

# Wedding and Reception Guidelines

First English Lutheran Church  
1243 N. 31<sup>st</sup> St.  
Billings, MT 59101  
(406) 245-4933



Dear Friends,

Congratulations on your engagement! We are honored to serve as the hosts for your wedding. We know that your wedding day is going to be very special, for it will always serve as a reminder of your promises and the commitments you will continue to make to one another. We hope you will be able to grow in your faith and love for each other as you plan and prepare for your special day. Most importantly, we hope your wedding will exemplify God's love for you as well.

Weddings are preferably a congregational and public affair because we, as your community, want to commit to supporting you in your relationship and as you grow as a couple. Therefore, we look forward to serving you in any way we can and we pray the following information will assist you in your planning!

God's blessings and peace be upon you,  
Pastor Stacey

## Wedding Policies at First English

1. Please note that it is required that the current pastor at First English conducts your wedding ceremony. Exceptions will be left to the discretion of the pastor.
2. Since this is a Christian service of worship, we have guidelines for our services that aid in making Christ and God's love for you central to the ceremony. However, we also encourage you to be creative and include your own personal touches to the service. Please confer with the pastor about the Order of Service. Also, make sure to get the date for your wedding on the church calendar right away, and don't forget to call if you postpone or cancel your wedding.
3. Pre-marital Counseling: We require pre-marital work to be done before we marry couples at First English. Please talk to the pastor about your options for counseling.
4. Music: Please choose music that is appropriate for a Christian worship service. Music can be sentimental but be sure it also represents the gift and blessing of marital love.
5. Organist/Musician: Our church's staff organist/musician is appointed to play at all weddings, except by special arrangement. The couple is responsible for contacting the church's organist/musician five to six weeks prior to the wedding date. Set an appointment and talk with her or him before making your musical selections, including vocal solos.
6. Vocalist/Instrumentalist: All other musicians are requested to meet and confer with the organist/head musician.
7. Program Facilitator (or Wedding Host/ess): A paid host/ess is designated by our church to orient the wedding group to our building and assist with the wedding and rehearsal schedules. The pastor will provide the name of the person to contact.
8. Bulletins: The use of bulletins outlining the order of service and the names of participants is helpful and appropriate. Our church administrative secretary can prepare a printed bulletin if desired, or attractive bulletins can be ordered at the expense of the couple. You may also create and distribute your own bulletins; however, please confer with the pastor before printing and ordering them.
9. Wedding License: You, the couple, must obtain your wedding license from the Clerk of Court well ahead of time. If there has been a previous marriage, the date and place of death, divorce, or annulment will be needed when you get your new license.

The license and the certificate from the church will be signed by the pastor and witnesses the day of the wedding.

10. Ring bearers and Flower Girls: If these participants are under six, we request you select an adult to accompany them in their roles throughout the rehearsal and, if needed, throughout the ceremony as well.
10. Rehearsal: The rehearsal takes about an hour and will be arranged with the pastor. Normally, rehearsals are scheduled the day or evening before the wedding. All attendants including ushers must be present. Please be on time and please refrain from consuming alcohol prior to the rehearsal. Also, please bring your marriage license and payments for the facility and professional services offered by the church, so not to forget these details the following day.
11. Reception: Small receptions can be scheduled in the church reception hall downstairs and are usually scheduled for members only, with exceptions. Please note only 60-70 people can sit comfortably in our reception hall. Receptions are served by the Women of First English and a monetary donation for their efforts is expected.
12. Photos: We recommend pictures of the wedding party be taken at least 2 hours prior to the service. Photographers should check in with the pastor and wedding host/ess before the service begins. You, as a couple, are required to ask your photographers to refrain from using flash photography. Please also ask them to refrain from moving too abruptly throughout the service and to not move objects belonging to the church at any time.
13. Decorations: Decorations for the wedding ceremony should enhance the spirit of the wedding celebration. Please be mindful that your decorations or floral arrangements do not cover or obscure the altar and our religious symbols or banners. Please do not place flowers or decorations on the altar itself. Also, please refrain from using glitter or glittered objects. Any taping, tacks, or fasteners need to be approved by the wedding host/ess. Please do not use tacks to fasten anything to our pews.
14. Dressing Rooms: Private dressing rooms are available in our building. The choir room and downstairs rooms are available to the wedding party. Please do not leave your valuables in the dressing rooms. We do not want to be held responsible for lost or stolen items.
15. Post Ceremony: We strongly recommend that you use bubbles or birdseed as opposed to rice upon your exit out of the church. Please confer with the wedding host/ess regarding your plans.

16. Alcohol: Alcoholic beverages are not allowed during receptions at the church. Please refrain from consuming alcohol prior to the ceremony, this includes all family members and members of the bridal party.
  
17. Receiving Line: You may plan to have a receiving line in the narthex after the service, especially if there is no reception in the parish hall. Decide the order of participants ahead of time. Persons in a traditional receiving line stand as follows: Mother of the Bride, Father of the Groom, Mother of the Groom, Father of the Bride, Bride, Groom, Best Man, Maid of Honor, Bridesmaids, Groomsmen, Flower Girl, Ring Bearer, etc.

## The Vows

If you wish, you may write your own vows, provided that you indicate the complete sharing of your lives and resources, which marriage implies, and that you also make clear your life-long promises of love and commitment to one another.

Five models are listed below; each can be modified and rendered appropriate, so to represent your intentions towards one another.

1. I take you \_\_\_\_\_ to be my wife/husband/partner from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come. And with the help of God, I promise to be faithful to you as God gives us life together.
2. \_\_\_\_\_, I take you to be my wife/husband/partner from this day forward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you my whole life and with my whole being.
3. I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband/partner. I promise before God and these witnesses you be faithful to you, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others, as long as we both shall live.
4. I take you \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband/partner, and these things I promise you: I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help, and care for you; I will share my life with you; I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you to better understand our relationship, the world, and God, through the best and the worst of what is to come, as long as we live.
5. I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband/partner, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death do us part. This is my solemn vow.

## **Suggested Hymns:**

- Gather Us In
- Bind Us Together
- When Love Is Found
- Blest Be the Tie That Binds
- Perfect Love

- Beautiful Savior
- Now Thank We All Our God
- Borning Cry
- What Wondrous Love Is This
- Go, My Children, with My Blessing
- Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
- As Man and Woman We Were Made

## **Suggested Bible Readings:**

### *Old Testament:*

Genesis 2:18-24 (Not good for man or woman to be alone)

Song of Solomon 2:10-14 (Arise, my love,...& come away...)

Song of Solomon 8:6-7 (Set me as a seal on your heart)

Isaiah 62:7-9 (God's steadfast love)

Pslams: 33, 67, 100, 117, 128, 136, 150

### *New Testament:*

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13 (Love is patient, Love is kind)

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33 (Loving each other as Christ loves the Church)

Philippians 4: 4-7 (Rejoice and give thanks always)

Colossians 3:12-17 (Love, which binds everything together in harmony)

1 John 4:7-16 (Let us love one another for love is of God)

Romans 15:5-6 (May God...grant that you live in harmony...)

### *Gospel Readings:*

Matthew 5:1-10 (The Beatitudes)

Matthew 5:13-16 (You are the light, let your light so shine)

Matthew 7:21, 24-29 (Like a wise man who build his house upon the rock)

Matthew 19: 4-6 (No longer two, but one flesh)

John 2:1-10 (Celebration of marriage at Cana)

John 15: 9-12 (Love one another as I have loved you)

## Suggested Time Schedule

Pictures taken 2 hours prior to service or directly post service

### 1 hour Prior

Ushers arrive and dress, check in with pastor

### 30 minutes Prior

Ushers in narthex to greet and seat guests: bride's guests on left side facing the altar, groom's guests on the right.

Bridal Party and witnesses sign certificates with pastor downstairs, unless included in the service

### 20 minutes Prior

All wedding party members line up downstairs

Prelude Music begins

Ushers light candles

Ushers continue to seat guests

### 5 minutes Prior

The mother of the bride is seated

The Prelude ends

Processional begins

Minister, best man, groom enter

Bridesmaids enter by themselves, or escorted down the aisle by groomsmen, or met at the first pew by the groomsmen

Ring bearer enters

Flower girl(s) enter

Bride and father enter, bride at right of father

Marriage Service begins



## People to Contact

Organist: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Facilitator or Host/ess: \_\_\_\_\_

Soloist: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Committee for Reception:

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Notes:

## Wedding Fee Schedule for Members

### Use of Facilities:

Sanctuary and Facilities	No Charge
Reception at FELC	Starting at \$100

### Professional Services:

Pastoral Services	\$ 100
Organist/Musician	\$ 100
Soloist:	\$ 30
Custodian	\$ 75
Program Facilitator (Wedding Host/ess)	\$ 75

## Wedding Fee Schedule for Non-Members

### Use of Facilities:

Sanctuary and Facilities	\$100
Reception, by exception	Starting at \$150

### Professional Services:

Pastoral Services	\$ 200
Organist/Musician	\$ 100
Soloist	\$ 30
Custodian	\$ 75
Program Facilitator (Wedding Host/ess)	\$ 75

*Receptions are to be held elsewhere by non-members; though, exceptions may apply.*

*One check to pay all itemized fees should be made out to First English Lutheran Church and given to the program Facilitator on the day of the rehearsal.*

**We look forward to working with you! Blessings as you prepare!**