

# ***WEDDING GUIDE***



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**Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church**

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# NOTES

## **Congratulations!**

The members and ministry staff of the Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church extend their congratulations on your plans to be married. In the coming months as you prepare and plan, we pray for God's presence and guidance in your lives. We pray this is a joyful and Spirit-filled time as you prepare to make your commitments to each other.

## **Introduction**

God instituted marriage for companionship and intimacy. The account of God's creative activity in Genesis 2:4-25 tells of God's care for creation and how God intends companionship in human life. In marriage, a man and a woman join together in a life-long covenant of fidelity. This is the basic building block of human community.

The Christian Wedding Service is first and foremost a Service of Worship within the life of the congregation. The occasion for this worship is the marriage of a man and a woman who will express their life-long faithfulness to each other. The people of God (bride, groom, families, friends and congregation) gather to hear God's Word and celebrate God's love in Jesus. They gather to praise God and join in prayer. They rejoice as the bride and groom exchange vows and seek God's blessing upon their marriage. The Wedding Service reflects and proclaims the self-giving love of God in Jesus as the basis for the couple's love and commitment.

## **The First Steps...**

All arrangements for weddings at the Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church are made through the pastor of the congregation. The pastor schedules the time and day of the Wedding Rehearsal and Service based on the church's calendar. Couples should make an initial appointment with the pastor to discuss this and other matters related to Wedding Services at Immanuel.

## **Other Considerations**

Confetti or rice is not permitted. Birdseed may be used as an alternative, but only outside the church building. Balloon launches are strongly discouraged for environmental reasons.

The wedding party should refrain from the use of alcohol prior to the rehearsal and wedding.

The use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted in the church building or on the church grounds. Smoking is not permitted within the church building according to state law. The asphalt parking areas are designated for those who smoke.

The pastor, organist and wedding coordinators do not assume they are "automatically" invited to rehearsal dinners or wedding receptions. They will respond to invitations to these events as their schedules and other commitments permit.

## Flowers

The sanctuary of Immanuel has a quiet simplicity. A single piece (table arrangement) set on the free standing altar works well. Another possibility is two arrangements placed on flower stands in the chancel. Excessive amounts of flowers will detract from the Wedding Service. The church is open one hour before the start of the Wedding Service for delivery of flowers. Immanuel's Wedding Coordinators are available to assist with the placement of flowers in the chancel and the pinning of boutonnieres and corsages.

If the couple decides to have a Unity Candle, this may be worked into the floral arrangement, if they so desire. Or, the Unity Candle may stand separately on the altar. The couple provides the unity candle.

## Pew Bows

Bows may be placed on the ends of the pews. *No adhesives of any kind may be used.* Ribbons, pipe cleaners and rubber bands are some of the ways couples have secured bows on the pews.

## Aisle Runners

The use of an aisle runner is strongly discouraged for safety reasons.

## Handicap Accessibility

Immanuel is handicap accessible. An elevator (located near the parking lot entrance) provides access to the upper level of the church building and sanctuary.

## Pre-marital Guidance Sessions

Participation in Pre-marital Guidance Sessions with the pastor is required for a couple seeking to be married in the church. The pastor holds four sessions with the couple, scheduled at mutually arranged times. Pre-marital Guidance Sessions are a time for intentional reflection and discussion by the couple with the pastor on areas that relate to their future life together, the development and care of their relationship and faith life, their families of origin and planning the Wedding Service.

## The Wedding Service

The pastor meets with the couple to arrange a service based on the Order for Marriage in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. This service includes prayers, scripture readings, exchange of vows and other elements. The pastor, couple and director of music determine the portions of worship by mutual agreement.

It is expected that the pastor of the Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church will officiate at the worship service. If the couple intends to invite other clergy to participate that invitation should be discussed with, and then made through, the pastor of Immanuel.

Immanuel's Church Organist plays for all weddings held at Immanuel. If the church organist is not available to play for the wedding, he/she will secure a qualified substitute.

The church office produces a worship bulletin for the wedding, if desired by the couple. The use of a bulletin is encouraged (although not required). It assists congregational participation and serves as a fitting remembrance of your wedding for each guest. The couple is responsible for the final proofreading of the wedding bulletin and should give special attention to the correct spelling of all names.

## Music for the Wedding Service

A Christian wedding is an occasion for the worship of God. The music which is a part of the wedding service should reflect this context.

There is an abundance of music appropriate for a wedding service. There is also music which is suitable for the wedding reception. The effect a piece has on those gathered, whether conscious or subconscious, is an important consideration in determining the appropriateness of a specific musical selection for the wedding service.

Immanuel has a tradition of strong, well-crafted music of high integrity. The congregation is committed to continue this high standard of music in worship, including wedding services. Secular music (show tunes, country, rock and roll, etc.) generally is not permitted during worship. These may be more suitable for the reception. The director of music/organist will discuss possibilities suggested by the couple.

Along with the quality of music, the musical ability of soloists or other instrumentalists should contribute positively to the wedding service. The director of music will assist the couple in securing persons with the necessary musical talent to enrich the wedding service.

The following questions are considered in selecting music: Does the music enrich the worship experience? Does it aid proclaiming God's love in Jesus? Does it enhance the central purpose of worship? Does it support the meaning of Christian worship and Christian marriage?

## The Rehearsal

The couple arranges the day and time for the rehearsal with the pastor. Normally a wedding rehearsal is scheduled the day prior to the wedding service. It is important for everyone participating in the wedding to be present for the rehearsal. The rehearsal is an opportunity to prepare for the service so that everyone is more familiar with what will occur – spoken lines, positions in the chancel. Time is also devoted to practicing the procession and recession. The goal of the rehearsal is to help the couple and wedding party relax and be able to enjoy the worship service.

Members of Immanuel serve as Wedding Coordinators. The Wedding Coordinators assist the couple, the wedding party and guests at the rehearsal and Wedding Service.

The couple brings to the rehearsal the marriage license, envelopes containing the necessary honoraria or fees, and other items which will be part of the wedding service, such as the Unity Candle.

The rehearsal normally lasts approximately 45 minutes.

## Photographs and Videos

Flash pictures may be taken only during the procession and recession. Once the bride is at the front of the sanctuary, the photographer then takes pictures from the back of the sanctuary or choir loft, using available light only. Portions of the Wedding Service may be re-enacted following the Service for pictures using a flash.

Video cameras, using available light only, may be used from the choir loft or the back of the sanctuary. An *unattended* camera may be placed on the left or right side of the chancel. This unattended camera is set up and turned on prior to the start of the Service. Video systems must not interfere with the congregation's PA system which uses wireless microphones.