

Wedding Guidelines

Evangelical Covenant Church

Dassel, Minnesota

Congratulations on your approaching wedding and marriage. You have chosen to celebrate your Marriage Covenant in a wedding ceremony here at the Evangelical Covenant Church. We are pleased to offer you our assistance, resources and guidance for this memorable occasion.

Our desire is to celebrate with you as you express your love for each other before God. It is our hope and intent to affirm and assist you in your preparation, understanding, and commitment to the biblical values and principles that enhance the life-long marriage union. At the same time, we are sensitive to the roles your sacred covenant and joyful celebrations serve in establishing this bond of unity at your wedding ceremony. We join you in desiring that your experience be a most meaningful and memorable ceremony.

Setting a Date & Time

The Bride and Groom should arrange to visit with our Lead Pastor, when they have determined an approximate date for their wedding. During this first meeting, a tentative date and time for the wedding ceremony, use of the church facilities, and rehearsal should be cleared in the church calendar. A **reservation form and damage deposit** will be required at this time to reserve the date which is 100% refundable if the church facilities are left in good order. In addition, a relationship is established which will continue throughout the preparation process. We suggest that other arrangements and reservations of facilities should wait until the wedding date is officially set. This can avoid misunderstandings and frustrations surrounding the approval of your wedding date.

After meeting with the Pastor one of our *Wedding Consultants* will be assigned to assist you. You will be given her name and telephone number. Please contact her regarding the use of the facility and everything pertaining to your wedding **8 weeks** prior to wedding. (The church secretary is not responsible for questions regarding your wedding.)

If the Fellowship Hall is used for the reception, please meet with our custodian at least **4 weeks** prior to the wedding for planning the table arrangement. To allow for cleaning and preparing for worship services on Sunday, a Saturday wedding and reception **must conclude by 6:00 p.m.** (If reception is included we suggest the Ceremony start no later than 3:00 p.m.) If an adjustment is desired, please consult with the Pastor, consultant and custodian.

Those wishing to have their wedding at Dassel Covenant Church and are not a member of Dassel Covenant Church or a Sister Church, must fill out the wedding questionnaire and have it approved prior to reserving the facilities.

Meetings of Preparation

Planning and preparation for your wedding should be a process of several months duration. Our expectations as a Pastor and Congregation include meeting for conversations with the Pastor concerning the nature of marriage. These pre-marital sessions (about 6) will be at the discretion of the Pastor, and are to be scheduled at least five to six months prior to your wedding date. The Pastor will arrange for you to complete the *Prepare/Enrich Inventory, by Life Innovations*, will at a fee of \$35.00. These sessions are to be at the initiation of the bride and groom.

If you desire that another Pastor, relative or friend participate in the wedding ceremony, this should be communicated to the Pastor as early in the planning process as possible. The Pastor of our church is responsible for all weddings at the church. At your request he will invite others to share in the ceremony.

This booklet is for your use in planning a biblical Christian wedding within the guidelines and doctrine of our church. (Please review our “**Human Sexuality Policies and Guidelines**” which are attached.)

The Wedding Music

One of the first persons to be contacted after setting the wedding date with the Pastor is the church organist/pianist: Church Organist/Pianist: Harvey Peterson
Telephone: 320/286-5696

If an organist/pianist other than our church organist/pianist is to be used please discuss with the Pastor.

The organist/pianist will be available to discuss and assist in the choice of music and musicians for the wedding. A wedding is a celebration of God’s gifts of life and love. We encourage you to choose musical selections that are expressive of God’s love for you, your prayers for His blessing, and your praise and thanksgiving to Him. In choosing your music, a good guide is to ask yourself if the music would seem appropriate for a service of worship. Our Pastor will go over your selection of music with you.

Also, the Pastor will share with you Scripture passages that are intended to prepare you for a life together. These and other appropriate suggested passages from God’s Word are listed here:

Genesis 1:26-28, 31
Genesis 2:18-24
Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 8:6-7
Ruth 1:16-17
Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalms 33, 67, 100, 117, 127, 128, 136, and 150
Proverbs 24:3-4, 31:10-31
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
Matthew 7:24-29 or 19:4-6
Mark 10:6-9
John 2:1-10 or 15:9-12, 16
Romans 12:10-13 or 15:5-6
I Corinthians 13
Ephesians 5:21-33
Philippians 2:1-4
Colossians 3:12-17
I John 3:18-24 or 4:7-10

Marriage Covenant or License

The State of Minnesota offers the option of a Marriage Covenant or traditional License, if you prefer a Marriage Covenant – the requirement is met by meeting with the Pastor for counseling and completing the *Prepare Inventory*. It is the responsibility of the Bride and Groom to have the marriage license in the church office at least **1 week** before the wedding date. It is recommended that you apply for the wedding license at least **6 weeks** or more before the wedding. It takes about a week to get the license after application has been made.

Decoration Information

The sanctuary and entrance are decorated appropriately for the seasons of the church year (examples: Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter, Pentecost, etc.). Please give this consideration as you plan for your wedding. The decorations and banners are not to be removed.

Use of our sanctuary is for the rehearsal and the day of the ceremony. Arrangements can be made to set up for the wedding and reception the day before.

If an isle runner is desired, secure it from your florist. The aisle is about 70 feet from the doorway to the foot of the first step.

There are 35 rows of pews in the main sanctuary (seating for 210), 12 in the balcony (seating for 75) and 38 chairs in the chapel for overflow. Ribbons, greens, flowers, etc. for decoration may be attached with removable tape. Please, no nails, screws or thumbtacks. Please consult with the *Wedding Consultant* or *Custodian* before you decorate.

Please have someone in charge of taking all decorations down right after the wedding ceremony. Your personal attendant could do this.

At The Rehearsal

Weddings involving processional and recessional are more successful when a rehearsal is held in advance of the ceremony. This is usually held the evening prior to the ceremony. All wedding party members should be present, prompt and attentive. Parents and ushers are urged to be at the rehearsal also. The Pastor gives complete directions for the ceremony. The *Wedding Consultant* will be at the rehearsal and help with the directions.

The rehearsal usually lasts no more than an hour. Again, it is very important that everyone arrive on time for the rehearsal.

The Wedding Day

Let the *Custodian* know what time the doors of the church should be opened for the Bridal party's use. The Bride and her attendants use the library on the main level for dressing. We suggest the door be locked during the wedding. The *Wedding Consultant* will provide a key.

The groom and his attendants use the Fellowship (Green) room for dressing. Be sure that someone checks both rooms after the wedding to be sure that everything has been picked up.

We suggest that you begin pictures early enough so that you are finished **1 hour** before your wedding time. You do not want to be taking pictures when your guests start to arrive. It is good to have some time to sit and relax before you the service begins. It is very important that

everyone is on time. If you are using a program, please be sure that the following is inserted: **“no flash pictures during the ceremony, please.”** Also, **“please turn off all electronic equipment such as cell phones.”**

Be sure that you have someone that will be in charge of pinning flowers on people. It is suggested that you have a list of those who are to get a flower. This same person would also make sure that if you were using as aisle cloth, that it is securely tacked to the first step.

HOSTS AND HOSTESS:

- If you are having a Host and Hostess, request that they be at the church at least 1 hour before the start of the wedding.
- They can be available to help with last minute things. They will be in the narthex to greet your guests as they arrive, keep the flow of people going into the church, be aware of where the bathrooms are etc.
- Ask them to be in charge of the box or basket with the cards in it. **We recommend that the gifts and basket of cards be locked in the Library during the ceremony and reception.**
- After the ceremony they should be available to direct people where to go for the reception, if the guests are to start through the line before the wedding party, etc.
- Also have them remind guests to remain on the main level of the facility and not in the sanctuary area following the ceremony to help prevent any unsupervised activity.

USHERS:

- Should be ready to escort guests 45 minutes prior to the ceremony.
- Remind guests not to take pictures during the ceremony.
- During the ceremony, the ushers may be more involved in your wedding by standing in front of the platform, to the side.
- Ask your ushers to be responsible for extinguishing all candles after the service.

GUEST BOOK:

- The person for the guest book and gifts should be at the church 1 hour before the ceremony.
- The person at the guest book should close the book 10 minutes before the ceremony is to start, asking those that have not signed to sign the book after the ceremony. This will allow everyone to get seated so that the ceremony can start on time. The person at the guest book is in charge of making sure that the book is moved to the reception area to be signed after the ceremony.

Wedding Consultant will arrange for our sound and video technicians who will be happy to record a DVD of the service for you. If you make arrangement for another person to record the ceremony, they will need to use their own equipment and should be at the church early enough to get set up before the guests begin arriving. You can have them tape from the balcony, the back of the church or by the organ.

After the ceremony, you may or may not want to have a receiving line. Some couples prefer to usher their guests out, row by row. You may have a receiving line in the narthex or have it outside, weather permitting. You may just want to greet your guests during the reception. There is no hard and set rule on what you have to do.

Rice, confetti, etc. are not to be thrown in the church or its entryway; birdseed may be used, but be sure that it is thrown away from the church. Some now are choosing to use bubbles.

It is suggested that a snack be provided for your wedding party, grandparents etc. to have after pictures and before the ceremony. This could be set up in the kitchen, a corner of the fellowship hall or the library. Make sure that someone cleans this up afterwards. It is not the responsibility of our custodians to do this.

The *Wedding Consultant* will be at the church at least an hour before the ceremony.

Absolutely NO alcohol or drugs are permitted on the Church property. This includes all indoor and outdoor areas as well as the parking lot.

WEDDING FEES

Our facilities are for weddings for our church family and sister covenant church.

We believe Jesus Christ is our Lord. As believers, we endeavor to exhibit kindness and consideration to the entire community. We are also responsible stewards of our facilities and talents on behalf of our Lord, and have established our charges accordingly. All money for the soloist, organist, Pastor, custodians and the use of our church is to be paid the night of the rehearsal. You may give the money to the wedding consultant, in separate envelopes. She will distribute them, otherwise the groom may distribute the envelopes.

The fees and regulations listed below are set and administered by the church officers and Pastor.

Our church family is not required to pay the rental charge for the use of the church but is responsible for all other charges.

Church Rental:	Church Family	Sister Church	Other
Sanctuary only		100.00	300.00
Fellowship Hall (including kitchen)		150.00	350.00
Foyer		25.00	25.00
Library		25.00	25.00
Green Room		25.00	25.00
Custodial Fees:			
Sanctuary Only	75.00	100.00	200.00
Fellowship Hall	125.00	200.00	300.00
Foyer	25.00	25.00	50.00
Library	25.00	25.00	50.00
Green Room	25.00	25.00	50.00
Wedding Consultant	75.00	100.00	200.00
Clergy Honorarium	100.00	150.00	250.00

Our church organist/pianist	75.00	100.00	200.00
Sound Tech	50.00	100.00	200.00
Livestream/Video Tech	50.00	100.00	200.00
Damage Deposit	200.00	200.00	300.00

Our church secretary is available to assist with printing your wedding program. If you desire her assistance please provide paper for copying and a copy ready master of the program.

(Applies to the whole facility including lost or damaged items in the kitchen or excess fees for extra garbage) Unused portion of the damage deposit will be refunded 10-14 days following the ceremony.

No food or drink in the sanctuary at any time during the rehearsal and/or ceremony. Smoking and the serving of alcoholic beverages are prohibited in all areas of our church and it's grounds. For your own benefit, no alcohol should be consumed by anyone in the wedding party prior to the rehearsal or wedding. Please be respectful of our church property.

After the wedding reception, have someone go through the whole church to make sure that everything has been taken down and that everything that you brought with you has been taken home. Our custodians are not responsible for cleaning up unnecessary things. Examples of this would be plastic bags from the tuxes, snack items etc. Treat our facilities as you would your own home.

The following is included with the church rental charge. You may use any or all of it. Again, please treat everything as if it were your own.

- kneeling bench
- podium for guest book
- 2 torches to light candles
- small table for unity candle
- 200+ chairs
- 18 round tables (can seat 8 around each)
- 15 long tables (4 in library, 2 narrow tables)
- 2 punch tables

KITCHEN: (available day of rehearsal)

- 20 coffee servers
- 26 water pitchers
- The new coffee maker has two pots that hold 42 cups each. There are also two 42 cup pots that sit on warmers. (It takes about 4 minutes to brew a pot. Instructions are near the coffee maker.)
- 2 refrigerators with freezers
- 2 conventional ovens
- convection oven
- assorted candleholders and vases

Items not included in the use of the church:

Table decorations, tablecloths, food, beverages, dishes, silverware, napkins, candles, unity candle or holder.

Caterer

The reception meal CANNOT be cooked in the Church kitchen. We are a “prep kitchen” only. A licensed caterer must bring in the prepared food. This is a Minnesota State Law. The caterer must provide their own towels and dish cloths. The kitchen is used only for serving food, not for the preparation of food.

Wedding Checklist

1. Set date and arrange with Pastor to get on the church calendar. Complete reservation form and submit damage deposit.
2. Arrange pre-marital counseling sessions with Pastor. **(6 months before)**
3. Choose and get commitment from bridesmaids, maid of honor, groomsmen, personal attendant, host and hostess, someone for guest book, to take gifts, pour punch, coffee and cut cake, person to pin on flowers.
4. Contact organist: Harvey Peterson: 320/286-5696
5. Arrange for soloist and any other musicians to be used.
6. Discuss musical selections with Pastor for approval.
7. Set time for the rehearsal and get on church calendar. Instruct bridal party as to the time that they need to be at the church.
8. Meet with *Wedding Consultant* **8 weeks** before wedding to review guidelines and use facilities.
9. Arrange for a florist.
10. Arrange for a photographer (Reminder: allow at least 1-1/2 hours before ceremony.)
11. Obtain marriage license **(6 weeks before)** ceremony.
12. Get your program printed, if using one. There are many places to have this done.
13. Contact Custodians **4 weeks prior to wedding to plan** for the reception. This is the responsibility of the bridal couple. Let them know what time you will be decorating the church, having the rehearsal and when you will be arriving the day of your wedding.
14. Bring marriage license to the church office **one week** before ceremony.
15. Provide all decoration, flowers, candles, unity candle and holder, aisle cloth etc.
16. Have some kind of decorated box or basket for cards.
17. Arrange for someone to check the church carefully after the wedding to be sure that everything personal has been picked up.
18. Arrange to have someone take down all of the decorations, including candles.
19. Have a small snack for the bridal party prior to the wedding ceremony.
20. Bring checks for all fees to the rehearsal and distribute.
21. It is suggested that the night of the rehearsal you bring: candles (unity candle, holder and candles for candelabras), programs, guest book and pen, cake knife and server, box or basket for the cards.

A reminder:

- There is to be no smoking in or around the church property.
- No serving of alcoholic beverages.
- To help insure that you have the day that you have always dreamed of, no alcohol should be consumed by anyone in the bridal party prior to the rehearsal or wedding.

May God richly bless you as you begin your married life together.