

Wedding Guidelines



Messiah Lutheran Church

1550 South Poseyville Road ▪ Midland, MI 48640 ▪ Phone 989.835.7143 ▪ Fax 989.835.5325

Welcome

Messiah's mission is ***Reaching one more life with Jesus... by creating environments for life transformation.***

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage. The Bible and, therefore, Messiah Lutheran Church, hold marriage in high regard as a blessed state instituted by God Himself as our Lord Jesus said,

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder. Matthew 19:5-6¹

Introduction

Every wedding at Messiah is a worship service that will glorify God. The service itself will be centered in God's word, diligently planned with the bride and groom supported in a godly manner. Those coming to the ceremony will hear God's plan for marriage and experience God's grace.

Since weddings at Messiah are Christian weddings, we have policies about such things as music, decorations, photography, and many other details. Worship cannot be taken for granted, but must, in every case, be a sincere expression of love and respect for God.

The following policies will assist you in planning your wedding worship service at Messiah. The church staff and volunteers will strive to make this a holy and happy occasion.

Wedding Coordinator

Plans for your wedding must be made through Messiah's Wedding Coordinator. She will assist you in working out the details of your wedding ceremony and can offer helpful advice and counsel. Working closely with the pastors, the Wedding Coordinator will make certain that all wedding plans are consistent with the values of Messiah Lutheran Church, which are God's Word, excellence for the Lord, caring community and outreach.

You must meet with the Wedding Coordinator at least twice before your rehearsal. You must keep the Wedding Coordinator informed of all the details of your wedding ceremony. The wedding coordinator will oversee your wedding rehearsal and ceremony to ensure that everything runs smoothly and properly.

Sound and Lighting Technician

The Sound and Lighting Technician is a specially trained member of Messiah who will be present during your rehearsal and ceremony. They are responsible for working with the musicians, vocalists, and other wedding participants to make sure that the best possible sound and lighting is achieved. They can also help you with any DVD or PowerPoint presentation you may want to include in your service.

¹ Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 Biblica. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

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Officiant

Ordinarily, one of the pastors of Messiah will officiate at weddings performed in the church. Exceptions may be allowed, however, but only when the participating clergyman is a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod or with the approval of the senior pastor and the Board of Elders. It is understood that these clergymen will abide by congregational guidelines.

You will need to schedule a meeting with the officiating pastor to discuss your wedding service at least six weeks before your wedding date.

Date & Times for Weddings

We will do our best to schedule your wedding at your preferred day and time, as long as it does not conflict with an already scheduled event or church ministry operations.

There are dates during the year when we reserve the calendar to allow for uninterrupted ministry. **Excluded dates**, inclusive of weekends before and after, include: Thanksgiving through New Years, the week of Easter, and the week of summer kids outreach (VBS and/or Camp). Exceptions to this must be reviewed and approved by the leadership team.

We typically allocate three hours for the use of the sanctuary and facilities for weddings. Because we may have multiple weddings on one day, all will need to respect this time limit.

Rehearsal

Except for very small weddings, a rehearsal is required. Generally, this is held the day or evening before the wedding. Thursday rehearsals for Friday weddings must be finished by 6:00 pm. All participants, including the wedding party, ushers, parents, and musicians are to attend. The pastor may not necessarily attend, as the Wedding Coordinator and the Sound and Light Technician will handle all the details and be able to answer any questions you may have. It is expected that those in attendance at the rehearsal will conduct themselves as followers of Christ.

Music

Marriage ceremonies at Messiah are Christian worship services and the worshipping of God should be reflected in the music used. While the style of music may vary, the text of the music needs to be consistent with Messiah's Christian values. Only music that has the underlying thought of glorifying God is suitable for a Christian church service at Messiah. The use of secular texts and music are better saved for your reception.

Since music is a wonderful way to personalize your wedding service, the Wedding Coordinator is ready to assist you in music choices and knows many musicians that are available for hire.

Your music choices must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator no later than two months before your wedding.

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Decorations

The altar cloths and banners at Messiah are designed and displayed according to the church year. They are not decorations and cannot be changed or removed. An additional wedding banner may be used. At times, other adornments are placed in the sanctuary to emphasize liturgical seasons. These too, are not to be removed for weddings.

Our church has a unity candleholder available for your use. We also have pew clips that you may use to attach special decorative pieces to the pews.

You may leave a flower arrangement for the next Sunday service or if you plan to take the flowers to the reception, designate someone to attend to this after the wedding service. Only artificial flower petals can be thrown in the aisle. For safety reasons, the use of an aisle runner is strongly discouraged.

In keeping our church and the parking area safe and clean, we do not allow rice, confetti, birdseed, cereal, silly string, etc. to be thrown. You may use bubbles outside.

All decorations must be discussed in advance with the Wedding Coordinator, who will assist with the setup and removal.

Pictures

Please familiarize yourself with our photography policies by reading "A Guide for the Wedding Photographer/Video Camera Operator" on page 6. The policies will be sent to your photographer and they will be expected to adhere to them. Please note that there is no flash photography allowed during the ceremony. Any stationary video equipment should be in place 30 minutes before your ceremony.

Printed Order of Worship

Some couples desire that those in attendance have a printed order of the wedding service. This may contain the names of the bride and groom, the date, place and time of wedding, and information about the reception. It should also contain instructions to the guests that they may not use flash photography during the wedding service. Sample wedding bulletins may be obtained from an area Christian bookstore or from the Wedding Coordinator. The church does not provide this service.

Marriage License

Be certain you allow enough time to obtain your marriage license. Please refer any questions regarding marriage licenses to the Midland County Clerk's Office (832-6739). You must bring your valid marriage license to the church office at least two days before the wedding. Please do not leave the information on changing your social security number with the church.

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Dressing Rooms

A dressing room is available for the female members of the wedding party, and a separate room is available for the male members. These rooms can be used beginning two hours before the ceremony. All clothing and other items must be packed and picked up immediately after the service. It is helpful to arrange for someone to do this for you. Do not leave any valuables or money in these rooms. The church is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Guidelines for Facility Usage

The sound and lighting equipment will be available for use by one of our technicians; however, the video recording equipment is not.

During the rehearsal and ceremony, language, dress, and conduct should indicate respect for the House of God. Intoxicants are not permitted on the church property and smoking is not permitted inside the building. It is suggested that these rules be called to the attention of all members of the wedding party. Please refrain from drinking before the rehearsal and the ceremony. The pastor has complete authority to exclude any member of the wedding party whose behavior or condition he deems unacceptable.

Fees

A fee of \$400.00 is charged to compensate the Wedding Coordinator and the Sound and Light Technician and the officiating pastor. This fee needs to be paid at least two weeks prior to your wedding date. A check made out to "Messiah Lutheran Church" can be mailed to the church, marked to the attention of the Wedding Coordinator. Should these fees prove a hardship to you, please contact Pastor John Langewisch. He is in a position to adjust these fees based on an understanding that you will be keeping the total expenses for your wedding to a minimum.

All other fees, including musicians, should be discussed with the individual in advance.

Policies for the Wedding Photographer Video Camera Operator

The bride and groom have chosen you to record the visual memories of their wedding. In keeping with the Christian nature of this occasion, the following policies and information need to be followed:

1. Flash pictures of the processional and recessional are permitted. No flash pictures are to be taken during the wedding service. Non-flash pictures are permitted from the area in the back of the sanctuary or from the balcony.
2. No photographers or videographers are allowed in the chancel area during the service.
3. Language, dress and conduct should indicate respect for the House of God. Smoking is not allowed in the church building. It is permitted outside the front entrances.
4. The chancel area is not to be used for taking pictures during the wedding service.
5. Do not climb over communion rails, stand on pews, or use the altar as a table.
6. If you desire to have the candles (altar or pedestal unity) lit for background, please ask Messiah's wedding coordinator.
7. Non-service related pictures, i.e., family groupings and so forth, may be taken after the service. Since there may be multiple weddings on one day, we ask that you finish taking photos within 2 hours from the beginning of the ceremony.
8. If you desire to reconstruct portions of the service, please inform the pastor and take such pictures before the other "after ceremony" photos.
9. Any movement of hand-held video cameras during the service is to be restricted to the back of the sanctuary or the balcony. No equipment of any kind may be placed in the chancel area during the wedding service. Tripod-mounted, remote-controlled cameras may be placed by the organ to the right of the chancel and should be in place at least 30 minutes before the service. If you have concerns, please consult with Messiah's Wedding Coordinator well in advance of the service.