

Congratulations,

You have made the decision to get married, and to publicly make lifetime commitments and promises to one another that signify your love for each other.

We are honored to share in this special celebration with you. As Christians, we believe God plays a central role in strengthening and enhancing our love to one another. Two benefits of having a wedding at First Evangelical Lutheran Church (FELC), are that you can be assured you are celebrating in an environment that is rich with Christian symbolism. Further, you can know that you will be working with people who can help you express your personal faith in God and love for one another in ways that are rooted in a deep spiritual tradition, while being understandable to those who are celebrating with you.

As we work with you to plan for and host this portion of your wedding day, please know that first and foremost, we see our role at FELC to be that of helping you plan a worship service. In our tradition, that includes language that centers our worship around Jesus and has a structure that calls for certain parts but also offers flexibility as to what exactly goes in them. Most people have not planned a worship service before, so please see the information that is offered here as a way of creating a worshipful experience for your guests that reflects your unique relationship with God and with one another.

As a church, we have much to offer you in terms of hospitality. Our nave is elevator accessible and can seat up to 400 people. If your guest list is larger than that, we have extra room available in our fellowship hall which is audio and video enabled. We are able to offer you rooms for dressing, and space for light refreshments or even a simple reception. We also know that weddings can be a long day for children. If your younger guests need a place to run off some energy, there is a fenced in playground behind the church and a courtyard in the front where they are welcome to play.

In addition to helping plan the worship service for your wedding day, we also wish to help you get started laying a foundation upon which a lifetime marriage can be built. To that end, couples that get married at FELC are asked to meet with the pastor for three pre-marital counseling sessions as well as do some “homework” between these sessions. This work will not only help the pastor to get to know you better before your wedding day, but will also help you to get to know one another even better than you already do.

To get started working together, please read the information that is presented in this packet and return the final page to the church office either in person or via email to firstlutheran.np@gmail.com to reserve your date.

Again, congratulations! We pray we can make beginning your married life a memorable and God surrounded day.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church Council

Rev. Patrick Sipes
Kathy Hinrichs, Wedding Coordinator

Wedding Policy and Procedures
First Evangelical Lutheran Church
(2021)

NOTE to the Bride and Groom- Please share this information with those who are working with you to plan your wedding day such as wedding planners, florists, photographers/videographers, parents, and those in your wedding party.

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 to 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.

Marriage is also a human estate, with vows publicly witnessed. The church in worship surrounds these promises with the gathering of God's people, the witness of the word of God, and prayers of blessing and intercession.

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Overview

The wedding policy and procedures of First Evangelical Lutheran (FELC) have been developed by the Pastor, Wedding Coordinator, Director of Music, Worship and Music Committee, and Church Council to reflect this understanding of marriage.

This policy and accompanying materials have been prepared to aid you in the planning of the worship service on the occasion of your wedding. It explains the wedding policies of First Evangelical Lutheran Church and provides resources we hope will be helpful in managing the many details of preparing for your wedding day. Please read these materials carefully. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the pastor or the wedding coordinator; they are responsible for final interpretation and administration of this policy.

Legal Requirements

You must go to any county courthouse in Nebraska and pick up your application for a marriage license. The Lincoln County Clerk address is:

Lincoln County Courthouse
301 North Jeffers
North Platte, NE 69101
308-535-3500

After the ceremony, the church office will forward the license to the county where it was originally issued. It is recorded there and then forwarded to the Bureau of Vital Statistics for permanent filing. If you would like a copy of the marriage license, please contact the County

Clerk for further details. The church will issue you a ceremonial copy.

The marriage license must be delivered to the church office, along with all forms and fees two weeks prior to the rehearsal.

Scheduling

A wedding is best scheduled at least six months or more in advance and should be scheduled no later than three months in advance so that it can be coordinated with other church activities. Please check with the church office as to the availability of the church building and Pastor for the date you have in mind.

Please keep in mind that during certain times of the year the sanctuary may already be decorated for the church season we are in. If your own decorations play a large role in how you picture your wedding, please consider a wedding during the Season after Epiphany (Jan 6 to Ash Wednesday) or during the Season after Pentecost, (Late May- Late November) If decorations are something you'd rather not worry about, Advent (Late November- Christmas Eve) is beautiful at FELC.

Out of respect for how much the church is in use for worship services and how much they ask from our Pastor, we ask you to please refrain from scheduling weddings on the Saturday before Easter, and on Christmas Eve or Day. However, we leave it to our pastor's discretion whether to preside over weddings on these days.

Officiating

The current Pastor of First Evangelical Lutheran Church will preside at the Marriage Service. With the Pastor's approval, other clergy may be invited to participate in the Service. Other clergy may officiate in the pastor's stead with the approval of the current Pastor and Council.

If you desire an offsite wedding, please check with the pastor for his or her availability for the date, time, and place you have in mind.

Wedding Coordinator

To help free our pastor for other ministry tasks, FELC uses an in-house wedding coordinator. We ask that all weddings hosted at FELC that include music and invited guests use the services of this wedding coordinator. Their services are also available and encouraged for off-site weddings. The wedding coordinator's services are meant to help you plan for and keep track of the many details that are involved in a wedding as well as help you do so while keeping within our congregation's policies. Our wedding coordinator is available to answer questions that you may have along the way and will help you with keeping things on track during the rehearsal and wedding day.

The Wedding Coordinator will wish to meet with you (and your parents should you so desire) approximately 90 days before the wedding to go over some of the larger details and to help you begin to fill in gaps that you may have in your plan. As a follow up, they will want to meet with

you again about two weeks before the ceremony to go over last-minute details.

At the wedding rehearsal, the Wedding Coordinator and the Pastor will lead the participants through the details of the wedding ceremony and ensure that everyone involved understands what will happen on the day of the wedding. On your wedding day, the Wedding Coordinator will help to see that everything runs as smoothly as possible from the time you arrive until after the wedding.

Decorating

The day of the rehearsal and the day of the wedding, the church will be open for preparation, decoration, dressing, pictures, etc.

The church may be decorated prior to the rehearsal provided the sanctuary is not in use.

We ask that arrangements be made to have decorations taken down prior to Sunday morning worship services unless prior arrangements are made.

The church does not have an aisle runner. Any aisle runner must be provided by the couple. Most florist or bridal supply stores have runners for sale or rent. The aisle is 75 feet long, from the first step of the chancel to the entry way door.

It is the responsibility of the wedding party to make arrangements with the florist for the wedding decorations. Ribbons or floral arrangements may be used to decorate the pews. No nails, thumb tacks, glue or tape may be used.

The church has pew bow holders that may be used. Check with the Wedding Coordinator about using these.

We also have 18 pew torches available, and 2 seven branch candelabras, these are all oil filled so no additional candles are needed. These may be decorated but no wires, glue, tape, or tacks, please use only pipe cleaners or ribbon.

The appropriate paraments (altar cloths) for the season or festival day will be used on the day of the wedding. These liturgical decorations will not be removed or changed for weddings.

There are many objects within the worship space that can be moved and many that cannot. Please consult with the pastor or wedding coordinator if you wish to rearrange things. As you move things, please treat them as you would a beloved object given to you by your grandmother.

Photography/Video

Pictures are a cherished part of weddings. Because a wedding is a sacred occasion, certain procedures must be followed. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform the photographer (professional or personal friend) of the policies of the church.

A photographer may take no flash photographs during the wedding ceremony. Flash photos

may only be taken during the procession and the recession. Please ask your guests to refrain from taking pictures during the ceremony. FELC has the ability to livestream your ceremony via Facebook. If this is something you desire, please let us know as you make your plans.

The use of a video camera is allowed, but placement of the camera and operator must be discussed with the Wedding Coordinator and Pastor prior to the rehearsal.

To help facilitate the seating of your guests, photographs should be completed 30 minutes prior to the start of the wedding. Please convey this information to the photographer.

As You Depart

Because they create a mess that lingers for weeks, and are expensive to clean up, rice, confetti, birdseed, real flower petals, etc. may not be thrown either inside or outside of the church. (Silk petals are allowed.) You may use bubbles outside of the church.

Please provide the names to our Wedding Coordinator of two individuals who will be responsible before and after the ceremony for:

Leaving the dressing rooms in order.

Removing flowers, bulletins etc. (immediately after the ceremony).

Disposing of flower boxes, food and beverage containers and any detritus.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal normally takes place the evening before the wedding and is scheduled by the couple in consultation with the Pastor, Wedding Coordinator and the Organist. The rehearsal will help you know where to stand, how the service will flow, and how you will be coming in and out. A good rehearsal can be done in about 45 minutes. In my experience, they take longer when people are late, not engaged in what is going on, and trying to figure out details that could have been settled before hand. Part of the third counseling session is dedicated to working with you before we get to the rehearsal to have a plan for how you wish the ceremony to proceed. For your part, please do what is needed to get people there on time and encourage them to be present to what is happening.

If you have them as part of the ceremony, we need the following people at the rehearsal:

Bride and Groom

Attendants

Ushers

Flower girl/ring bearer

Readers

Parents of the Bride and Groom

Step Parents of the Bride and Groom

Grandparents of the Bride and Groom

Musicians/Soloists

Candle lighters

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drugs

It is the policy of FELC that Illegal Drugs and Alcoholic Beverages other than wine used for Holy Communion are not permitted anywhere on church property including the parking lot. There is a designated smoking area by the office doors. Should any member of the wedding party or family member appear to be under the influence, during the rehearsal or ceremony, the Pastor reserves the right to stop the rehearsal or ceremony and not proceed until the person/persons have removed themselves. Further, in the state of Nebraska, it is illegal to enter a contract, such as marriage, when one is intoxicated. If the Bride or Groom shows signs that they are intoxicated, the wedding will not proceed.

Usage of Church for Weddings

Names _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Date of Wedding _____ Time of Wedding _____

Fees:	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
Building Use	No charge	\$ 500
Pastor	Gratuity suggested	\$ 200
Organist	contact organist for fee	contact organist for fee
Wedding. Cord.	\$150	\$ 200
Sound	\$ 50	\$ 50
Custodian	\$100	\$ 100
Use of Kitchen	\$ 00 (Must provide own consumable items: Paper products, coffee, tea, sweeteners, etc.)	\$ 50 (Must provide own consumable items: Paper products, coffee, tea, sweeteners, etc.)
<u>Damage Deposit</u>	<u>\$250</u>	<u>\$ 500</u>
TOTALS	\$550	\$1,600

Deposit paid \$ _____ (amount) _____ (date) Office Personal initials _____.

Remainder Paid \$ _____ (amount) _____ (date) Office Personal initials _____.

Any fees for soloists or musicians are the responsibility of the couple and should be taken care of separately from the above fees.

A reservation/damage deposit of \$ 250 for members and \$ 500 for non-members is required at the time of the reservation. A wedding is not booked until forms and deposit are received. Provided there is no damage, your refund will be mailed to you 7-10 business days after your wedding. This deposit is non-refundable if the wedding is cancelled within 30 days prior to the date of the wedding.

Balance of all fees is due to the Wedding Coordinator **two weeks prior to the wedding**. Checks need to be made out to the Wedding Coordinator, who will distribute them to the proper recipients on the night of the rehearsal.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by all the guidelines established for the use of First Evangelical Lutheran Church. I understand the reservation/damage deposit will be refunded after the event, provided no other expense has been incurred.

Signed _____ Date _____

Indemnification Agreement

First Evangelical Lutheran Church(First Lutheran) is the Owner of the property located on West 5th Street, North Platte, NE 69101 (Facilities). First Lutheran gives permission to:

_____ (Wedding couple)

to utilize the Facilities for the purpose of a wedding rehearsal and wedding. The use of the Facilities will occur on:

Date of Rehearsal _____ Time of Rehearsal _____
(The rehearsal is usually held the evening prior to the wedding.)

Date of Wedding _____ Time of Wedding _____

In consideration of such use and in addition to any fees assessed for the use of the Facilities:

_____ (wedding couple)

agree to hold harmless First Lutheran together with its officers, employees, agents invitees, and licensees, and to indemnify First Lutheran and to each of its officers, employees, agents, invitees and licensees from any and all damages and losses of any nature whatsoever, whether direct or indirect, arising under, or in connection with, such use.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

By: _____ Date: _____
(please print name)

Bride: _____ Date _____

Groom: _____ Date: _____

Please complete this form and return it to the church office in order to reserve the date for you wedding. You will receive a signed copy of this form once your date is approved.