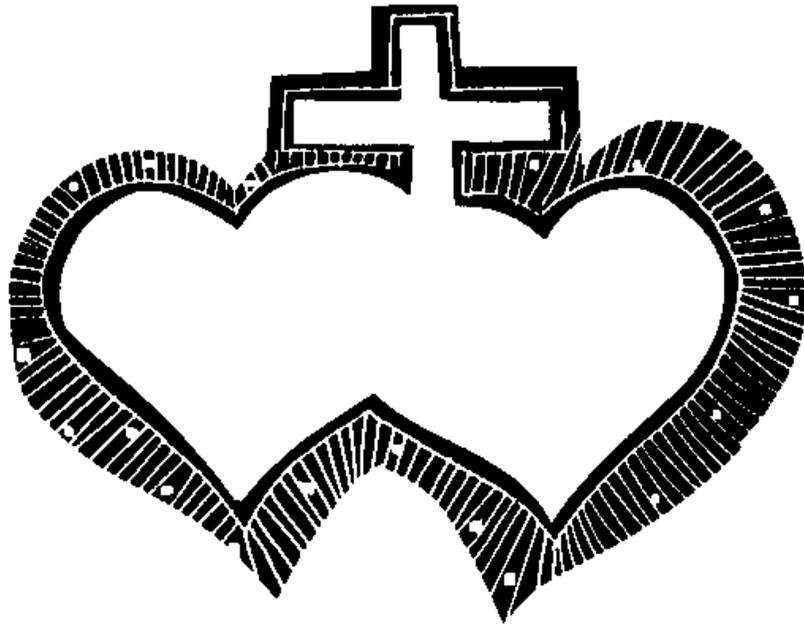


# WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE



*Revised October 2017*

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## INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your engagement! You are at the beginning of an important journey, and we are honored that you want First English Lutheran Church to share in your joy on the day of your marriage.

As you plan this service, we hope these materials will help guide you so that your wedding day will be a joyous act of worship. By attending to details in a timely and thoughtful manner now, you and your guests will be able to focus on celebrating your union in the presence of God on the day you are married.

As you move through this planning process, do so carefully and prayerfully. Consider each detail in turn, and don't worry! All will be ready when the time comes. Remember that marriage is a rite of the church, "intended for the joy and mutual strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family" (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, ELW). The most important thing about your wedding day is not the flowers, the clothes, the pictures, or the party. The most important thing is worshiping the Creator and Giver of all things... the one who makes the party possible! Our sincere hope is that you will put far more energy into preparing for your marriage than for the single day of this wedding!

This booklet will provide an overview of what a wedding service at First English involves. If you have further questions, feel free to contact the administrative assistant or your assigned wedding coordinator. We want your wedding to be a joyful occasion, and we are here to support you as you prepare. Thank you for inviting us to share this important day in your life.

# YOUR WEDDING AT FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH

## To Do List

### As Soon As Possible

1. Fill out “Marriage Request” form online
2. Return paperwork with \$200 deposit
3. Contact pastor to take PREPARE inventory and set up counseling plan

Other:

### 2-3 Months Before Wedding

1. Contact musician to schedule consultation and select music
2. Complete pre-marital counseling with pastor

Other:

### 1 Month Before Wedding

1. Apply for marriage license
2. Pay balance of wedding fee
3. Finalize order of service with Pastor, including selection of readings and vows
4. Plan your service folder/bulletin and get pastor’s approval before printing

Other:

### Within 1 Week of Wedding

1. Contact the church office for any questions, concerns, or last minute changes or challenges.

Other:

## THINKING ABOUT YOUR WEDDING SERVICE

*Before your last session with your pastor, when you will discuss the service, think about what your marriage means to you. How will the things most important to you be reflected in your service? Use the following questions to make some notes to prepare you to plan the service with your pastor.*

The theme we want to lift up at our wedding service, through music, God’s word and the meditations:

Titles of hymns or solos we might want to include:

Scripture lessons we are thinking about:

If you are choosing to write your own vows, include them here. (For suggestions and guidance, see the **Vows** and **Ring Texts** sections on pages 16-19.)

## THE BASICS

### PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS

All who wish to plan a marriage service (members and non-members) at First English Lutheran Church are asked to fill out a Wedding Request Form. This document allows the pastor and staff to learn a little bit about you and to get the scheduling process underway.

For a copy of this form contact the administrative assistant. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. The form is also available online: [www.felcaustin.org/weddings](http://www.felcaustin.org/weddings)

Please understand that dates for events at First English are often booked far in advance, and it is First English’s policy to restrict how many weddings can occur in a single month. Also, the pastor’s schedule for time away is often scheduled up to a year in advance. It is very helpful to have a few different dates in mind when calling the church. Additionally, First English does not schedule weddings at the church during the church year seasons of Advent or Lent.

Weddings on Saturdays in the sanctuary may start no earlier than 2:30 PM, due to current building usage.

## FEES

### Members

The wedding fee is \$300 for members (when one or both parties getting married have been members for at least 12 months). The fee covers a wedding assistant and custodian. It does not cover the PREPARE inventory, the director of music or musician fees, or the pastor's honorarium.

### Non-Members

For non-members, the wedding fee is \$1500. (In the case of a non-member wedding held at a place other than the church, a \$500 fee applies.) The fee covers a wedding assistant and custodian, a building usage fee, and pastoral fee. It does not cover the PREPARE inventory, the organist's fee, or the pastor's honorarium. The pastoral fee covers planning meetings and at least three pre-marital counseling sessions. The building fee helps First English maintain and preserve its historic sanctuary and facilities, which church members support through their offerings and donations.

To include visiting musicians or clergy in your service, First English's pastor must consult with you and approve their participation. As First English's staff must be available to assist guest participants and offer you guidance through the planning process, working with outside participants **will not** change the fee stated above. You will want to discuss appropriate additional compensation for visiting participants (which will not be taken from the church fee) independently with them. (For information about visiting musicians and clergy, see the **Music Guidance** and **Visiting Clergy** sections.)

Your fee covers the use of the sanctuary, the parlor for the bridal party, and the library for the groomsmen. A fee schedule for the use of the fellowship hall and/or kitchen is available from the administrative assistant.

A **deposit of \$200** secures the date you have agreed upon with the pastor. Checks may be made payable to First English Lutheran Church. Please note that your deposit is not refundable. **The balance of your fee is due thirty days prior to the service.**

## SAME SEX WEDDINGS

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America allows congregations and clergy that choose to, to perform same-sex weddings that express the same life-long, faithful covenant as traditional marriage. Since 1989, First English Lutheran Church has invited and welcomed persons of all sexual orientations and gender expressions to participate fully in the life of the church.

## PARKING

FELC has a parking lot on the back side of the building with limited space, and parking along streets around the building. Be aware that if your wedding is on a UT football game day, parking could be very limited on the streets and guests may have to walk one or more blocks.

## ACCESS FOR THE DISABLED

Our sanctuary and restrooms are accessible from the parking lot to persons in wheelchairs. Access to the parlor, where the bridal party dresses, is available via the exterior covered ramp by the parking lot entrance.

## RECEPTIONS

If you are interested in holding your reception at First English, our Fellowship Hall can be reserved, for an additional fee.

Please note that an outside catering service of your choice may arrange with First English to use our kitchen facility, but serving alcoholic beverages is not permitted on the church campus (see **Drug & Alcohol Policy** below).

## DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

The use of alcohol or any illegal drugs anywhere on the church property is prohibited. The First English staff reserves the right to cancel or postpone the ceremony if drug or alcohol use by any member of the wedding party is discovered at the rehearsal or wedding.

Smoking is also prohibited in the church building and on the campus.

## MARRIAGE LICENSE

You must apply for a marriage license in person at a county registrar's office. In Texas you can obtain a marriage license from any county and be married in another county.

You must obtain the license at least 72 hours before the wedding, and no more than 30 days before. Please contact the county registrar's office for more details on requirements for a marriage license. County web sites usually contain all the information you need.

## THE PASTOR

The pastor presides at all weddings at First English, and may honor requests for other clergy to participate and/or preside. When your wedding date is reserved, the pastor will begin working with you on pre-marital sessions and wedding service plans.

First English has a vicar / intern pastor, a seminary student in training for the ministry, supervised by the pastor. Normally, the vicar will participate as assisting minister in weddings.

## VISITING CLERGY

First English welcomes the participation of visiting clergy in wedding services. If you have a pastor from a home church, or an ordained member of your family who you want to involve in the marriage service, please let the pastor know as soon as possible. Participation and role of visiting clergy is at the discretion of First English's pastor.

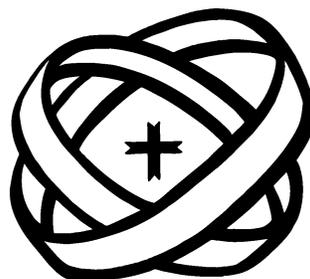
The visiting pastor or a certified counselor may also conduct the premarital counseling, at the discretion of the First English pastor. If you intend to undergo counseling with another pastor or independent counselor, you must inform the First English pastor assigned to your wedding.

It is your responsibility to arrange an appropriate honorarium with a visiting pastor independently.

## PREMARITAL COUNSELING

Three premarital counseling sessions with the pastor is typical. The PREPARE inventory, which is required for all couples married at First English. This inventory is a relationship discovery instrument which will offer insights into relationships strengths and growing edges, family dynamics, and personality traits between you and your partner. It is taken online by each person independently.

**The cost of PREPARE is \$35** and is paid online when you take the inventory. The pastor will register you after your first meeting and give you instructions on how to access the PREPARE web site.



## WEDDING ASSISTANT

The wedding assistant works with the pastor to help ensure the rehearsal and the wedding service will go as planned, so you will have a wonderful wedding. The wedding assistant will open and close the building for the rehearsal and the wedding, answer questions about the facilities and the service, and be available to help guide wedding participants at the beginning and end of the service.

## THE REHEARSAL

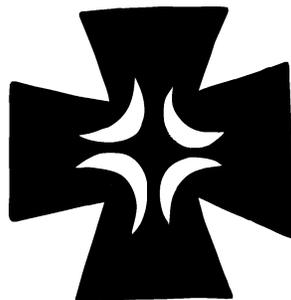
Your rehearsal will normally take place the day before the wedding. Rehearsals last up to one hour and normally begin at 6:00 p.m. Other times may be arranged based on your needs. **It is essential that all members of your wedding party be present and on time,** including parents, grandparents (if possible), and ushers. Make sure the start time is adequate to allow rehearsal participants to travel and arrive on time, and to allow time for your rehearsal dinner or other plans that evening.

## DRESSING ROOMS

Dressing rooms are available for your use on the day of the wedding. The bridal party uses the Parlor, and the groomsmen the Library. This and all other rooms used by the wedding party are to be left in good condition. Any trash should be cleaned up and disposed of properly before the wedding party leaves the building.

You may bring snacks and/or non-alcoholic beverages for the wedding party on the wedding day. These items may not be brought the day of the rehearsal and left overnight. (Please note that First English does not supply plates, napkins, cups, or glasses.) Food and drink may not be brought into the Sanctuary. Care must be taken to clean up any spills immediately, especially in the Parlor, which is carpeted.

It is important to assign a person (who is not in the wedding party) to remove all your belongings from the dressing rooms, sanctuary, and from the narthex gathering area immediately following the service.



## THE SANCTUARY

The Sanctuary and other facilities will be open 30 minutes prior to your rehearsal, and 2 hours prior to your wedding service. First English's sanctuary seats approximately 250 people when full. Additional seating can be placed in the Transept Chapel for up to 25.

During the church year the Sanctuary is decorated with paraments, seasonal banners, and other items used to enhance worship. The *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* church year follows the life of Christ, beginning with Advent, and moves through the Pentecost season to the conclusion of the church year on Christ the King Sunday. To emphasize the proper spirit of each season, paraments are placed on the altar, pulpit, and lectern and worn as stoles by the pastor. Please note the following colors of the various seasons of the church year. Paraments are changed at the specified times of the year and will not be changed for wedding services.

- Advent – blue (No weddings are scheduled at First English during this season.)
- Christmas – white
- Epiphany – white
- Time after Epiphany - green
- Transfiguration – white
- Lent – purple (No weddings are scheduled at First English during this season.)
- Easter – white
- Pentecost – red
- Holy Trinity – white
- Time after Pentecost – green
- Reformation – red
- All Saints – white
- Christ the King - white

## CANDLES

There are two candelabra that will be placed on either side of the altar, and there are two altar candles. No additional candles will be added to the chancel area. First English does not have candles to line the center aisle. Candles may not be affixed to the pews in any way. The central aisle is too narrow to have candle stands placed at the ends of pews.

## UNITY CANDLES AND OTHER RITUALS OF UNION

The unity candle is a modern addition to the traditional wedding service. It may be incorporated into the service if you wish. First English does not provide any candles or holders for a unity candle. A table may be set in the choir area or front of the nave for a unity candle, but the wedding party must provide the holders and candles. Other rituals expressing the marital union may be used in the service, developed in consultation with the pastor.

## DECORATIONS ON THE PEWS

Nothing may be attached or fixed to the pews, or any other surface in the Sanctuary, with any kind of adhesive (tape, glue, etc.) If you wish to have a decoration on the ends of the pews, they may be loosely attached with ribbon or other material. The pews at First English are original to the building, and include decorative carvings by a renowned woodcarving artist. We want to preserve the wood and the artwork for many years to come.

## FLOWERS

Flower arrangements may be placed on either side of the altar on the flower stands, or near the chancel steps. Flowers may **not** be placed on the altar. Artificial flowers are not permitted. No other flower arrangements are permitted in the choir/chancel area. There is room in the narthex (sanctuary entrance) for a smaller arrangement near your guest book, if you wish. Your florist will have access to the sanctuary 2 hours before the wedding service. If you would like any of your flowers to remain in the sanctuary for Sunday services and be noted in the Sunday bulletin, please let the administrative assistant know a week ahead of time. First English is not responsible for flowers left after a wedding, and they may be disposed of the next day.

## PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

Photographs in the sanctuary may be taken before and after the wedding service. If taken before the service, the photographer should be done 45 minutes before the wedding start time. If taken after, you should plan on having your guests proceed to the reception without having them greet the wedding party so you can begin taking pictures as soon as possible.

Photographers may use a flash only at the beginning of the service during the procession, and at the end during the recession. Photos during the service may be taken without a flash from the back of the sanctuary or the side. A videographer may record the service from the back of the church or the side. Photographers and videographers should not interfere with the worship service by walking around or using flash.

## MISCELLANEOUS

First English does not permit the throwing of plastic confetti, rice, or birdseed either inside or outside the church building. Once the wedding party is outside it is permissible to throw paper confetti or flower petals, or to blow bubbles. Also, First English does not permit live animals anywhere in the building, or to be released on the premises. First English does not permit the use of an aisle runner, or the throwing of flower petals on the aisle, as they pose a significant safety hazard. The floor of the Sanctuary is tiled and uneven and a runner can slip, and petals are slippery.

## THE MARRIAGE LITURGY

Below is a template of the order of service for Marriage, taken from the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW), pages 286 – 291. A wedding service may include Holy Communion, if so desired. This is most appropriate for members of the church.

+++

### PRELUDE

### SEATING OF THE FAMILY

### +GATHERING

### PROCESSION/ENTRANCE

*The assembly stands for the bride's entrance.*

### GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

### DECLARATION OF INTENTION

*The minister addresses the couple in these or similar words, asking each person in turn:*

\_\_\_\_ name \_\_\_\_\_, will you have \_\_\_\_ name \_\_\_\_\_ to be your wife/husband, to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love *her/him*, comfort *her/him*, honor and keep *her/him*, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live?

Response: I will.

*The minister may address the assembly in these or similar words. There may be a separate question asking for the support and blessing of immediate family.*

Will all of you, by God's grace, uphold and care for name and name in their life together? If so, answer: We will.

Response: **We will.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Gracious God, you sent your Son Jesus Christ into the world to reveal your love to all people. Enrich name and name with every good gift, that their life together may show forth your love; and grant that at the last we may all celebrate with Christ the marriage feast that has no end; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The assembly is seated.*

**+WORD**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** (See **Scripture** section for options.)

*The assembly is seated. Two or three scripture readings are proclaimed.*

**SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY OR SPECIAL MUSIC** (See **Hymns** section for options.)

*A hymn of the day may be sung, or other music may be offered. If there is no music, the service continues with the vows.*

**Vows** (See **Vows** section for other options)

I take you, name,  
to be my wife/husband from this day forward,  
to join with you and share all that is to come,  
and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.

**OR**

In the presence of God and this community,  
I, name, take you, name, to be my wife/husband;  
To have and to hold from this day forward,  
In joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health,  
To love and to cherish, as long as we both shall live.  
This is my solemn vow.

**GIVING OF RINGS** (See **Ring Texts** section for other options)

Name, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

**OR**

Name, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow.  
With all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you,  
In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

## **ACCLAMATION**

*The presiding minister addresses the assembly.*

          name           and           name          , by their promises before God and in the presence of this assembly, have joined themselves to one another as husband and wife / life partners / *other statements that reflect same-sex marriage*. Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.

*The assembly gives acclamation with applause. The wedding couple may kiss.*

*Other symbols of marriage may be given or used at this time (i.e. unity candle lighting or floral presentation to parents). Special music may be offered here.*

## **MARRIAGE BLESSING**

*The couple may kneel. The presiding minister extends a hand over the couple while praying for God's blessing in the following or similar words. Parents may be invited to come forward and place their hands on the couple.*

Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to endure the cross for our sake, that we may have abundance of life.

By the power of your Holy Spirit pour out the abundance of your blessing on           name           and           name          . Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let your love be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle above their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads.

Bless them so that their lives together may bear witness to your love. Bless them in their works and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death.

Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table where your saints feast forever in your heavenly home, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*Prayers are offered for the joys and blessings of life, family, and relationships, and for those in need. A prayer petition remembering loved ones who have died is a meaningful time to name close family members of the wedding couple.*

*A service without communion continues as follows:*

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be they name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen.**

**OR**

*If the service includes Holy Communion, the pastor will offer the Great Thanksgiving, followed by the assembly praying the Lord's Prayer together. Communion distribution occurs. The wedding couple may participate in distributing communion to the assembly. It is not appropriate for only the wedding couple to commune. During the distribution, special music may be offered or hymns may be sung.*

## **+SENDING**

### **BENEDICTION**

*The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing to the assembly in these or similar words.*

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor, and give you +peace.

*A hymn may be sung or instrumental music played as the wedding group and the ministers depart.*

### **RECESSIONAL**

### **POSTLUDE**

+++

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Below are suggested scripture readings for the wedding service:

### Old Testament

Genesis 1.26-31	<i>Humankind is created by God</i>
Genesis 2.18-24	<i>Created for relationship</i>
Proverbs 3.3-6	<i>Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart</i>
Ecclesiastes 4.9-12	<i>The value of two together</i>
Song of Solomon 2.10-13	<i>The voice of the beloved; Song of two lovers</i>
Song of Solomon 8.6-7	<i>Many waters cannot quench love</i>
Isaiah 63.7-9	<i>God's steadfast love lifts up the people</i>
Jeremiah 31.31-34	<i>The new covenant of the people of God</i>

### Psalms

Psalms 33	<i>The Lord is our help and our shield (33.20)</i> <i>Let your lovingkindness be upon us, as we have put out trust in you (33:22)</i>
Psalms 67	<i>May God be merciful to us and bless us</i>
Psalms 100 (100.2)	<i>We are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture</i>
Psalms 117	<i>Enter the gates of the LORD with thanksgiving (100.3)</i>
Psalms 121	<i>The steadfast love of the Lord</i>
Psalms 127	<i>The Lord keeps watch over you</i> <i>Unless the Lord builds the house</i> <i>Children are a heritage from the LORD (127.4)</i>
Psalms 128	<i>Happy are they who follow in the ways of the LORD (128.1)</i>
Psalms 136	<i>God's mercy endures forever (136.1b)</i>
Psalms 150	<i>Let everything that has breath praise the LORD (150.6)</i>

### New Testament Letters

Romans 12.1-2, 9-18	<i>A living sacrifice and genuine love</i>
I Corinthians 12.31 - 13.13	<i>The greatest gift is love</i>
Ephesians 3.14-19	<i>The breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love</i>
Ephesians 5.21-33	<i>Walk in love, as Christ loved us</i>
Philippians 4.4-9	<i>Rejoice in the Lord always</i>
Colossians 3.12-17	<i>Clothed in compassion, kindness, meekness and patience</i>
1 John 3.18-23	<i>Let us love in truth and action</i>
1 John 4.7-12	<i>Let us love one another for love is of God</i>

## New Testament Gospels

Matthew 5.14-16	<i>You are the light, let your light shine</i>
Matthew 7.21, 24-29	<i>A wise person builds upon the rock</i>
Matthew 19.4-6	<i>What God has united must not be divided</i>
Matthew 22.35-40	<i>Love, the greatest commandment</i>
Mark 10.6-9	<i>They are no longer two but one</i>
John 2.1-10	<i>The wedding at Cana</i>
John 15.9-12	<i>Love one another as I have loved you</i>

## Vows

Below are optional vows:

- (1) I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.
- (2) I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband, I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband/wife, 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.
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward, 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 with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.
- (4) I, \_\_\_\_\_, give you my hand this day. I open my mouth to declare before God, our ancestors, and this congregation, that I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I love you. In bitter days and in days of sweetness, in darkness and in light, in life and until death, I will walk in step with you. Your concerns will be my concerns. Your joys will be my joys. We will share our struggles, and we will share our triumphs. I will be with you all the days of my life. This is my vow. I have spoken.
- (5) I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.
- (6) I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold, for this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.
- (7) I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband; and I promise, before God and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful husband/wife; in plenty and in want; in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in health; as long as we both shall live.

- (8) In the presence of God and this community, I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband; to have and to hold from this day forward, in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.
- (9) In the Name of God, I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better and for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.
- (10) I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I promise to love you, comfort you, honor and keep you, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.
- (11) I, \_\_\_\_\_, with love and joy and an honest and open spirit, make with you, \_\_\_\_\_, this covenant of marriage before God and this community of friends and family. I promise to love and trust you, as we share hopes and failures, and to support and encourage you so that we might grow individually and as a couple. I promise also to nurture you with faith and tenderness in the name of Christ. I shall always try to speak the truth to you and to listen with utmost concern for your desires and needs. I promise to be faithful to you and this pledge throughout our lives.
- (12) I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband, I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband/wife, 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.
- (13) \_\_\_\_\_, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward, 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 with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.
- (14) \_\_\_\_\_, I promise to share with you the sweet things of life as well as the bitter, to love you and enjoy you, to respect and encourage you, to listen to you and promise to strive for a life of courage, faithfulness, and dignity, and to seek understanding among all people, for as long as we both shall live. In all this, I ask God to help and guide us.
- (15) I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband from this day forward; to be with you forever in times of joy and suffering, wealth and poverty; I pledge you my honor, patience and faithfulness, and by the grace of God offer you my unending love.
- (16) I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and before this community to be faithful to you and to share all that is to come. In times of happiness I will share your joy and laughter. In times of sorrow, I will share your tears and pain. I

will forgive as I have been forgiven. I will love as I have been loved. I will join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.

- (17) I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my spouse, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy law; and this is my solemn vow.
- (18) I, \_\_\_\_\_, having full confidence that our abiding faith in each other will last our lifetimes, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded wife/husband; I promise to be your loving and faithful husband/wife; in prosperity and in need, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, and to respect your privileges as an individual as long as we both shall live.
- (19) I, \_\_\_\_\_, give myself to you, \_\_\_\_\_. By the grace of God, I promise to support and care for you. In the love of Christ, I promise to love and cherish you. With the Spirit's help, I promise to be faithful to you, as long as we both shall live.
- (20) I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband, 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 forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will share my life with you, through the best and worst of all that is to come, until death parts us.

General counsel about composing original vows or modifying vows:

- The primary promise in Christian marriage is faithfulness to one another in a life-long covenant that is not dependent on things always being good, happy, perfect, or based on the temporary feelings of romance.
- Keep your vows as simple as possible. You'll be living with them the rest of your life!
- Don't promise anything that is impossible. Avoid words like forever, never, only, always.
- Vows should be mutual: each partner promises the same to the other. Statements of individual expressions of love to the partner may be used in addition to vows.



## GIVING OF RINGS TEXTS

Below are suggested texts for the giving of rings:

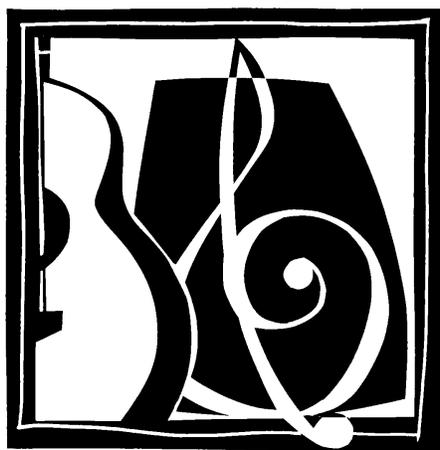
- (1) I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_, take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.
- (3) I give/take this ring as a sign of our marriage covenant.
- (4) This ring I give you, as a sign of our constant faith and abiding love.
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you.
- (6) \_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring, as a sign of the covenant we have made today.
- (7) As this ring has no end, my love for you has no end.
- (8) \_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow. With all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.



## DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND GUIDANCE FOR MUSICAL SELECTIONS

Here is some helpful information to make planning music for your wedding an easy task:

1. It is our practice that First English Lutheran Church that our Director of Music serves as musician for all weddings held at First English, unless unavailable on the date of the wedding. Other organists or musicians may play for weddings. Such requests need to be cleared with our Director of Music and pastor.
2. Contact the Director of Music two months before your wedding date to schedule a consultation regarding all your wedding music.
3. If you are making use of a vocal soloist or instrumentalist it is up to that person to contact the Director of Music directly to arrange rehearsal times. These may require additional fees.
4. Regarding selection of music, especially vocal solos or choral pieces with text: Since the wedding ceremony is a service of worship, selections must be appropriate for use at any church service (i.e. sacred in nature). Save secular selections for use at the reception. It is the responsibility of First English's Director of Music to make final decisions regarding vocal music with text.
5. No recorded music is permitted during, before or after the wedding service. This includes soloist accompaniments on CD.
6. The singing of hymns can be a welcomed addition to the wedding service. Hymns that focus on marriage and community in Christ are especially poignant. (See the **Suggested Hymns** section on the following pages.)
7. Please note that the Director of Music's has a separate fee of \$250. Any additional musicians you wish to hire are your responsibility to pay.



## HYMNS

Below are some suggested hymns. Hymn numbers are for *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

Abide with Us, Our Savior	539
All People that on Earth Do Dwell (paraphrased Psalm 100)	883
Beautiful Savior	838
Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life	816
For the Beauty of the Earth	879
For the Fruit of All Creation (paraphrased Psalm 136)	679
Give to Our God Immortal Praise! (paraphrased Psalm 136)	848
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father	585
In Thee Is Gladness	867
Jesus, Come! For We Invite You (paraphrased John 2)	312
Joy to the World (paraphrased Psalm 100)	267
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee	836
Let All Things Now Living (paraphrased Psalm 150.6)	881
Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus	802
Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me (paraphrased Psalm 136.12)	767
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	631
Now Thank We All Our God	839, 840
O God, Our Help in Ages Past (Psalm 33)	632
Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices (paraphrased Psalm 150.6)	833
Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty (paraphrased Psalm 100)	533
Our Father, By Whose Name	640
Praise, God, from Whom All Blessings (paraphrased Psalm 150.1)	884, 885
Praise the Lord! O Heavens	823
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (paraphrased Psalm 100/150)	858, 859
Sing Praise to God, the Highest Good	871
Songs of Thankfulness and Praise (paraphrased John 2)	310
Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness	488, 489
Ubi Caritas et Amor (paraphrased I Corinthians 13; John 15)	642
What Feast of Love	487

## YOUR WEDDING BULLETIN

If you plan to provide an order-of-service bulletin for your guests, you will probably want to arrange for your own typing and printing. Using the above resources and the advice of the pastor and musicians, you should be able to provide a helpful source of information to those attending the service.

The way you design your service folder, from the format to the colors, from the fonts to text itself, makes a great deal of difference in the worship experience of your guests.

- ◆ When you look at fonts, font sizes and paper color, think about the oldest guests who may attend and consider whether the text is easy enough to read – especially for them.
- ◆ When you choose how much text to include in the order of service, consider how familiar your guests are with the liturgy being used. Unless both families and all your friends are regular church goers, it may be helpful to print all the words spoken by the assembly, including the Lord’s Prayer. Holy Communion services usually need more text and music printed. You may choose only to print the outline of the service. See below.
- ◆ Extensive biographies or personal stories from bridal party members are best saved for the reception. A brief note from the bride and groom, thanking the guests for being a part of this special celebration is appropriate, as is acknowledgment of loved ones whose memories are in your hearts at this special time.

Please bring a draft of your service folder to the pastor at least one week before the service and before the full printing. **The pastor must approve your service folder before it is printed.**

### *Wedding Service Outline*

PRELUDE  
SEATING OF FAMILY  
PROCESSION  
GREETING  
DECLARATION OF INTENTION  
PRAYER OF THE DAY  
SCRIPTURE READINGS  
SERMON  
HYMN OR MUSIC (OPTIONAL)  
VOWS  
GIVING OF RINGS  
ACCLAMATION  
UNITY CANDLE / RITUAL OF UNION (OPTIONAL)  
MARRIAGE BLESSING  
PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION  
LORD’S PRAYER  
BLESSING  
RECESSION (MUSIC OR HYMN)  
POSTLUDE

*Wedding Service with Holy Communion.  
After the Prayers of Intercession the service  
continues as follows:*

PEACE  
GREAT THANKSGIVING  
LORD’S PRAYER  
DISTRIBUTION  
MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION (HYMN OR OTHER MUSIC)  
PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION  
BLESSING  
RECESSION (MUSIC OR HYMN)  
POSTLUDE

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q. When can we have access to the church for the rehearsal and the wedding?**

A. For rehearsals, the building is open 30 minutes before the start time. For the wedding service, the building is open 2 hours ahead.

**Q. Do weddings and rehearsal usually begin at the scheduled time?**

A. We work very hard to respect your time and your guests' time, and we expect that you will, too. Rehearsals need to start on time because of your dinner plans, and because of the staff's personal schedules. Weddings need to start on time for everyone's sake. If the wedding is scheduled for 2:00, that should be the time that the prelude is winding down and the family is about to be seated.

**Q. How long is the wedding ceremony itself?**

A. The wedding service will last approximately 30 minutes. With communion, 45 to 50 depending on the number of guests.

**Q. How much time do we have after the ceremony is over?**

A. We expect the church will be vacant within one hour after your service ends. If your wedding begins at 4 p.m. and is over at about 4:30 p.m., the church is usually empty by 5:30 p.m. Keep this in mind as you decide how to receive your guests and plan any photography that will take place after the service.

**Q. What items can be left at the church on the rehearsal night?**

A. The unity candle, programs, and other small items may be left overnight at the church after the rehearsal, but we cannot be responsible for any clothing, jewelry, electronic equipment, or other valuables. First English Lutheran Church is not responsible for lost or stolen items left at the church. Please note that food may not be left overnight.

**Q. What about my marriage license and certificates?**

A. You may obtain your license and certificate from any Texas county courthouse at least 72 hours in advance, and no more than 30 days in advance of your wedding. Contact the county registrar for more information. County web sites usually have all the information you need. You must bring the marriage license to the wedding and leave it with the pastor to sign, record, and return to the county. Usually, the best man or another friend or family member should be left in charge of getting this to the pastor on the wedding day.

**Q. Does Texas require a blood test?**

A. No.

**Q. Does your church and pastor perform same-sex weddings?**

A. Yes. See section above on **Same-sex Weddings**.

**Q. Do we need witnesses to our wedding?**

A. No. The marriage certificate has a place for optional witness signatures. Traditionally, the best man and maid of honor will sign.

**Q. How do I apply for a name change after the wedding?**

A. When you apply for your name change on your driver's license, certificate of title, or identification card you will be required to present a **certified copy** of your marriage record. **Do not file the application to change your name until after the marriage has taken place.** To change your name you will also need your original Social Security card.

**Q. Can our children be included in the ceremony?**

A. Yes, we welcome them. Talk with the pastor about meaningful ways of including children in the service.

**Q. Are there rules about wedding party size?**

A. Generally, having more than 8 total bridesmaids/groomsmen is unwise. The placement of so many people at the front of the church is visually cluttered and limits visibility of the couple for members of the assembly.

If you have more than eight people whom you want to participate in your wedding, consider allowing them to be ushers or greeters. Having plenty of ushers and greeters stationed throughout the church will make your guests feel welcomed and help them find the Sanctuary, rest rooms, and coat closet more efficiently.

**Q. Is the Lutheran marriage service different from the common conception of marriage services?**

A. The Lutheran service differs from “common knowledge” in a few small ways that you may want to consider. It is not part of the Lutheran liturgy (as you may note in the **Order of Service** section) for the pastor to ask, “Who presents this woman to be married?” (or a variation on that theme). It is no longer appropriate to imply that the bride does not present *herself* to be married, acting upon her own free will. So, the question is not asked of anyone else.

**Q. Should we have Holy Communion at our wedding?**

A. This is a decision you will want to discuss with your pastor. Communion is a wonderful way to celebrate unity, but it can be challenging at a marriage service where those in attendance may not share one religious background. In these circumstances, it may highlight more tension than unity. If you have communion, the whole assembly is invited to commune. It is not appropriate to have communion only for the bride and groom. If you do have communion, the wedding couple will usually assist with the distribution. Communion is administered by intinction.

**Q. Should we have a unity candle?**

A. You may choose to have a unity candle lighting in your service, but you must provide the candles and holders. Other meaningful rituals that express the union of the couple may also be considered. Talk to the pastor about appropriate ideas.

**Q. What is the best way to list the members of the wedding party in the service folder/bulletin? May I include a brief biography of each member?**

A. At the end of the order of service it is appropriate to list all the participants (including ushers, pastor, musician, wedding party, and others). You may want to include a one-line description of each person (i.e. “friend of the groom” or “sister of the bride”). The sharing of biographical information and personal stories is a good thing to save for the reception. It is not a part of the service that needs to be printed for your guests in the worship folder.

**Q. Can we involve our pets in the wedding?**

A. Neither pets nor live animals of any kind are permitted at First English Lutheran Church, except for trained service animals.



## STAFF AND CONTACT INFORMATION

### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Bryan Rust

512-478-1933

[office@felcaustin.org](mailto:office@felcaustin.org)

### WEDDING ASSISTANT

We have several members who serve as wedding assistants.

Contact information for your wedding assistant will be provided.

### PASTOR

Michael Coffey, Pastor

512-478-1933

[pastor@felcaustin.org](mailto:pastor@felcaustin.org)

### DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Bryan Rust

[music@felcaustin.org](mailto:music@felcaustin.org)

*All material in this document can be accessed and downloaded  
from First English's website: [www.felcaustin.org](http://www.felcaustin.org)*



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