

Wedding Policy

St. Matthew Lutheran Church Galena

(Effective: August 31, 2021)

Congratulations on your engagement and thank you for considering St. Matthew Lutheran Church Galena ("St. Matthew") for your wedding ceremony. Here are some things to consider before making a final decision to have St. Matthew host your wedding.

We recognize marriage as a way of life created, blessed, and sustained by God. The Christian tradition holds a high view of marriage. This view originates in the Old Testament, and comes to its greatest expression in Jesus' teaching about marriage in the Gospels. In other parts of the New Testament, we find Jesus' teaching elaborated by the Apostles. Faithfulness to Jesus' teaching is our goal in helping couples enter marriage in the context of the Christian faith and the Lutheran tradition. Marriage often becomes the foundation for larger family life, also.

Our understanding of marriage does not require that a ceremony be performed by an ordained minister; marriage is a gift of God which he has not limited to believers. Therefore, when persons desire to be married in the church sanctuary by the pastor of St. Matthew, the church assumes that the couple shares its basic beliefs about God and about marriage in the sight of God. We consider the wedding ceremony a worship service and treat it as such in order to protect the sanctity of the marriage covenant. Otherwise, a civil ceremony would be the couple's appropriate choice.

Pre-Marital Counseling

All couples seeking to host a wedding at St. Matthew must complete pre-marital counseling through the programming of the pastor's choosing. At this time Pastor Blake uses the *Prepare/Enrich* program. This provides a way for the pastor to assist the couple as they move toward marriage, especially as concerns the faith dimension of married life. The pastor reserves the right to not perform the ceremony based on the results of the assessment or subsequent marriage counseling sessions.

Church Usage Application and Fees

St. Matthew has a set list of fees for all aspects of your wedding. Church members looking to host their wedding at St. Matthew do not need to pay for building usage or the pre-marital counseling, but are responsible for everything else. While we are not trying to profit from your special day, we do need to financially cover building usage and pay those who help to make your day possible. The fee breakdown is attached to this contract along with the application for church usage. All fees must be paid in full on or before the wedding rehearsal. Please note that entry to the second floor of the building which houses the church offices, workspace and preschool area is strictly prohibited without advanced approval by the pastor.

Live Streaming

The church's audio/video system is set up for live-streaming capabilities should you choose to request your service be live-streamed on Facebook®. Due to the complex nature of the system – the set-up, monitoring of the stream and audio levels throughout the service, and the editing needed after the service – there is an additional fee for this service. Please see the Wedding Fees Schedule for pricing.

Liturgy

The liturgy for the service will come out of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Additions, subtractions or modifications may be made only with prior approval from the pastor.

Paraments

The paraments are the colored liturgical hangings on and around the altar, as well as the cloths hanging from the lectern. For weddings these will be changed to white notwithstanding the season of the church year for the wedding. Due to the liturgical nature of the congregation, this cannot be changed.

Officiants at the Service

The main officiant at the wedding will be the pastor of St. Matthew. This person will be the one to lead the exchange of vows and sign the marriage license. Pastors from different Christian traditions are welcome to participate in the service with the approval of the pastor. The senior pastor of St. Matthew will dictate which pastor does which aspects of the wedding ceremony.

Tobacco, Alcohol, and drug policy

The use of tobacco products, alcohol, and drugs are strictly forbidden on the campus of St. Matthew. Should anyone in the wedding party or attendees be found using any of these substances while on the church campus, or arrives intoxicated, the pastor reserves the right to expel offenders from the property with the complete cooperation of the wedding couple, or cancel the wedding with no refund.

Music

St. Matthew has both a piano and an organ available for your wedding. The church has an in-house music minister who may be available to play for your service. You are also welcome to hire your own musician for the ceremony. Music for the wedding must be church appropriate; this is not to say that secular music is not allowed. A good rule of thumb is that if you would not feel comfortable playing it aloud in a professional work setting, it is probably not a good choice for your wedding ceremony. Secular vocal music is generally only acceptable before the

beginning of the service or following the benediction. All music selections must be pre-approved by the pastor. Please refer to the *St. Matthew Music Minister Policies and Fees* for more details.

Decorations

You are welcome to bring in your own decorations to adorn the sanctuary on your wedding day. Glitter is not allowed due to the difficult clean-up required afterwards. No decorations are to go on the free-standing altar or the back altar unless approved by the pastor; however, flowers may be placed on the back altar. All decorations must be removed by the wedding couple by end of the day of your wedding ceremony unless required earlier in the event a regularly-scheduled worship service is planned later that day.

Recessional

Any material thrown during the recessional must be biodegradable and easy to clean up. The use of rice and glitter is forbidden. If you need some help to find an alternative, we recommend bird food, bubbles, the ringing of individual bells, or flower petals.

BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT, I HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE that I have read it in its entirety and agree to pay all applicable fees and abide by the policies, rules, and regulations laid out herein. I ALSO HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE that should I, any member of my bridal party, or anyone in attendance at the wedding, break any of these rules and regulations, the pastor reserves the right to not perform the wedding and refuse usage of the church building without a refund.

(Bride's name)

(date)

(Groom's name)

(date)

(Pastor's name)

(date)