

Congratulations!

The marriage covenant between two people who love each other is one of the very best joys. Marriage is a personal covenant between two persons who have committed themselves to one another in a life-long relationship. In marriage, you will pledge to share and grow in your love for one another.

A wedding ceremony in a church setting is a worship service. God's people come together to give thanks for God's goodness and to ask God's blessing on your union.

To help you plan your wedding here at Vasa, we have prepared this handbook. The information will answer many questions in regard to the service, Vasa's facilities, pre-marital counseling, music planning, and fees. It offers suggestions you may wish to consider as you make your wedding plans. It is our hope to support your plans and to provide guidance in the preparations for the wedding ceremony.

Please spend some time reading through this manual and then make an appointment with me so that we can begin our preparation together.

I want to help make your wedding day one of the most special days of your life!

Blessings to you,

Pastor Maureen Hagen

Vasa Evangelical Lutheran Church

15235 Norelius Road (in Vasa)

Welch, MN 55089-4501

office@vasalutheran.org

Church Office: 651-258-4327

Website: vasalutheran.org

Pastor: Maureen Hagen

Cell: 507-271-5270

email: pastor@vasalutheran.org

Wedding Liaison: Gail Strusz-Klein, 651-764-0121

Office Admin. Asst: Emily Peterson, Office 651-258-4327

Custodian: Melissa McCann

Vasa Lutheran Church, ELCA
WEDDING HANDBOOK

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COUPLES' CHECKLIST

(For wedding plans related to the church)

- _____ Carefully reviewed this handbook.
- _____ Contacted the Pastor and the Church Office regarding the availability of the wedding date and time.
- _____ Wedding Contract submitted to the Church Office along with the deposit.
- _____ Rehearsal date and time set.
- _____ Set up a date to meet with Pastor and Wedding Liaison.
- _____ Entire wedding party, including parents have been notified to be at the rehearsal.
- _____ Organist, pianist, soloist, or other musicians have been secured for the wedding and rehearsal.
- _____ Music has been agreed upon and given to the musicians.
- _____ Pre-marital counseling has been arranged with Pastor.
- _____ All the necessary fees have been paid to the church.
- _____ License has been obtained and given to Pastor.
- _____ Marriage Service information has been arranged with Pastor.
- _____ Wedding program has been given to the Pastor.
- _____ Florist has been arranged and decoration time has been set.
- _____ Photographer and videographer have been secured and arrangements made for pictures.
- _____ All necessary instructions and arrangements have been shared with the Wedding Liaison and Pastor.

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

Vasa Lutheran Congregation has a policy that the pastor of the congregation oversees all weddings held within the church. At the discretion of the Vasa Lutheran pastor, other Christian clergy may officiate at a wedding. Currently, Rev. Maureen Hagen is the called pastor at Vasa Congregation. It is her responsibility to make sure that the wedding officiant holds the sanctity of the ceremony and building in high regard.

PREPARE and Pastoral Counseling Sessions

If it is your desire to have Vasa's current pastor, Rev. Maureen Hagen, officiate at your wedding, the day and time must be mutually agreed upon. Her counseling practice is as follows:

1. Four meetings occur spaced one to two weeks apart. These meetings can occur at any mutually agreed upon location, but mileage should be a consideration.
2. These meetings typically last 1 to 1.5 hours. The primary emphasis is on enriching the spiritual dynamics of the couple.
3. By the end of the fourth meeting the wedding ceremony will be planned.
4. These counseling sessions are intended to help Pastor Maureen get to know you and to share a sermon/meditation that is specific to you as a couple.
5. These counseling sessions will NOT fulfill the requirement for a reduced marriage license fee.

Marriage License Discount in Minnesota

Couples completing 12 hours of premarital counseling with a pastor or certified counselor qualify to receive a reduced marriage license fee with the State of Minnesota. At this writing, a marriage license without counseling costs \$115. With counseling certification the cost is \$40.

WEDDING LIAISON

Prior to the day of the wedding, the Wedding Liaison will meet with you individually, or mutually with the pastor, at the church to talk about the details of your wedding. She will be at the church early on the day of your wedding to help arrange any last minute details. She and the pastor will help you be aware of the many details that are involved in planning a wedding at Vasa Lutheran Church.

The Wedding Liaison will be of assistance to you at the time of wedding rehearsal, usually held the evening before the wedding. The pastor will be in charge of the wedding rehearsal. Both the Wedding Liaison and the pastor will provide you guidance in arranging the wedding party at the altar and walking down the aisle so that everything flows smoothly. All weddings at Vasa are required to use the Wedding Liaison.

The Wedding Liaison's fee will be based on the number of hours spent planning with the wedding couple, attending the rehearsal and the wedding. The price quoted in the wedding contract covers 10 hours of time with the Liaison. If you need more than 10 hours of time, each hour will be billed at \$20 per hour.

PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

Keep in mind that your wedding is a worship service. As a couple, you and the pastor will work together to plan your wedding service, to help make it as personalized as possible, but the pastor has the final decision of what is and what is not appropriate. The pastor will provide you with suitable outlines for the marriage service based on common forms currently in use in the church. You will be involved in decisions regarding the music, scripture lessons, vows, and prayers. (Suggestions are included on the following pages of the handbook.)

If you desire Holy Communion during the wedding service, we would be more than happy to include communion in the service. Holy Communion is offered for all the baptized who commune in their own congregation. We will not be able to commune only the wedding couple or just the wedding party. It must be offered for all. Because a wedding is often a gathering of people of diverse backgrounds, a special effort will be made to enable all to feel included and comfortable with their sharing in Holy Communion. Care must be given when deciding whether or not to offer Holy Communion at your wedding.

CHURCH BUILDING

Limited space is available to use as dressing rooms. The bride's room is located in the balcony area for the bride and her attendants. Time of arrival should be cleared with the Wedding Liaison. The groom, groomsmen, and the ushers are asked to come dressed and ready for the ceremony.

Seating information: The church seats approximately 300 people and the aisle length is 75 feet.

GAZEBO

The picnic grounds and gazebo can also be used for a wedding ceremony. The security deposit of \$250 will reserve the gazebo for the date you want. Vasa will not provide a sound system at the gazebo, but one is recommended because of the road noise. There are no bathroom facilities except for a porta potty. If you want the church opened for use of the bathroom and bride's room, the custodian charge will apply, payable one week before the wedding date. The wedding liaison charge (posted in the contract) will cover a meeting ahead of the wedding and attendance at the wedding in case of problems. In case of rain, the church is available for the price listed in the contract. The security deposit could be used for this charge if the decision to be inside is made at the last minute. Otherwise, the security deposit will be refunded after the date of the wedding.

MUSIC

Selecting beautiful and appropriate music is an important step in planning your wedding. The bride and groom should remember that certain music does not fit within the context of a worship service. A good "rule of thumb" is not to pick music that you might use at your wedding reception, just as you won't likely pick religious music for musicians to play at your wedding reception. Please consult with Pastor about music selections used for the processional, recessional, solos, or congregational hymns.

The church building has an organ, a baby grand in the front of the church and an upright in the balcony. Guest organists and pianists are welcome, but we like wedding couples to offer Vasa's organist/pianist the opportunity to play at your wedding.

Live-streaming and subsequent recording of the wedding service is available through the church. Contact the pastor if you have questions about our microphones or are considering bringing electronic equipment (including computers, MP3 players, iPad, etc). The Vasa congregation has a group of trained A/V technicians. It is advisable to hire one of them to manage your A/V needs. *The final decision for all music lies with the pastor of Vasa Lutheran Church.****

WEDDING BULLETINS

Bulletins assist in letting the congregation know who the participants are. Although it is the decision of the couple, wedding bulletins are a nice addition to the wedding. We do not have the capability or the staff to produce/reproduce your bulletins at the church. If you have questions about the order of service, please contact the pastor. The following comments are suggested for printing your bulletin:

*Please remain seated during the processional.

*Please, no flash pictures during the wedding.

READERS

You may have some special friends or relatives that you would like to be readers. If you invite a reader, make sure that they have the text(s) ahead of time from the Bible translation that you would like them to read. If there are questions about pronunciations, please ask the pastor for help.

FLOWERS & DECORATIONS

Altar flowers can be placed in the church's altar vases or matching vases provided by your florist. Vase liners must be used with the church altar vases. Please notify the Wedding Liaison one-month prior to your wedding as to whether the altar flowers will be left for the Sunday service. The information can then be added to the church bulletin.

The altar candles are always in place and used at all weddings. Vasa Lutheran Church has 10 aisle candleholders. Vasa Lutheran Church provides the candles for the aisle candleholders.

The altar cross and paraments (colored cloths), and linens remain on the altar for all weddings, as well as the parament cloths on the lectern and the pulpit.

If an aisle runner is desired, it should be rented or bought from your florist. Vasa Lutheran Church does not provide the aisle runner. You might find it interesting to note that aisle runners came from a time when they were needed to protect wedding dresses from being harmed by dirt floors. They really are not needed anymore for weddings in church buildings and sanctuaries.

The church has 16 pairs of pews and there is one smaller pair of wooden partitions in the front of the seating. When decorating, please do not use any staples or tape when securing your wedding decorations to the pews.

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

Weddings require a rehearsal at Vasa Lutheran Church. A rehearsal is usually held the evening before, but exceptions can be considered. Members of the wedding party, ushers, musicians, parents of the bride and parents of the groom should attend. A rehearsal can take less than one hour from the time all the participants have arrived.

Bring copies of the service bulletin and the marriage license to the rehearsal.

CHURCH POLICIES

VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH'S ALCOHOL AND SMOKING POLICY

No alcoholic beverages may be served/consumed at any time on the church grounds, including the parking lots. If there is any evidence of alcohol consumption while you are using our church, the \$250.00 damage deposit will not be returned. If any member of the wedding party appears intoxicated at the time of the wedding, the wedding may be postponed at the pastor's discretion. Please also be aware that smoking is not permitted on the grounds of Vasa Lutheran Church.

INSURANCE LIABILITY

Rice, birdseed, confetti, balloons, and other materials are not to be thrown as the wedding party leaves the church. These items make cleaning difficult and pose a danger to people walking. Insurance liability for injuries to one of your guests poses a financial risk to the congregation, and any such injury takes away from the joy of the event.

PHOTOGRAPH POLICY

Picture taking during the ceremony is a distraction, except for time exposures from the back of the sanctuary or balcony. Professional photographers are aware of such requests and are prepared to honor them. Pictures may be taken in the sanctuary either before or after the ceremony. If pictures are taken prior to the service, pictures should be completed with ample time allowed prior to the beginning of the ceremony. Please inform family members and other guests of these guidelines:

- Flash pictures may be taken during the recessional of the wedding party.
- No flash cameras are to be used during the ceremony.
- Videotaping is allowed if done in an inconspicuous manner. One or two video cameras, portable or on tripods, are permitted equipment. Supplemental lighting or audio equipment is not permitted.
- Moving of any church furnishings for photography should only be done after consultation with the pastor.

We appreciate your full cooperation with our church policies on taking pictures.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

THE WEDDING RECEPTION

Our Lutheran Center is available for wedding receptions. Advance reservations should be made with the Office Administration at 651-258-4327. It is recommended that contact be made with our Kitchen Committee so that someone from the church may be present to help at your reception, if using the Lutheran Center.

Out of respect for the Vasa Lutheran Church and church staff, there is usually only one wedding scheduled per day, and we usually don't schedule weddings for every weekend in a month.

YOUR NEW ADDRESS

If you are a member of Vasa Lutheran Church or plan to be, please call the church office at 651-258-4327 with your new address following the wedding, if you will be having a new address.

WEDDING FEE SCHEDULE

Fees are effective as of 2021 and are subject to change. Your wedding is not considered booked until a damage deposit of \$250 is paid to the church. The damage deposit check will be cashed and if it has been determined that no damage has been done to the church property and all fees have been cleared, the church will refund the fee within 30 days. If making an electronic payment, when it has been determined that no damage has been done to the church property and all fees have been paid, the damage deposit will be refunded within 30 days also. See the wedding contract for the appropriate fees for your situation.

RESERVING YOUR DATE

Your date will be reserved on the church calendar when you:

1. **Complete** the attached Wedding Contract.
2. Enclose the **\$250.00 damage deposit** or use this QR code to send it electronically.
3. **Mail or Deliver** to the address below.



Mailing Address:

ATTN: Pastor
Vasa Lutheran Church
15235 Norelius Rd
Welch MN 55089-4501

ALL FEES, OTHER THAN THE DAMAGE DEPOSIT ARE DUE ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE WEDDING DATE.

Wedding Service Planning

Declaration of Intention (Choose one)

(a) _____, will you have _____ 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.

(b) _____ will you receive _____ as your *wife/husband* and bind yourself to *her/him* in the covenant of marriage? Will you promise to love and honor *her/him* in true devotion, to rejoice with *her/him* in times of gladness, to grieve with *her/him* in times of sorrow, and to be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live? If so, answer I will, with the help of God.

(c) _____, living in the promise of God, joined to Christ in your baptism, will you give yourself to _____ in love and faithfulness? Will you share your life with *her/him*, in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, and will you be faithful to *her/him* as long as you both shall live?

Response: I will, with the help of God.

Exchange of Vows (Choose one or write your own.)

(a) 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.

(b) 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.

(c) _____, repeat after me: 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.

(d) 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.

Blessing of Rings Prayer (Choose one – not listed separately in the bulletin. This is spoken over the rings before they are exchanged.)

(a) Gracious God, by your blessing let these rings be to _____ and _____ a symbol of their unending love and faithfulness, to remind them of the vow and covenant they have made this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(b) Bless these rings, O God; may they who wear them live in love and fidelity, and continue in your service all the days of their lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(c) We give you thanks, O God of grace, for our love and faithfulness to your people. Bless these rings, that they may be symbols of the enduring commitment _____ and _____ have made to each other; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Giving of Rings (Choose one or write your own)

(a) _____, I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

(b) _____, 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.

Lord's Prayer (Choose one. May be written in the bulletin for all to read together as they pray.)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy 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

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Scripture Choices – These are just a few of the examples of scripture. Please feel free to choose any Bible scriptures that speak to you as a couple.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:26-28	Woman and man created in the image of God
Genesis 2:18-24	Companionship rather than loneliness
Proverbs 3:3-6	Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart
Song of Solomon 2:10-13	The voice of the beloved
Song of Solomon 8:6-7	Many waters cannot quench love
Isaiah 63:7-9	God's steadfast love lifts up the people
Jeremiah 31:31-34	The new covenant of the people of God

PSALM

Psalms 67	May God be merciful to us and bless us
Psalms 100	We are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture
Psalms 117	The steadfast love of the Lord
Psalms 121	The Lord keeps watch over you
Psalms 127	Unless the Lord builds the house
Psalms 128	Blessed are those who walk in the Lord's ways
Psalms 150	Let everything that breathes praise the Lord

NEW TESTAMENT

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39	If God is for us, who is against us
Romans 12:1-2, 9-18	A living sacrifice and genuine love
1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13	The greatest gift is love
Ephesians 3:14-19	The breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love
Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33	Walk in love, as Christ loved us
Philippians 4:4-9	Rejoice in the Lord always
Colossians 3:12-17	Clothed in compassion, kindness, meekness and patience
1 John 3:18-24	Let us love in truth and action
1 John 4:7-16	Let us love one another for love is of God

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-10	The beatitudes
Matthew 5:14-16	You are the light, let your light shine
Matthew 7:21, 24-29	A wise person builds upon the rock
Matthew 19:3-6	What God has united must not be divided
Matthew 22:35-40	Love, the greatest commandment
Mark 10:6-9	They are no longer two but one
John 2:1-11	The wedding at Cana
John 15:9-17	Love one another as I have loved you

DRAFT SAMPLE BULLETIN – Order of Service

The Marriage Ceremony of

{List your names here as you want them}

Church or Location, Town

DATE

Rev. Maureen Hagen Officiating

Prelude

Lighting of the Candles

Processional Song {Include a title here if you have a specific song you are walking in on}

Bride's Processional Song {Include a title here if you have a specific song the bride is walking in on}

Greeting

**Declaration of Intention*

Prayer of the Day

**Scripture Reading(s)*

{Old Testament Reading, Psalm, New Testament Reading – could be one of each, just one of them, two of them.
Could also include another kind of reading – poem, etc.}

Solo/Hymn

{Title}

**Holy Gospel*

Meditation

Solo/Hymn

{Title}

**Exchange of Vows*

**Giving of Rings*

Pronouncement of Marriage

Lighting of Unity Candle/Unity Sand/Unity Knot

Solo/Hymn

{Title}

Marriage Blessing

Prayers

**Lord's Prayer*

Blessing

Presentation of Couple {how would you like to be announced? Mr and Mrs male name last name, Mr and Mrs male name and female name last name, or Male name and Female name last name.}

Recessional {Include a title here if you have a specific song you are walking out on}

Postlude

Yellow areas are optional items for the service. You do not need to include these in the service or we can move some to other spots in the service.

* The asterisk and green indicates areas where you have language on the other sheets to choose from.

**WEDDING CONTRACT
CHURCH COPY FOR MEMBERS**

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____
 Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____
 Location of wedding: _____ Church _____ Gazebo
 Location of Reception: _____ Time: _____
 Bride: _____ Groom: _____
 Address: _____

 Phone(home or cell): _____
 Additional phone: _____
 Email: _____
 _____ Member of Vasa _____ Non-Member
 _____ Member of Vasa _____ Non-Member

FEES: Fees are based on the membership of the bride or groom on the day they contact the church office to reserve the church for their wedding.

Member Fees:	Amount	Paid
Pastor	\$150.00	_____
Wedding Liaison (up to 10 hours)	\$150.00	_____

**Liaison Hours more than 10 will be paid at \$20 per hour, whether member or non-member. The Wedding Liaison will keep track of the hours spent and submit an invoice of time to the couple a week before the date of the wedding.

Church A/V Technician	\$75 (Rehearsal) + \$150 (Service)	_____
Custodians	\$50.00	_____
Church	\$ 0.00	
Gazebo	\$ 0.00	
Organists/Pianists	Fees negotiated with individual musicians.	



Pastor's fees are paid directly to the pastor by cash or check. All other fees are paid in cash, check, or electronically using the above QR code to Vasa Lutheran Church. All fees are due 1 week prior to the wedding date.

Refundable Damage Deposit due on date this contract is submitted.
 Church or Gazebo \$250.00 Amount Paid _____ Date Paid _____ Cash _____ Check # _____

Wedding date reserved when Damage Deposit is received in the Church Office.

Signature of Bride and/or Groom: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:
 Deposit: _____ Returned _____ Not returned _____
 Damage: _____

**WEDDING CONTRACT
CHURCH COPY FOR NON-MEMBERS**

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____
 Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____
 Location of wedding: _____ Church _____ Gazebo
 Location of Reception: _____ Time: _____
 Bride: _____ Groom: _____
 Address: _____

 Phone(home or cell): _____
 Additional phone: _____
 Email: _____
 _____ Member of Vasa _____ Non-Member
 _____ Member of Vasa _____ Non-Member

FEES: Fees are based on the membership of the bride or groom on the day they contact the church office to reserve the church for their wedding.

Non-Member Fees:	Amount	Paid
Pastor	\$200.00	_____
Wedding Liaison (up to 10 hours)	\$200.00	_____
Wedding Liaison (up to 10 hours on a holiday weekend)	\$300.00	_____

**Liaison Hours more than 10 will be paid at \$20 per hour, whether member or non-member. The Wedding Liaison will keep track of the hours spent and submit an invoice of time to the couple a week before the date of the wedding.

Church A/V Technician	\$75 (Rehearsal) + \$150 (service)	_____
Custodians	\$75.00	_____
Church	\$ 250.00	
Gazebo	\$ 50.00	
Organists/Pianists	Fees negotiated with individual musicians.	



Pastor's fees are paid directly to the pastor by cash or check. All other fees are paid in cash, check, or electronically using the above QR code to Vasa Lutheran Church. All fees are due 1 week prior to the wedding date.

Refundable Damage Deposit due on date this contract is submitted.

Church or Gazebo \$250.00 Amount Paid _____ Date Paid _____ Cash _____ Check # _____

Wedding date reserved when Damage Deposit is received in the Church Office.

Signature of Bride and/or Groom: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Deposit: _____ Returned _____ Not returned _____
 Damage: _____

Vasa Lutheran Church



Wedding Handbook