

First English Lutheran Church wedding guidelines

Officiating pastor(s)

One of the pastors of First English will officiate at your wedding. A First English pastor will be chosen to work with you based upon ministry schedules and calendar of events. A letter will be mailed to you following your "Getting Married, Getting Started" session naming your pastor and wedding coordinator(s). Attending worship regularly and becoming a part of the First English community will contribute to a more meaningful wedding day and marriage.

Meet with your pastor at least 60-90 days before your ceremony and then as needed before the wedding date. Feel free to contact your pastor at anytime either by e-mail or phone. You may wish to mail your pastor and their guest an invitation, but please do not assume that the pastor is free to attend or give the blessing at the reception meal. Please confirm that detail with them closer to the wedding date.

Guest pastors are welcome to participate. When the couple desires to have another pastor participate in the service, the couple must get the consent of the pastor at First English. It is customary that the guest pastor preaches while the First English pastor officiates and presides.

Wedding coordinator

First English is proud to provide wedding coordinators for our couples preparing to be married at either site. After your "Getting Married, Getting Started" session, a letter will come to you sharing the name of your wedding coordinator team. Most weddings at the Downtown Site have 2 coordinators while North Site weddings have 1 coordinator.

HINT: Schedule a personal interview with your coordinator 30-60 days before your wedding date. Feel free to contact your wedding coordinator by e-mail or phone at any time with any questions or concerns.

Dressing areas

Both sites have areas for the wedding party to get dressed in. You are encouraged to bring items to the church on the day of the ceremony versus at the rehearsal and locking up over night. First English is not responsible for lost or misplaced items. Personal articles should be removed from the premises immediately after the service.

HINT: Based on experience, it is suggested that hair and makeup be done before arriving at the church. Touch-ups on initial hair and make up are expected so bring what is needed for that purpose.

Candles, runners and unity candle

Aisle candles are an option only at the Downtown Site. There are 12 candles total (six on each side of the aisle). Candles are provided and you do not need to use all 12. Indicate your interest on your wedding ceremony detail sheet or let your wedding coordinator know 1-2 weeks before your ceremony.

Aisle runners are not provided by First English.

The unity candle is an option for couples but is not a required or necessary part of the wedding service.

The ceremony

A Christian wedding is a service of worship, a celebration in which our attention is drawn to God. Your wedding will be a joyful act of worship in which your family and friends will thank and praise God and pray for God's blessing on your marriage. Worship involves active participation for those present. Your guests are encouraged to take part in the wedding service by singing hymns, responding in prayer and praying the Lord's Prayer.

The ceremony will be planned in consultation with the Pastor. Several options are available and some work will be required on your part. One lesson from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament may be read by a lay person of your choosing. Your readers should be prepared to read the lessons at rehearsal. The pastor always reads the gospel, which you are asked to select from the New Testament. The wedding party will be seated during the reading of the lessons.

Music and musicians

Part of the joy of planning a wedding is selecting music for the service. Music chosen should reflect the readings and overall purpose of the wedding service: to express Christian love and the love of the people assembled. Hymn singing during your marriage service is encouraged. "The Lutheran Book of Worship" and "With One Voice" contain many hymns appropriate for a wedding celebration. Texts of all vocal and/or choral music sung before or during the wedding itself must glorify God.

Music that has its origin in movies, theater, and television may not be appropriate in church for a worship service, and may not affirm the Christian understanding of marriage. It is suggested that this music be used at the wedding reception or rehearsal dinner rather than the sanctuary of the church. All music needs pastoral approval at least 30 days before wedding date.

To begin a conversation about music for your wedding, please contact Annie Laver, the First English organist. Annie can be reached at 585-469-4089. A handout also is provided with contact information for soloists and pianists.

HINT: Please arrange your music well in advance of your ceremony (three – six months before your ceremony).

Feel free to visit the following Web sites to hear some possible selections:

www.guideforbrides.co.uk/music

www.lutheran-hymnal.com

Bulletins

All wedding worship services will need a bulletin for the ceremony. Bulletin templates are available on the church Web site at www.felc.com, under the FAQ's link. Use these templates as a starting point. Before bringing to the printer and at least 30 days before the wedding, please have the bulletin approved by your wedding coordinator/pastor. Remember, your guests also are your witnesses and the bulletin allows them an active part in your worship service.

HINT: To ease stress, begin to work on the bulletin 60-90 days before your wedding. Make certain to use full names in the wedding party list and that the names are spelled correctly. Then list in the correct order of procession. Do not let a personal thank you within the bulletin ever replace your personal or handwritten thank you.

Photography/videotaping

Flash photography during the service is not permitted with the exception of the processional and recessional. The sanctuary must be cleared 30 minutes before the ceremony to allow your guests to enter. All preceremony photographs must be completed by that time and all equipment must be removed.

Videotaping is allowed but camera placement must be located in a place agreed upon with the pastor. Please make it a priority to provide any photographers or videographers the First English Lutheran instruction sheets enclosed in your packet.

HINT: **Have the photographer introduce themselves to the wedding coordinator and speak with the pastor before the service.**

As a courtesy to you, your wedding party and your wedding coordinator(s) your photographer needs to have their photography completed one hour after the end of the worship ceremony. Preceremony photography always is an option. The church will be opened by your wedding coordinator two hours before the ceremony but will be locked one hour after the ceremony. Contact your wedding coordinator in special circumstances.

Rehearsal

Everyone involved in the wedding (ushers, bridal party, ring- or flower-bearers, readers and parents) should attend the rehearsal. Rehearsal will start promptly at the scheduled time. Please instruct your wedding party to be on time. Most rehearsals take 30-45 minutes. At the rehearsal, you will need to have your wedding license and any fees for the church and the musicians. All fees and the license will be collected at the rehearsal.

The order of worship will be reviewed as well as people's roles and special decorations or details for the wedding day. The processional and recession will be practiced until everyone is comfortable with what they are to do.

Bring easy-to-read copies of the readings to the rehearsal.

It is a musician's discretion whether or not to attend rehearsal, but it doesn't hurt to ask if they will attend. The church can be contacted for music rehearsal time, if needed.

Marriage license

The marriage license should be given to the coordinator at the beginning of the rehearsal. The license is a legal necessity and is the responsibility of the couple.

The latest date to receive the marriage license is at the rehearsal.

For details about obtaining a license, contact your county clerk.

You must have a valid license or there cannot be a wedding.

Flowers

Please inform your wedding coordinator if you need assistance distributing flowers before the wedding service. As a couple, take time to double-check your listing of who should receive corsages and/or boutonnieres. To avoid hurt feelings, review all grandparents, god parents, personal attendants, etc., on both sides of your families - 20 minutes before the start of the service is not the time to discover you forgot a grandparent or godparent!

HINT: Create labels with the names of the individual receiving corsages and boutonnieres. For example: Bride's grandmother: Jane Doe instead of just stating bride's grandmother.

First English Lutheran does not permit real or fake petals lining the aisles and flower girls should not actually drop flower petals during the procession. Experience has shown that the petals (or the like) have followed the bride down the aisle and into her dress and train throughout the ceremony and pictures. Also, the church tiles have been stained by the inks and dyes from natural and artificial petals.

Rice, birdseed, confetti, pets, etc.

First English Lutheran does not permit the throwing of rice, birdseed or the like. Bubbles are fine. It is also not appropriate to include pets in the wedding worship ceremony.

Alcohol

First English has a policy that no alcoholic beverages may be present on the church property. This includes the parking lot. Also, anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed to participate in the service.

First English Lutheran Church wedding fees **\$500 total** **(\$100 deposit, plus \$400)**

In 2007, FELC began charging a flat fee for weddings at First English. These payments will be included on your church statement as a contribution. At your rehearsal, bring a check payable to First English Lutheran Church for any remaining fees. After paying your \$100 nonrefundable deposit, couples can choose to make payments to the church office or bring one check for \$400 to the wedding rehearsal. The church office will forward your payment to all individuals who are to be paid. If this should prove to be a financial hardship, please contact one of the pastors for an adjusted-fee schedule.

The \$500 fee covers the following:

- Building/facility use fee
- Pastoral fee
- Custodial fees
- Wedding coordinator(s) fee
- Sound technician fee
- 2 premarital workshops

“Getting Married, Getting Started”

“Building a Successful Christian Marriage” workshop with Wes Johnson

Note: The \$500 fee does not cover musician fees. Couples are responsible for hiring musicians.