least a week prior to your wedding so a second set of eyes can review it prior to printing.

Bulletins can be available as guests sign the guest book or given to guests by ushers during seating.

Musicians:

Messiah has been blessed with many talented musicians, and the inclusion of one or more of them in your wedding service can be arranged with our Music Director. In addition, the Music Director will help you if you have your own musicians, but wish to use the instruments at Messiah.

Ushers:

You will want to give consideration to the number of ushers you select. Experience has shown that you will need one usher for every 75 guests, with a minimum of two ushers. The ushers are to begin ushering guests in 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the service. The traditional seating is to seat friends of the bride on the left and friends of the groom on the right; however, it is becoming more and more common for guests to be seated on either side. The guests are to be ushered down the side aisles leaving the main aisle for the ushering of the grandparents, parents of the groom and the mother of the bride.

It is common courtesy for the usher to escort a lady on his arm, the gentleman will follow. If there are two ladies, it is customary for the usher to offer an arm to the eldest lady.

Grandparents of the bridal couple are to be ushered in prior to the beginning of the service or after candles have been lit. They are to be seated in a reserved area in front of the church. The parents of the groom are ushered down the main aisle prior to the beginning of the ceremony. The mother of the bride is the last to be ushered in and is ushered down the main aisle prior to the beginning of the ceremony. The parents of the groom are often ushered by the groom, and the mother of the bride is often ushered either by the groom or by a son who may be in the wedding party.

If either the groom or bride has two sets of parents, the Wedding Coordinator will guide you in the decision of seating arrangements. If you have other special guests that need special seating, please let your Wedding Coordinator know.

Flower Girls – Ring Bearers:

Very young flower girls and ring bearers who are too young to stand quietly during the service should be seated with their parents in the third or fourth row from the front. This will prevent them from being a distraction during your wedding service. It is desirable that the children be four years or older. It is important that you use artificial flower petals if the

flower girl is to drop petals. Real flower petals are not allowed because they are slippery and stain the carpet.

Candle Lighters:

Candle lighters should be tall enough to reach the tops of the candles. Candle lighters will practice lighting the candles during and after the wedding rehearsal if desired.

Dressing Rooms:

Dressing rooms will be assigned for both the bridal attendants and the groomsmen. Personal belongings should be kept together in a bag for each individual. The bride's room will be locked during the ceremony. It is important that you provide the name of the individual who will be responsible to assure that all belongings are removed at the end of the wedding service. Your Wedding Coordinator will unlock the bride's room at the end of the service.

Eating:

The wedding party will probably be meeting at the church two to three hours prior to the beginning of the service. It is a busy day and often the wedding party has not had time to eat and will not have an opportunity to eat prior to the reception. Thus, it is desirable to provide light snacks for the wedding party. The snacks should be something that will not spoil easily, stain clothing or require many utensils. Sandwiches, vegetables, fruits and chips are appropriate. You may also want to provide small bottles of water to drink. Any supplies needed to serve the snack should be provided by the wedding party.

Alcoholic Beverages:

No alcoholic beverages of any kind are allowed on the church premise in connection with the wedding or rehearsal. The church reserves the right to ask anyone who has been drinking to leave the premises. Please assist us in this observance.

Smoking:

Messiah's facility is a smoke-free environment. Please assist us in communicating this to the wedding party and your participants.

Marriage License:

A marriage license in Lancaster County in the State of Nebraska can be obtained at the County Clerk's office at 555 S. 10th Street, Room 108, Lincoln, Nebraska. A driver's license, passport or other form of photo identification is required to certify date of birth. You will also need to supply your Social Security numbers, names of your parents (including mother's maiden name), and your parent's birthplaces. Both the bride and groom must be present to sign the application. The fee for the marriage license is \$25.00 cash, check or credit debit card. The license may be obtained in any Nebraska county with no waiting period required. The license, if not used, expires within one year after application. If either applicant is not of legal age (19), a notarized consent form must be signed by the person's legal guardian giving consent to the marriage of the minor. If either applicant is under 17 years of age, a license cannot be issued in the State of Nebraska.

For additional information you can call 402-441-7481 at the City-County Building or visit the web site at www.lancaster.ne.gov, keyword "Marriage."

We ask that the license be given to the Wedding Coordinator or brought to the church office no later than two weeks before the wedding date.

Witnesses:

State law requires validating signature of two individuals who witness the wedding. Ordinarily, the best man and the maid (matron) of honor are chosen for this purpose. The officiating pastor will determine when the marriage license and marriage certificate will be

signed. Three options include prior to the wedding, on the altar during the ceremony, (usually after the unity candle is lit), or immediately following the ceremony during guest dismissal.

As the couple leaves Messiah, your Wedding Coordinator will provide them with a copy of their marriage license as proof of marriage if needed for health or travel purposes.

FACILITY INFORMATION

Facility Capacity:

Messiah has the capacity to comfortably seat up to 800 guests.

Messiah Lutheran Church Wedding Fees

(effective June 1, 2018)

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>
Church	\$0	\$200
Rehearsal Dinner in Family Life Center	\$125	\$125
Reception in Family Life Center	\$200	\$200
*Officiating Pastor	(See Wedding Coordinator)	
**Music Consultation	\$20	\$20
Pianist/Primary Musician (Rehearsal & Wedding)	\$100	\$100
Other Instruments (Rehearsal & Wedding) Trumpet, flute, strings	\$60-120	\$60-120
Soloist, 1-2 Selections (Rehearsal & Wedding)	\$60-120	\$60-120
**Sound System	\$60	\$60
Video	\$200	\$200
**Custodian Fees (Deposit)	\$80	\$80
**Wedding Coordinator	\$120	\$120
Prepare/Enrich On-Line	\$35	\$35

Notes:

Each Soloist and Instrumentalist is a separate fee.

\$80 deposit is required to put a firm hold on your selected date and must be received before a wedding coordinator is assigned.

The balance is due no later than the date of the wedding rehearsal. Make check payable to **Messiah Lutheran Church** and send or deliver it to your wedding coordinator.

*Place Officiating Pastor's Honorarium with a thank-you note in a separate envelope and give it to the wedding coordinator or the pastor the day of the rehearsal. **Recommended starting amount \$200.**

**Required Fee

Messiah Lutheran Church
Holiday/Holiday weekend Wedding Fees
(effective June, 2018)

	Members	Non-Members
Church	\$0	\$400
Rehearsal Dinner in Family Life Center	\$250	\$250
Reception in Family Life Center	\$400	\$400
*Officiating Pastor	(See Wedding Coordinator)	
**Music Consultation	\$40	\$40
Pianist/Primary Musician (Rehearsal & Wedding)	\$200	\$200
Other Instruments (Rehearsal & Wedding) Trumpet, flute, strings	\$120-240 each	\$120-240 each
Soloist, 1-2 selections (Rehearsal & Wedding)	\$120-240	\$120-240
**Sound System	\$120	\$120
**Custodian Fees (deposit)	\$160	\$160
**Wedding Coordinator	\$240	\$240
Video	\$400	\$400
Prepare/Enrich On-Line	\$35	\$35

Notes:

Each Soloist and Instrumentalist is a separate fee.

\$160 deposit is required to put a firm hold on your selected date and must be received before a wedding coordinator is assigned.

The balance is due no later than the date of the wedding rehearsal. Make check payable to **Messiah Lutheran Church** and send or deliver it to your wedding coordinator.

*Place Officiating Pastor's Honorarium with a thank-you note in a separate envelope and give it to the wedding coordinator the day of the rehearsal.

Recommended starting amount \$400.

**Required Fee

Messiah Lutheran Church
Outdoor Wedding Fees
(effective June, 2018)

	Members	Non-Members
Outdoor	\$0	\$200
Rehearsal Dinner in Family Life Center	\$187.50	\$187.50
Reception in Family Life Center	\$300	\$300
*Officiating Pastor	(See Wedding Coordinator)	
**Music Consultation	\$30	\$30
Pianist/Primary Musician (Rehearsal & Wedding)	\$150	\$150
Other Instruments (Rehearsal & Wedding) Trumpet, flute, strings	\$90-180 each	\$90-180 each
Soloist, 1-2 selections (Rehearsal & Wedding)	\$90-180	\$90-180
**Sound System	\$90	\$90
**Custodian Fees (deposit)	\$120	\$120
**Wedding Coordinator	\$180	\$180
Prepare/Enrich On-Line	\$35	\$35

Notes:

Each Soloist and Instrumentalist is a separate fee.

\$120 deposit is required to put a firm hold on your selected date and must be received before a wedding coordinator is assigned.

The balance is due no later than the date of the wedding rehearsal. Make check payable to **Messiah Lutheran Church** and send or deliver it to your wedding coordinator.

*Place Officiating Pastor's Honorarium with a thank-you note in a separate envelope and give it to the wedding coordinator the day of the rehearsal.

Recommended starting amount \$300.

**Required Fee