

***Membership:** As defined by our constitution is persons that worship at HLC and give monetarily to Christ's mission here. You must be a member no less that 6 months prior to your wedding.

Notes

- 1 Adapted from *Life Passages: Marriage, Healing, Funeral*. Renewing Worship, vol. 4. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002.
- 2 From *Sexuality: Some Common Convictions* as adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on November 9, 1996.
- 3 "Marriage," Lutheran Book of Worship, 203.
- 4 *Lutheran Book of Worship: Minister's Desk Edition*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1978.
- 5 Taken from *Life Passages: Marriage, Healing, Funeral*. Renewing Worship, vol. 4. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002.

Suggested Resources

A Marriage Sourcebook (Liturgy Training Publications) by J. Robert Baker, Joni Gibley, and Kevin Charles Gibley is a rich collection of scripture, poetry, prayer, fiction, song, and humor regarding the joys, sorrows, challenges, and blessings of married life. ISBN-1-56854-039-6. To order, call 800/933-1800. Order online at www.ltp.org.

Marriage: A Worship Handbook (Augsburg Fortress) by Karen G. Bockelman. Marriage is one of life's most important passages and the ceremony is a moment of special spiritual meaning. This handbook explains the liturgy of marriage—its meaning, its history, its possibilities—allowing the reader to experience, understand, or even create a ceremony that gives glory to God. ISBN-0-8066-4281-5. To order, call 800/328-4648. Order online at www.augsburgfortress.org.

Now Bring Your Joy To This Wedding (CSS Publishing) by Norma S. Wood and Lisa Leber offers a set of readings and exercises designed to assist couples who are preparing for marriage. ISBN-0-7880-1881-7. To order, call 800/537-1030. Order online at www.csspub.com.

PREPARE/ENRICH (Life Innovations) is the series that HLC uses in its pre-marital counseling. Their web site offers information on their materials, a quiz for couples, and specific resources for strengthening relationships that are available for purchase. Visit the site at www.lifeinnovations.com.

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Planning Your Wedding

March 2011 Revision

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INTRODUCTION

As you plan and prepare for your wedding, it is likely that you will experience this time as both exciting and eventful. The wedding day itself is a significant occasion to look forward to, but even more importantly, it is preparing oneself to make a unique and binding promise of faithfulness to another that marks this time as special. There is no doubt that marriage always brings with it big changes and new challenges in life. The temptation to neglect the spiritual dimensions of preparation for marriage is always there as the days quickly pass and things get busy. However, it is up to you to establish this preparation as a priority in these days before your wedding. Taking the time now to lay a solid foundation for married life will go a long way in helping to assure the health not only of your marriage but also as individuals who are making the choice to step out in faith and love.

Marriage and the Church



The Church affirms that marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family. In creation God blessed humankind with mutual companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. The biblical understanding of marriage is modeled after God's grace-filled act of choosing to be in relationship with God's people. It is a relationship that is characterized by faithfulness and mutual love.¹

Of course, marriage also exists outside of the Church. It is also a legal contract that is governed and regulated by the state. These aspects of a marriage do not directly concern the Church. What then can we say about the particular relationship between marriage and the Church? What is it that characterizes a marriage that is founded upon the understandings and teachings of the Church?

APPENDIX B: Schedule of Fees for Members & Non-members

Note: Items in bold type are required. Other items are optional, if services are not used.

	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-member*</u>	<u>Payee</u>
Church Use	no fee	\$500	HLC
Counseling Inventory (PREPARE/ENRICH)	\$35	\$29.95(online)	Life Innovations
Musician	\$100	\$150	Musician
Pastor	\$100 (suggested)	\$300	Pastor
Custodian	\$50	\$50	Custodian
Church Reception	donation	\$250	HLC
Deposit	\$25	\$50	HLC

APPENDIX C: Church Policies

Building Use

The church building is available for the weddings of both members and non-members. The fellowship hall is available for receptions, but representatives of the WELCA must be on hand to supervise the use of the kitchen. The pastor can put you in contact with the appropriate people. See the fee schedule for associated costs. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at these receptions.

Alcohol

No alcoholic beverages are permitted in the church building for any reason other than the use of wine in Holy Communion. No exceptions will be made.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in the church building or adjacent to doors and windows. If you smoke outside of the building, please do so at a respectful distance.

Decoration and exit.

The throwing of rice is not permitted. Also, we do not allow fresh flower petals to be spread in the sanctuary. All decorations are your responsibility to clean up immediately after the ceremony.

Photography and Videography

Photographs should be arranged for before or after the service. Photographs may be taken during the processional and recessional but are discouraged during the marriage service itself. Non-flash pictures and videos may be taken during the service, if prior arrangements are made with the pastor. The balcony and the pews on the side aisles are most suitable for taking photos and video during the service.

Giving of Rings

A *Name*, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

B *Name*, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow.
With all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you,
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Suggested Scripture Readings

Old Testament

Genesis 1:26-28	<i>Woman and man created in the image of God</i>
Genesis 2:18-24	<i>Companionship rather than loneliness</i>
Proverbs 3:3-6	<i>Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart</i>
Song of Solomon 2:10-13	<i>The voice of the beloved</i>
Song of Solomon 8:6-7	<i>Many waters cannot quench love</i>
Isaiah 63:7-9	<i>God's steadfast love lifts up the people</i>
Jeremiah 31:31-34	<i>The new covenant of the people of God</i>

Psalm

Psalm 67	<i>May God be merciful to us and bless us</i>
Psalm 100	<i>We are the sheep of God's pasture</i>
Psalm 117	<i>The steadfast love of the Lord</i>
Psalm 121	<i>The Lord keeps watch over you</i>
Psalm 127	<i>Unless the Lord builds the house</i>
Psalm 128	<i>Blessed are those who walk in the Lord's way</i>
Psalm 150	<i>Let everything that breathes praise the Lord</i>

New Testament

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39	<i>If God is for us, who is against us</i>
Romans 12:1-2, 9-18	<i>A living sacrifice and genuine love</i>
1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13	<i>The greatest gift is love</i>
Ephesians 3:14-19	<i>Breadth, length, height, depth of Christ's love</i>
Philippians 4:4-9	<i>Rejoice in the Lord always</i>
Colossians 3:12-17	<i>Clothed in compassion, kindness, patience...</i>
1 John 3:18-24	<i>Let us love in truth and action</i>
1 John 4:7-16	<i>Let us love one another for love is of God</i>

Gospel

Matthew 5:1-10	<i>The beatitudes</i>
Matthew 5:14-16	<i>You are the light, let your light shine</i>
Matthew 7:21, 24-29	<i>A wise person builds upon the rock</i>
Matthew 19:3-6	<i>What God has united must not be divided</i>
Matthew 22:35-40	<i>Love, the greatest commandment</i>
Mark 10:6-9	<i>They are no longer two but one</i>
John 2:1-11	<i>The wedding at Cana</i>
John 15:9-17	<i>Love one another as I have loved you</i>

This booklet can only serve to encourage good conversation about this incredibly important decision in your life. It is up to you to reflect upon and continue this faithful conversation with so many in the Church who have gone before. The hope is that you will think about these teachings of the Church and have an informed conversation about where you stand as individuals and as a couple in relationship to them.

Common Convictions: Marriage in the Church²

Marriage is a lifelong covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman. In marriage, two persons become "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-9; Eph. 5:31), a personal and sexual union that embodies God's loving purpose to create and enrich life. By the gift of marriage God "founded human community in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come."³

Marriage provides a structure of security and stability within which spouses may fully enjoy and risk sexual expression. The binding legal contract of marriage reinforces its "staying power" when it is threatened by sin. Within marriage, spouses can learn to exercise mutual, faithful love.

Christians yearn for marriages that are loving and life-giving. In the intimacy of marriage, spouses can learn to share feelings and fears, to listen deeply, and to respect the differences of the other. Being loved and accepted by God helps them to love and accept one another. Rather than one dominating the other, each spouse seeks to empower and encourage the other.

All marriages fall short of intentions. Some marriages are not safe spaces, but places where spouses or children are abused. Intimacy and sexual pleasure often are absent. A marriage grows and changes over time through experiences of humor and playfulness, brokenness and healing, failure and accomplishment, forgiveness and renewal.

In the growth, changes, and disappointments of a marriage, the counsel and support of the Church is important. Premarital instruction can help a couple to prepare for the covenant they are entering. During the first few years of a marriage, the guidance and support of the Christian community can help a couple to adjust and set healthy patterns for their relationship. Those more recently married can learn much from those whose marriages have grown and been tested through the years. Throughout a marriage, the ministry of the Church should assist the couple to discern and address their shortcomings, and to seek forgiveness, reconciliation, and new life.

The purpose of marriage goes beyond the intimacy and companionship it provides the couple. The wider community is symbolically present when a couple publicly exchanges vows. Witnesses pledge to support the marriage, and those exchanging vows are reminded that their marriage will affect the wider community. They are to extend themselves for the sake of others.

GETTING STARTED

Setting a Date

As soon as you have a date and time in mind, it is important that you contact the church. The office manager will assist you in determining whether or not the desired date and time are available and confirm them on the church calendar. For purposes of planning and preparation, a period of at least three months is required between setting the date and the wedding. This is to ensure adequate time for pre-marital counseling and other arrangements. Please note that special times and days in the Church year (Holy Week, Easter Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and others) and ALL other nationally recognized holidays **are not** available for scheduling (New Years Eve or Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, 4th of July, etc.).

APPENDIX A: Options and Suggestions for the Service⁵

Declaration of Intention

- A** Name, will you have name to be your *wife/husband*,
To live together in a holy marriage?
Will you love *her/him*, comfort *her/him*, honor and keep *her/him*,
in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others,
be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live?
Response: I will.
- B** Name, will you receive name as your *wife/husband*
and bind yourself to *her/him* in the covenant of marriage?
Will you promise to love and honor *her/him* in true devotion,
to rejoice with *her/him* in times of gladness,
to grieve with *her/him* in times of sorrow,
and to be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live?
Response: I will, with the help of God.
- C** Name, living in the promise of God,
joined to Christ in your baptism,
will you give yourself to name in love and faithfulness?
Will you share your life with *her/him*,
in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness,
for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse,
and will you be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live?
Response: I will, with the help of God.

Vows

- A** In the presence of God and this community,
I, name, take you, name, 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.
- B** I take you, name, 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.
- C** I, name, give myself to you, name.
By the grace of God, I promise to support and care for you.
In the love of Christ, I promise to love and cherish you.
With the Spirit's help, I promise to be faithful to you,
as long as we both shall live.
- 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 forgive you as we have been forgiven;
and I will share my life with you,
through the best and worst of all that is to come, until death parts us.

The Wedding Rehearsal

In most cases a wedding rehearsal is necessary in order to walk through the basic order of the service and to ensure that everyone understands their role. Most rehearsals take place the evening prior to the wedding, although an alternate time may be arranged with the pastor. The rehearsal usually takes 45-60 minutes. The all musicians are recommended to be present. It is your responsibility to make sure that the wedding party and all those involved are on time for the rehearsal. Failure to arrive in a timely manner (within 15 minutes of schedule) for rehearsal is not tolerated and may cause a cancelled ceremony.

Inviting Pastors to Receptions/Rehearsal Dinners

Often it is not possible for the pastor to attend either your rehearsal dinner or your wedding reception. If you would like the pastor or the pastor and his/her family to attend such events, please invite them well in advance (at the same time you send your other invitations is customary). This will give the pastor time to respond to your invitation and avoid surprises.

Things to bring and when (Checklist)

- Rings (rehearsal night and wedding)
- Bulletins (rehearsal night)
- Decorations (rehearsal day, or other arrangements)
- License (please bring in the week of the wedding)
- Checks to pay the Musician, Custodian, Pastor, and other church fees (please bring these to the HLC office one week before the wedding)

Note: Payment of all fees are required one week before the wedding. For specific fees, see Appendix B: Fee Schedule.

Marriage Preparation Sessions

Because you are preparing not only for the wedding ceremony but for married life together, the church requires participation in a series of marriage preparation sessions prior to the wedding day. These sessions will encourage you to reflect and talk about some important aspects of married life with the pastor. This is not a time of testing or indoctrination. Rather, it is a time to engage in an open and honest conversation and to pray for the guidance of God's Spirit, as you anticipate the beginning of married life together. These sessions will also be tailored to the circumstances of your lives. For more information on the specifics of the preparation sessions, please contact the pastor. You can also visit the website associated with the resources we will use. The program is Prepare/Enrich and the web site address is [<http://www.lifeinnovations.com/>]. Currently we partner with Lutheran Social Services to do some of the pre-marital preparation.

The License

In the State of Wisconsin, a marriage license is issued by the county clerk's office. The state also has a residency requirement that at least one of the applicants reside in the county where the license application is filed for a minimum of 30 days. If you are from out of state, the license must be applied for in the county where the ceremony will be held (La Crosse County). You must bring your Social Security Number, show proof of residence, and have a certified copy of your birth certificate if you are under the age of 30. Know your parent's full names, mothers' maiden names. Make sure you have the date and place of your marriage ceremony and the name, address and phone number of the officiant. There is a 6 day waiting period. If you have questions, please contact the county clerk's office.

The Pastor

The currently called pastor(s) serving at Holmen Lutheran Church (HLC) and Bridge of Life Lutheran Church are responsible for all rites that take place in connection with this congregation. Normally, this means that a current pastor at either congregation will serve as the officiant at your wedding.

If you wish to have a different pastor officiate or assist at your wedding, it is important that you first explain your reasons to the pastor and receive his or her permission. When another pastor officiates at a wedding at HLC he/she will agree to abide by the policies of HLC governing weddings. As a courtesy, it is also asked that an order of service be submitted to the Senior Pastor at HLC at least two weeks prior to the wedding. Any non-ELCA Lutheran pastor officiating or assisting needs approval by the church council, which requires time to approve.

The Musicians

The regular church organists and pianists at HLC are often available to play at weddings where organ or piano music is desired. It is then your responsibility to contact the musician and make arrangements for the service. Please contact the musician 2-3 months prior to the wedding so schedules can be accommodated. Please contact Holmen Lutheran's office to get an updated list of musicians. There is a fee for the services of these musicians which takes into account rehearsal time and the wedding day (see Appendix B: Fee Schedule). If you wish to have another musician play at your wedding, please notify the pastor.

The Custodian

HLC employs a regular custodian to clean and maintain the building and grounds and to lock and unlock the building. These basic services are covered in the custodian fee. (see Appendix B: Fee Schedule)

Decorations

The paraments (altar cloths, pulpit cloth, etc.) are used in accordance with the seasons of the Church year. These can not be changed to coordinate with the colors of a particular wedding. For more information on the particular colors used each season or on special days, contact either the pastor or church secretary.

The church does not provide an aisle runner. If you desire to have an aisle runner or other decorations specific to your wedding, please check with area businesses that offer rental of such items. (Our aisle is 100ft long.) The couple and their families are responsible for all arrangements in regard to these decorations. If you plan on making use of candles in your wedding service, the lighting and extinguishing of candles should be handled by someone who is designated to do so. If you wish to use our candelabra please make arrangements with the pastor and their will be a charge of \$10 for their use.

Floral decorations may be used and are encouraged particularly for use in the chancel area and on the altar. You are free to make floral arrangements with whomever you choose. We ask that you do not attach anything to any furnishings without permission.

Following the wedding service, the flowers may be taken by the couple or may be left for use when possible for Sunday morning worship.

Printed Programs

Many couples decide to have the order of service and participants listed in a printed program. As you work on this, please refer to the outline of the wedding service in preparing the program and consult often with the pastor.

Recommended organ music for processions:

Canon in D	Pachelbel
Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring	Bach
March (from Occasional Oratorio)	Handel
Prince of Denmark's March (Trumpet Voluntary)	Clarke/Purcell
Processional in C	Hopson
Processional (from Water Music Suite)	Handel
Trumpet March	Lully-Wolff
Trumpet Tune in C	Lau
Solemn Processional (from Water Music)	Handel
Wedding Processional and Air	Bach-Leupold

Recommended organ music for recessions:

Allegro (from Symphony #4)	Boyce
Allegro Maestoso (Walter Music)	Handel
God of Grace	arr. Manz
Hornpipe (from Water Music)	Handel
Psalm 19	Marcello
Prelude in Classic Style	Young
Now Thank We All Our God	Post
Rigaudon	Campra
Rondeau ("Theme from Masterpiece Theater")	Mouret
Trumpet Tune	Clarke/Purcell
Trumpet Finale	Manfredini-Wolff

Recommended Congregational Hymns:

Beginning of Service (Can also be used as a processional.)

Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now	ELW #527
We Praise You, O God	ELW #870
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	ELW #858
Holy God, We Praise Your Name	ELW #414

During Service (Following the sermon, during Unity Candle, etc.)

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	ELW #631
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father	ELW #585
Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus	ELW #802
The King of Love My Shepherd Is	ELW #502

End of Service (Can also be used as a recessional.)

On What Has Now Been Sown	ELW #550
Now Thank We All Our God	ELW #839,840
Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven	ELW #865
Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee	ELW #836
Let All Things Now Living	ELW #881
Earth and All Stars	ELW #731

Please note this music is suggested music and many other appropriate pieces and hymns may be used.

PLANNING THE WEDDING SERVICE

Outline of the Wedding Service



This outline lays out the sequence of events in the wedding service in a detailed way. The Pastor will work with you in your pre-marital counseling sessions offering guidance and answering questions you might have. The items listed in bold type are essential parts of the service. Other items are optional. Appendix A provides options and suggestions for various parts of the service.

<u>Order of Service</u>	<u>Comments</u>
GATHERING	
Prelude	
Ring of the Bell	
Processional	
Pastoral Greeting	Pastor greets people in the name of God.
Introduction	Pastor introduces the focus of the service.
Declaration of Intention	For options, see Appendix A.
Prayer of the Day	
WORD	
Readings	For suggestions, see Appendix A.
Sermon/Homily	
Hymn of the Day	
MARRIAGE	
Vows	For options, see Appendix A.
Giving of Rings	For options, see Appendix A.
Acclamation	Pastor announces the marriage bond.
Nuptial Blessing	This prayer focuses on the couple.
Unity Candle	Please see section on the Unity Candle.
Intercessions	Prayers are expanded to include all.
The Lord's Prayer	
[COMMUNION]	If communion is celebrated, all baptized persons present must be invited to participate.
SENDING	
Blessing	
Dismissal	
Departure	

Holy Communion



The celebration of Holy Communion is an appropriate part of a marriage service. In the sacrament of Holy Communion, we gather around the table that Christ sets before us. This is an act that draws all the baptized together and unites us in our calling to go out to love and serve the world around us. In the same way, marriage draws two people together and is intended to challenge them to grow in love and service not only toward each other but to the world they live in.

Whenever Holy Communion is celebrated at HLC, all baptized persons present must be invited to participate. If you plan to have Holy Communion as a part of your wedding service, please let the pastor know, so that arrangements can be made.

The Unity Candle

The Unity Candle is not a traditional part of the Christian marriage service but is a recent innovation that is frequently used. You may choose to have the lighting of a unity candle, as a part of your wedding service. This lighting is understood to be a sign of two lives joining together in marriage. **Note: You are responsible for providing your own unity candle along with two tapers (side candles and holders).**

Musicians

In addition to an organist or pianist, many couples are interested in incorporating other musicians (e.g. vocal, flute, trumpet, etc.) within the wedding service. If this is your desire, you will be responsible for making arrangements in this regard. Please note that fees for musicians are to be worked out between the couple and the musicians. Also let the pastor know so that arrangements in the worship space are made for the musicians.

Recorded and Instrumental Music

Recorded music is highly discouraged. The church's sound system is capable of playing CDs that can be used as either accompaniment or stand alone as service music. Music must be approved by the pastor and an understanding must be reached about how this is going to happen in the worship. Please understand that it is impossible to make the music perfectly timed in the service.

Music: Expectations and Recommendations

When choosing the various pieces of music that will be played or sung during your wedding, it is important to give some thought to the ways in which these selections will or will not enhance the occasion. The Minister's Desk Edition of the Lutheran Book of Worship has this recommendation: "Music selected should embody high standards of quality and, in general, reflect the praise of God, God's steadfast love in Christ as the foundation of and model for marriage, and the asking of God's presence and blessing."⁴

Numerous styles of music from traditional to contemporary are appropriate and can enhance the focus of the day. Weddings that take place at HLC are done so as a worship service. There are countless ways to lift up the goodness of God's love and faithfulness in worship. In evaluating whether or not music is appropriate, focus on the celebration of love and faithfulness is of primary importance. This focus is not simply on the couple in isolation but on the ways that God's love and faithfulness in all times and all places are present in this covenant between two persons.

Some thought should go into the selection of all musical pieces: hymns, solos, processional, and recessional. The pastor and the church organist are available to help you should you have any questions or concerns. The church requests that you submit your musical selections to the pastor at least one month prior to the wedding service and the pastor will have final say on music.