

# WEDDING GUIDELINES

Information for those wishing to be married  
at South Canyon Lutheran Church



SOUTH CANYON LUTHERAN CHURCH

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## To the Prospective Bride and Groom!

At South Canyon Lutheran Church we rejoice with you as you anticipate your wedding day. We are pleased that you have chosen South Canyon as the place to celebrate your marriage ceremony. We will do everything possible to make sure that it is a joyous event. We want your wedding to be an occasion you will always remember as a beautiful and meaningful day, one full of reverence and dignity. More importantly, we are concerned not only for your wedding ceremony but also for your marriage. The material in this booklet is meant to help you plan not only for your wedding day but also for your life together as husband and wife. Please read through all the material prior to meeting with one of our pastors.

Christian marriage is a covenant of faith — it is a mutual promise of fidelity where husband and wife promise life-long faithfulness to each other. The officiating pastor is present as an official witness and as a representative of the State of South Dakota as well as of the Christian Church. The information in this booklet has been prepared to answer many of the questions you may have and to assist you in making your wedding preparations. Please read through this booklet and familiarize yourselves with its content. As you make your plans please use this as a reference guide.

We pray God's blessings upon both of you as you make your wedding plans!

Rev. Bruce H. Thalacker, Senior Pastor

Rev. Chris Baesler, Associate Pastor

Please Note: We have made every effort to be comprehensive with the material contained in this booklet. However, situations may arise that necessitate further clarification; thus we reserve the right to modify these guidelines at any time. These guidelines apply to all weddings scheduled in the year 2005 and beyond. Questions should be addressed to the church office. Thank you.

## Marriage and the Church

Marriage does not belong exclusively to the Church. While marriage is ordained by God and supported by the Church, it is a social contract, governed and regulated by the state for the purpose of protecting individuals and providing stability to the social order. To the Christian it is more:

- ❖ We believe God ordained marriage to enrich the lives of husband and wife and to provide a sound basis for family life.
- ❖ We believe God's intention for marriage is that it be a life-long relationship based on the commitment by the man to the woman and the woman to the man.

- ❖ We believe God’s self-giving love and faithfulness toward us is the foundation of a committed relationship between wife and husband. In the words of St. Paul to the Ephesians church, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”           Ephesians 4:32
- ❖ We believe God, along with the Church, desires marriage to be a source of faith, joy, love, and fulfillment. Marriages rooted in God’s steadfast love will be the most likely to experience these qualities.
- ❖ The pastor officiates at your wedding, representing both church and state, but it is you who bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife, by your promises before God and in the presence of the gathered community.
- ❖ You make your promises in the presence of God, trusting that God will support you as you work together to fulfill them. Thus, to be married in the church is to recognize God’s intentions for marriage and to affirm them as your own.

### **The FIRST STEPS in Planning Your Wedding**

A. Read This Booklet—jot down questions raised in your mind as you read.

B. Confirm the Date of Your Wedding

Contact South Canyon Lutheran Church to set the wedding date and rehearsal date. Please try to do this at least three months before the anticipated time of the ceremony and before you make other arrangements. Ours is a busy congregation for weddings, particularly during the summer months. On occasion there are congregational events taking place that will make it impossible to hold a wedding the same day. At times, the pastors’ schedules may not allow for a wedding.

No wedding will be scheduled at the church without first consulting the staff at South Canyon, completing and returning the Wedding Information Form and receiving confirmation from the staff that the date and time are available.

Please note that weddings will normally not be scheduled on the following days:

- Sundays
- New Year's Eve and New Year's Day
- Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve or Christmas Day
- Synod Assembly Weekend

C. The wedding information blank must be completed and returned before a wedding is scheduled at South Canyon.

D. Members of South Canyon Lutheran Church have first consideration in the scheduling and planning of weddings.

A \$100.00 deposit is required for members. Non-members pay the entire fee of \$575.00 as a deposit which includes facilities, pastor, organist and custodian. For non-members the deposit is non-refundable for all wedding which are cancelled. For fee purposes, you must be an active member of South Canyon Lutheran Church for a full year prior to your wedding date.

E. Arrange for an Initial Planning Session with the pastor of your choice.

The pastor will consult with you in planning your wedding and in helping you prepare for your marriage together. The minimum time required to complete arrangements and counseling is three months. Ultimately, the pastor has the final say on all wedding plans.

Normally a pastor of this congregation will officiate at your wedding. If it is your desire to have a clergy person from outside the congregation participate, you must first consult with a pastor at South Canyon about such arrangements.

F. Arrange for Premarital Counseling

All couples being married in this congregation are required to participate in premarital counseling sessions. These are designed to help you look at yourself, your partner, and your relationship as you prepare for married life together. It is recommended that you, as a couple, arrange for pre-marital counseling sessions through the Marital Preparation Program of Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota . This consists of two sessions, each lasting one hour. Cost of the program is currently \$75.00. A report will then be forwarded to the officiating pastor. Any proposed wedding date is tentative until these sessions are complete. If you live away from the Rapid City area alternate counseling arrangements can be made with a congregation in your area.

G. Arrange for an Initial Planning Session with the Organist

It is expected that the organist for your wedding will be from South Canyon Lutheran. It is your responsibility to consult with the organist at least three months prior to the wedding. In the event that our organist has a scheduling conflict with your wedding date, substitute organists' names will be made available. Outside organists must be approved by the South Canyon Organist. If help is needed in selecting a soloist, the Organist will assist you. Organist- Sharon Beck (605-718-2603)

H. Secure a Wedding License

South Dakota law requires couples to secure a license to marry. You may apply for a license at the Register of Deeds Office for Pennington County. The license is due to the church office Thursday prior to the wedding.

I. Fees/Gifts for Church Personnel

Use of Church Facilities

Member ..... \$ 0  
 Non-member ..... \$ 200  
 Member or Non-Member Custodial Service ..... \$ 100

Organist

Rehearsal, rehearsal with soloist/instrumentalist, and wedding ..... \$125  
 Each additional rehearsal with soloist and/or instrumentalist..... \$35

Pastor

Suggested minimum ..... \$150

Off Site Weddings

Member or Non-Member..... \$250 plus mileage

Note: All monetary gifts and/or fees should be placed in sealed envelopes, properly identified and are due in the church office a week prior to the wedding.

J. Planning the Wedding Service

As you meet with the pastor to plan your ceremony, you are encouraged to bring ideas about ways to personalize your wedding. Of course, what is done in the service should be appropriate to a service of worship and consistent with the Christian understanding of marriage.

K. Order of Service

*Song	Scripture
Greeting	Sermon
Declaration of Intention	*Song
Affirmation by Family and Friends	Marriage Vows
Prayer of the Day	Exchange of Rings
*Song	Announcement of Marriage

\*Song  
Lighting of the Unity Candle  
(optional)  
Prayers of Blessing  
Lord's Prayer

\*Song  
Benediction  
Introduction of Couple (optional)  
Dismissal

\* Places in order of service where songs may be placed.

#### M. Selecting Scripture Readings

You are encouraged to select scripture that will be consistent with themes you want to emphasize. One or two readings is appropriate. Members of your family or wedding party may serve as readers of the scripture you select. Readings during the wedding service shall only be from the 66 canonical books of the Bible. Below is a list of possible scripture readings:

Genesis 1:26-31	Psalms 128	I Corinthians 13
Genesis 2:18-24	Psalms 145	Ephesians 3:14-19
Genesis 24:50-53, 58-67	Psalms 147	Ephesians 5:21-23
Joshua 24:15	Proverbs 3:5-6	Philippians 2:1-11
Ruth 1:16-17	Proverbs 24:3-4	Philippians 4:4-8
II Samuel 7:29	Ecclesiastes 3:1-8	Colossians 3:12-17
Psalms 33:1-9	Song of Solomon 2:10-13	I Peter 2:4-9
Psalms 33:18-22	Song of Solomon 8:6a, 7	I John 4:7-16
Psalms 37:3-5	Jeremiah 33:11	Matthew 5:13-16
Psalms 95:1-7	Romans 15:5-6	Matthew 6:25-34
Psalms 98	Romans 8:31-35, 37- 39	Matthew 7:24-27
Psalms 100		Matthew 19:4-6
Psalms 115:9-18	Romans 12:9-12	Matthew 22:35-40
Psalms 117	Romans 14:1-3	Mark 10:6-9
Psalms 119:105	Romans 15:5-6	John 2:1-11
Psalms 127		John 13:34
		John 15:9-17

Please share your scripture choices with the pastor doing your wedding.

#### N. Selecting Music

The organist of the congregation will assist you in selecting music appropriate to your wedding service and will offer suggestions regarding vocalists and instrumentalists.

The Manual on the Liturgy-Lutheran Book of Worship reads, "The Marriage Service is a service of worship, and the music therefore must be carefully and discriminately chosen. It should embody high standards of quality and the texts should reflect the

praise of God, the steadfast love of Christ for his church as the foundation and model for love and fidelity in marriage, the invocation of God's presence and blessing." In every case, music selected "should be of high quality and not cloud the mood of the service with triteness or sentimentality."

In summary, if you can answer "yes" to all of the following questions, the music you propose is probably appropriate:

- *Does this music and its text reflect praise to God?*
- *Is it based on or does it reflect a scriptural theme?*
- *Is it appropriate for use in a regular service of worship?*
- *Is the music within the ability of the musicians to play or sing with assurance?*

All music must be approved by the pastor in consultation with the organist. The wedding bulletin must be approved by the pastor prior to its printing.

## Other Details

### • Rehearsal

Rehearsals are to be scheduled when the wedding day is scheduled. It normally occurs the evening before the ceremony but can be held the same day if necessary. All members of the wedding party (bride, groom, bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girls, ring-bearers, ushers, and parents of the bride and groom) should be present at the time scheduled for the rehearsal. The pastor will walk the wedding party through the service from beginning to end. If everyone arrives on time, the rehearsal should not take longer than one hour.

### • Ushers

It is recommended that a minimum of one usher per 75 guests be present to seat guests and family members. More ushers will be needed if you intend to invite more than 150 guests. Groomsmen may serve as ushers.

### • Service Folders

It is helpful, but not necessary, to have a wedding bulletin to inform guests of the order of service and the names of participants in the wedding party. They make nice mementos of the wedding. You should discuss the layout of the wedding bulletin with the pastor. Bulletins are available in Rapid City for purchase at the Christian bookstores. Arranging the bulletin is the responsibility of the couple. Sample bulletins and the order

of the marriage service will be provided to the couple. The Church office will help you print them if desired.

- Decorations

Decorations – If floral decorations and an aisle runner, neither of which are necessary, are desired they must be provided by the couple. Flowers may not be placed on the mensa (main altar surface). The flowers may be placed on two flower stands provided by the church. Altar paraments can be changed to white. If you desire white paraments, please advise the pastor. The communion rail cannot be removed for weddings. Please note that when the church is decorated for a season such as Christmas or Easter, these decorations and/or plants cannot be moved. Other decorations must be discussed with the pastor. No extra candles/candelabras may be brought into the church (except the unity candle.) Candelabras may not be moved from their present location.

- Punctuality

It is courteous to your guests, as well as an aid to a “stress-free” wedding ceremony, if the ceremony begins at the scheduled time. The guest book should be closed 10 minutes prior to the starting time (guests can sign afterwards) and the remaining guests ushered in. The mother of the bride is to be seated at the time the wedding is scheduled to begin. She is the signal to everyone that the wedding is ready to begin.

- Conduct of Guests

As the wedding is set within the context of worship, participants and guests are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. **THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE NOT PERMITTED ON THE CHURCH PREMISES (BUILDING OR PARKING LOT).**

Persons under the influence of alcohol or other controlled substances will not be permitted to participate in the wedding. Smoking is prohibited in the building. **NO FOOD or BEVERAGES** are permitted in the sanctuary at any time.

The pastor reserves the right to halt the ceremony if a member of the wedding party or a guest is behaving in an inappropriate manner.

- Photographs and Videos

Most people contract with a professional photographer to photograph or videotape their wedding. Floodlights or flash are not permitted during the ceremony. Any pictures taken during the ceremony must be done from the back of the church.

Video cameras with tripods may be used where designated by the pastor. No additional sound equipment can be brought in for use during the service. During the

service, microphones will be available for readers, soloists, and the pastor. It is the responsibility of the bridal party to communicate these guidelines to the vendors they contract with. Please inform those operating cameras to refrain from conversation during the ceremony.

Please inform your family and friends that no pictures are to be taken during the service while seated in the sanctuary. Allow those family and friends who wish to take pictures to do so before or after the ceremony. As a matter of courtesy to our reception guests, you should consider taking your wedding pictures prior to the service.

- Sanctuary Seating

The sanctuary can seat 476 people. The sanctuary is air-conditioned during the summer months. The temperature is preset and cannot be adjusted.

- Parking

All vehicles should be removed from the parking lot immediately following the wedding so that these spaces are available for Sunday morning use.

- Bride's and Groom's Checklist of Things to Think About

Keep all appointments promptly, or notify those you have appointments with that you will be delayed and/or make new arrangements. Before finalizing plans, check with the pastor, Church office and/or organist to see if your plans conform with church policy.

Make sure all involved are notified of any change in plans. A small detail may seem unimportant, but could lead to problems.

When choosing your attendants, remember how much room there is at the altar. Don't have so many that you are crowded.

If you have extra people you wish to honor, here are some suggestions that will help make your wedding go more smoothly:

- ❖ Host and hostess (other than parents) to greet your guests in the Narthex and at the wedding reception.
- ❖ Someone to collect and remove wedding gifts from the church.
- ❖ Someone to help with serving of small children and/or elderly guests.
- ❖ Double check all suppliers for delivery time of your wedding purchases. (Cake, flowers, dresses, etc.)
- ❖ Get all legal, medical, and religious documents in order. Bring your license to the church office on the Thursday prior to the wedding.

- ❖ Do as much as you can ahead of time. This will tend to lessen last minute confusion.
- ❖ Gifts to your attendants should be given to them at the rehearsal dinner or at some time other than just before the wedding. (Please do not expect the church personnel to do this for you.)
- ❖ In choosing someone for the guest book and for host or hostess, be sure they have a friendly, out-going personality. They see your guests before you do.
- ❖ Check all sizes and colors of the wedding attire and accessories (men and women) before the wedding day. (It is impossible to make alterations and exchanges just before the wedding.)
- ❖ Have all members of the wedding party, including ushers, at the rehearsal.
- ❖ Give out-of-town guests and others instructions or a map on how to get to the church.
- ❖ Allow plenty of time for yourself and your attendants to dress. Dressing rooms are available. The Peace Room on the main floor for the women and Reformation on main floor or Spirit Room downstairs for the men.
- ❖ Inform all the participants when you expect them to be at the Church for the rehearsal and/ or wedding.
- ❖ Cooperation with all involved in arranging your wedding is of vital importance to having a smoothly run, beautiful, memorable day.
- ❖ Make arrangements for all rental items to be returned.
- ❖ Have a thorough discussion with your photographer so you have a good understanding of what will take place and how long it will take.
- ❖ When working with the videographer, specify what you expect for finished product. Ask to see samples of their work.
- ❖ Tell people involved and those helping what they are expected to do and when. The more they know ahead of time, the more you will be able to relax and enjoy this special day.
- ❖ Arrange for someone to keep the dressing rooms in order, collect personal belongings and clean up the rooms. The church is not responsible for anything left behind. DO Not leave things of value in the dressing rooms.
- ❖ Ushers should be stationed at the sanctuary doors, ready to usher guests inside. They should refrain from visiting, as their attention is needed to keep things moving smoothly.

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