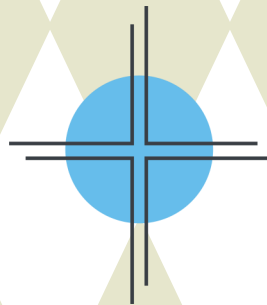


Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Wedding Handbook



Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Maple Lake, MN ©2024

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

WEDDING SERVICES AT HOLY CROSS

A Christian Marriage Service

As part of the goodness of creation, God instituted marriage as a relationship of mutual commitment and faithfulness in which a man and a woman share the joys and struggles of life together. Throughout the world, marriages take place according to the traditions of many different nations, cultures, and religions.

What makes a marriage distinctly *Christian* is that the two people who are married share a faith in Jesus Christ, and that they live out this faith in their life with one another. Thus, it is only fitting that Christian marriages begin by asking for God's blessing on the union. For this reason, all weddings at Holy Cross are services of Christian worship, where a man and woman are joined together within the context of their faith in God, and in fellowship with the church, along with family and friends.

Who May Be Married at Holy Cross

Anyone who is an active member of Holy Cross Lutheran Church may request a date for their wedding by contacting the pastor. Normally, weddings are not conducted for those who have no connection to the congregation of Holy Cross.

In all cases, the pastor of Holy Cross will serve as the presiding minister of services at this church, and no weddings will be scheduled without the pastor's approval. Exceptions to this policy are considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Common Confession & Practice

In 2006, Holy Cross Church adopted "The Common Confession" as a summary of our common beliefs and theology. Within "The Common Confession," it is stated, "We believe and confess that the marriage of a male and female is an institution created and blessed by God. From marriage, God forms families to serve as the building blocks of all human civilization and community. We teach and practice that sexual activity belongs exclusively within the biblical boundaries of a faithful marriage between one man and one woman". Therefore, it is the practice of this congregation to perform wedding services according to this teaching.

10 SIGNS YOU SHOULD NOT BE GETTING MARRIED IN A CHURCH

(adapted from the *Huffington Post Religion*– published 07/10/2012)

10 Signs You Should Not be Getting Married in a Church

1. You find yourself asking the clergy to take all the references to Jesus out of the service.
2. You find yourself dreading your next meeting with the minister.
3. You find yourself dreading the service, worried that the minister will say something too religious.
4. You disagree with the core values of the church.
5. You find the core values of the church so uninteresting that you can just tune them out, no problem.
6. You are not a member of any faith community and neither one of you intends to be.
7. This location feels like a choice you both are making for somebody else, rather than for yourselves.
8. You and your partner have never talked about religion, and you have serious doubts that you will ever be able to.
9. This experience feels like just another wedding transaction, one more service provider to check off the list.
10. You can't wait for the reception.

10 Signs You Might be in the Right Place After All

1. You have drifted from the church, but as you prepare for your wedding you find yourself seeking a community of faith.
2. You enjoy meeting the minister and appreciate the chance to focus on matters of the spirit in the midst of wedding planning stress.
3. You have worshipped here and found yourself moved.
4. You want your marriage to be associated with this place and its core values.
5. You can imagine the members of this church holding you in prayer.
6. You sense that your marriage is about more than the two of you.
7. You find yourself praying.
8. This experience is causing you and your partner to talk about your faith and your aspirations for a faith community as a couple.
9. You don't have it all figured out yet, but this church feels like a blessing to start you on your way.
10. You can't wait for the wedding.

PART TWO: LOGISTICS

WORSHIP SPACE

Seating Capacity

The sanctuary of Holy Cross is normally arranged for a seating of 150 people in a curved array (there is a total of 186 wooden/padded seats). If folding chairs are added, the sanctuary can seat a maximum of 200 people, in straight rows. If the glass panels are opened in the rear, and folding chairs are added in the narthex, a maximum of 250 people can be seated for the service.

Furnishings & Decorations

Weddings are considered to be a part of the life of the congregation, and not an intrusion into it. Therefore, in setting-up for weddings, the basic arrangement of furnishings and fixtures is not to be changed. The color of the paraments (i.e. the cloth of the altar, pulpit, etc.) signifies the season of the church year. It is not changed for weddings.

Decorations may be placed within the sanctuary as desired, with proper care. A set-up time will be determined with the pastor, in conjunction with the master calendar. Avoid using tacks, tape, and adhesives that can damage surfaces. Consideration should be given as to where people will be standing, walking, etc., during the service.

PROPERTY AND BUILDING USE

HCLC bans firearms on its premises.

The use of illegal drugs is prohibited on all HCLC property.

HCLC property and buildings are smoke free. Smoking is defined as inhaling, exhaling, burning or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, pipe or any other lighted or heated product containing, made or derived from nicotine, tobacco, marijuana, or other plant intended for inhalation. (As defined in the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act)

Use of alcoholic or intoxicating beverages is prohibited except in the case of the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Please refer to the Building Use Policy for additional details

RESERVATION AND DEPOSIT

Reservation of a Date

The church and/or its facilities must be reserved for all weddings. All reservations must be made through the pastor in conjunction with the master calendar. Arrangements for the first pre-marriage session may also be made at this time.

Dates are available on a 'first come, first served' basis, assuming there is no conflict with previously arranged church functions. No weddings will be scheduled during Holy Week (i.e. Palm Sunday through Easter).

All reservations must be made at least thirty days prior to the date of the wedding.

Reservation Fee

Wedding reservations remain tentative until a Reservation Fee of \$100 is received by the church office. The fee reserves your spot on the calendar, and prevents the date from being assigned to another couple. The fee is non-refundable.

Note: The submission of a reservation fee does not obligate the church or its pastor to conduct a marriage service. If the couple fails to attend the pre-marriage sessions, or if they refuse to abide by the terms outlined in this handbook, the wedding will be canceled and the date removed from the church calendar.

Offsite weddings

If the wedding is more than 50 miles from Holy Cross Lutheran Church, accommodations for the Pastor will be provided and paid for by the couple at the Pastor's discretion.

Fees and Honoraria

Fees charged by the church for weddings are based on the couple's membership status as of the date the reservation is made on the church calendar. Normally, there is no charge to those who are members of Holy Cross for use of the church facilities (for weddings, rehearsals, and receptions). In the case of non-members, a rental fee will be charged according to the facilities required (*see Fee Schedule Summary below*).

Couples should also be aware that professionals who are asked to take part in a wedding (including: musicians, soloists, etc.) sometimes set their own fee for their services, which may be different from what is listed below. In the case of family and friends, a monetary gift is usually given by the couple as an honorarium, with the amount being left to the discretion of the couple.

Fee Schedule Summary*

Reservation Fee & Custodial Costs	\$100
Building – Wedding	None
Fellowship Hall – Dinner/Reception	None
Pastor	Minimum honorarium of \$250
Accompanist	\$150-\$250 (to be set by accompanist depending on level of music requested)
Soloists & Other Musicians	\$75

*All building rental fees are to be submitted to the church by the date of the wedding rehearsal.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PREPARATION

Pre-Marriage Sessions

All couples to be married at Holy Cross will participate in pre-marriage counseling sessions with the pastor. These sessions allow the pastor and couple to get to know each other better, to talk about the meaning of marriage within the context of the Christian faith, and to prepare the wedding service. Pastor Culynn is a certified PREPARE/ENRICH counselor, and uses this assessment and its accompanying resources to prepare and “develop healthy relationships and build strong marriages” (www.prepare-enrich.com). The cost is \$35.

Sessions are approximately one hour each and last up to six weeks. Pre-marriage sessions not only prepare you well, but offer a discounted marriage license in the state of Minnesota.

Participation in other pre-marriage retreats or seminars (sponsored by L.S.S., etc.) is always encouraged.

Remarriage after Divorce

The congregation of Holy Cross welcomes those who are single and married, as well as those who have been divorced and remarried. However, we also affirm the words of Christ concerning God’s intention for marriage as a life-long commitment (*Mark 10:9, etc.*). In cases where a person is seeking remarriage after a divorce, the couple will be invited to discuss the issue with the pastor in light of Scripture and the practice of this Church, as part of the pre-marriage sessions. It will also be encouraged that the wedding service include an order of confession and forgiveness.

Marriage License

The pastor of Holy Cross will not officiate a wedding unless the couple has a valid marriage license. Marriage licenses are obtained from the Court Administrator of the county in which the bride is a resident. There is a charge for the license and a five-day waiting period. Licenses are valid in Minnesota for six months after the date of issue. The marriage license must be submitted to the pastor at the rehearsal.

PART THREE: PREPARATION FOR THE WEDDING

PLANNING THE SERVICE

The Order of Worship

Weddings at Holy Cross Church are done according to the various traditions of the Lutheran Church. There are, within this service, many features and options that the couple can choose to personalize the wedding in a style to fit their taste. At the same time, there are some portions of the rite of marriage that must be included in the order of service. These are indicated by an asterisk (*).

In printing the wedding bulletin, the following standard order should be used as a guide:

Prelude

Seating of the Grandparents/Parents

Procession

*Invocation & Words of Welcome

Declaration of Intention (with parents &/or assembly)

*Prayer of the Day

Hymn/Solo

*First Reading

*Second Reading

*Homily

Hymn/Solo

Declaration of Intention (Couple only)

Confession & Forgiveness

*Vows

Exchange of Rings

*Marriage Blessing

Unity Ritual & Hymn/Solo

*Prayers & Lord's Prayer

Holy Communion

*Benediction

*Presentation of the Couple

Recessional

Postlude

VARIOUS CONSIDERATIONS

Procession & Escorts

The couple should consider how they would like their families and wedding party to enter the service, as well as who will escort them. The pastor can describe various options which are commonly used.

Wedding Music

Music chosen for the wedding will be appropriate to a Christian worship service. A good guideline for choosing the music is to ask yourself whether or not the song would be acceptable at a Sunday morning worship service. If not, it is probably not appropriate for a wedding service either.

Normally, there are no more than three songs in the wedding service (four, if the Lord's Prayer is sung). This is to avoid making the service overly long. If the couple would like additional songs, these songs should be included in the prelude or postlude.

The couple should be aware that many popular contemporary songs are often difficult to perform properly in the setting of the church. Musicians may be simply unable to reproduce the studio-quality sound heard on the radio. When all is said and done, it is much better to have a less-familiar song done well, than to have a favorite song done poorly.

Choice of music should be discussed with musicians well in advance of the wedding. They will want to have proper time to prepare. The pastor will also approve of songs before the final selection is made.

A Note on the Sound System:

The church has a number of microphones and instrument jacks for use by musicians during the service. Vocalists and instrumentalists should let the pastor know what is needed.

Scripture Lessons

Normally, two readings are chosen for weddings. The following readings are suggestions; others may also be appropriate:

Genesis 1:26-31: *"Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image...'"*

Genesis 2:18-24: *"The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone...'"*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13: *"For everything there is a season..."*

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: *"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward..."*

Song of Solomon 8:6-7a: *"Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm..."*

Matthew 19:4-6: *"Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning..."*

Mark 10:6-9: *"From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female..."*

John 2:1-11: *"On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee..."*

John 15:9-12: *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you..."*

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18: *"I appeal to you... to present your bodies as a living sacrifice..."*

1 Corinthians 13:1-13: *"If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love..."*

Ephesians 4:1b-6: *"Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called..."*

Ephesians 5:1-2, 22-23: *"Therefore be imitators of God [...] and to live in love..."*

Colossians 3:12-14: *"Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved..."*

Declaration of Intention

During the service, some couples choose to have a declaration of intention from both the bride, groom, their families, and/or the gathered assembly. There are several options for this and can be inquired of from the pastor.

Marriage Vows

The marriage vows that are spoken by the couple are the central part of the wedding service. Here the man and woman commit themselves to one another with a promise of life-long faithfulness. One of the following vows may be chosen:

Option 1: The Lutheran Book of Worship

I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.

Option 2: Service Book and Hymnal

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

Option 3: L.B.W. Manual on the Liturgy

I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help, and care for you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you to better understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come, as long as we live.

Option 4: L.B.W. Manual on the Liturgy

_____, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward, to join with you and to share all there is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together, to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being, until death parts us.

Option 5: L.B.W. Manual on the Liturgy (adapted)

In the presence of God and this community, I, _____ take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. To have and to hold from this day forward, in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.

Option 6: ReClaim Order of Wedding Service

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/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 till death parts us, according to God's holy word; therefore, I make this solemn vow.

Option 7: Personal Vows (Written by the Couple)

The couple may choose to write their own vows. However, certain requirements must be met. All marriage vows must:

- Be written in the form of a promise
- Express a commitment made for length of one's life
- Be centered on mutual faithfulness, in word and deed

Additional Options for the Service

Other possible options for the wedding service include the following:

Congregational Hymns

Instead of solos, congregational music may be chosen from the hymnal. The pastor can offer suggestions.

Confession & Forgiveness

Led by the pastor and including the whole congregation, confession and forgiveness signifies a new beginning in God's grace. This is especially appropriate in services where there is a remarriage after divorce.

Blessing from Parents or Visiting Clergy

Parents or visiting clergy may be invited to give their own blessing to the couple directly after marriage vows.

Holy Communion

Sharing in the Lord's Supper can be a special part of a wedding service. The communion elements are available free of charge and will be set up by church staff. We do ask that someone be assigned to assist in the clean up. The couple should note, however, that guests who come from other religious traditions may feel uncomfortable in taking part.

Wedding Bulletins

Wedding bulletins are not required, but they are customary and helpful. Bulletins list the order of worship and the participants in the service, along with a brief note of thanks from the couple. A reminder to turn off cell-phones and refrain from photography during the service may also be included.

The couple is responsible for the purchase and printing of their own wedding bulletins. Professional printers in the community will be able to prepare the bulletin based on information supplied by the couple (see "Order of Worship" listed earlier).

PART FOUR: THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

RULES OF ORDER

Since the wedding is a service of worship, proper reverence and respect is expected to be observed by those present. To honor the dignity of couple and the church, certain basic rules of order will be maintained during both the rehearsal and the wedding day while at Holy Cross:

- 1) There is to be no disruptive behavior during the service (stunts, practical jokes, etc.).
- 2) No one who is intoxicated will be allowed to participate in the wedding. Please respect the church grounds as a dry campus. (Beer or other alcohol must not be brought into the church or consumed on church property.)
- 3) Proper attire is to be worn by those participating in the wedding.
- 4) The throwing of rice, birdseed, or use of glitter is discouraged, inside or outside the building. Both are extremely difficult to clean. The use of sparklers or party poppers may be used with discretion.

Important Reminder: The use of illegal drugs, alcoholic or intoxicating beverages is prohibited on all HCLC property, and HCLC property and buildings are smoke free.

REHEARSAL

Final Preparation

The wedding rehearsal allows the opportunity for the pastor to meet the wedding party and explain the order of service to those involved. The entire wedding party should be present at the rehearsal, including: the bride and groom, bridesmaids and groomsmen, ushers, and other attendants. Also present should be parents and any other immediate family members who will have special seating at the wedding.

It is not necessary for musicians to be present at the rehearsal. There will be no time available during the run-through for soloists to rehearse their songs.

Time of the Rehearsal

Rehearsals are often held the night before the wedding, but they can be also held early on the day of the wedding itself. Rehearsals last one half hour to 45 minutes, depending on organization of details and the number of questions.

The couple should stress to the wedding party that they not be late for the rehearsal. The pastor will begin and end at the appointed time. Also, since the building will need to be locked overnight, please do not plan to remain in the church after the rehearsal, unless the rehearsal dinner is being held at the church.

THE WEDDING DAY

Preparation

The couple should let the pastor know what time they will need the building open before the wedding. Remember to account for dressing time and other preparation as well as photography.

Photography & Videography

Most often, formal photography is done before the wedding service. Allow plenty of time for taking pictures; posed photography will be completed a full half hour before the scheduled time of the wedding.

During the service, the taking of pictures by anyone except the professional photographer and video recorder is discouraged. Stationary cameras must be placed near the rear of the sanctuary. Photographers are not to enter the chancel during the service.

Official Documents

Directly before the wedding, official copies of the marriage certificates are signed by the best man, maid of honor, and the pastor. The pastor usually gives these documents to one of the parents of the couple for safe-keeping, to be given to the couple at a later time.

AFTER THE SERVICE

Clean-up

The church building and grounds are to be left as found, remembering that there is usually a church service scheduled for the following Sunday. Any food, boxes, decorations, etc., that were brought to the church for the wedding must be taken out after the service. (Most couples designate a few friends or relatives to serve as the "clean-up crew" to vacuum and dispose of trash.)

Reception

If the reception is at the church, it is to be coordinated between the caterer and a representative of Holy Cross. Church serving-ware and utensils must remain at the church; linens may be returned after cleaning.

According to the church's building use policy, no alcohol is allowed to be served as part of the reception.

Please note that the pastor's schedule does not often allow the time for attending wedding receptions and dinners. The couple should know that invitations are appreciated, even though they must usually be declined.

A Final Word...

If there are any questions regarding the policies and procedures for weddings at Holy Cross, please feel free to contact the pastor.

WEDDING INFORMATION

Wedding Summary

Groom: _____ Bride's Name: _____
Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____ Officiant: _____
Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____
Reservation Fee: _____ Building: _____ Pastor: _____ Musicians: _____

The Couple

Groom: _____ Age: _____ Member: ☐ Yes ☐ No*

Address: _____ Email: _____

Occupation: _____ Phone(s): _____

Parent's Name & Address: _____

*Home Congregation & Town: _____ First Marriage: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Bride: _____ Age: _____ Member: ☐ Yes ☐ No*

Address: _____ Email: _____

Occupation: _____ Phone(s): _____

Parent's Name & Address: _____

*Home Congregation & Town: _____ First Marriage: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Wedding Party

Best Man: _____ Attendants: _____

Ringbearer: _____

MOH: _____ Attendants: _____

Flowergirl: _____

Order of Service for a Wedding

Approximate Number of Guests: _____

Photography: ☐ Before ☐ During ☐ After

Florist: _____

Videography: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Flowers for Sunday Worship? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Musicians: _____

Scripture Readings: _____

Order of Confession & Forgiveness: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Holy Communion: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Announcing the New Couple: _____

Other Service Notes: _____

Other Notes

Reception Location: _____

New Address for Couple: _____

Pre-Marriage Counseling Notes: