



Congratulations on your engagement!

We are thrilled you have decided to have Jesus Christ be the focus of your wedding service and of your marriage. We know that God is the source of all good gifts in this world. He created you, and He created your future spouse. He brought you together, and He will fill your lives with blessings as you give your lives to one another through Him.

As you seek to create a joy-filled day, this document provides the useful information you will need to have your wedding officiated by a pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church.

Marriage Statement

God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:32). The Scriptures teach that in the beginning the blessed Trinity instituted marriage to be the life-long union of one man and one woman (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4-6), to be held in honor by all and kept pure (Heb 13:4; 1 Thess 4:2-5). God's Word assures us that each time one man and one woman join themselves together in the union of the marriage commitment and relationship, God himself has joined them as one. Mark 10:7-9 says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate."

Who May be Married by a Pastor From Messiah

Typically our pastors perform wedding ceremonies where at least one person is a member of Messiah Lutheran Church. However, there may be a time when Messiah Lutheran Church will be willing to assess the situation and make an exception. In these cases, both the Bride and Groom must have established a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and be open to biblical principles for guiding their marriage. This important relationship with the Lord is the foundation for pre-marriage counseling and for a successful marriage.

The marriage policy of Messiah Lutheran Church, a member congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, is and always has been consistent with the Synod's beliefs on marriage. We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24-25), and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:32).

Pastor Availability

When choosing your wedding date, a specific pastor may be requested, but may not always be available. For out-of-town weddings, travel expenses may apply and should be discussed with the Ministry Assistant well in advance of the scheduled date. If a wedding takes place outside of St. Charles, please reimburse pastor for mileage (currently \$0.62/mile).

Other LCMS guest pastors are welcome to participate in the wedding, but Messiah Lutheran Church will not allow co-officiating from any other denomination.

Please do not be offended if the pastors are unable to attend your wedding reception.

Rehearsals must be held the day prior to the wedding and should last no longer than one hour.

Services and Fee Schedule

All services related to off-site weddings (e.g., musicians, vocalists, sound, programs) are to be arranged and paid for by the bride and groom. There is no fee due to Messiah for off-site weddings, but **an honorarium to the pastor (\$200 is a typical gift) for his time is appreciated.** If this is a hardship for you, please discuss the matter with the ministry assistant.

Pre-Marital Counseling + Meeting with Pastor

All couples are expected to undergo counseling sessions with a licensed therapist. Messiah recommends Kate Parks, LPC. Her rate is \$100 session and couples usually meet for three sessions. There is also a \$40 assessment fee for a Zoe score. All costs are the responsibility of the couple. Appointments are arranged directly with Counselor Kate: kop@counselorkatelpc.com (314-609-6772)

Couples will meet with the officiating pastor 4-6 weeks before the wedding. This meeting will take at least one hour and be scheduled during regular office hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00-4:00). Please review the information on the second page and bring it to this meeting.



The most important part of your wedding vows is the commitment to “live in holy marriage according to the word of God.” Because God created mankind with marriage as a vital part of life, God knows how marriage works best.

Please take time to do the following prior to meeting with the Pastor:

† Read over the following wedding vows and reflect on the meaning of the words. Discuss them with your future spouse and pray for God to help you better understand what they mean.

I, _____, in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you, _____, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death parts us, and I pledge you my faithfulness.

I, _____, in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you, _____, to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death parts us, and I pledge you my faithfulness.

Read the following Bible passages and discuss how they will apply to your marriage.

Matthew 19:4-6

1. What will be some of the emotional challenges of “leaving your father and mother?” (*Both for each of you and for your parents?*)
2. What is the meaning of a “one-flesh” relationship (*emotionally, physically, and spiritually*)?
3. How does a life-long commitment help to nurture a deeper trusting relationship?

Ephesians 5:22-23

1. Men: List as many similarities as you can between how Jesus loves the Church and how you are to love your wife.
2. Women: List as many similarities as you can between how the Church loves Jesus, and how you are to love your husband.

Standard Order of Service

Procession

Welcome and Invocation

Bible Readings

Message

Vows

Exchange of Rings

Pronouncement of Marriage

Unity Candle

Prayers—Lord’s Prayer

Blessing Recessional