

Wedding Service Manual

Saint Mark Lutheran Church
Kaneohe, Hawaii

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
The Wedding As Worship.....	1
Thoughts Concerning Your Wedding Worship Service	2
Preliminary Arrangements	
Pre-marital Preparation.....	2
Sexual Activity.....	2
Living Together.....	3
Who can be married at Saint Mark.....	3
The Sign of Holy Matrimony	3
The Date.....	3
Special Considerations	3
Wedding Consultant/Coordinator	4
Decorations	4
Wedding Bulletins	4
Photographs and Videos	4
Wedding Service	
Order of Service.....	5
Wedding Music	5
Organ/Instrumental	5
Soloists	5
Service Participants	
The Wedding Party	6
Other Clergy	6
The Attendants (Bridesmaids/Groomsmen).....	6
Flower Girl and Ring Bearer	6
Ushers	6
Other Participants	
Photographer/Videographer.....	6
Florist.....	7
Decorations and Accessories	
Floral Arrangements	7
Candles	7
Aisle Runner.....	7
Church Furnishings and Accessories	7
Rice Throwing.....	7
Documents	
License and Witnesses.....	8
Other Arrangements	
Printed Order of Service	8
Fees and Costs.....	8
The Wedding Worship Service	
The Rehearsal.....	8
The Service	
Arrival Times	9
Bridal Couple's Mothers.....	9
Attendants' Guidelines.....	9
Bride and Escort.....	9
Bridal Party Placement.....	10

The Order of Worship for the Marriage	11
Signing of the Documents.....	12
Reception.....	12
Final Thoughts	12
Couple's Check-List.....	12

Introduction

Dear Engaged Couple:

Congratulations on your forthcoming marriage! This holy union for which you seek the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is one of the most important relationships in the life of a Christian who chooses to marry.

We at Saint Mark Lutheran Church consider it a privilege to serve you and our Lord, Jesus Christ, as you prepare to come into His sanctuary and publicly make your vows, seeking guidance and blessings from Holy Scripture.

As you no doubt realize, this next step in your life will be a big one- something which should not be taken lightly, yet one that comes with many joys and blessings.

We are concerned about you and your future life together in holy wedlock. That is why we strive to do our best to prepare couples seeking marriage build a strong foundation for their marriage. That foundation, of course, is Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

May the Lord bless your preparation time, as you seek to do His will in all aspects of your life.

Please take the time to carefully read through and understand this entire handbook. It will help guide us in the preparation and planning of this special wedding ceremony where the Lord will declare you to be husband and wife. If you have any other questions, or do not understand something included in this manual, please contact the Pastor immediately.

In Christ,

The Pastor and Elders of Our Savior Lutheran Church

The Wedding As Worship

Even though God has established the marriage relationship, there can be marriages and wedding services apart from the church that are in accordance with the will of God. This is because God has provided this relationship as something for the human race as a whole which is not limited to the church. Therefore, the regulation and recording of marriages is the responsibility of the State and not a sacrament or exclusive right of the Church.

Nevertheless, a Christian will want to have both a Christian service and marriage because of his/her relationship with Jesus Christ. As the Christian desires to follow God's will and to give glory to God in all that he/she does (2 Corinthians 5:15-21; 1 Corinthians 10:31), so also he/she will want to have God's blessing on the marriage, begin that marriage in Christ, and give witness to Christ in the wedding ceremony. **The wedding ceremony is a worship service** (much like Sunday worship!) in which the bride and groom make their commitment to live in the marriage relationship as He established it and invite their fellow Christians to join them in worship and pray with them and for them as they begin their marriage.

The object of our worship is the Triune God, **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**. He alone is worthy of our worship and adoration.

All elements of any service of worship will praise, honor, and glorify God. What this means for Christians is that the wedding service is never theirs alone. It is a public act (even though it may be performed privately) which belongs to the worship life of the church. As such, you will want your wedding service to reflect a **distinctively Christian content** so that not only you but everyone present will be enriched and edified. This document represents our heartfelt desire to aid you in planning a worshipful, joyful wedding service.

Thoughts Concerning Your Wedding Worship Service

A Christian marriage is possible only when those who are intent on entering this holy estate have committed themselves to their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The members of Saint Mark Lutheran Church offer the facilities of the congregation to those who have the sincere desire to be united in Holy Matrimony under the direction and guidance of the Triune God. It is to be understood that all who wish to stand before the Altar of God to receive His blessings also profess a sincere faith in Christ, along with allegiance and obedience to Him.

Since marriage is a union of the community of believers--the church--we consider it of primary importance that those who choose to unite in Holy Matrimony are active in their church lives (i.e., Worship, Bible Study, Holy Communion, etc.). It is also expected that the married couple will share their gift of oneness with the rest of the Body of Christ.

If you are not an active member of Saint Mark Lutheran Church, or a sister Lutheran congregation, a meeting with the Pastor will be required before any process to have your Wedding Worship Service here is begun.

Pre-marital Preparation

The pastor and couple will meet to help the couple identify the strengths on which they will build and the growth areas on which they will need to work. The pastor will also provide information to the couple regarding other aspects of married life and the marriage relationship as needed. The primary resources that are utilized are ZoeScore, iMarriage, and Prepare/Enrich. This will also be a time for the pastor to help the couple prepare the wedding ceremony.

We believe that beginning a marriage is not something to be taken lightly. **God has established marriage for the good of society, but also for the good of man and woman who plan to enter that relationship.** Part of that good of marriage also includes specific directions as to how husband and wife are to act toward each other and toward people outside the relationship.

Sexual Activity

God has given the gift of **the sexual relationship to people to be used in marriage** for the purpose of bringing children into the world and for the expression of affection and pleasure between husband and wife. He forbids the misuse of this gift by using it outside the marriage relationship, often called fornication and adultery (Genesis 39:9, Exodus 20:14). He has also encouraged all to **honor the marriage relationship and keep it pure** (Hebrews 13:4).

This marriage relationship begins when the man and woman make their public vows to commit themselves to each other as husband and wife until death parts them. In the case of a church wedding, this is done in the presence of the congregation attending the ceremony and **in the presence of the Lord.**

Christian couples are to exercise self-control during the courting and engagement period. This time should be considered a special time of anticipation- getting to know each other's interests, going to church and receiving God's gifts of forgiveness together, attending social events, spending time with each other's families and friends, and also self preparation and prayer for your future life together.

Couples who are struggling, like all sin, should repent, seek forgiveness from God and one another and by God's grace, amend their life into conformity of God's will. Rejoicing in the forgiveness of sins and with a clean heart, couples should then look forward to their wedding day and their future together as husband and wife.

Living Together

Saint Mark Lutheran Church does not condone couples “living together” before marriage. In cases in which couples have been living together, **special living arrangements must be made to resolve this situation before wedding plans proceed.** Normally these arrangements would include the following: Recognition of this type of pre-marital cohabitation as sin, repentance shown for that sin by the couple, forgiveness from God for this sin, living arrangements changed and the wedding plans continue with a pure heart.

Another option would be for the couple to be separate for a short period and get married immediately (within a month) in a small, simple ceremony. A Blessing of Marriage Ceremony (which is very similar to a wedding ceremony) may then take place on a future date chosen by the couple that could include all of the festivities of a traditional wedding ceremony. This would allow couples that had already made arrangements for a specific date to follow through with pre-planned festivities. Another option would be to seek a wedding from a State Official.

A University of Wisconsin study of 12,000 couples shows that couples living together have an 85% relationship failure rate and their divorce rate doubles to 75%. Our first and ultimate responsibility as a church is to hold true to what Scriptures tell us (mentioned above). We also want to help you build a strong and fulfilling marriage with the greatest chance of success possible.

Who can be married at Saint Mark?

A wedding at Saint Mark is normally a privilege reserved for members of the congregation, or for those seeking to commit to a regular and active membership in the congregation. In this regard, ultimately, it is at the discretion of Saint Mark’s pastoral staff whether a wedding will take place in our church. Holy Scriptures speak only of heterosexual marriage unions; therefore, our pastor will not solemnize, officiate, recognize, or bless same sex partnerships or unions (marriages).

The Sign of Holy Matrimony

The Cross symbolizes the presence of Christ, the rings are emblems of the vows of oneness, and the candles indicate the light of God’s Word that will shine in the union, living under the promise and power of God. The Dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit descending upon the couple through God’s Word, thus bringing Christ’s blessings.

The Date

Saint Mark Lutheran Church requires at least three months' advance notice of your desired wedding date to determine if the church’s calendar and Pastor’s schedule will accommodate the day and time you have selected. Arrangements for Pre-Marital counseling will be made at the time your wedding date is confirmed.

Special Considerations

When considering Saint Mark as the location for your wedding, please be aware of the following special considerations:

- * Saint Mark church is not air conditioned.
- * No smoking is allowed in any of our facilities.
- * No alcohol is permitted at the rehearsal or wedding.
- * You must fill out a facility rental agreement through Saint Mark Lutheran School.

Wedding Consultant/Coordinator

If you choose to contract the services of a Wedding Consultant or Wedding Coordinator, it is to be clearly understood that in matters of the Wedding Worship Service at Saint Mark, he/she will function in an “assistant only” capacity to the Pastor.

Decorations

To maintain proper reverence for the Lord’s house, the decorations may be as simple or elaborate as the couple chooses as long as they conform to the policies given in this document. No decorations (including flowers) may be placed on or attached to the altar, communion rails, or baptismal font. The color of the altar cloths (Paraments) will depend on the season of the church year. All Paraments remain in place during wedding ceremonies. Flowers may be placed within the Chancel as long as proper respect is shown to the altar. If it is the desire of the couple that the flowers be used for worship services following the wedding, notice should be given to the church office so that appropriate acknowledgment can be made in the church bulletin.

Marriage/unity candles are the responsibility of the couple. They can be purchased locally at a Christian bookstore or from a florist. Plastic sheets must be placed under the candles to prevent wax from dripping on the altar cloth.

The Blending of Sands vases are the responsibility of the couple. They can be purchased locally at a Christian bookstore or online. Two sands shall be chosen in accordance with the couple’s wedding colors and a third, white sand, is to also be obtained to signify the foundation of the Christian marriage on the forgiveness and love of God shown to us through Jesus Christ.

White center aisle runners may be rented from outside sources. If bows, ropes, or ribbons are to be attached to pews, wire/metal fasteners and tape are not to be used (they damage the pews). Please ask your florist for special plastic pew clips designed for this purpose.

All decorations should be removed from the church the day of the wedding so that the janitorial staff may clean the church for any upcoming worship services.

Wedding Bulletins

It is helpful, but not necessary to have printed bulletins to inform guests of the order of service and the names of the participants in the wedding. If desired, the church may print a standard wedding bulletin. If desired, special bulletin covers may also be purchased through the church office and the bulletin can be printed on the special cover.

Photographs and Videos

We recognize the value pictures and videotapes hold for a couple. Pictures may be taken in the sanctuary or on the church grounds with flash/special lighting equipment either before or after the service and during the processional and recessional.

Because flash photography is disruptive in the worship service, **no flash photography is permitted during the service itself.** Photographs may be taken during the ceremony without a flash if taken discretely from the back or side of the sanctuary (not in the front or chancel area). Video cameras may be operated quietly from the back of the sanctuary. A stationary video camera may also be placed on a tripod towards the front, right hand side of the sanctuary. No photographer (professional, friend, or family) is allowed to disrupt the worship ceremony. It is the responsibility of the couple to inform their guests of Saint Mark’s policy.

Order of Service

All wedding ceremonies at Saint Mark and by Saint Mark's pastors are to follow the order of service found in our Hymnal (i.e. p. 275 of Lutheran Service Book) and/or Agenda. This includes weddings done at another location.

Wedding Music

The couple should consult the pastor regarding arrangements for an organist, accompanist, soloist, or other desired musicians. All use of musicians from outside the congregation and music to be included in the ceremony must be cleared through the Pastor.

The Pastor uses the following criteria regarding the approval of submitted music:

1. The text should be Christ-centered.
2. The theology of the text shall be in concert with the theology of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.
3. The music should not be associated with any secular, social, political, or cultural event or function which will detract from the sacredness of Christian worship in a wedding service.
4. The timbre, structure, and general “sound” of the proposed music should be appropriate for a Christian church wedding.

The Pastor will be happy to provide the couple with files of appropriate vocal solos, instrumental solos, processional and recessional choices, and the like. The musicians playing for your wedding may also be willing to meet with you to give you samples of appropriate choices.

Organ

The organ should be the principal instrument used in connection with any service of worship, including a wedding. There are other instruments traditionally employed in the church for festive occasions. These include most orchestral instruments (trumpet, strings, etc.). Unless previously excused by the Pastor, all musicians must be present at the Rehearsal.

Under normal circumstances, one of our Church Organists will play for the Wedding Worship Service. This provides a musician familiar with our Church and our organ to serve at the Wedding. If a guest organist, or other musician, is desired, approval must be secured from the Pastor well in advance.

Organist/other musicians/soloist fees must be discussed with each of these individuals.

Soloists

Vocal music performed during the wedding should enhance the worship experience. Asking friends who might be of questionable competence creates tension and is usually unwise. It brings an unharmonious element into what should be a joyous occasion. The decision to have a soloist participate in your Wedding Worship Service should be made in consultation with the Pastor.

Service Participants

The Wedding Party

With the exceptions of your Florist, Photographer, and/or Videographer, all Wedding Worship Service Participants are expected to be present for the Rehearsal in order to assure that your Wedding Worship Service will flow smoothly. It is your responsibility to notify all participants in your Wedding Worship Service to conduct themselves maturely and respectfully during both the Rehearsal and the Wedding Worship Service. Please refrain from “celebrating” prior to both the Rehearsal and the Wedding Worship Service.

Other Clergy

Only LCMS pastors may preach and officiate. Arrangements to have another Pastor lead your Wedding Worship Service must be discussed with our Pastor well in advance, preferably when you schedule the Wedding Worship Service.

The Attendants

We recommend relatives and close friends of your faith be first choice. Experience has shown us that Wedding Parties with more than five attendants (five Bridesmaids and five Groomsmen) create placement problems.

Flower Girl and Ring Bearer

Children selected (Flower Girl, Ring Bearer) should have the maturity to conduct themselves worshipfully. If children will be involved, please consult with the Pastor in the initial stages of your planning.

Ushers

The duties of Ushers at a Wedding Worship Service are quite involved. They are the first participants your guests will see as they arrive for your Wedding Worship Service, and they have very specific duties, which continue through the Recessional. Therefore, those you select to serve as Ushers should not also be Groomsmen. Two ushers are essential for the uninterrupted continuity of the Wedding Worship Service. More Ushers may be used, if desired. Ushers must attend the Wedding Worship Service Rehearsal.

Other Participants

Photographer/Videographer

Most professional photographers are aware of, and accept, the practices of Christian congregations; which is, that NO FLASH PICTURES ARE TAKEN DURING THE SERVICE BY ANYONE! These are permissible before the bride is given and after the bride and groom leave the Altar.

Timed or still pictures (no flash) and/or video recordings (no lights) may be taken only from the rear of the sanctuary during the Service by your official photographer, providing he/she does not interfere with the organist and other musicians/soloists. If you desire pictures of the altar, they must be posed after the service. Kindly let the Pastor know in advance, so he may be prepared.

All arrangements for video recording of your Wedding Worship Service must be cleared in advance with the Pastor. The cameraman will be expected to follow the instructions of the Pastor regarding the placement of his equipment. Your cameraman will be allowed to record from in front of the Church until the entire party has processed into the church, and then he must continue filming from the rear.

Florist

Inform your Florist that arrangements will be coordinated by the Pastor. Please advise the Florist that he/she is responsible for all cleanup of arrangements, runner, and any debris on carpet and/or pews, boxes and other paper trash. This cleanup is to be done immediately after the service.

Decorations and Accessories

Floral Arrangements

Floral bouquets should be prepared and placed throughout the Church under the advisement of the Pastor. He will be able to guide you regarding placement and will insure that your floral decorations are not "overdone" or "crowded". The Pastor will be happy to speak with your Florist, and even meet with him/her at the Church. If such a meeting is desired, it is necessary that the bride be present. If leis will be used for the ceremony, a Maile lei should be provided to the Pastor as well.

Candles

Normally the six candles in the Chancel, the Christ candle, and the two candles on the Altar are lighted for Wedding Worship Services. No decorations are allowed on these candles. Arrangements for placement of any other candles (for a candlelight wedding) must be discussed with the Pastor before any final arrangements are made. This is to be certain that proper precautions are taken with regard to Fire Regulations and Requirements.

Aisle Runner

If you wish to use a white aisle runner, please make arrangements with your Florist. Once the runner is in place, no one will be allowed to use the center aisle prior to the Procession of the Mothers. The Florist is also responsible for removal of the runner, and any debris it may leave on the tile, immediately after the church has been emptied following the Service.

Church Furnishings and Accessories

No special removal or rearrangement of any of the church's furniture and/or accessories can be made for your Wedding Worship Service. The bride and all concerned must accept the church as it is presented; this includes all paraments, banners, placement of furnishings, etc. The wedding party must realize they are responsible for leaving the church in the condition in which it is found.

Rice Throwing

The throwing of rice, birdseed, glitter, paper streamers, or any other items is NOT ALLOWED inside or on the lanai of the church. This activity should be planned for your reception.

Documents

Licenses and Witnesses

It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to obtain the proper License, which will record your marriage in the State Registry.

To obtain your license, you must have:

- (1) a certified copy of your birth certificates (before applying for the license).
- (2) if married previously, a copy of the final divorce decree.

The marriage license is valid for 30 days from the date of its issuance. If Saint Mark's pastor is to officiate at your wedding, we ask that you bring your license to the Church Office on the day you obtain it, whenever possible. These are kept in a locked file after they have been prepared. The license must be in the Church Office at least 3 days prior to your wedding.

Other Arrangements

Printed Order of Service

Saint Mark will assist in obtaining and preparing of the Wedding Worship Service. A catalogue from Concordia Publishing House is kept in the church office. Special bulletins must be order at least three weeks prior to the wedding date.

Fees and Costs

Facilities A utilities and service charge is required by the Church for those not holding membership here at Saint Mark Lutheran Church. The School Office can supply you with information concerning the current fee. A set, non-refundable deposit is required to hold the date. The remainder of the fee is payable before the day of the Rehearsal.

Pastor An Honorarium for the Pastor is usually the responsibility of the Groom. It is an expression of gratitude for the Pastor's services, including pre-marital counseling sessions, the Rehearsal, and the Wedding Worship Service. No special fee is set.

Saint Mark Lutheran Church does not maintain any cost listings for Organists, Soloists, and/or other Musicians. This matter is to be handled by you.

There is a Wedding Information Sheet, which you will complete, to be used by the Pastor in coordinating the details of your wedding. You will also be expected to provide a duplicate copy of the church's form and this manual to your Wedding Coordinator.

The Wedding Worship Service

All members of your Wedding Party must be present at the Rehearsal! The only exceptions are the Photographer, Videographer, and Florist.

The Rehearsal is to start on time! It should be held at a time when all members of the bridal party can be present. Take this into serious consideration when you set the time. The Pastor should not be expected to wait for those who arrive late. The Pastor will be present to answer last-minute questions and will direct the Rehearsal. The Rehearsal is a time of careful preparation to insure proper decorum during the Wedding Worship Service. The Pastor will help the Rehearsal run smoothly, and that all phases of the service will be covered.

The Service

The Wedding Worship Service Should Start On Time! Because of limited space in the lanai, your service participants are asked to go to their designated areas upon arrival, to avoid crowding.

Florist:	Time to be arranged with the Pastor (no less than 2 hours).
Ushers:	45 minutes prior to start of service.
Musicians:	45 minutes prior to start of service.
Photographer:	10 minutes prior to start of service.
Mothers:	10 minutes prior to start of service.
Groom/Groomsmen:	10 minutes prior to start of service.
Bridesmaids:	10 minutes prior to start of service.
Bride/Escort:	10 minutes prior to start of service.

Bridal Couple's Mothers

Upon their arrival (10-15 minutes prior to the start of the service), the Mothers of the Bride and Groom will be asked to wait on the Lanai until it is time for the ushers to escort them in. At this time, any corsages, etc., will be given to them.

Attendants' Guidelines

Groomsmen

1. Groomsmen are to meet in the Pastor's office at least 10 minutes before the service. (If the Groomsmen must arrive earlier to accommodate transportation needs, they will be asked to wait in the Sanctuary.)
2. Groomsmen are asked not to "wander around" prior to the start of the service.
3. Groomsmen enter with Pastor and take their assigned positions for the processional.

Bridesmaids

1. The Bridesmaids will be lined up in order for the Processional in "Classroom 2" or in the "First Grade Classroom" (depending on availability through school office) at the across the Lanai opposite the Church. Because of the limited walking space, it is very important that they not "roam" or move around, so that guests still arriving can be moved from the Lanai and seated quickly.

Bride and Escort

1. The Bride and her Escort are asked to remain in Classroom 2 or the First Grade Classroom (depending on availability through school office) until the Pastor comes to assist the Bride. This will be the signal that the service is to begin.

Placement of Wedding Party

The Placement of the Wedding Party will be determined by the number of participants, in consultation with the Pastor and your Wedding Coordinator, to insure easy “flow” to and from the Chancel area.

INSERT PICTURE OF INSIDE OF CHURCH

The Order of Worship for the Marriage

The following is a basic outline of the Order of Worship for your Wedding Worship Service. Any adjustments, such as hymns, solos, etc., can be discussed with the Pastor. The Pastor will review the Order of Worship with you, and it will be practiced at the Rehearsal.

Pre-Service Music (A solo may be included here.)

Seating of Mother of the Groom

Seating of Mother of the Bride

Ringling of the Bell

Entrance of the Attendants

Entrance of the Bride

Invocation and Call to Worship

Parental Affirmation

Declaration of Intent

Scripture Readings - These will be selected in consultation with the Pastor

Old Testament Reading

New Testament Reading

Gospel Reading

Sermon

Wedding Vows

Giving and Receiving of the Rings

Blessing of the Rings

Exchange of Leis (Optional. A solo may be sung here.)

Lighting of the Unity Candle (Optional. A solo may be sung here.)

Blending of Sand Ceremony (Optional. A solo may be sung here.)

Declaration of Marriage

Prayers for the Couple and Those in Attendance.

Lord's Prayer (May be a solo.)

Blessing of the Couple.

Formal Introduction of the Couple.

Recessional

Signing Of the Documents

The Wedding Licenses and Certificates will be signed following the Wedding Service as pictures are being taken. Please have your two witnesses designated to sign, as required. Documents must be signed in black ink, or they will not be accepted by the State of Hawaii.

Reception

Saint Mark Lutheran Church does offer its facilities for Receptions. For use and rental of any of the Saint Mark facilities, please contact the Saint Mark Lutheran School office.

Final Thoughts

Pray together! Do this every day! Set aside a given time each day when you will listen to God as you read His Word and when you will speak to Him in prayer. Establish your family worship. Keep your Bible in full view, to remind you and your guests that God is Lord in your life and in your home.

Worship together! Do this Sunday by Sunday. In all the things you will not be doing together, in all the places you will not be going together, put this at the head of the list. You will experience the truth of Jesus' Word: "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it."

Join the fellowship of your church! Be active together in your church activities. There is joy in doing things for Christ and for your neighbor. Labor with the love and devotion. Make your church and your community be a place where you, and the children God may give you, can grow in grace and live in peace. May the Savior's love hold you and bless you in your love for each other!

Couple's Check-List

- ___ Read through the entire Wedding Service Manual
- ___ Fill out the "Wedding Information Sheet" and "Request for Wedding" sheet and return to the church office. At the same time, make an appointment to meet with the pastor.
- ___ After meeting with the pastor, call the church office to finalize your request for the wedding/rehearsal dates.
- ___ Meet with the Pastor about music for your wedding. Request musicians (organist/pianist/soloist) from Our Savior, if desired.
- ___ Purchase sheet music, if necessary.
- ___ Share Our Savior's decorating guidelines with your florist.
- ___ Share Our Savior's photography guidelines with your photographer.
- ___ Secure a marriage license.
- ___ Purchase unity candle, if desired.
- ___ Coordinate open/close of church with pastor.
- ___ Pay any fees by wedding date.

May God richly bless your planning, wedding day, and married lives together!