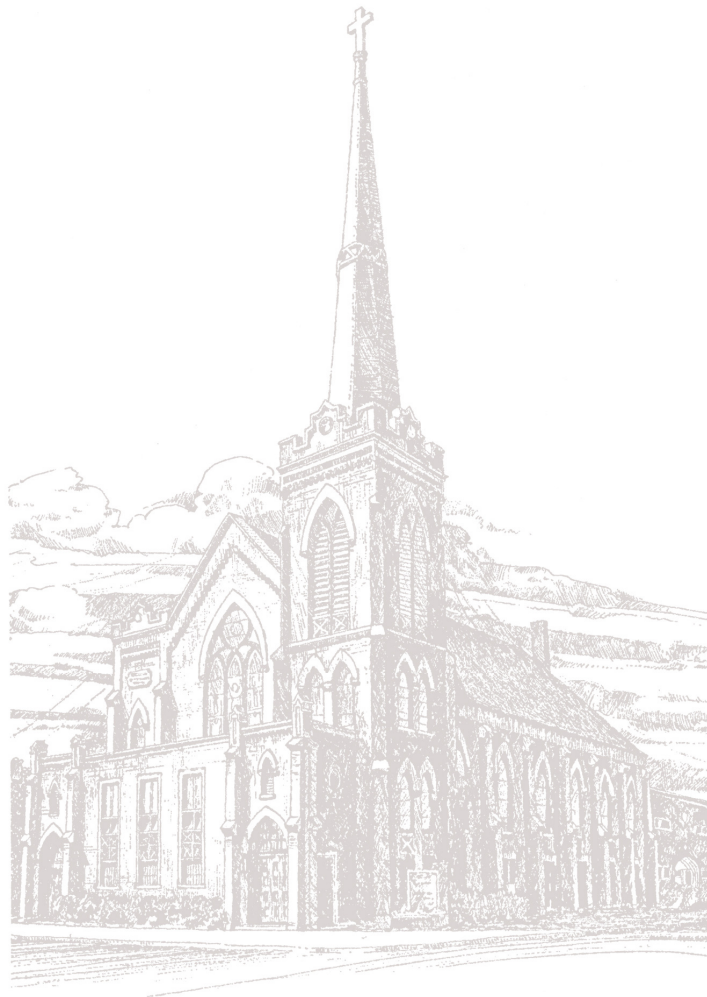


# *MARRIAGE PREPARATION*

*“A wedding is a day and  
a marriage is a lifetime”*



*ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH  
925 Fifth Avenue – Rockford, IL 61104 – 815-964-4609*

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION

**A WEDDING AND A MARRIAGE** - We believe that a wedding is a day to celebrate the gift of love that is ours in Christ. A wedding is more than just a civil contract, but a relationship blessed by God to provide support and love to all involved. A wedding is between a man and woman, but there are many involved. A wedding service is a worship service where a couple is surrounded by God, family and friends. The information in this booklet is intended to help your wedding and marriage planning. It is important to keep the events of the day in perspective, for no matter how much planning is done, the focus of the day is a time to worship God and give God thanks for the love of Christ that is received and shared within a marriage and the community of Christian friends.

**SETTING THE DATE** - When you decide you want to get married, please contact the Pastor about the date before signing any contracts or a reception. Please call the Pastor to make sure Pastor's calendar is open for the date you want to have the wedding and the church building is available. The Pastor will not perform a wedding unless marriage preparation takes place. No wedding will be confirmed until the couple has met personally with the Pastor. Wedding dates and times are set on a first come, first served basis, subject to the Pastor and building availability.

The church worship space holds about 425 people. The Chapel holds 50 people. No weddings are planned during Holy Week or on major church holidays or civil holidays. Weddings are not to be scheduled later than 4:00pm. Sunday weddings cannot be scheduled before 3:00pm. Access to the building will be available 1 1/2 hours prior to the service and 1 hour after the service is over.

**PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING PLAN** - All couples are asked to take a pre-marital survey with the Pastor prior to the wedding. The cost is \$35.00 paid directly to the company that processes the material. Couples are required to develop a "pre-marriage counseling plan". This plan requires one of the following: either a pre-marital retreat call "Engaged Encounter", a one day marriage seminar, connect with a marriage coach within the congregation or attend six sessions with an approved Christian marriage counselor. Contacts and phone numbers for your Pre-marriage Counseling plan are on the back page.

**REHEARSAL** - Rehearsals are scheduled in consultation with the Pastor and Wedding Coordinator. The following people need to be present: bride, groom, parents, attendants, and ushers, (ring bearers and flower bearers, if any).

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION

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**MARRIAGE LICENSE** - The marriage license must be brought to the church office five days before the wedding. Both copies of the license are needed. One copy will be signed and sent to the courthouse by the church after the wedding and the other will be given to the bride and groom. Make sure the license is from the county the wedding will be held in. You cannot use the license the same day you purchase it, because there is a one-day waiting period.

**MUSIC** - All music must be discussed with the Pastor and Church Musician. There are many songs that have sentimental value to couple and should be shared at the reception, but may not be appropriate for a worship service. The Organist at Zion will coordinate the music for all wedding services. This policy is to protect our musical equipment and policies. If our musician is not available, we will help to find another competent musician to play at your wedding. It is the couples responsibility to contact the Organist two months prior to the wedding to make plans. If the music requested is not in the music library, it is appropriate for the couple to provide the sheet music. With the consent of the Pastor, if a guest musician is participating, they must meet with our Organist to familiarize themselves with the musical equipment and sound system. The fee for the organist includes one hour consultation and the wedding rehearsal. Additional fees for rehearsing with soloist and additional consultation.

**OUTSIDE CLERGY** - All weddings held in our church will be officiated by a Pastor of Zion. Additional clergy may be included in the service by prior arrangement with the Pastor at Zion. The Zion Pastor will preside and be in authority during the planning, at the service and in the signing of the license.

**FLOWERS** - Flowers for the altar area may be provided by the couple, but they are not allowed to be placed on any musical equipment. There are two flower tables available for placement of flowers in the altar area. No artificial flowers are allowed in the altar area.

**PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO TAPING** - Photos may be taken with a flash before and after the service, but no flash photos may be taken during the service. We ask the photographer and videographer to limit their movements during the service as to not be a distraction. Video taping must be done from one of the locations designated by the pastor and they are not permitted in or near the altar area. Photos need to be completed within an hour of the end of service. We encourage most photos to be taken prior to service.

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION

**AISLE RUNNERS** - We do not allow the use of aisle runners.

**CANDLEABRAS** - We have candles on the altar that will be lit during the wedding. If you want candelabras, you may rent our two candelabras for \$10.00 each. You will need to bring fourteen 10" inch candles for the candelabras. The two candelabras are placed outside of the communion rail.

**DECORATION** - No decorations may be fastened (by tape or other adhesive) to the pulpit, altar, font, chairs, or musical equipment. Ribbons, rubber bands or twist ties may be used to attach decorations. Unity candles are coordinated by the couple for use in worship. The supply of Unity candles and holders are the couples responsibility. The individual candles will not be extinguished during the service. The rental of candelabra is optional for the couple, with the approval from Pastor. Costs and arrangements are the couple's responsibility. The use of aisles candles is not possible.

**RICE, CONFETTI, BIRD SEED, ETC.** - Throwing of rice or confetti is prohibited. You may use birdseed. Please tie in small bags and wait to disperse until the wedding party is outside of the church building. Balloons may not be brought into the sanctuary area at any time for a wedding. The use of bubbles or bells is welcome. Any items are to be used only outside of the building as guests are going outside.

**ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO** - There is no smoking in the building. There is a designated smoking area outside by north doors at the end of the hallway by the classrooms. The use of alcohol is prohibited on church grounds or in the parking lot (including inside of vehicles in the parking lot), except in the use during Holy Communion. The Pastor has the right to remove/exclude intoxicated individuals from participating in the wedding or rehearsal.

**DRESSING FOR THE WEDDING** - A designated room will be available for the bridal party. This room is not secured during or after the service. Zion is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

**BULLETINS** - If wedding bulletins are desired, the couple is asked to provide them. The final copy is to be approved by the Pastor, prior to copying, at least two weeks prior to the wedding. (The final proof may be emailed to Pastor). A final copy must be brought to rehearsal.

**LIGHT AND SOUND EQUIPMENT** - The sound system requires a trained operator and one will be assigned. The sound operator can also control special lighting effects and is available one hour before the wedding to check microphones.

**UNITY CANDLE** - A unity candle is the responsibility of the couple.

# WEDDING SERVICE ORDER

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\*Preservice Music

Parents lighting of side candles (music)

Processional with music

Congregational Song or Special Music (optional)

\*Invocation

\*Prayer

\*Bible Lessons (up to three, please refer to page 9)

\*Sermon

Congregational Song or Special Music (optional)

\*Order of Marriage

\*Wedding Vows

\*Exchange of Rings

Unity Candle (solo optional)

\*Parents Blessing

\*Family and Friends Blessing

\*Pastoral Blessing

\*Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Communion (optional)

\*Benediction

\*Introduction of Couple/Family

Congregational Song (optional)

\*Recessional

\*Included in Wedding Worship

## **Couples Role**

The couple should pick the Bible lessons, help serve communion, pick appropriate music with the Organist and select the wedding vows. The couple can have people read the Bible lessons. The service is flexible and the Pastor is consulted in the process of decision making.

## SUGGESTED WEDDING VOWS

1. I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, 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. (LBW, 1978).
2. In the presence of God and this community, I (name), take you (name), 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 health, to love and to cherish, until death parts us. This is my solemn vow (ELW, 2006)
3. 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 as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you to better understand ourselves, the world, and God, through the best and the worst of what is to come until death parts us.
4. I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and these witnesses to be faithful, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others until death parts us.
5. \_\_\_\_\_, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time forward, to join with you and to share in 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. \_\_\_\_\_, I take you to be my wife/husband with love and joy in my heart. I promise these things in the presence of God and these witnesses: To honor and respect you, to share in all that life brings, to care for you and to stand by you, to forgive as we have been forgiven, and to grow with you in faith as we live our lives together from this day forward until death parts us.
7. \_\_\_\_\_, you are my best friend. Now with these promises, I bind myself to you as husband/wife for the rest of my days on this earth; I promise to honor and respect you, to stand by you in the good times and the bad, to care for you and pray for you, and to be faithful to you, my wife/husband.
8. I believe in a life centered in trust of God almighty. I believe in the promise of love. I believe in forever. I believe in you, and I believe in us. With great thankfulness to God for bringing us together, I promise myself to you as husband/wife until death parts us.

## SUGGEST VOWS FOR RE-MARRIAGES

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1. This is not my first marriage; however it is my last. I am now at peace as I stand before hopeful friends and family, for you, \_\_\_\_\_ represent happiness and stability for our future. For our life together, I promise you support, understanding, willingness to learn and grow with you, love and faithfulness. We join ourselves as a family, looking forward and not back, in the name of love all of my days.
2. I, \_\_\_\_\_, am proud to become your husband/wife. Where there have been tears, I offer you laughter; where there has been pain, I offer you kindness and love; where there are memories, I will open to you not only my own past, but also all our tomorrow's as husband and wife. I promise you my love and faithfulness all of my days.
3. With God's help, I have passed through different storms and set safe harbor in the harbor of God's His love. It is by God's grace that we join today as a family. Under God's guidance, we are able to bring good news today of peace, love and tranquillity. We ask our family and friends to support us with their prayers as we begin our new life together. I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, as my wedded partner to love and cherish and honor all of my days. May our journey be guided by the hand of God.
4. Today is our renaissance. \_\_\_\_\_, I open my arms to you in the promise of a lifetime love. May we grow together in heart and spirit; may we relish the solidity of God who has entered our lives; and may we never turn away from God or from each other, as long as we both shall live. I commit to you my faithfulness from this moment forward until death parts us.

## SCRIPTURE FOR WEDDINGS

A wide variety of Scriptures are available for couples. The Scriptures have some reference to love, marriage, God's role in your life and the impact of Jesus in a person's life. Portions may be read by friends or family as part of the service. The Pastor will read the Gospel lesson picked for the service. The following list is a place to start:

### Old Testament Lessons

Genesis 1:1:26-28, 2:18-24	The creation of man and woman
Joshua 24:14-18	"...my household, we will serve the Lord"
Solomon 2:10-13; 8:5-7	Love between man and woman
Psalms 139	God has known me all of my life
Proverbs 31	Definition of a "capable wife"
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12	"Two are better than one..."
Jeremiah 31:31-34	"I will be by their God and they...my people"

### New Testament Lessons

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18	Be generous in offering hospitality
1 Corinthians 13	No limit to love's endurance
Colossians 3:12-17	Qualities of living for God's people
1 John 3:18-24	Love in truth and action
1 John 4:7-16	"Love one another, love is from God"
Ephesians 5:21-33	Husbands and wives roles
Philippians 4:4-7	Trust in God

### Gospel Lesson

Matthew 5:1-12	"Blessed are the peacemakers"
Matthew 5:13-16	"You are the light of the world"
Matthew 19:4-6	"A man shall leave his parents and unite with his wife and the two shall be one"
Matthew 22:35-40	"Love your neighbor as yourself"
Mark 8:1-9	God will provide enough for the journey
John 2:1-11	"There was a wedding in Cana"
John 15:9-16	"Love one another as I loved you"



# WEDDING CHECKLIST

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Contact Pastor about date of wedding before making deposit on reception hall

Deposit to the church

Reception hall reservation confirmed

Decide on rehearsal time

Set up a date for premarital survey

Decide on Pre-Marriage Counseling Plan

Decide on dress and tuxedos

Decide on flowers, photos and video

Decide on cake for wedding reception

Decide on Unity candle, holders and candelabra (optional)

Decide on gifts for wedding party

Order and send out invitations

Select music and participants

Contact Wedding Coordinator

Contact Organist to pick music for processional and recessional

Communion at Service? (bring bottle of wine, grape juice, and bread)

Pick lessons

Decide on a wedding bulletin and show Pastor copy before you are ready to print

Take marriage license and fees to church 5 days before wedding

## DIRECTIONS FOR USHERS

Much of the success of the wedding will depend upon the ushers. You are in complete charge of making the last minute arrangements in getting people seated as quickly as possible before the ceremony. The Wedding Coordinator will assist you and give you instructions the night of the rehearsal.

### Duties of the Ushers:

1. See that the people are seated as they arrive. Help avoid crowding in the back by encouraging guests to be seated as they arrive. Guests should do their visiting after the service and not delay the ceremony by waiting until the last minute to be seated. Ushers should see that this does not happen.
2. You may ask the guest which side of the church they would like to be seated. Usually the bride's side is the left side as you face the altar, and the groom's side is the right side. This custom is not a necessity, however. Check with the couple.
3. Always offer your right arm and walk to the left of the lady being seated. This is particularly important when ushering the grandmothers and mothers.
4. No guests are to be seated during the processional. They must wait until the bridal party has taken their place up front. Then late guests can be ushered in from the side aisles.
5. After the recessional the usher is to proceed immediately to the front to usher out the parents unless they decide to leave without being ushered. The bride's parents are ushered out or leave first, followed by the groom's parents.
6. After the parents are out, the ushers then usher out the people moving from front to back or the couple may usher people out.
7. After the service, go through all seats collecting all debris and dispose of it in the wastebasket, picking up any articles that may have been left behind.
8. If you have questions, please ask the couple or the pastor at rehearsal.

## WEDDING FEES

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CHAPEL WEDDINGS	Active - Member	Non-Member
Chapel Fee	Free	\$25.00
Custodian Fee	\$25.00	\$25.00
Organist	\$100.00	\$100.00
Fellowship Hall Custodian	\$50.00	\$50.00 \$25.00
Pastor		\$150.00
TOTAL FEES	\$	\$
SANCTURY WEDDING	Active - Member	Non-Member
Worship Space Fee (\$50.00 deposit)		\$200.00
Custodian & Sound Technician (Worship)	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00
Organist	\$200.00	\$200.00
Soloist	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Fellowship Hall Custodian (Fellowship Hall use)	\$100.00 \$ 25.00	NA NA
Kitchen Director (Fellowship Hall use)	\$ 25.00	NA
Wedding Coordinator	\$100.00	\$100.00
Candelabras (\$10.00 each x 2)	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00
Unity Candle holder	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00
Pastor		\$150.00
Pre-Marital Survey (Life Innovations)	\$35.00	\$35.00
TOTAL FEES	\$	\$

Fees are subject to change. The worship space/chapel fee must be submitted upon setting the date with the Pastor. Please address checks individually to the hostess, custodian, organist and Pastor. These fees should be submitted to the office one day prior to wedding. The deposit is fully refundable unless there is a problem, such as damage done to the church, excessive cleanup following the wedding, etc., or will be applied to various fees.

Building use for receptions is for members of Zion only. It can be used for up to two hours after the wedding, for meal/cake reception only. The wedding party is responsible for catering, set-up and clean up of kitchen and fellowship hall. A reception at Zion requires fees for the custodian and Kitchen Director to supervise caterers and clean up.

## MARRIAGE RESOURCES

### MARRIAGE MATERIAL

- “Becoming Married”, by Herbert Anderson  
 “Couples Devotional Bible”, New International Version  
 “Finding The Love of Your Life”, by Neil Clark Warren  
 “Five Love Languages”, by Gary Chapman  
 “His Needs, Her Needs”, by Willard F. Harley, Jr.  
 “Making Love Last Forever”, by Gary Smalley  
 “Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts”, by Drs. Les & Leslie Parrott  
 “Remarriage”, by Helen Hunter  
 “Remarriage”, by Charles Cerling  
 “Ten Great Dates”, by David and Claudie Arp  
 “The Good Marriage”, by Wallerstein and Blakeslee  
 “The Second Wedding Handbook”, by Judith Slawson

### Parenting Material

- “The Shaping of a Christian Family”, by Elisabeth Elliot  
 “Breakthrough Parenting”, by John Maxwell  
 The Stepfamily Association of America - 1.800.735.0329

### Retreats

- 1) Catholic Engaged Encounter (weekend)  
     Bishop Lane Retreat Center -Rockford 815.965.5011
- 2) PREP - Marital Skills Seminar (Saturday all day)  
     Allan Rohlf in Chicago 773.478.6264)
- 3) Christian Marriage Counselors - arranged with Pastor

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Pastor	Rev. Dr. Michael E. Thomas	815.964-4609
Wedding Coord.	Kathy Hand	815.566.0674

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