

DRAFT Wedding Policy for Bethel Lutheran Church

ALL Are Welcome at Bethel Lutheran Church. We believe that we are called to extend God's welcome to all for God loves everybody. This holds true for our wedding policy.

One of the guiding principles at Bethel is "Christ-centered relationships." This means everyone at Bethel is a child of God from the oldest to the youngest. We embrace and extend radical hospitality to all.

Bethel Lutheran understands that marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and mutual strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family. God created and blessed humankind with the gifts of companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. Jesus affirmed the covenant of marriage and revealed God's own self – giving love on the cross. The Holy Spirit helps those who are united in marriage to be living signs of God's grace, love, and faithfulness. [adapted from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, *Marriage*, pg. 286] All human relationships that reflect this understanding will be considered for marriage, in light of the couple's trust, faithfulness, commitment, hope and love.

This policy is determined by the Congregation's Council in conversation with the membership of Bethel Lutheran and the Pastor.

Bethel Lutheran Church will:

- Give fair and equal consideration to all requests for marriage from members and non-members that meet the requirements of Federal law and the laws of the State of Montana.

Couples desiring to be married at Bethel Lutheran Church will:

- Be encouraged to complete pre-marital counseling with the Pastor prior to the wedding.
- Agree that ceremonies held in the church facility shall reflect the presence and participation of God in the rite of marriage.
- Schedule the date and complete a facility use agreement with the Church/Pastor as appropriate to membership status. (ie. member, non-member)
- Deliver the marriage license and associated fees to the church office no less than two (2) days prior to the wedding rehearsal.

The Pastor will:

- Schedule pre-marital counseling with the couple prior to the wedding.
- Assist the couple in planning a ceremony that reflects the presence and participation of God in the marriage ceremony.
- Participate in the wedding rehearsal and conduct the marriage ceremony.
- Complete and file the marriage license in a timely manner according to county requirements.

Weddings may be conducted either at the church or off-site.

Join us for worship, there is a place for you at Bethel!

Adopted by Bethel Church Council 01.16.2018