

Congratulations on your engagement to be married! We of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church are pleased to be able to minister to your special needs as you prepare to be married. We hope this letter will be helpful to you as you begin planning for your wedding day.

The following is the Wedding Policy of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and some commentary on it.

### **Date & Time**

As soon as you can, contact the pastor to establish the date of your wedding. The pastor will try to accommodate you, but the later you make these arrangements, the more likely scheduling conflicts will arise. A date and time for rehearsal will need to be established as well.

Traditionally, weddings are not celebrated during Holy Week. There will be no wedding scheduled later than 6:00 p.m. on Saturday evenings.

### **Pastor**

The pastor of Gloria Dei will be the chief officiant for the service, without exceptions. If desired, other pastors may assist upon approval of the pastor and/or the Church Council. If you would like another pastor/priest to share in the service, please let the pastor of Gloria Dei know their name and phone number so he/she can extend a proper invitation to them. Finally, it is not assumed that the pastor attends the rehearsal dinner or reception, so if you desire the pastor to attend, please send an invitation.

### **Premarital Counseling**

The pastor will not preside at a wedding which has not had adequate planning and preparation. Our hope for you is that you will be preparing for your marriage as well as your wedding, therefore pre-marriage counseling is a must. This ministry to you takes an investment of time. So again, early contact with the pastor is essential. There will be at least three such sessions planned.

### **Organist & Music**

*It is your responsibility to contact an organist or pianist to play at your wedding.* Early contact with the organist or pianist is also advisable. A great deal of music has found its way into the wedding service which, due to both the words and the music, fails to reinforce the spiritual significance of the wedding service. Some music may not be appropriate for a church service. You may wish to reserve these selections for the reception. The final approval of all music at the wedding rests with the pastor, so check all music with the pastor before giving it to your musicians.

### **Wedding Service**

The wedding service is first and foremost a worship service. It is an occasion for worship and praise – it is more than a ceremony for spectators to watch. The focus is on God. That understanding of the marriage service must be clear at the outset of your planning. The conduct of all participants should be in keeping with the solemnity of the service. The Pastor reserves the right to halt any service when a member of the party or any guests in the church are not conducting themselves with propriety. The wedding service will be one approved by the ELCA or the pastor. This also includes vows. The throwing of rice is harmful to birds and we ask that you do not throw rice. (This is actually a Buddhist fertility rite anyway!)

### **Decorations**

Decorations are a simple and creative way to bring added beauty to the worship space. If you plan to use decorations, keep in mind the solemnity of the occasion as you are choosing decorations. Again, a wedding service is a worship service so every aspect of the wedding should reflect the worshipping mood of the occasion. All decorations, aisle runner, candelabra, etc. are to be provided by the bridal party. Please make arrangements as to when the flowers and/or family will be at the church to decorate. Any decorations attached to the pews, altar rail, etc. must be attached by fun tack or some other means that will not mar the wood finish. No thumbtacks, pins, or tape may be used.

### **Pictures**

Please instruct photographers that no flash pictures are to be taken during the service. The exception – as the brides party processes down the aisle and as the wedding party recesses. Time exposures can be taken any time. Photographers should check with the Pastor upon arriving prior to the wedding. Video camera equipment will remain in the balcony. (The wedding party should remain the focus of attention, not the photographer!) Pictures are normally taken after the service, but you may find it more convenient to take them before the service. Either way is appropriate.

### **Fees & Rentals**

There is a \$50 rental fee for use of the building and should be paid no later than one (1) week prior to the wedding (\$100 for use of the Jacobsville Chapel). The Pastor's Fee is \$200 and is due two (2) weeks prior to the wedding. If the wedding is to be held at a location other than the church, then the Pastor's Fee includes mileage for both the rehearsal *and* the wedding. Organists and other musicians set their own fees, so you will want to check with them.

### **Alcohol and Smoking**

The use of drugs and alcoholic beverages is prohibited at the church or on the grounds with the exception of wine for communion. (Note: No wedding will be conducted while anyone in the wedding party is under the influence!) Smoking is prohibited in all areas indoors. Please ask your guests to respect this rule and to smoke outdoors if they need to smoke.

This is a very exciting time for you as you look to make a new beginning with someone special. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. As you prepare for your marriage, you may want to read a devotional book together. We do ask that you attend worship together on a weekly basis as a spiritual discipline in preparation for your life together. Please discuss, and plan carefully and seriously. A well-planned marriage service is a positive beginning for a truly happy and satisfying life together. May your special worship service be a great blessing to all who attend.

In Christ,

Pr. D. J. Rasner  
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church