

FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH

FELC WEDDING POLICY

First English Lutheran Church (FELC) offers its blessing to the unions of Christian men and women who see the Church and its ministry as an important part of their lives. It is required that one of the parties or their parents be a member of First English Lutheran Church; exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Couples must contact the church office to be placed on the church wedding calendar. Couples will receive a preliminary wedding packet that will answer many of the questions they may have. A nonrefundable deposit will secure the wedding date for the couple.

The desire of FELC is that the church in which a couple is married be a special place where the two can grow in faith and love. The wedding service is first and foremost a celebration of the love of God and is a Lutheran worship service. God's love in Christ makes it possible for us to love one another. In planning this service, lessons, vows and music will be chosen by the couple and approved by the pastor.

The pastors at First English strongly value premarital counseling for engaged couples. Couples are required to complete a Prepare-Enrich assessment, attend a premarital workshop and meet with their officiating pastor, marriage mentors and wedding coordinator before their wedding.

- **PREPARE/ENRICH:** PREPARE/ENRICH is a customized couple assessment completed online that identifies a couple's strength and growth areas. It is one of the most widely used programs for premarital counseling and premarital education. Couples will be sent a link and log-in ID to complete the assessment before the pre-marital workshop.
- **"Building a Successful Christian Marriage" workshop:** This workshop assists couples in preparing for their life together, getting through difficult times and enriching their relationship through prayer and understanding. This is a group workshop and the PREPARE/ENRICH assessment will be discussed. Couples must either attend this workshop, meet one-on-one with a Christian marriage counselor, or attend a Lutheran Social Service premarital workshop before the wedding.

Officiating Pastor(s)

One of the FELC pastors will officiate at the wedding. A FELC pastor will be chosen to work with you based upon ministry schedules and calendar of events. Attending worship regularly and becoming a part of the FELC community will also contribute to a more meaningful wedding day and marriage. Couples meet with their officiating pastor 30 to 90 days before the wedding to finalize the details of the upcoming ceremony. A wedding coordinator also will be assigned.

Marriage Mentors

Each engaged couple will be partnered with a marriage mentor couple. The marriage mentor couple will meet with the engaged couple prior to the wedding to review and help to interpret the PREPARE/ENRICH assessment tool and results. Mentors are FELC couples who have a loving and growing marriage (though imperfect) and have a heart for other couples. Couples will meet with the mentors a minimum of two times for approximately an hour. Contact information will be provided.

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Wedding Coordinators

FELC is proud to provide wedding coordinators for couples preparing to be married at either site. A letter or E-mail will share the name of the wedding coordinator(s). Most weddings at the Downtown Site have two coordinators while North Site weddings have one coordinator.

Wedding and Worship Planning Guidelines are available by contacting the church office.

Wedding Music

Wedding services are truly joy-filled opportunities to worship and praise God for the gifts of love and marriage. Part of the joy of planning a wedding is selecting music for the service that expresses thanks and praise to God. Music should be appropriate for a Lutheran Worship service.

The organist/pianist at FELC is considered the designated organist/pianist for all weddings at the Downtown Site. Musician bookings and fees for wedding services at FELC are contracted directly by the wedding couple and not through the church. All wedding music must be approved by the organist/pianist at FELC. The Wedding Music Selection form must be completed 60-90 days prior to the wedding date and sent to FELC's pastor officiating at the wedding service.

The wedding will be a Lutheran service of worship within the faith community of FELC. Music selected for the wedding service reflects the scripture readings and overall purpose of the wedding service: to express thanksgiving, joy and praise to God. The wedding ceremony is a service of worship, therefore music selections must be sacred in nature. No recorded music is permitted before, during or after the wedding service.

Music that is secular in nature (for example, from movies, theater or television) may not affirm the Christian understanding of marriage and is not appropriate for the wedding service. These pieces include popular love songs and secularized vocal and/or instrumental music.