

## WEDDINGS

The Christian Wedding does not glorify the bride and groom. As a Divine Service, its purpose is to proclaim Christ to the worshipers in the pews. It does this by pointing to Jesus Christ, the Groom, who has betrothed and united himself to his holy Bride, the Church. The Christian marriage of husband and wife is a picture, albeit an imperfect picture, of the blessed union of Christ and the Church (*Ephesians 5:22-33*). Just as a loving husband cares for his wife and together they produce offspring, so Christ cares for his Church, which he purchased with his own blood. Together they bear the offspring of believers, who come to life in the womb of the Baptismal font and are fed and nourished with the Sacrament of their Savior's body and blood.

It is the custom of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church to provide this service for her members. The pastor may also make an exception and marry a couple that has expressed their intentions of becoming members of our church family. However, should the pastor learn that the couple is living together outside of marriage or that one of the spouses has been divorced, he will grant them a Christian wedding only when there is repentance. He will bless what God calls blessed, but he cannot bless what God has called sin and, therefore, does not bless.

Prior to the wedding, the prospective bride and groom will meet with the pastor of Good Shepherd to discuss:

- what constitutes a Christian marriage,
- what is God's will for a husband and a wife,
- the care of a Christian household, and
- what may or may not be appropriate for a Christian wedding.

To avoid any potential embarrassment or problems, it is best to schedule these pre-marital visits (2-3, depending upon the amount of discussion, length of visits, etc...) well in advance of the wedding day. To set up these visits, contact the pastor.

The prospective bride and groom will also find useful our *Wedding Service Guidelines* manual which is available from the church.