

MARRIAGE MANUAL

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming wedding! The Pastoral staff at Trinity rejoices with you as you prepare to be united together by God in Holy Marriage. We are pleased to be a part of this exciting time in your lives.

Planning a wedding is an exciting and hectic time of life. At Trinity we are excited about the possibility and opportunity for making your wedding, and more importantly, your marriage, a wonderful blessing. In order to make that happen we are providing you with this marriage manual. Please read through it carefully.

Before you can reserve a date for your wedding, and make an appointment with one of our pastors, you must read this manual and submit an application.

The purpose of this marriage manual is twofold. First, it is intended to help you more fully understand and appreciate the nature and purpose of *Christian marriage* and what a *Christian wedding ceremony* is all about. Secondly, it is intended to help you in the planning and preparation of your wedding.

Please Note: We expect couples to contact the church a minimum of six months in advance of the wedding. This is to have enough opportunity to meet with you and properly plan and prepare for both the marriage and the wedding.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR SCHEDULING A WEDDING AT TRINITY?

1. Read through a copy of Trinity's Wedding Manual (especially pages 1 – 5).
2. After reviewing the Wedding Manual and determining that you desire a Christian wedding through Trinity church, please submit your application. Following review by one of the pastors, you will be contacted for your initial appointment. **PLEASE NOTE:** The wedding date is **NOT** secured until **AFTER** your initial appointment. At this time you are welcome to discuss any issues or ask any questions you may have regarding having your wedding at Trinity. Similarly, the pastor may wish to discuss with you important matters of faith and life.

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE?

Marriage is God's idea. At the beginning of time it was the Lord who said, "it is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. . ." God instituted marriage for a number of reasons. Marriage is the foundation of the family and the proper place for the raising of children and passing on the faith to them. Marriage is the proper place for the expressing of romantic love and sexual intimacy. Marriage was intended by God as the place for a man and woman to share life's deepest friendship, companionship, and togetherness. Christian marriage is intended to be a reflection of the love of Christ with us – his people (Ephesians 5:21ff). Christian couples desire to love one another as Christ has first loved them. Christian marriage expresses the deepest form of love that we can know in this life. It is a love that gives, serves, sacrifices, commits, forgives, nurtures, and cares for one's spouse until "death parts us." For that type of love to occur Christian couples need to **FIRST** seek to know, love, and embrace Jesus Christ in their life and then, from the love of Christ, love one another.

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN WEDDING?

A Christian wedding, therefore, is a special worship service of the Church that focuses not on mere sentimentality or “warm fuzzies”, but on the serious commitment of the couple to one another until death parts them. The Christian wedding **IS NOT** only about the bride and groom, but it recognizes and emphasizes that Christ is the source of perfect love and that the bride and groom desire to love one another empowered by and centered in the love of God.

A “church” wedding is not for the purpose of having a beautiful setting for the ceremony. It is not because God will “bless us more” if the wedding is in a church. It is not “better” in God’s eyes because of where the ceremony takes place. A “church” wedding is to be **an expression of faith on the part of the bride and groom** and it is to be a reflection of the faith of the couple and their desire to honor and serve God with their lives as husband and wife.

Therefore a Christian wedding ceremony will include distinctively Christian or sacred music and not “love songs” from the popular culture (see more about this in the section on music). It will include the reading of God’s Word from the Bible, a wedding address that is centered in Christ but applicable to the couple, and vows that reflect the Christian teaching on marriage as a lifelong commitment of love and faithfulness, and so on.

While a Christian wedding ceremony is a time of worship, it is also a time of celebration and joy as God unites two people into “one flesh.” (Matthew 19:6) Therefore, a festive atmosphere of joy, celebration and family love is always welcome as well.

Please Note:

Couples who have not yet come to the point in their life where they wish to take their spiritual commitments seriously, or do not see their wedding as a time of worship, along with the celebration should consider having their wedding somewhere other than Trinity, or they should consider a civil ceremony. (A civil ceremony is completely legitimate but does not involve the church directly when the couple is not yet ready or prepared for that type of service). This doesn’t make you a “bad” person if you chose an option other than the church. It simply recognizes that you’re at a different place in terms of your life of faith.

Couples who may not have a great deal of religious background or experience in the Christian faith, **but are seeking a deeper more meaningful relationship with God**, and who want to include Christ in their lives as they enter into Holy Marriage are **invited and encouraged** to talk with one of the pastors as they consider what to do in planning their wedding.

WHO MAY BE MARRIED AT TRINITY?

- ❖ **MEMBERS** who are active in worship and in the life of the church.
- ❖ **NON-MEMBERS** who are worshiping at Trinity and/or who are interested in joining Trinity or learning more about the Christian faith.

Please Note: All weddings at Trinity, regardless of whether or not someone is a member, are performed at the discretion of the Pastoral Staff in accordance with the Word of God and the Lutheran confessions.

SEXUALITY ISSUES

Since the issues of sexuality and living together are such important premarital topics in the church and society today, we offer the following Christian perspective on these issues.

1. Expressing Love

There are many good, Christian ways to express your love for each other. You have probably done many of them during your dating. You may have sent love letters, cards or notes to each other. Perhaps you have sent flowers or given gifts. Every couple seems to have their own special way of saying "I love you."

There are also many physical ways that couples express love for each other. A special look can express much love. A gentle touch can be very loving. Of course there are such expressions as holding hands, hugging, and kissing, just to name a few.

In God's Word we learn that one of the best ways to show love is to give of ourselves for the sake of the other. It is this kind of love that prompted our heavenly Father to sacrifice His own Son for us (see John 3:16). When we love someone we seek to put them and their needs first, instead of seeking to fulfill our own selfish needs (see Corinthians 13:4-8).

We also learn in God's Word that sexual intercourse between unmarried persons is **not** an appropriate way to express love. God created men and women as sexual beings and encourages them to unite sexually, but **only** inside the bonds of marriage (see Hebrews 13:4). God considers sexual intercourse outside marriage to be a sin against His Commandments and urges us to "flee from sexual immorality" (1Corinthians 6:18).

Christian couples who wish to honor God in their lives will not engage in sexual intercourse prior to their wedding. They will reserve this special gift of themselves for their spouse until after they have been married. Until then they will look for other God-pleasing ways to express their love to each other.

2. Living Together

An extension of this issue is the common practice today of couples living together prior to marriage. This arrangement usually includes sexual intercourse. As has been said above, such activity is not pleasing to God.

Even if the couple is not "sleeping together" there is a strong temptation to give in to the natural desires that are present in all of us. It is much better not to put yourself in a situation where you are tempted to violate God's will.

There are other reasons why living together before marriage is not a wise thing to do. As Christian people, when you live together before marriage, you give a poor witness of your faith to those around you. You may even lead others into sin because they see what you do and think it is therefore alright, and then do it too (see Luke 17:1-3). Even from a secular, sociological perspective, living together before marriage is harmful. A recent research study of the National Marriage Project of Rutgers University (January, 1999) entitled "Should We Live Together" found that 1.) living together before marriage increases the risk of breaking up after marriage, 2.) living together outside of marriage increases the risk of domestic violence for women, and the risk of

physical and sexual abuse for children, and 3.) unmarried couples have lower levels of happiness and well-being than married couples.

For the Christian couple who is seeking to lead a God-pleasing life, living together outside of marriage should be avoided.

3. What If?

Understanding God's will concerning sexual intercourse and living together before marriage; what should you do if you are already involved in these activities?

First of all, we realize that addressing these issues can create a sense of guilt, defensiveness, shame, or embarrassment. These emotional responses, or guilty feelings, are internal signals indicating discomfort and possible disconnection from God. Our intent **IS NOT** to make people "feel bad," but to create awareness of what God wants (the very best) for his loved children, male and female.

Second, there is good news for you. The God who has said "Thou shall not," is also the God who offers love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Confessing your sins to Him and asking for His forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ frees you from your sins. Our loving God removes your sin from you, (see Psalm 103:12), washing you clean in Christ's blood (see Isaiah 1:18).

Living in God's forgiving love and grace you may wish to consider the following options:

- If you're sexually active, but not living together, consider making a promise to God and to one another that you will refrain from sexual intercourse until you are married. What an awesome gift to give one another on your wedding day as you give yourself to each other in "heart, body, and mind."
- If you're living together, consider getting married "sooner" rather than "later." If your goal is to honor God in your life together as husband and wife, begin now by not putting off the wedding, but getting married just as quickly as possible. This might be a particularly good option if there are already children in the family. (Don't wait for 6, 9, 12 months or more)
- Another option is for one or the other of you to move out until the wedding. Perhaps you can move in with a parent, sibling, or friend. What an amazing witness you will be to your family and friends when they hear that you wish to prepare for marriage by honoring God in this way.

There may be other options as well. The Pastor officiating at your wedding will be happy to discuss these issues and any other concerns you may have. Again, our goal is not to be or critical or judgmental, but to assist you to have the best possible life together, built on the foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word.

PRE-MARRIAGE PREPARATION

All couples who are married at Trinity need to participate in pre-marriage preparation. We consider this an important part of our caring ministry to couples and families at Trinity. **We know that preparation for the marriage is more important than preparation for the wedding.**

Pre-marriage preparation may take place in one of these ways:

- ❖ Attending our six session pre-marriage classes. These are offered at different times throughout the year and focus on a number of important aspects of married life. This is done in a group setting with other couples preparing for marriage. These classes are lead by members of our Ministry Team. It is a great way to explore your relationship using the PREPARE Inventory as well as a great opportunity to meet other couples who are soon to be married. There is a \$60 fee per couple for this pre-marriage preparation.
- ❖ Other Pre-marriage arrangements can be made for couples with special circumstances. You can discuss this with one of our pastors when you meet with them.

WHO MAY OFFICIATE AT OUR WEDDING?

Because a Christian wedding ceremony is a worship service of the Church and not just a private ceremony of the couple; and because the “Called” Pastors of the congregation are responsible to God for the ongoing spiritual life and health of the congregation and its members, and because the “Called” Pastors are responsible for the preaching and teaching that takes place at Trinity a Trinity Pastor will officiate at all weddings conducted at Trinity.

Are there any exceptions? Couples who would like to include clergy other than Trinity’s Pastors may do so with the permission of Trinity’s pastors under the following conditions: a) Clergy from our denomination, (The Lutheran Missouri Synod) are welcome to conduct a wedding ceremony independently of, or in conjunction with, Trinity’s pastors. We encourage couples to include a Trinity Pastor with the goal of maintaining or developing a strong connection to the congregation. b) Christian clergy from outside of our denomination are welcome to participate, with a Trinity Pastor, as our guest in support of the Bride and Groom. They may not, however, preach the wedding message or formally receive the vows of the Bride and Groom.

Approved by the Board of Elders (May 2008)

FINAL THOUGHTS

Yes, planning a wedding is an exciting and hectic time of life. There is a great deal to think about and to consider. The order of service for Holy Marriage says, **“therefore, marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately and with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.”**

Our goal is to do all we can to help and assist couples not only to have a beautiful wedding day, but more importantly, to have a great life together as husband and wife.

To that end we want to encourage you to:

- ❖ Invest in your spiritual life and take it seriously.
- ❖ Take your time getting to know one another. Don't rush into marriage. Love takes time to develop and deepen.
- ❖ Resist the urge to be sexually active or to live together before marriage. It's important to build your relationship primarily on a spiritual and emotional level rather than a physical one.
- ❖ Prepare for the marriage and not just the wedding by getting involved in meaningful pre-marriage preparation.

God's Blessings to you as we plan and prepare for your life together as husband and wife!

WEDDING GUIDELINES – ISSUES TO CONSIDER

A WORD ABOUT MUSIC

The sanctuaries of Trinity were built and dedicated exclusively for the worship of God. This is God's house. God is the center of all we do here. The music for all worship services at Trinity is the responsibility of the Minister for Worship & Music.

The Christian wedding service is a worship service centering in God's grace in Jesus Christ who brought you to one another and who promises to give you the wisdom and strength to fulfill the vows you will make in His presence. Many secular and popular songs may be appropriate for the reception but their content and/or focus makes them inappropriate for use in a worship setting. Only music which focuses on Christ, glorifies God and is in agreement with the teachings of the church will be used. **All music will be judged by this standard.** Please do not ask the Minister for Worship & Music to make exceptions to this policy. It is inappropriate to have a service that is Christian in thought and theology, but pagan in procession and pageantry.

Suggestions for processional, recessional, hymns, solos and instrumental music will be provided. Your suggestions will be considered so long as they are in accord with congregational policy. Use the Minister for Worship & Music as your resource. As a professional church musician he/she is eminently qualified to help you. The pastor will let you know how to contact the Minister for Worship & Music for help.

The organist/pianist will be appointed by the Minister for Worship & Music. Only in exceptional cases will a guest organist displace a congregational organist. In all cases the music policies of Trinity will be observed. Usually the organist/Pianist will play ten or fifteen minutes before the service. Through this music the congregation's thoughts are directed toward God, who created and redeemed you and whom you have invited to bless your union. The organist/Pianist is not required to be at rehearsals unless special circumstances prevail.

WEDDING PICTURES

Photographs of your wedding are important to you because they will preserve the memory of this beautiful and holy event for years to come. Most professional photographers are trained and experienced in capturing the Christian wedding ceremony. Your photographer is not only a guest of the bridal couple but also of the congregation. Instructions will be given to the photographer by the wedding coordinator or presiding pastor before the service begins.

The professional photographer is permitted to take flash pictures only during the processional, the recessional and after the service in the sanctuary. No flash pictures will be permitted BY ANYONE while the marriage service is in progress. Photographic sessions in the church are limited to **30-45-minutes following the service.**

Time exposures may be taken by your professional photographer during the service so long as no distraction is created. Under no circumstances will a photographer be permitted near the chancel area during a service. The photographer must remain in one spot at the back of the sanctuary during the service, not moving around the church causing a distraction.

ABOUT VIDEO TAPING

We offer DVD service through Trinity's video and sound system; however, arrangements must be made in advance so our video person can wire the groom ahead of time for sound. If you will be using an outside videographer, taping must not distract from the worship service and is not allowed in the

Chancel area. Instructions will be given on proper procedure by the wedding coordinator or pastor before the service.

FLOWERS

The use of flowers in the sanctuary is optional. Flower arrangements may be placed in the chancel, at one or both sides of the altar. No flowers or decorations are placed on the altar itself. Couples have the option to leave their wedding flowers in church to be used for Sunday worship but must make arrangements for that. Others take them to the reception. Please notify the wedding coordinator of your intent when service plans are discussed. Be sure to discuss plans for any special decorations with the wedding coordinator before finalizing them.

CANDELABRA

We have six candelabra available. They may be used, upon request. Please refer to the fee schedule on page 14.

AISLE RUNNER

Trinity does not own an aisle runner. If you wish to use one, consult your florist. Trinity's center aisle is 75 feet long.

UNITY/MARRIAGE CANDLE**

Some couples may choose to have a unity candle. The unity candle consists of three candles; the larger center candle represents the marriage unity/couple. It is lit during the wedding by the Bride and Groom, who light it with the two smaller candles (representing them or their families), which are lit before the service either by the usher(s) or by a representative of each family. The unity candles and stand may be bought locally at various stores (i.e., Michael's, Hallmark). Trinity has a small pedestal that is used to place your unity candles by the Altar. When purchasing your unity candles/stand, keep in mind that the top of the pedestal is only 12 inches in diameter (dinner plate size).

CONFETTI, RICE, BIRD SEED, BALLOONS, BUBBLES, ETC.

The use of these is not allowed inside or outside the church or Community Center. Bubbles may be used outside.

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

Rehearsals are ordinarily scheduled on the previous day; however, other arrangements may be made. All members of the wedding party should be present for the rehearsal including family members (grandparents, etc.), if possible. PLEASE BE PROMPT. One hour is scheduled for your rehearsal.

The pastor and/or the wedding coordinator are in charge and will direct the rehearsal according to the usages of the church. Those attending the rehearsal are expected to conduct themselves with proper decorum and respect for the sanctuary.

THE WEDDING SERVICE

The Pastor presiding at the wedding will work with the bride/groom to put together an appropriate service of worship. See pages 8 – 11 and page 16 for a sample service.

WEDDING BULLETINS

A printed order of worship is not necessary, but can be of assistance to those who come to your wedding service. It can facilitate their participation, give them a memento of your service, and can help the service go smoothly. The wedding coordinator will give you the details when she plans other phases of your wedding.

Your marriage license and all fees must be given to the wedding coordinator PRIOR TO the rehearsal. If we are printing your wedding bulletins, you must proofread them prior to the rehearsal.

Please instruct those attending the rehearsal to enter the church through the doors in the Foyer, facing the back parking lot.

THE WORSHIP SERVICE

Here is an outline of a wedding service as it is celebrated at Trinity. What follows is typically what Pastor uses. Optional parts of the service are indicated with **. Other additions and changes to the service are possible. Please speak with Pastor about these.

Pre-Service Music

Organ, piano, vocal, or other instrumental music is appropriate.

Processional

This is the piece of music during which time the wedding party enters the church and comes to their places at the front. Sometimes the bridesmaids come in during one piece of music; the Bride to another.

Welcome

Pastor can and will (at your request) speak a word of welcome prior to the beginning of the actual worship service, once all have arrived at their places.

Invocation

Pastor speaks the following to begin the worship: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. With these words God's presence is asked, and our Christian faith declared.

Prayer

Pastor prays: Eternal God, our Creator and Redeemer, as you gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee by the presence of your Son, so by his presence now bring joy to this wedding. Look in favor upon **(name)** and **(name)** and grant that they may rejoice in all your gifts, and at last celebrate with Christ the marriage feast which has no end. Amen.

Giving of the Bride – Parental Blessing**

Historically, this began when women were considered property; now, when used this question indicates the family's role in marriage.

The Pastor asks: Who gives this woman to be married to this man? The Bride's father (or mother or brother or sister or another family member) answers: I do / We do / Her mother and I do, etc.

Question to the parent(s) or families may be used instead (or in addition). Example: In order to give witness to the spirit of this marriage, I now ask your families: Will you wholeheartedly support this marriage, will you support and encourage _____ and _____ in their life together as husband and wife.

Do you promise to pray for them and do you give your children your blessing? If so, answer, **WE WILL & WE DO** (family then answers).

Hymn/Solo**

As an option, the congregation may sing a hymn of praise to God. See Hymns #251-253 and #435-461 of our hymnal, Lutheran Worship.

Scripture Readings

Usually two readings from the Bible are read at this time. The Pastor or another designated person may do this. See the list of suggested readings that follows. You may choose from this list or, if you wish, choose other readings from the Bible or the Pastor will choose the readings.

Old Testament: Genesis 1:26-31; 2:18-24
Ruth 1:16-17
Psalm 33, 100, 117, 127, 128, 136 150
Isaiah 63:7-9
Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:7

New Testament: Matthew 7:24-27 or Matthew 19:4-6
John 2:1-10 or John 15:9-12
1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13 (or a portion of this)
2 Corinthians 5:14-17
Ephesians 3:14-19 or Ephesians 5:21-33
Philippians 2:1-5
Colossians 3:12-17
1 John 4:7-12

Wedding Address

The Pastor will have a brief wedding address to the bride and groom based on the readings chosen for the wedding or other scripture selected by the pastor.

Marriage Vows (Pick One A or B)

1) Questions of Intent and Life-Long Faithfulness

A) (Name), wilt thou have this woman/man to be thy wedded wife/husband, to live with her/him, after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her/him, comfort her/him, honor her/him, and keep her/him, so long as ye both shall live? If so answer, I will.

B) (Name), will you have this woman/man to be your wife/husband, to live with her/him in holy marriage according to the Word of God? Will you love her/him, comfort her/him, honor her/him, and keep her/him in sickness and in health and, forsaking all others, be husband/wife to her/him as long as you both shall live? If so, answer, I will.

2) Vows (Pick One A - G) Usually repeated phrase by phrase after the Pastor. They can be memorized or read

A) I, (Name), in the presence of God and these witnesses, take thee, (Name), to be my wedded wife/husband and plight thee my troth till death us do part.

B) I, (Name), in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you, (Name) 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, until death parts us, and I pledge you my faithfulness.

- C) I take you, (Name) to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, until death parts us.
- D) I take you, (Name) 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 better to understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come until death part us.
- E) I take you, (Name), to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful wife/husband, share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.
- F) (Name), I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward, to join with you and to share all that 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.
- G) You may write your own vows, using the above for ideas, or simply expressing your own thoughts. If you compose your own vows, you will want to include promises of life-long love and faithfulness. Pastor will review the vows with you.

Exchange of Rings (*Pick One A or B*) **

Rings are not necessary, but the Bride, Groom, or both may exchange a ring as a symbol of their marriage. If a ring/rings are used, one of the following is said:

- A) Receive this ring as a pledge and token of wedded love and faithfulness.
- B) I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

Pronouncement of Marriage

The Pastor declares: Now that (Name) and (Name) have consented together in holy marriage, have given themselves to each other by their solemn pledges, and have declared the same before God and these witnesses, I pronounce them to be husband and wife, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. What God has joined together, let no one put asunder.

The Unity/Marriage Candle**

You may light a special candle to symbolize the marriage. A three candle arrangement is used: the center (larger) candle represents the marriage unity/couple, and it may depict oneness in Christ. It is lit by the couple with two smaller candles (representing them or their families), which are previously lit. These two candles are lit before the service either by the usher(s) or by a representative of each family.

If you choose to do this, such special candle kits are available for purchase, or you may simply use other white candles.

Pastor explains the significance of the ceremony before the Bride and Groom light the candle. Sometimes a solo is sung at this time.

Prayers

Prayers are offered for the bridal couple, for all who are married, for families, and for others, upon request.

The Lord's Prayer

This prayer is spoken by all or sung by a soloist, if present. We use the traditional text:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

For clarity, the words are usually printed in the service folder, if one is used.

Benediction

The worship concludes with the blessing: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord look upon you with his favor and give you peace. Amen.

Introduction of the Newly Married

Pastor introduces the bridal couple in a way that is agreeable with them. For example: Family and friends, it is my pleasure and delight by the power of Almighty God who makes the two into one flesh to introduce to you . . . Mr. and Mrs. Tom Smith / Tom and Sally Smith / Tom and Sally Johnson-Smith.

Kiss**

The couple may kiss. It should be a brief kiss, appropriate for church.

Recessional

This is the piece of music that is played as the bridal couple and the attendants exit the sanctuary. A hymn may be used to close the service, if you so wish. This is most appropriate.

Exit

The parents of the bridal couple leave first, usually escorted by an usher. Afterwards, the wedding guests leave, with or without the direction of the ushers. They may be ushered out row by row, however, either by the ushers or (in small assemblies) by the wedding couple.

It is preferred that the receiving line be done at the reception hall so the wedding party can have their pictures done immediately following the service.

A wedding service usually lasts between 20 and 30 minutes, depending upon which options are used.

BEFORE THE WEDDING

The church will be open for your use one hour before the time of the service. (Earlier if it is a week day and the church office is open.) If you must have access to the church more than an hour before the service please make arrangements with the wedding coordinator. The women's lounge and the church lounge are available for the use of the bride and bridesmaids before the service.

The groom and best man should arrive in the pastor's office ten minutes before the time of the service.

Wedding cars may be parked along the covered walkway in the rear church parking lot. Do not obstruct designated or handicapped parking spaces.

The wedding coordinator will be on duty before, during and after your wedding to assist in seeing that the wedding and all the details surrounding it run smoothly. If you should have any questions or need assistance, feel free to speak with her.

FEES AND COSTS

Expenses for a wedding service can vary greatly depending on what each couple wants to include in their service and the number of people serving them. We are aware of the numerous costs incurred by couples and their parents in planning and celebrating a wedding. We believe that the heart and center of your wedding day is the commitment that you make to one another before God's altar. Therefore the church tries to keep its costs to a minimum and work with each couple to focus on the very special and holy nature of your wedding.

You should, however, expect and plan to reimburse those who provide services for your wedding in proportion to their time, expertise and the expenses they incur on your behalf. A current list with suggested minimum donations can be found on page 15. These fees/costs need to be received in **CASH only** for easy distribution.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Trinity's Community Center is available for rehearsal dinners and receptions for up to 160 persons. Receptions must be alcohol and smoke free. Please consult with the wedding coordinator for regulations, application forms and fees.

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Unless there are reasons for variation, prayers for the couple will be spoken in the worship of the congregation in Sunday services preceding the ceremony. Families and participants in the wedding will find it uplifting to be present, if at all possible, in this larger context of God's gathered people.

****** Denotes optional items.

HOW TO GET A MACOMB COUNTY MARRIAGE LICENSE

1. COMPLETE THE AFFIDAVIT FOR LICENSE TO MARRY FORM.

Please use black ink and print clearly. You may get this form via:

- a. Fax-on-demand 1-888-99-CLERK (1-888-992-5375), document #3120.
- b. Internet, <http://www.macombcountymi.gov/clerksoffice/pdf/marriage.pdf>.
- c. Request a form is mailed to you by calling 586-469-6283.
- d. Pick up a form in person at the clerk's office. See office hours below.

2. CHECK THE BOX INDICATING YOU RECEIVED EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ABOUT SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES, HIV/AIDS AND PRENATAL CARE ENCLOSED WITH THIS INFORMATION.

3. THE MACOMB COUNTY RESIDENT(S) MUST TAKE THE OATH AT THE BOTTOM OF THE FORM AND SIGN IT BEFORE A NOTARY PUBLIC. The Macomb County resident(s) may do this in person at the Macomb County Clerk's office. (Office hours below.)

4. COMPLETE THE MARRIAGE LICENSE APPLICATION COVER FORM. Review Marriage License Requirements section. Also indicate how you will pay the application fee. ******IF THE MARRIAGE APPLICATION IS ILLEGIBLE, HAS INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION OR CONTAINS ERRORS, WE WILL REJECT YOUR APPLICATION AND YOU MUST APPLY IN PERSON.******

5. RETURN BOTH FORMS TO THE MACOMB COUNTY CLERK. You may not apply for a marriage unless the ceremony will occur within 33 days. Include the Affidavit for License to Marry Form and the Marriage License Application Cover Form. If applying by fax, include the Credit Card Payment Information Form.

- a. You may FAX it to 586-469-4751. **If you fax your Affidavit for License to Marry you must call the Clerk's Office at (586) 469-6283 within the hour to confirm it was received.**
- b. You may MAIL it to: Macomb County Clerk, 40 North Main, Mt. Clemens, MI 48043-5656
If you mail your Affidavit for License to Marry you must call the Clerk's Office at (586) 469-6283 in 72 hours of the mailing to confirm it was received.
- c. If you choose to submit the application IN PERSON the Macomb County resident must appear with valid ID (i.e. driver's license) to the Macomb County Clerk's Office. (Office hours below.)

6. After the statutory three-day waiting period, your marriage license will be mailed to you. IF YOUR MARRIAGE CEREMONY WILL OCCUR LESS THAN TEN DAYS FROM YOUR APPLICATION DATE, you will then be required to pick up your marriage license in person at the Macomb County Clerk's office. See office hours below.

- 7. CAREFULLY REVIEW THE MARRIAGE LICENSE UPON RECEIPT.** If a correction is needed due to a typing error made by the clerk's office, there is no charge to make the correction. If a correction is needed because the Affidavit for License to Marry form was incorrectly filled out, there is a \$5.00 charge that may be paid via cash, check or credit card. (To change a license after the marriage ceremony, you would have to open a circuit court case, pay a \$150 filing fee and have a judge sign an order to correct the marriage license.)
- 8.** After the marriage ceremony, the officiate (pastor, priest, minister, rabbi, etc.) will sign the marriage license and return it for filing at the Macomb County Clerk's office.

If you have any questions or need assistance with this process, please call **586-469-6283**.

The County Clerks Office Hours: Mon. – Fri. 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., open until 7:00 p.m. Wednesdays.

Wedding Manual approved
Board of Elders
November, 2005