Saint John Lutheran Church

Wedding Policy

2016

Marriage is a glad occasion overflowing with joy, and those who celebrate it rejoice in the gifts of GOD – life, health, strength, sexuality, the family – all that the Creator declared from the beginning to be “very good”.

In order for a marriage to be solemnized at Saint John Lutheran Church the pastor must be convinced that:

1. The marriage is in accordance with the word of GOD.
2. It is in accordance with the laws of the State of Iowa.
3. GOD’S blessing can properly be asked upon it.

It is good judgment, therefore to meet with the pastor before a public announcement is made. Arrange for an interview with the pastor as far in advance of the ceremony as possible. Five months is recommended.

Saint John Lutheran Church requires and provides the service of a wedding coordinator, who will work with the couple on most practical items for the wedding. All weddings taking place at Saint John must work with the wedding coordinator whose fees are non-negotiable and are listed in the fee schedule.

OTHER ITEMS OF WHICH THE COUPLE SHOULD BE AWARE:

SETTING THE DATE – The pastor will assist you in securing an open date on the pastor’s schedule and the church’s calendar. A REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT IS REQUIRED AT THIS TIME TO RESERVE YOUR DATE. Weddings will not be scheduled after 2:30 on Saturdays.

CEREMONY – The ceremony shall follow, or be in harmony with, the prescribed order of this church, according to the interpretation of Saint John’s pastors. A WEDDING IS INTENDED TO BE A WORSHIP SERVICE. Please use this as the guiding principle in planning the ceremony. Included in this policy packet is a rough outline of the wedding service for you to use as a guide as you plan various parts of the ceremony.

It should be noted also that all worship accoutrements will remain where they are placed.

CLERGY – A pastor of Saint John Lutheran church will be involved in all weddings conducted in the Saint John facility, unless otherwise agreed upon by the pastors. If you wish another pastor to participate also in the ceremony it is an appropriate courtesy for Saint John’s pastor to invite the other pastor, providing Saint John’s pastor is in agreement. In the case of non-member weddings, you must give the NAME and TELEPHONE NUMBER of the guest pastor to the Wedding Coordinator. The guest pastor must also contact the church office before any date will be finalized. An ordained minister must conduct the service.

MUSIC – Since the marriage ceremony is a worship service, the music used must be appropriate for a worship service. It should be chosen with the upmost thought of GLORIFYING OUR LORD, who ordains and blesses marriage. The pastor will have the final decision as to what music is and is

not appropriate.

Since the organ and keyboard are highly technical instruments, it is best to ask the organist at Saint John, who is well acquainted with the instruments, to do your music. In addition, the organist can serve as an excellent resource in choosing your music. The organist should be contacted as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to call her. However if you should chose another organist, the pastor must first approve that person.

If using music on a CD you must have all music on one disc and in the order to be played at least one month before wedding date.

DECORATIONS – The couple must clear all decorations with the wedding coordinator. Decorations may be attached to the pews only with non-defacing brackets, available from most florists or craft stores. If damages should result from the use of any decorations (e.g., wax on carpet, scratched or marred woodwork, etc.), the cost for cleaning and repair will be taken from the damage deposit. If such cost exceeds the deposit, the couple will be billed.

The throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, etc. is not permitted in the building or on the church grounds. The wedding couple is also responsible for the clean-up of decorations inside and outside of the church. This includes the rooms used by the wedding party. Any items or equipment brought in for the wedding are to be taken from the church immediately after the ceremony and are not the responsibility of the church. Non-compliance with any clean-up may result in loss of some or all of the deposit.

PHOTOGRAPHY – Photography with natural light only is allowed if taken inconspicuously. The official photographer should be informed that photographs without flash may be taken during the ceremony from the rear of the sanctuary. It is, however, permissible to take flash pictures during the processional and recessional. The photographer should check with the wedding coordinator before the ceremony for any other instructions. VIDEO CAMERAS ARE ALLOWED ONLY IN THE REAR OF THE SANCTUARY.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES –No alcoholic beverages are allowed in the facility or anywhere on the property. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to relay this message to everyone in the wedding party.

Non-compliance with this rule will result in the forfeiture of deposit.

Saint John Lutheran Church is a smoke free building and campus.

CHURCH EQUIPMENT – Equipment belonging to the church is not to be removed from the church property. The piano and the sound system are to be used by authorized personal only. If a CD is to be used, a sound system person is required and a resulting fee is to be paid.

REHEARSAL – Everyone who is involved in the wedding ceremony, including parents, attendants, ring bearer, flower girl, ushers, candle lighters, scripture readers and singers should attend the rehearsal. It is of the utmost importance for everyone to be on time and it is the responsibility of the couple to inform all to make every effort to do so. The time of the pastor, organist and coordinator should be respected. In this regard, it is best to schedule the rehearsal at a time that fits work schedules and travel distances of those involved.

MARRIAGE LICENSES – A marriage license is necessary for the pastor to perform the ceremony and may be obtained from the Clerk of Court at the Pottawattamie County Courthouse. The license must be in the church office no later than Monday before the ceremony.

RING BEARERS AND FLOWER GIRLS – The involvement of young children can be a sentimental and meaningful moment for the couple and is allowed. The use of very young children can be disruptive to the ceremony and this should be a consideration when planning your service. If you do choose to involve young children, a parent or grandparent should be designated for each child in case the child needs to be removed.

WEDDING RECEPTION – any arrangements for a rehearsal dinner/ wedding reception in the Faith and Life Center are to be made with the Women of Saint John Lutheran Church. Your coordinator will put you in contact with the person in charge.

DAMAGE DEPOSIT - a refundable damage deposit for all weddings will be required. This deposit secures your wedding date. It is understood that if there is damage resulting from the rehearsal or wedding, such expenses will be subtracted from the deposit. If damage costs exceed deposit, couple will be billed. A refund check will be issued approximately 10 days after the wedding.

PAYMENT OF FEES –payment of fees is due no later than 10 days prior to the wedding. Individual checks to the organist, the sound person, and the coordinator can be given to the office manager during normal business hours (M-F, 8:00-4:00).

PAYMENT OF PASTOR – It is customary in this congregation to provide the pastor/pastors with a monetary gift for his or her assistance in making the wedding arrangements, counseling, supervising and presiding at the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. $200 - $250 is suggested and should be given directly to the pastor/pastors at the rehearsal. If the wedding is held offsite or out of town, it is customary for the pastor’s travel and lodging expenses to be covered in full.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The church does not print wedding bulletins.

A unity candle is not provided; however you may bring your own.

If you would like the pastor/pastors to attend the rehearsal dinner and/or wedding reception, please make this clear as far in advance as possible. Also please specify whether a pastor’s spouse is to be included. This is not a suggestion that the pastor/pastors be invited, merely a request that it be clear to them.

Number of pews - 38

Each pew seats approximately 10 people

Number of floral arrangements at altar - 2

The Saint John wedding coordinators are available to answer questions you might have concerning the church sanctuary, pew decorations, church receptions, etc.

The coordinators are:

Debbie Hamling 712.323.9719

[Djsb121@isiowa.org](mailto:Djsb121@isiowa.org)

Barbara Stuckey 402.960.8984

[stuckeyb@cox.net](mailto:stuckeyb@cox.net)

Patricia Minchin 712.323.0292

[psminchin@hotmail.com](mailto:psminchin@hotmail.com)

Organist: Joan Ebersold 712.328.8055

Sound: Mack Bertelsen 712.305.2170

FEE SCHEDULE FOR WEDDINGS AT

SAINT JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH\*

Active Members\*\* Non-members

Sanctuary 0 $450.00

Faith & Life center 0 $150.00

Wedding Coordinator $125.00 $150.00

/with reception $150.00 $175.00

Damage deposit $300.00 $300.00

Organist $125.00 (minimum) $150.00 (minimum)

Saint John Pastor $ 200- $250.00 $250-$300.00

Sound system $100.00 $150.00

\* All fees are subject to change.

\*\*Active members shall have communed in this congregation and have

made a contribution of record during the current or preceding calendar year.

Saint John Lutheran Church

633 Willow Avenue

Council Bluffs, Iowa 51501

712.323.7173

Email: info@SaintJohnELCA.org