

WEDDING POLICY

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Detroit, Michigan

Marriage is of God. The Triune God created the first man and the first woman in His image and in His likeness, to live in marriage, and to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-24, Ap. XIII.14). While different after the fall into sin, marriage remains an institution of God, pleasing to Him, to be held in honor among all (Genesis 3:16; Hebrews 13:4). Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches of marriage in the New Testament (Matthew 5, 19), as do His Apostles (1 Corinthians 7; Colossians 3; 1 Timothy 4, 5; 1 Peter 3). Marriage is, in fact, a model of the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5). As such those to be married must be Christians (2 Corinthians 5:14). Marriage is of this body and life (Matthew 22:30). The church recognizes and holds as valid marriages performed by the state. To this point, a special rite is available for the blessing of a civil marriage.

Those desiring to be married at Zion, or to have their civil marriage blessed at Zion, are advised that:

1. Wedding Services at Zion are available only when at least the bride or the groom is a confirmed, communicant member in good standing of Zion Lutheran Church, and intends to continue in that membership either at Zion or at another congregation in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. For the spiritual well-being of the couple, the benefit of the marriage, and for the spiritual well-being and Christian training of any children, it is strongly recommended that both bride and groom be Communicant members in good standing of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. In any case, one of the couple must be a confirmed, communicant member of Zion, and the other must be a practicing Christian as determined by Zion's Pastor.
2. A wedding at Zion is in every aspect a Divine Service, and so is integral to the congregation's worship life. Such services are intended for members in good standing of the congregation. Thus, all the regular rubrics for a Service pertain. (This includes Synodical guidelines for clergy participation, music used, orders of Service, conduct of wedding party and worshippers.) The Pastor and Board of Deacons are responsible to oversee these matters.
 - a. The wedding party and all guests shall conduct themselves with proper decorum in the church building, parking lot and grounds. No alcohol shall be consumed on the church property. The building is smoke-free.
 - b. Photographers shall check with the Pastor before the Service for instruction.
 - c. No rice or confetti may be thrown inside or outside the Sanctuary.
 - d. The altar parament and vestment color for weddings is color of the liturgical Sunday, or white/blue. Silver/blue may be used.
 - e. No runners may be used.
 - f. The janitor and organist fees will be approved periodically by the Board of Deacons. The Pastor will report these fees to the couple in one of the preparation sessions
 - g. Any and all special situations not covered by these guidelines shall be decided by the Board of Deacons in consultation with the Pastor.

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3. Since a wedding is a Divine Service, all hymnody shall be selected from *The Lutheran Hymnal*, the hymnal of our church, in consultation with the Pastor and Zion organist. Secular music or music from other Christian denominations, which is in good taste, may be used as a prelude or postlude with permission. Such secular music must not: be vulgar romantic music or songs that teach a false view of God or of man or of marriage; be set to music inappropriate for a church Service. All such music is subject to approval by the Pastor in consultation with the organist.
4. Because of the celebratory nature of the wedding Service and reception, weddings should not be scheduled during penitential seasons (closed seasons) of the Liturgical Year.
5. The Pastor will be provided the appropriate marriage license documents no later than the day before the wedding. It is against state law for the Pastor to conduct a wedding without them. As an officer of the civil court under Michigan state law, he may conduct weddings (under special circumstances) in settings other than our Sanctuary (e.g. hospitals, homes, etc.). These will be reported to the Board of Deacons.
6. If for a special reason a member of a sister congregation wishes to use Zion for a wedding, the following guidelines will be in effect.
 - a. The home Pastor of that person must be notified.
 - b. The home Pastor, if a rostered member of the LC-MS clergy, may officiate, alone or together with Zion's Pastor. This will be decided by the Pastors involved, in consultation with the Zion Board of Deacons.
 - c. All Zion policies must be followed.
 - d. The regular Zion organist will play (Unless he/she declines to do so. Then only an organist approved by the Zion Pastor and organist may play).
 - e. The suggested fees will be assessed.
7. In all cases where the Pastor will officiate at a wedding, pre-marital preparation shall be required, and the couple shall participate in such preparation. A large part of pre-marital preparation is regular attendance at Holy Mass and Bible Class by both the bride and groom to be.
8. If the wedding Service Ordo is printed by an outside printer (not by Zion), the Service Ordo will be first in the document, wedding participants and greetings from the bride and groom will be last.

As a privilege of membership at Zion, no fees are assessed for members in good standing, except that a stipend is requested for the Musician. Suggested fees for non-members:

Use of church/security - \$225
Custodian - \$50
Ordos - \$15
Musician - \$200
Pastor - \$250