

Luther Memorial Church

Wedding Handbook

Senior Pastor

The Rev. Franklin Wilson

Interim Associate Pastor

The Rev. Brad Pohlman

LMC Affiliated Pastors

Pastor Craig Jan-McMahon

Pastor Miriam Hull

Pastor Larry Thies

Director of Music

Bruce A. Bengtson

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Luther Memorial Church
1021 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53715

Phone 608-258-3160

FAX: 608-250-2496

E-mail: office@luthermem.org

Web site: www.luthermem.org

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Marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and mutual strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family. God created us male and female and blessed humankind with the gifts of companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. Jesus affirmed the covenant of marriage and revealed God's own self-giving love on the cross. The Holy Spirit helps those who are united in marriage to be living signs of God's grace, love, and faithfulness.

—*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

Congratulations!

Marriage is one of the great gifts that God has given to the human family. Some of the most beautiful experiences of joy and happiness are found in the marriage relationship.

Your desire to be married at Luther Memorial Church indicates that you want your wedding service to be a sacred worship experience. You want God to be a part of your new home.

The agreement to host a wedding service at Luther Memorial Church will be determined after one of the pastors of Luther Memorial Church talks with the couple making the request. To prepare for your wedding, the officiating pastor will meet with you to assist you in planning your service of marriage.

It is a privilege to help you plan your wedding.

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For any clarification or amplification of the policies in this handbook or for inquiries about unusual circumstances, please contact the church office.

Scheduling a wedding at Luther Memorial Church

While many customs and traditions have secular origins, the purpose of a Christian wedding is worship before God: to acknowledge God's gracious love in which the marriage of two persons might grow, to hear words of guidance from Scripture, to pray for this marriage and all marriages, and to make a public promise of faithfulness to each other in the marriage vows. Couples desiring a wedding at Luther Memorial Church (LMC) should be willing to affirm these religious purposes when making arrangements for the church and presiding minister. If not, then a civil ceremony before a magistrate might be more appropriate.

Who can get married at Luther Memorial Church?

LMC does not prohibit any couple who can be legally married in the state of Wisconsin from holding a wedding at the church. However, the pastors of LMC may decide this church is not appropriate for a couple's wedding. All weddings are subject to final approval by the pastors. Membership at LMC is not necessary to holding your wedding here.

Though membership at LMC is not necessary to hold a wedding here, application requirements vary depending on whether one of the couple is a member of LMC. The following are considered members for wedding purposes:

- Anyone who is a member in good standing of Luther Memorial Church for at least one year prior to scheduling a date for their wedding.
- A child of a member as defined above.
- Anyone who had been an active participant in the Lutheran Campus Center and is a member of a congregation of the Christian Church. Couples from the Lutheran Campus Center must be recommended by the campus pastor and agree to participate fully in the Campus Center's process for premarital counseling.

Premarital Counseling

Premarital counseling is required for all couples married at Luther Memorial Church. As a major part of the pre-marital sessions, all couples are required to attend a Saturday pre-marital session held at Luther Memorial. These sessions are led by the pastors of Luther Memorial and run 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and includes lunch. The dates for 2010/2011 are as follows:

Saturday, August 28, 2010
Saturday, February 19 2011
Saturday, April 30, 2011
Saturday, August 27, 2011

When your wedding date is scheduled at Luther Memorial please look for a pre-marital session that is a minimum of three months before your wedding date. If you have any questions, please contact one of the pastors at Luther Memorial.

Scheduling a wedding at Luther Memorial Church is a four-step process:

Your wedding is not officially “booked” until all four of these steps are complete.

1. Check the church website, www.luthermem.org, and download the wedding handbook and wedding application form. The handbook should answer many of your questions about holding your wedding service at Luther Memorial. The wedding page also has a link to our church calendar, which you may check for available wedding dates.
2. Contact the church office and speak to Pastor Brad Pohlman to find out if the date you would like is available and to discuss any special circumstances surrounding your impending marriage.
3. If the date is available on the church calendar and the pastor approves hosting the wedding ceremony at Luther Memorial, the couple will need to return the completed and signed Wedding Information/Application, and the date will be taken before the church staff at their weekly staff meeting to make sure that the wedding does not conflict with another scheduled activity and that the appropriate musical and custodial staff are available.
4. Finally, after approval of the wedding date, the couple will need to pay a non-refundable deposit of 50% of the applicable wedding fee. Upon our receiving both the Wedding Information/Application and the deposit, the date is secured for the couple’s wedding. A letter confirming the wedding will be mailed soon after.

Service and Fees

LMC charges a flat fee and does not itemize the expenses of a wedding. The comprehensive fee for a non-member wedding is \$1,900. The following services are included in the wedding fee:

- A presiding minister.
- An organist.
- A sexton who will provide janitorial services and act as sound technician if needed.
- Limited flower stands and candelabras.
- Bulletins/programs published by the church office.

The fee does not cover outside services, such as a cellist instead of our organist. Florists, photographers, and additional musicians or ministers are paid directly by the couple. Unused services do not result in a fee reduction.

The fee is not for rental of the church building but for services provided by LMC. Use of the church is a privilege that accompanies the services of the church. The following church facilities are made available during the four hours allotted to weddings held at LMC:

- The Nave/Sanctuary for the ceremony
- Dressing rooms for men and women
- Our underground garage, accessible from N. Mills St. via Conklin Place.
- Our use of the parking lot behind St. Francis House next door to Luther Memorial.
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A non-refundable deposit of 50% of the total wedding fee is to be paid when the wedding is scheduled. The remaining half shall be paid three weeks prior to the wedding service.

****Please contact a Pastor for member fee pricing****

Payment methods

Checks shall be made to “Luther Memorial Church.” Please be sure to note the couple’s names and the wedding date on the check. Visa and MasterCard credit cards are also acceptable forms of payment.

Date and Time availability

Weddings are normally scheduled to begin at noon, 2:00, 4:00 or 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Sunday weddings are not scheduled except in extremely rare circumstances and with permission of a Luther Memorial pastor. Because of other church activities, weddings are not held at LMC during Holy Week, the week between Christmas and New Year’s, UW commencement weekend (usually the third weekend in May) and the weekend closest to August 15 (student move-in weekend). In addition couples should be very wary of scheduling a wedding on home UW football game days. Parking is very restricted during these times.

Luther Memorial may schedule more than one wedding per day provided that wedding start times are four hours apart.

Planning the Service

The marriage service is one of the most sacred and beautiful of all services of the Church. It is a worship service in which two persons in the company of their loved ones and friends pledge themselves to each other under the blessing of God and are united in Christian Marriage.

Preparations should be made with this in mind. It is the desire of Luther Memorial Church that your wedding be a memorable event - beautiful and meaningful. It is to this end that the following guidelines and policies have been established.

The Wedding Service

The format for weddings at LMC follows the order for marriage in the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Couples, in consultation with the minister, can adjust the service to meet their family needs.

Clergy

Luther Memorial Church will assign a presiding minister to each wedding. Couples may not request a particular presiding minister. Additional ministers may be invited by the presiding minister to also be a part of the service, should the couple request it. Luther Memorial's minister will determine what role additional ministers will play and have final authority on all matters related to the service and the use of Luther Memorial's facilities. Additional ministers may bring their own vestments or borrow them from Luther Memorial.

The presiding minister will also direct the rehearsal. All members of the wedding party, including attendants, parents, additional clergy, readers, ushers, soloists and musicians, are expected to attend unless excused by the presiding minister. **REMEMBER:** Bring your marriage license to the rehearsal! The rehearsal cannot continue without the wedding license.

The presiding minister will meet with you to plan the service, finalize the details of the wedding bulletin and answer questions. Three months before your wedding you will be given the "Wedding Schedule and Building Use" form and the "Order of Service" and "Wedding Party List" forms. The "Wedding Schedule and Building Use" form helps the staff of LMC prepare the building for your wedding. The "Order of Service" information will guide you through decisions about the liturgy and will assist your planning session with your presiding minister. The following sections describe some choices you need to consider in planning your ceremony:

Readings

The couple will work with the presiding minister to select scripture passages to be read during the ceremony. In addition to readings from the Bible, a selection from a secular source may be used if it is in harmony with the spirit of a Christian worship service and with the biblical understanding of marriage. Non-biblical material must be approved by the presiding minister. You may choose one or more friends or family members to serve as lectors. Often several friends or family members can participate by each reading one lesson.

Vows

A list of suggested vows is found in the Order of Service booklet. You may choose one of these, or you may write your own vows. Written vows should be consistent with the biblical understanding of marriage and should make clear that the promises are a life-long commitment. They must be submitted to the presiding minister for approval at least one month before the wedding.

Holy Communion

Holy Communion is an appropriate addition to Christian weddings when couples being married are active participants in the faith community. Couples may choose to include Holy Communion in the wedding worship service, provided that the sacrament is celebrated by the whole community in accordance with the practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA).

Music

Music for the service is under the direction and supervision of the Director of Music and Organist of Luther Memorial, Bruce Bengtson. Couples should schedule a meeting with him at least three months before the wedding to discuss the selection of music. All music used in the service must be approved by the Director of Music.

The music for a wedding typically consists of the following:

- Prelude as the guests are arriving and being seated.
- Processional as the wedding party enters the nave.
- Recessional as the wedding party leaves the nave.
- Postlude as guests leave the nave.
- Appropriate vocal or instrumental solos and congregational hymns, may be used.

All music, whether traditional or contemporary, used in the service will be sacred. Recorded music is not used in worship services at Luther Memorial and some songs are not appropriate for worship services at Luther Memorial. Secular or popular songs of special meaning to you should be reserved for the wedding reception.

In addition to helping you plan the music for your service, Mr. Bengtson will play the organ at the wedding. If Mr. Bengtson is not available to play at the wedding, he will arrange for a substitute organist. The service of an organist provided by Luther Memorial is covered by the flat fee. If Mr. Bengtson is available but you desire a guest organist or other musicians, LMC follows the policy of the American Guild of Organists: a guest organist must meet with Mr. Bengtson, who will assess the musician's competence and experience. If the musician is approved for the service, it will be your responsibility to arrange for and pay the musician's fee directly to the musician in addition to the flat fee paid to Luther Memorial. If you wish to have a friend or family member sing or play at the service, arrangements must be made with Mr. Bengtson when you meet with him to select music. Additional instrumentalists or vocalists are paid directly by the wedding party.

Bulletins

As part of the services of the church, standard wedding bulletins will be printed by the staff of Luther Memorial. Your bulletin outline and wedding party list must be given to the church office **one month** prior to the wedding in order to allow ample time for review and printing. Bulletins will be printed on LMC's regular wedding covers unless the couple provides another cover at their own expense.

Use of the Building

In all matters pertaining to the building, authority rests with the presiding minister. Everyone associated with the wedding, including the wedding party, guests, and contracted service providers, are expected to abide by the policies of Luther Memorial.

Accessibility

A wedding rehearsal is usually held the evening before the wedding and lasts about one hour. The doors will be opened approximately 15 minutes before your scheduled rehearsal. Make every effort to arrive on time.

Wedding parties may use the building for up to, but not exceeding, 4 hours on the wedding day. Use begins 2 hours before the scheduled start of the wedding service. For example, a wedding scheduled for 2:00 p.m. allows the wedding party to use the building from noon until 4:00 p.m. Any deliveries, such as from florists, or set-up by photographers must be completed during the 4 hour window.

Parking is available for the 4 hours of building access. The church has an underground parking garage beneath the Lutheran Campus Center, immediately west of the church facility which holds a total of approximately 20 cars. Parking for guests is also available on weekends on the side streets of Brooks and Mills. Metered parking is available inside Grainger Hall on Brooks Street, one half block east of Luther Memorial Church. When choosing a date for your wedding, please consider that Badger Football games at Camp Randall make parking scarce. Buses on Madison Metro's routes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 serve the area seven days a week.

Our parking garage offers reserved parking and wheelchair accessibility to the lower level of the church. An elevator makes almost all areas of the church wheelchair accessible. Hearing devices for the hearing impaired are also available. Arrangements to use the hearing devices need to be made with the presiding minister prior to the wedding rehearsal.

Church etiquette

- No tobacco or alcohol is allowed on the premises of the church or the underground parking lot.
- No rice, bird seed, flower petals (real or artificial), confetti or similar materials are allowed on church grounds.
- Please leave the church in relatively clean condition.

Nave

All weddings at LMC are held in the Nave which can comfortably hold 400 people. The church Nave is the central location for worship by the people of God. It is a place that is held in reverence because of its purpose. All preparations for the wedding service and the service itself will be conducted in the spirit of this reverence.

Photographs/Video recordings

A photographic record of weddings is often important to the couple being married and their families. In order to assure a proper working relationship between the photographer and the church, the following policy is offered. The use of Luther Memorial Church as a setting for photographs is a privilege, not a right that comes with the employment of the photographer. Every attempt will be made to assist the photographers in accomplishing their task, so long as these policies are observed.

Guidelines and policies preceding and following the wedding service are different from those during the service itself.

Before and after service

Formal photographs of the wedding party can be taken within the sanctuary until thirty minutes before the service and for forty-five minutes following the closing recessional.

Photographers are expected to bring their own extension cords. Under no circumstance shall the furniture of the congregation be moved for photographs. The altar table is used exclusively for sacramental purposes. Nothing should be placed upon that table during the photographic session.

During the ceremony

Photographers and their assistants moving without constraint during the service is an unnecessary distraction and inappropriate in a service of worship. To ensure that worship itself remains the focus during the service, the following policies have been established:

Because the wedding liturgy is a worship service of the church, no flash photographs may be taken during the service. Photographers may take flash photographs as the wedding party enters the Nave, but must not stand in the center aisle and no further than ten pews into the seating area. After the wedding procession has passed that point, the photographer may not take any flash photographs until the wedding party leaves the front of the nave at the end of the service. The photographer may take flash photographs during the recessional but must remain no closer than five pews into the nave.

During the worship service, photographers are permitted to take photographs without flash from the rear balcony, the back of the nave, or the aria balconies if cleared with the presiding minister.

Video Cameras

The same rules (above) apply to video cameras; however, it is possible to put a video camera on a stationary tripod in the west transept or near the Steere organ in the east transept of the nave. This video camera may be activated prior to the service and left unattended throughout the service. The photographers are expected to have sufficient battery time for the duration of the service. The tripod must be at floor level, not up in the chancel.

We ask that the couple ensure that the professionals they engage adhere to these policies. Should these policies be violated by photographers or guests, the presiding minister may stop the service until the integrity of the service is restored.

Decoration

Part of the joy of holding a wedding at LMC is the beauty of the Nave. Little, if any, decoration is necessary. The following section details what items are available from LMC as well as what decoration is allowed.

As part of the flat fee, couples may use LMC's candelabras and candles. Luther Memorial does not furnish candles or candle holders for the lighting of a unity candle but will provide a stand for them.

The church will be open two hours before the ceremony on the day of the wedding, and the exterior sanctuary doors will open thirty minutes prior to the service. Flowers for the wedding party will be placed on a table in the Crossing between the Parlor and Library. Bouquets, boutonnieres, etc. may not be stored in the church Nave. It is the responsibility of the florist or the bridal party to remove all boxes or decoration materials from the church Nave no later than 40 minutes prior to the wedding service. Florists need to take this into consideration as they make plans for any decorations. Luther Memorial

will provide stands for flower arrangements. Arches are not permitted.

One floral bouquet is permitted for use on the high altar for wedding services. Saturday weddings can often make use of the altar flowers ordered for Sunday worship. Note that altar flowers are not always available. If you wish to make the wedding flower arrangements available for the Sunday morning worship services, let the church office know at least two weeks before your wedding.

The color of paraments and vestments used for the wedding service are the color for the season of the church year during which the wedding is conducted. The color is not changed for a wedding service.

The furnishings in the sanctuary may not be moved or altered for the wedding service. The only pieces of furniture to be added to the usual setting are the prayer desk and occasionally a table for the unity candle and/or memorial flowers. The railings, altar, and clergy seats are not to be decorated; however, bows and/or candle standards may be attached to the pews upon consent of the sexton or presiding minister. No adhesive tape or clamps that will scratch the pews or remove the varnish will be allowed. Ribbons may be attached to the handrails leading into the narthex from University Avenue.

Under no circumstances are rice, birdseed, flower petals, or other similar objects to be strewn about the church or its grounds. Aisle runners are also strictly prohibited due to safety considerations.

Couples must arrange to have a member of the wedding party remove decorations prior to leaving our facilities.

Florists are thanked in advance for their cooperation in the observance of this policy.

The Undercroft

Parts of the lowest level of the building accessible from the parking garage (the undercroft) are also available to wedding parties.

The wedding party may provide finger food for participants in the wedding. Prior arrangements must be made for a table to be set up in the Crossing between the Parlor and Library for this purpose. Plates, napkins, cups and other table wear and service pieces must be provided by the wedding party. The wedding party is responsible for leaving the area reasonably clean and for cleaning up any messes made by the wedding party or guests. The sexton will make a trash can available to dispose of unwanted food and dirty tableware and will empty the trash can after the wedding.

No tobacco or alcohol is allowed on the premises of the church or the under-building parking area.

Two rooms will be made available as dressing spaces two hours prior to the wedding. Time for dressing is part of the four hours of building availability. Though the rooms will be ready for use two hours before the ceremony, you are not obligated to use them for two hours. A bride's room (typically the Parlor) will be set aside for the use of the bride and her attendants. If the women of the bridal party choose to dress in this room, a full length mirror will be placed in the room in advance. A room for the groom and his attendants (typically the upstairs Conference Room) will also be available. Often the Library is also open as a lounge for parents, grandparents and wedding party members.

Preparing for your wedding

The following is a timeline of appointments and tasks to be completed to help your wedding at Luther Memorial Church run smoothly. For further explanation of the following tasks, please consult the referenced sections and pages in the wedding handbook.

6-8 months before your wedding:

- A presiding minister is selected for your wedding and will be in contact with you
- Sign up for a Saturday pre-marital class held at Luther Memorial (pg. 5)

3 months before your wedding:

- Contact presiding minister to begin planning the wedding ceremony (pg. 7)
- Contact Music Director Bruce Bengtson to plan music for the wedding ceremony (pg. 8)

1 month before your wedding:

- Final meeting with the presiding minister
- Turn in “Order of Service” and “Wedding Party” forms if you did not do so at your last meeting with the presiding minister

3 weeks before your wedding:

- Return “Wedding Schedule and Building Use” form with payment of fees due.

1 week before your wedding

- Proof the wedding bulletin (pg. 8), which is normally sent to the couple electronically as a pdf for review and direct any changes or adjustments to the Communication and Publication Coordinator.

1 day before your wedding:

- Wedding Rehearsal

The presiding minister provided by Luther Memorial will direct the rehearsal. All members of the wedding party, including attendants, parents, additional clergy, readers, ushers, soloists and musicians, are expected to attend unless excused by the presiding minister. **REMEMBER:** Bring your marriage license to the rehearsal!

Other considerations

Arrange for the reception

If you are planning a reception at Luther Memorial Church, you or your caterer should contact the church office for a setup sheet to indicate arrangements of tables and chairs. The fee for holding a reception at LMC is not included in the wedding fee. Please contact the church office for additional information.

People to assist you

To reduce the stress of your wedding and allow you to enjoy the occasion, we recommend you find someone to assist in carrying out some of the details. Though LMC’s sexton is willing to help in many ways, he is not a wedding coordinator. Either a hired wedding coordinator or a responsible friend or relative will provide tremendous help.

Ushers are vitally important to making the service run smoothly. Two ushers are adequate for 125 guests, but additional ushers are suggested for larger weddings. Ushers should be at their station half an hour before the service begins.

You may also wish to have members of the family or close friends serve as hosts and hostesses, especially at the reception. Wedding hosts and hostesses might also help distribute flowers to special guests.