

**Christ Lutheran Church**  
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Columbus, Nebraska 68601-8727  
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### **WEDDING POLICY**

The Lutheran church holds marriage to be a sacred covenant relationship, not merely a legal institution. The root word “wed” means “to covenant, promise, pledge, or vow.” Marriage is holy because God has instituted it. What binds couples together happily for a lifetime should not be simply the legal obligation, an arrangement with mutual consent for mutual benefit. More importantly, marital happiness requires personal commitment, sacrificial love, and life-long faithfulness.

A church sanctuary wedding is not a requirement for Christian marriages; however, it is appropriate to have the marriage vows administered by a Christian pastor.

The marriage policy of Christ Lutheran Church in Columbus, Nebraska, 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). The official position of The Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod, as set forth in 1998 Res. 3-21 (“To Affirm the Sanctity of Marriage and to Reject Same-Sex Unions”), is that homosexual unions come under categorical prohibition in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10) as contrary to the Creator’s design (Rom. 1:26-27). These positions and beliefs can be found on the LCMS website, along with other statements, papers and reports on the subject of homosexuality and same-sex civil unions and “marriage.” Our pastors will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy. (adopted at the July 19, 2015 Voters’ Assembly Meeting).

### **Qualifications**

The facilities of Christ Lutheran Church have been built and maintained by its members and friends to serve this community. They are not restricted in use for members only. The sanctuary is available to those who choose a church wedding which emphasizes the sacredness of

marriage; couples must agree to several sessions of pre-marital counseling, have a Christian frame of reference and agree to use the buildings and equipment in accordance with the church policies. Christ Lutheran Church is happy to make the facilities available under the direction of the pastor, elders, wedding coordinator and this wedding policy.

### **Facility Policy**

In order to reserve the church, a deposit of \$250.00 for non-members is required. A portion, if any, of this deposit will be returned after the wedding when all fees have been applied. A reservation form will also be submitted to reserve your wedding date.

The church does not allow smoking in any building at any time, nor is the use of alcoholic beverages permitted anywhere on the church grounds. If any member of the wedding party comes to the wedding intoxicated or on drugs, the pastor will either postpone the wedding or prohibit the participation of the individual in question.

Food and beverages are not permitted in the sanctuary. The kitchen and basement are available for food preparation and serving.

Instead of rice, we suggest birdseed. Since rice/birdseed make the sidewalks slippery, please confine the throwing of it to the parking lot area as guests can easily slip. No rice or birdseed will be thrown inside the buildings.

The party arranging for the wedding shall be responsible that all the areas used for the wedding be back to their original state before leaving the church grounds. It is helpful to have a host couple be responsible for taking care of the facilities after the wedding. This includes vacuuming the carpets and making sure sidewalks and steps are swept. ***If facilities are not in order, \$25.00 fee will be taken from your deposit to pay for the facilities to be cleaned. For members, a \$25.00 fee will charged.***

The party arranging for the wedding shall be responsible for any damage to the church buildings and furnishings by guests, bridal party, florists, photographers, etc.

### **The Clergy**

The pastor(s) of Christ Lutheran Church will officiate at all weddings. In some instances, assisting ministers from other Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod churches may participate at the discretion of the

pastor. Because of clergy and church schedules it is necessary to obtain and fill out the attached Wedding Reservation Form. Return it to the church office either by mail or in person and the Wedding Coordinator will notify you whether or not your wedding can take place on your selected date. An honorarium of \$100.00 is usual fee for the services of the pastor.

### **Premarital Counseling**

Before the wedding, several counseling sessions are scheduled with the pastor. Please call the pastor for your first appointment time after the wedding date is approved. The pastor will arrange additional counseling sessions in advance of the marriage. The pastor is available for counseling members of Christ Lutheran. Our current pastor uses "PREPARE" as a counseling tool. There is a fee of \$35.00 due at your first counseling session. Make check payable to Prepare.

### **Wedding Coordinator**

Christ Lutheran utilizes the services of a Wedding Coordinator. This person will go over the details of your wedding, procedures that will be followed in our church and any questions you may have. These details include decorations, audio for soloists, mechanics of the worship service including the processional and recessional. The Wedding Coordinator will recommend the use of the Processional Cross in the worship service. ***You will need to meet with this person at least 30 days prior to the wedding to work any details or questions in regards to your wedding.***

### **Marriage License**

It is the responsibility of the couple to secure the marriage license. ***Bring it to the wedding rehearsal and give it to the pastor.*** The license is signed by the newly-weds and the best man and maid or matron of honor immediately following the ceremony in the presence of the pastor.

### **Photographs**

We are happy to cooperate with your photographer. FLASH PHOTOGRAPHS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN DURING THE CEREMONY OR SERVICE by either your photographer or guests. (The service begins with the invocation and ends with the benediction.) Your photographer may take pictures from the rear of the sanctuary, from the balcony or from the sacristy during the ceremony without the use of a flash.

Video cameras may be used, but the operators must remain in the balcony, in the rear of the church nave or the sacristy. At no time are photographers allowed in the chancel during the ceremony or service.

You may want to consider taking your formal pictures before the wedding. The photograph session should conclude at least 30 minutes before the time of the wedding.

The pastor will review all photography arrangements in advance of the wedding.

### **Audio Taping**

Christ Lutheran has the ability to audio tape your service. Please talk to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal about this option.

### **Music**

Quality religious or classical music is an appropriate ingredient for a Christian wedding.

Music to be used (vocal or instrumental) should be consistent with a Christian service. Secular “love songs” are neither permitted nor appropriate. At a Christian wedding songs should focus on God’s blessing rather than the human feelings of affection.

There is an abundance of appropriate organ and vocal music available. The organist will be happy to consult with you to assist in selecting acceptable Christian music for your wedding. This meeting should take place at least a month before your wedding. The scheduling of a organist or pianist is the responsibility of the wedding party. Musicians within the congregation are ample. If you are considering a musician not from Christ Lutheran, please consult the pastor. Solo music, while not essential, can do much to express your dependence on God. Soloists are expected to provide their own music (pending approval) including organ/piano copy, and should be fully prepared before the rehearsal. The pastor or organist can suggest capable soloists or instrumentalists. Congregational participation through hymns is appropriate when the majority of guests are from the congregation.

### **Flowers/Decorations**

It is the responsibility of the bride to arrange with a florist for flowers and decorations for the wedding. An aisle runner for the entry of the wedding party is not necessary for our carpeted sanctuary. However,

if you desire a runner, discuss this with the pastor. It is the bride's responsibility to furnish it.

Any flowers placed on the altar must be live flowers. Artificial flowers may be used but cannot be placed on the altar.

Christ Lutheran has available a unity candle stand. Couples are welcome to purchase candles that can be used with this stand.

The church is not responsible for any personal or rented items that need to be returned after the wedding.

**Rehearsal**

Unless the wedding is very small, weddings require a rehearsal, held one or two days before the wedding. Rehearsals are generally a hour in length. All members of the wedding party, including parents, should be present. Time the rehearsal to allow for your party to arrive on time and for any other plans, such as a wedding party dinner.

Respect for the house of worship is expected by all members of the wedding party during the rehearsal. We do not allow rehearsals or weddings to take place when any member of the wedding party is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Fees are to be paid to the (worship professional) paid participants at the time of the rehearsal. Please pay in cash or a money order made payable to paid participant. Checks will not be accepted.

**Wedding Fee Schedule For Non-Members**

**Deposit: (includes Pastor fee, Counseling & Facility Use) \$250.00**

Basic Wedding Services include:

Pastor .....	\$100.00
Counseling ... ..	50.00
Facility use .....	100.00

**Wedding Coordinator Fees: \$ 75.00**

Wedding Coordinator (Clifford Cattau) ...	50.00
Cleaning Fee (Clifford Cattau) ... ..	25.00

**Wedding Fee Schedule For Members**

**Deposit:** **\$ 0.00**

Basic Wedding Services include:

Pastor ... .. **honorarium**

**Wedding Coordinator Fees:** **\$ 75.00**

Wedding Coordinator (Clifford Cattau) ... \$ 25.00

Cleaning Fee (Clifford Cattau) . . . . . 25.00

Adopted 8/1999  
2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment 1/2001  
3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment 4/2006  
4<sup>th</sup> Amendment 7/2015