



# *Beginning your Marriage at West Nidaros Lutheran Church*



## **WEDDING DAY GUIDELINES**

### **SETTING THE DATE**

Call the church to schedule your wedding worship service, and, if desired, your reception. The sanctuary, including the balcony, seats approximately 340 people. The dining room can seat 125 guests, and the Family Life Center seats 300.

If Pastor is not available when you call to schedule your wedding, the office manager will visit with the pastor about your wedding date. Please remember that a wedding date is not set until it is written in the church's master calendar and the pastor's personal schedule planner.

We recognize that the date and time for a wedding is often driven by the availability of a reception location. It would be wise to make sure that the church and the pastor are available before making any binding agreements with a reception hall.

The church will try to keep the schedule for the Family Life Center open the day of your wedding so it is the only event at the church, however, it is not guaranteed. If you would like to use the Heritage Dining Room or the Family Life Center for your wedding or rehearsal, it is best to reserve those areas the same day that your wedding day is set.

If there is a special request or a special circumstance, i.e. another officiant that would like to participate in the ceremony, will be dealt with in a case by case basis with the pastor or in the absence of a pastor, will need to be discussed with the church council.

### **PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING**

Each couple will meet with Pastor a minimum of three times, and it is recommended that you begin meeting five months before your wedding day. It is your responsibility to arrange your first session with the Pastor.

Session one is a "getting to know you" meeting. You will also take the Pre-marriage Inventory at this time. This is an instrument of approximately 75 questions which, when scored, provides an important "window" into your relationship, and will become the basis for the remainder of the counseling sessions.

Subsequent sessions will include discussion of your relationship "strengths" and "growth areas," which will assist in your communication with one another. We will also allow ample time to plan the wedding worship, answer questions and address any concerns you may have.

### **PLANNING THE WEDDING WORSHIP**

This term, "wedding worship" may be new for you. Perhaps you are more familiar with the term "wedding ceremony," but this is, in fact, a worship service in which we ask for God's blessing as you begin your married life together. We will keep this in mind – that we will be gathering with family and friends in the presence of God – and allow God to be the focus.

**Wedding Coordinator:** After the wedding date is set, a coordinator will be assigned to you. A wedding coordinator is a member at West Nidaros who is specially trained to help make your wedding day run smoothly. This person will be a valuable resource to you before your wedding and especially on your wedding day.

**The Setting:** If you are familiar with the "seasons" of the church year, then you know that the sanctuary looks different at different times of the year. While most of spring, summer and fall the altar color is green, during December, the colors are blue for Advent. If you want to know the color on your wedding date, just ask Pastor. The altar colors may be changed if needed.

**Décor:** The West Nidaros sanctuary is beautiful all by itself, but you may provide some of your own special

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decorations. Only real flowers are appropriate for placement on or near the altar. We have candelabras and a stand plus outer candles for the unity candle; you will need to provide your own center candle. We only allow candles that prevent wax from dripping if additional candles or candelabras are used.

All of the worship furnishings in the sanctuary will remain in place during your wedding. This includes the baptismal font and kneelers.

**The Order of Worship:** Pastor will provide you with a sample order of worship and possible Scriptures. If you wish to customize your service and/or vows, please work through these with Pastor .

**The Music:** As in any worship service, the selection of music is important. Please keep in mind that this is a worship service. While a popular love song might be very special to you, it might not be appropriate for worship. Sacred, classical or contemporary Christian music are appropriate for a wedding, but some non-Christian songs are fine. Your music selection must be approved by Pastor, who can also assist you in selecting music.

**Musicians:** West Nidaros has an organ, a piano and an electric keyboard, and we have several organist/pianists who might be available to play. If you choose your own organist, then you will need to have one of ours acquaint him or her with our pipe organ. You can have family members or friends as soloists, or we have vocalists or instrumentalists we can recommend to you.

**The Rehearsal:** Typically, a rehearsal is scheduled the evening before the wedding. All members of the wedding party and the ushers are asked to attend, and everyone's promptness is appreciated. If your vocalists are not at the rehearsal, they may do a "sound check" prior to the wedding worship. Please let the wedding coordinator or Pastor know if they will not be at the rehearsal.

**Getting dressed at the Church:** We have dressing rooms available for the bridal party, but these rooms are not able to be locked. West Nidaros is not responsible for valuables left in these rooms during picture-taking or during the wedding worship.

**The Sound System:** West Nidaros has the capability of audio-taping your ceremony but this can only be done by one of our P.A. operators. If you have vocalists, the P.A. operator will set up microphones for their use. All weddings require a P.A. operator.

**Pictures and Video:** Most couples choose to take formal photographs before the wedding. Flash pictures are not appropriate during the wedding worship between the Invocation and the Benediction. Taste and discretion is greatly appreciated. The service may be videotaped, but the size of the altar area does not allow for videotaping from there. We recommend using the balcony area.

## **A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER**

### **Your Marriage License is required.**

Please bring your South Dakota marriage license to the church at least 3 days prior to your wedding. You can contact the pastor or the wedding coordinator to arrange the marriage license drop off. Witnesses are asked to meet with the pastor immediately following the wedding worship service to sign the license. We will mail the signed copy to the Register of Deeds office the following Monday.

### **Your reception can be held here.**

West Nidaros has two rooms available for wedding receptions: the Heritage Dining Room, which seats about 125 people and is located in the basement, and the Family Life Center, which seats about 300 people and is located on the south end of the church. West Nidaros' Family Service Groups are available to serve your reception. Your wedding coordinator or Pastor can direct you to the current person in charge.

### **Drinking/smoking are prohibited on the premises.**

West Nidaros is a smoke-free building, and alcohol is prohibited anywhere on the West Nidaros grounds. All members of the wedding party are asked to abstain from alcohol before the rehearsal and wedding worship, and we reserve the right to alter the events of the day if alcohol or drug use is apparent.

### **Clean-up and care of the building is required.**

The custodian will clean the space used during the wedding worship. However, please be considerate in your use of these spaces. If you provide snacks for the wedding party during preparation and pictures, please dispose of garbage before the wedding worship. Please assign someone to remove all decorations you brought in following the wedding worship. Remember, our congregation worships early on Sunday morning, which means the entire building needs to be clean by then.

**WEST NIDAROS LUTHERAN CHURCH WEDDING FEES**

	Members	Non-Members
Pre-Marriage Counseling	No fee	\$75.00
Use of Sanctuary	No fee	\$500.00
Reception-Heritage Dining Room	No Fee	\$50.00
Reception-Family Life Center	\$200.00	\$400.00
Pastor	\$200.00	\$300.00
P.A.Operator	\$125.00	\$200.00
Wedding Coordinator	\$175.00	\$250.00
Organist	\$100.00	\$200.00
Vocalist	As Arranged	As Arranged
Custodian-Wedding Only	\$100.00	\$150.00
Custodian-Wedding and Reception	\$175.00	\$200.00

*All fees are to be paid three (3) days prior to the wedding. Individual checks are to be given to the wedding coordinator who will distribute them.*