

WEDDING GUIDE BOOK



FIRST LUTHERAN
Church of Kearney

First Lutheran Church
3315 G Avenue
Kearney, Nebraska 68847
308-237-5544

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Welcome

The staff at First Lutheran Church does its utmost to make every wedding joyful and meaningful to the engaged couple. In return, we request that couples recognize the effort and professional training that the staff brings to all worship services.

You can be helpful in the following ways:

- Comply with the guidelines set forth in this wedding booklet and by First Lutheran Church.
- Instruct wedding party and guests to arrive on time for the rehearsal and ceremony.
- Be open to "new" ideas and suggestions from the staff, rather than being bound by tradition or preconceived plans.
- Remind all members of the wedding party that First Lutheran Church is a house of worship, and that their behavior at the rehearsal and wedding should reflect the respect that is due to God.
- Respect the church building and grounds, ensuring that the building is well taken care of, clean, and ready for worship after your ceremony.
- Remember that weddings are discouraged during the church season of Lent. Also, the church may not be available on some dates or weeks of the year for weddings.

Wedding Coordinator

All weddings (except for very small private weddings) will utilize the services of a wedding coordinator. First Lutheran Church will assign an individual(s) to serve as the wedding coordinator for your wedding ceremony and the events surrounding your ceremony that are held in the church building. This individual acts as a liaison between the church and the engaged couple, seeking to execute the wishes of the couple on their special day, while also ensuring that the policies of this booklet and of First Lutheran Church are followed. He/she will explain the church policies, answer any questions, and help your wedding day events to proceed smoothly. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to meet with the wedding coordinator early in the planning stages and then again in the weeks prior to the date of the wedding. Also, it is the responsibility of the couple to work in conjunction with this individual(s) with open communication regarding dates, times, questions, and expectations. At the rehearsal and on the day of the wedding, the decisions of the wedding coordinator are not negotiable.

Wedding Policies

1. Normally, either the perspective bride or groom (or both) are current members of First Lutheran Church or had grown up as a member of First Lutheran Church. With the prior approval of the Pastors, non-members may hold their wedding at First Lutheran Church by paying the appropriate non-members wedding fee and by abiding by the polices set forth in this Wedding Guidebook. Dates for the rehearsal and wedding of a non-member can be tentatively scheduled, but the final scheduling will not be made more than 12 months in advance.
2. A Pastor of First Lutheran Church will preside at all weddings performed at the church. Should you desire another clergy to be involved, we ask that you speak to a Pastor of First Lutheran Church before any invitation is extended.

3. The scheduling of all wedding activities must first be cleared through the church office and Pastor of First Lutheran before any final dates and times are committed by the church or its staff. The church may not be available on some dates or weeks of the year for weddings.
4. Normally, both the bride and the groom will meet with the Pastor for pre-marital counseling sessions.
5. The wedding couple is also required to schedule a meeting with a First Lutheran Church organist and with the wedding coordinator.
6. Normally, only an organist of First Lutheran Church may play the church organ. Other qualified organists may be substituted at the sole discretion of the presiding Pastor.
7. Decoration decisions must be finalized with the wedding coordinator.
8. The serving or consumption of alcoholic beverages is not permitted at any time on the church premises, including the parking areas.
9. All church buildings and grounds are tobacco-free, including any smoke or vapor product.
10. If the Pastor gains knowledge that any member of the wedding party is inebriated or otherwise impaired, that individual will not participate in the wedding ceremony. If the bride or groom are impaired, the Pastor will not/cannot proceed with the ceremony on ethical and legal grounds.
11. If there is a physical altercation or serious illness or injury, First Lutheran Church staff is required to call 9-1-1 without exception.
12. The wedding couple is to report to the wedding coordinator any damage to church facilities or property. The wedding couple is liable for any repairs or replacement of property resulting from the use of church facilities.

Counseling

When the wedding is scheduled, the Pastor and the couple will make plans for pre -marital counseling. Usually this counseling involves 4 sessions, approximately one hour each. The timing of the sessions will be at the Pastor 's discretion (for example, 1 year prior to the ceremony versus 3 months prior to the ceremony).

Caterers

You may choose any caterer for a wedding reception held on church property. Your caterer will be expected to abide by the policies stated in this booklet. A caterer may direct any questions to the wedding coordinator.

Decorations

A beautiful environment for worship need only require simple decorations. Wedding flowers and decorations must be in keeping with the dignity of Christian, Christ-centered worship. All decorations for a wedding must be in good taste and conform to the policies and practices of First Lutheran Church. All decorations must have the approval of the wedding coordinator. All seasonal decorations of the church, such as banners and colored hangings, remain in place including altar linen.

Placing wedding decorations cannot interfere with the scheduled activities of the parish. All wedding decorations must be removed immediately following the wedding. Equipment and decorations that are the property of florists, caterers, or musicians must be removed from the building immediately following the wedding and the church facilities returned to their original arrangements. The removal of all decorations from the building is the responsibility of the wedding couple. Please assign a responsible individual(s) to help you with this task.

Please refrain from the use of anything damaging to the building, walls, pews, or its furnishings, such as tacks, tape, candle wax, staples, glues, or any sticky or sharp objects that may scratch or scrape wood surfaces or damage the carpets. Please report to the wedding coordinator any damage to church facilities or furnishings. The wedding couple is liable for the cost of any necessary repairs or replacements.

Aisle Runner

We discourage (but do not prohibit) the use of a white runner down the center aisle. It has been our experience that expense and practicality of it are not worthwhile. Please bear in mind, a runner also presents a tripping hazard because our aisles have a slight incline.

Candelabra

First Lutheran Church has candelabras that may also be used at weddings. The candelabras may be decorated with flowers or greenery that would not harm the finish of the metal. The candelabras are fitted with oil candles that look like wax candles. We do not allow wax candles in the candelabras. Arrangements to use the candelabras are to be made with the wedding coordinator.

Flowers

When decorating the church please note that we can only guarantee a four-hour window of time for decorations and the service (it is often possible that a much larger window of time will be made available, but not guaranteed). Other events such as congregational worship, funerals, workshops, retreats and other weddings make it impossible to guarantee a longer time period. No flowers or decorations may be placed directly upon the altar. An appropriate table may be placed in the altar area to hold a unity candle, special flower arrangement, or other decor for special ceremonies.

Wedding flowers may be left at the church for use in following weekend services with the permission from the Pastor or wedding coordinator.

Liturgical Color of the Day

The liturgical color of the day is not changed by the celebration of marriage. Consequently, the color of the altar hangings and the vestments of the Pastor is that appointed for the day in the Church year.

Pew Decorations

The ends of the pews may be decorated, as long as decorations are fastened to the pews in such a way that the wood of the pews is not marred or damaged. Again, tape, candle wax, staples, glues, or any sticky or sharp objects that may scratch or scrape wood surfaces are not allowed. The wedding coordinator will answer any questions and make any final decisions with regard to appropriate decorations.

Dressing Facilities

Church facilities are available for both women and men for dressing and other preparations. Both dressing areas are near rest room facilities.

The wedding party can have access to the rooms the day before the wedding.

Fees

Required:

Wedding Coordinator:	\$250
Sound Tech:	\$75
Organist:	\$125
Custodian:	\$75
Pastor 's Honorarium:	\$100
Recording of the Service (unedited):	\$75 (optional)

Non-Members

Additional Building Use Fee: \$500

(Members \$625 total; Non-Members \$1,125 total)

If you are a non-member and plan to join the church, you need to pay the non-member fees up front and then the difference will be refunded after you become a member. In order to hold your wedding date on our church calendar, a down payment of 50% of the total fee needs to be received. The entire fee needs to be paid at least six months prior to the wedding date or upon request to hold the church date if it is within six months. (If needed, the payment can be divided into 2 payments.)

Gifts and Valuables

First Lutheran Church is not responsible for any lost or stolen articles. We urge you to place valuables in secured and locked areas. During the wedding ceremony, please leave wedding gifts in the care of an attendant.

Holy Communion

If both the bride and groom are active members of a parish, it is most appropriate to include the Rite of Marriage within a celebration of the Holy Communion.

When marriage is celebrated within the liturgy of word and meal, the Sacrament is offered to all baptized persons. The Sacrament is Christ in the midst of his people, offering himself for the gathered congregation.

Marriage License

Please bring your marriage license with you to the wedding rehearsal and place it in the care of the wedding coordinator. Usually we have the honor attendant(s) sign the license just prior to the service. Please arrange with the wedding coordinator when and where they will meet the Pastor for signing. If you plan to have the photographer take pictures of this event, let him/her know of this arrangement.

Music

The Marriage Service is a service of worship. The music, therefore, must be carefully and discriminatingly chosen. First Lutheran Church's music staff will share their professional experience and assist you in selecting the music for your wedding. A trained organist of First Lutheran Church shall normally be the organist for all weddings held in our church. An organist outside of First Lutheran Church are only permitted to play for weddings at the discretion of the presiding Pastor.

While there is room for personal taste, the First Lutheran Church organist will have final approval in all music selected, including CD selections and soloist selections. If a friend or relative is approved by the Presiding Pastor to play the organ or piano (in which case the organist fee will be waived), the Presiding Pastor will still review all music selections.

It is the couple's responsibility to contact the organist at least 3 months prior to the wedding to arrange for a meeting.

Please discuss the participation of other musicians with the organist before making any final arrangements with the musicians. It is the responsibility of a soloist to provide the organist with all music that requires accompaniment at least one month prior to the wedding. Vocalists are to arrange a separate rehearsal with the organist.

First Lutheran Church has several members who are experienced at performing solos for weddings. If interested, the couple should contact the organist and/or wedding coordinator to arrange for a church member to sing a solo.

Copying music without the permission of the publisher and/or the composer is against the law. All music used by the organist, vocalists, or other musicians must be legally printed and not illegally photocopied.

Participation

There are many opportunities for participation in the marriage liturgy by parents, family, guests, as well as the bride and groom, and the wedding party.

Assisting Ministers

Assisting ministers may be members of the families or members of the wedding party. The Assisting Minister reads the prayers and other parts of the worship service, sets the altar for the Holy Communion, administers the cup during Communion, and assists the presiding Pastor in other liturgical matters.

Bride's and Groom's Attendants

Please consider the appearance of your wedding party at the front of the worship space. You should choose a number of attendants that will not crowd the space. Also, please consider that when the number of attendants is large, exceeding 6 on each side, the focus on the wedding as a worship service may be overlooked.

Children

When those to be married are bringing children into a new family, declarations of intention may include questions to the couple as parents and possibly to the children. Discuss this plan with the presiding Pastor.

Children may be a part of the wedding party. When children are quite young, please help ensure there is a parent or adult to help them eat and rest so that they do not become easily upset and can enjoy the day. We do not send or force a crying child down the aisle, but a parent or adult may carry a child in procession.

Hymns

The use of hymns and congregational singing in the wedding is a wonderful option. The organist can help you select hymns that would be appropriate for your wedding.

Illness/Condition

If there are members of the wedding party or family with a condition needing special accommodations, such as a wheelchair, please let the wedding coordinator know so adaptations can be made to make the individual(s) feel comfortable. We ask that you please consider members who are frail or have difficulty walking and make arrangements to ensure they will have help.

If anyone in the wedding party does not feel well during the ceremony, they are encouraged to excuse themselves from standing at the front of the sanctuary, as opposed to trying to "tough it out." There will be empty pews reserved specifically for the wedding party at the front of the church should anyone need to sit, and there are bathrooms nearby on either side of the sanctuary. The manner in which the ceremony will proceed if either the bride or groom becomes ill will be at the discretion of the Pastor. Again, in the case of serious illness or injury, First Lutheran Church staff is required to call 9-1-1 without exception.

Ministers of Communion

The newly married couple or other family members or friends may serve as ministers of Communion and administer the chalice (cup) during the distribution of Holy Communion.

Offertory Procession

Although not required, the bread for the Holy Communion may be baked by the bride and groom, a member of the wedding party, a friend, or a relative. The offering of bread and wine may be brought to the altar by the bride and groom, representatives of the wedding party, family members, or other friends.

Parents

The parents of both the bride and groom are encouraged to participate in the service in a more active way. They may accompany their children in the entrance procession and exchange the Greeting of Peace with them as the procession ends. They, or other guests, may read the lessons. During the Declaration of Intention, parents may stand behind their children and place a hand on the shoulders of their children while responding to the question addressed to families.

Reading Lessons

The bride and groom select the lessons from the Bible to be read as a part of their wedding liturgy. Lessons may be read by the bride or the groom, parents and grandparents, other family members, members of the wedding party, or others who read with confidence. The lessons are normally read from the lectern.

Photographers

Any photographer and/or videographer is required to abide by the policies of First Lutheran Church as outlined in this booklet. Photographs may be taken either before or after the wedding liturgy. Photographs may be taken from the front or aisle during the processional. During the wedding itself, photographs are not allowed, except for non-flash photographs taken from the rear narthex (lobby), through the opened doors into the church, from the balcony, or from the back pew of the sanctuary. Video photography using available light is allowed during the wedding, provided the camera is located rear narthex (lobby), in the balcony, or in the back pew of the sanctuary. Any questions may be directed to the wedding coordinator.

Photography

Since your wedding is celebrated within the context of a worship service, no photographs may be taken from within the worship space by anyone at any time during the wedding liturgy (please see acceptable areas above in the "photographers" section). The sound of camera shutters and the bright light of flash photography are distracting and inappropriate in a sacred time consecrated to the worship of God.

Many wedding couples have all their photographs taken prior to the beginning of the wedding. The actions of the wedding can be "simulated" for the purpose of taking photographs. Taking photographs before the wedding can simplify the greeting of guests following the wedding and facilitate an early departure to the reception by the wedding party and guests. The Pastor and other ministers are available to be included in photography if a request is made known to the wedding coordinator prior to the day of the wedding.

An unedited video recording of the wedding ceremony can be requested. Such a request should be submitted in writing to the wedding coordinator along with the proper fee at least a month prior to the wedding date so that proper time is allowed for the church to secure an appropriate videographer from First Lutheran.

Receiving Lines

Receiving lines are an opportunity for the bride and groom to greet their wedding guests on an individual basis, and they are permitted at the church.

Please note that for late Saturday afternoon wedding reception lines must be concluded by 5:00 p.m. If there are still people in line at this time the wedding coordinator will invite the guests to greet the couple at the reception.

Reception

The Centennial Hall and the Fellowship Hall are available for wedding receptions. Both halls have full kitchen and restroom facilities. The wedding coordinator can answer any questions you may have with regard to use of the facilities and kitchen equipment.

Rehearsal

A detailed rehearsal helps assure a dignified and beautiful worship service. The wedding coordinator will schedule your rehearsal time. Please impress upon the members of your wedding party that both their attendance at the rehearsal and their prompt arrival are important. Rehearsals normally last 1 to 1.5 hours. We prefer to schedule the rehearsal the day prior to the wedding. Please bring your marriage license with you to the wedding rehearsal and place it in the care of the wedding coordinator.

Seating Capacity

The seating capacity within the church is currently 450-500 persons. The overflow seating can accommodate another 50 persons.

Service Folders

First Lutheran Church does not provide service folders.

Sound Technician

A sound technician will be provided as part of your service in order to ensure microphones for the Pastor(s), pulpit, and any CD music played will be properly executed. The wedding coordinator will arrange for the presence of a trained sound tech from First Lutheran Church.

Starting Time

Because of the parish worship schedule, Saturday afternoon weddings must begin no later than 4:00 p.m. Weddings requested to take place on a day other than Saturday should be carefully considered and approved far in advance, at least 12 months.

Vows

Couples may choose their vows from the marriage service provided in this guidebook or may write their own vows with the direction and approval of the Pastor.

Word of God

The reading of Scripture is an important part of your wedding. Scripture readings declare the steadfast love and blessings of God and call the couple to live out God's love within the covenant of their life together. In the hearing of Scripture, God speaks to us once again of God's purpose and presence in marriage. Scripture readings may be read by family members, members of the wedding party, the bride or groom, and others who read with confidence. You may choose as many scripture passages as you wish, but there is to be at least one choice of Gospel included.

Suggested Biblical Readings:

Old Testament

Genesis 1:26-28 *Woman and man created in the image of God*
Genesis 2:18-24 *Companionship rather than loneliness*
Proverbs 3:3-6 *Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart*
Song of Solomon 2:10-13 *The voice of the beloved*
Song of Solomon 8:6-7 *Many waters cannot quench love*
Isaiah 63:7-9 *God's steadfast love lifts up the people*
Jeremiah 31:31-34 *The new covenant of the people of God*

Psalm

67 *May God be merciful to us and bless us*
100 *We are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture*
117 *The steadfast love of the Lord*
121 *The Lord keeps watch over you*
127 *Unless the Lord builds the house*
128 *Blessed are those who walk in the Lord's ways*
150 *Let everything that breathes praise the Lord*

New Testament

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39 *If God is for us, who is against us*
Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 *A living sacrifice and genuine love*
1 Corinthians 13:1-7 *The greatest gift is love*
Ephesians 3:14-19 *The breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love*
Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33 *Walk in love, as Christ loved us*
Philippians 4:4-9 *Rejoice in the Lord always*
Colossians 3:12-17 *Clothed in compassion, kindness, meekness and patience*

1 John 3:18-24 *Let us love in truth and action*
1 John 4:7-16 *Let us love one another for love is of God*

Holy Gospel (Must choose one.)

Matthew 5:1-10 *The beatitudes*
Matthew 5:14-16 *You are the light, let your light shine*
Matthew 7:21, 24-29 *A wise person builds upon the rock*
Matthew 19:3-6 *What God has united must not be divided*
Matthew 22:35-40 *Love, the greatest commandment* Mark
Mark 10:6-9 *They are no longer two but one*
John 2:1-11 *The wedding at Cana*
John 15:9-17 *Love one another as I have loved you*

Worship Attendance

The questions are, "Why are you getting married in a church? Why not just get a justice of the peace?"
The answer is ... "Because we believe." . . . If you believe, then it follows that you would seek to live out the teachings of Christ. Christ teaches that we are to gather in community for the purpose of hearing his Word and the sharing of his body and blood.

Through hearing the Word of God proclaimed and receiving the Sacrament of our Lord's body and blood, God promises to be at work in our lives, nurturing our baptismal relationship with God, and blessing us with forgiveness of sins, new life, and salvation. There is no better preparation for the commitment and challenges of marriage than regular participation with the community of faith as it gathers around Word and Sacrament.

Marriage Service

The marriage service followed for ceremonies held at First Lutheran Church will be taken directly from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal. The Pastor will discuss liturgical options with you as you meet to plan your wedding. The Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal and its marriage service outline may be accessed online or in the ELW hymnal at First Lutheran Church. Should you have questions regarding the order of service, or requested changes or additions, please ask the Pastor.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH WEDDING CEREMONY FOR:

(Names)

(Date & Time)

Bride Phone: _____

Bride email: _____

Groom Phone: _____

Groom email: _____

Pastor:

REHEARSAL: _____

Rehearsal Date & Time _____

When would you like to decorate the church? _____

Where will your rehearsal dinner be held? _____

CEREMONY DECOR:

Would you like to use First Lutheran's (FL) candelabras? Y N _____

Would you like to use FL's greenery/plants on the altar)? Y N

Plans for pew decorations: _____

Plans for guest book table/memory tables/gift table: _____

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY:

Photographer (Name & Phone Number): _____

Time Pictures Will Begin: _____ Estimated Time Pictures Will End: _____

Would you like any candles/candelabras lit for pictures? Y N

Do you plan to have your photographer take a picture of:

- Maid/Matron of Honor and Best Man signing the Marriage Certificate? Y N
- You (Bride and Groom) with the Pastor? Y N

Videographer (Name & Phone Number): _____

- How many cameras will be used? _____ Will he/she be at the rehearsal? Y N

MUSIC:

Prelude Music (20-30 minutes before start of ceremony): _____

Organist: _____ Have you planned a meeting yet? _____

Processional Instrument and Songs: _____

Recessional Instrument and Songs: _____

Other Special Music (such as during the ceremony): _____

DAY OF CEREMONY PREPARATIONS:

What time would you like the church opened the day of the wedding? _____

Will the Bride and attendants dress at the church? Y N (Time: _____)

Will the Groom and attendants dress at the church? Y N (Time: _____)

Do you plan to leave and take pictures off-campus prior to the wedding? Y N _____

Will you bring in food for your wedding party and family? Y N

Florist (Name & Phone Number): _____

Time Flowers Will Be Delivered: _____

**Note: ensure flowers are at the church prior to pictures*

WEDDING PARTY:

Flower Attendant(s) (handles flowers/corsages): _____

Guest Book Attendant(s): _____

Program Attendant(s): _____

Gift Table Attendant(s): _____

Personal Attendant(s): _____

Lector(s) (for special readings): _____

Host/Hostess/or Host Couples (provide a phone number for at least 2 individuals):

Ushers (we suggest at least 4):

Will the Ushers hand out wedding programs? Y N

Would you like guests seated according to: ___ Bride/Groom side ___ No preference for side ___

Groomsmen (Mark the Best Man with *):

Junior Groomsmen: _____

Bridesmaids (Mark the Maid/Matron of Honor with *):

Junior Bridesmaids: _____

Flower Girl(s) (include ages please): _____

Ring Bearer(s) (include ages please): _____

Who will have the rings? ___ Best Man ___ Ring Bearer

Candle Lighters (we suggest 2, or the candles can be lit by church staff prior to the ceremony):

Other Special Wedding Party Positions: _____

SPECIAL SEATING:

Considerations for reserved pews: Parents, Grandparents, Sisters, Brothers, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Host Couples, Personal Attendants, Lectors, Children and Parents of children in the wedding party (6 Adult Maximum per pew)

Bride's Side:

Pew#1 (Generally parents here): _____

Pew #2: _____

Pew #3: _____

Groom's Side:

Pew#1 (Generally parents here): _____

Pew#2: _____

Pew#3 _____

Are there any other special considerations when it comes to seating or special seating needs?

Please note any special or sensitive issues surrounding seating of relatives and special guests such as divorce, not getting along, persons may try to attend that should not, wheelchair access, anyone in need of special accommodations.

Will an aisle runner be used? Y N

If yes, who will pull it down the aisle? _____

If yes, who will remove at ceremony's end? _____

WEDDING SERVICE:

Have you scheduled meetings with your Pastor to discuss ceremony selections? Y N

Unity Candle or other special ceremony plans? Y N _____

Will you be offering Communion during your wedding service? Y N

If yes, who will help with serving? _____

RECESSIONAL & DISMISSAL:

Who will dismiss the Bride and Groom's parents?
___ Ushers ___ Bride & Groom ___ Other

How will you dismiss your guests?
___ Pastor 's announcement
___ Bride & Groom row by row
___ Ushers dismiss row by row

Will you have a Receiving Line in the Narthex? Y N

Do you have special plans for leaving the church? (example: limo; please provide a number for the service)

CLEAN UP:

We respectfully ask that you assign the following tasks for clean -up/removal of decorations after the wedding:

Guest book table: _____

Replacing any furniture that was moved in the Narthex: _____

Removing gifts/cards: _____

Bride/Bridesmaid dressing room: _____

Groom/Groomsman/Usher dressing room: _____

Sanctuary decorations and flower petals: _____

Kitchen and Centennial Hall: _____

POST WEDDING ADDRESS:

NOTES: