

Rib Mountain Lutheran Church

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Rite of Holy Matrimony Policy

Adopted on July 22, 2015

We here at Rib Mountain Lutheran Church (RMLC) rejoice with you at this special time in your life and look forward to assisting you in planning a Christ-centered rite of Holy Matrimony. This truly is one of the most special days in your life and we thank you for choosing Rib Mountain Lutheran Church to share in this rite.

Definition of a Christian Matrimony:

The Holy Scriptures teach that God, in creating the world, gave marriage to be the life-long union of one man and one woman (Gen 2:24), a gift to be held in honor and kept pure (Heb 13:4; 1 Th 4:2-5). As a man and woman freely commit themselves to one another, God himself joins them as one. Matrimony is far more than a social contract or a mere interpersonal bond....It is an act of God the Creator. So our Lord Jesus says in Matthew 19 (verses 4-6): 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

This biblical understanding of the marriage union of man and woman is both purposeful and beautiful. Its purposes include the procreation and nurture of children, the mutual joy and the support and encouragement given to one another by husband and wife, and the restraint of selfishness and sin as each seeks to serve the other's needs. Such purposes reveal a beauty so great the Book of Ephesians (5: 21-33) connects marriage to the holy union of Christ and His "bride", the church. The apostle Paul writes that even as Christ, the bridegroom, pours forth sacrificial love for his church, the bride, and she trustingly commits her life to him, so also husbands are called to sacrificial love toward their wives and wives to a willing respect for their husbands.

This, in brief, is the Bible's teaching on marriage – and so it is also the doctrine of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS). Every congregation and called worker of the LCMS accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice. LCMS congregations, pastors, and other called servants thus agree to abide by the doctrine of the Synod; To believe that Holy Matrimony is a sacred union of one man and one woman is not a political opinion or cultural bias, it is the clear teaching of Holy Scripture, something that the members of the Synod believe, teach and confess as the very truth of God. Therefore the official position of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, as set forth in 1998 Res. 3-21 ("To Affirm the Sanctity of Marriage and to Reject Same-Sex Unions"), is that homosexual unions come under categorical prohibition in the Old

and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10) as contrary to the Creator's design (Rom. 1:26-27). These positions and beliefs can be found on the LCMS website, along with other statements, papers and reports on the subject of homosexuality and same-sex civil unions and "marriage." Our pastors will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and Rib Mountain Lutheran Church's property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this written policy.

Along with this, we must also address the issue of cohabitation, that is, living together in a sexual relationship without marriage. Every act of sexual intercourse is intended by God to express love, commitment and openness to life in the total gift of the spouses to each other. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage cannot express what God intended. Rather, it says something false—a total commitment that the couple does not yet have. This total commitment is possible only in marriage. We at Rib Mountain Lutheran Church believe, that the Holy Scriptures very clearly state that sex before marriage is a sin (1 Cor. 7:2, Heb. 13:4). With this, if a man and woman who are seeking the rite of Holy Matrimony, are currently cohabitating, this issue will need to be addressed and resolved in an agreeable manner with the pastor during the marriage counseling process.

Requirements for Rite of Holy Matrimony at Rib Mountain Lutheran Church:

Prior to the day of rite, the following criteria must be met:

(RMLC Senior Pastor must approve any and all exceptions)

1. The applying bride or groom shall be current members of Rib Mountain Lutheran Church and/or the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.
2. A minimum of 2 months is required between the application submittal and the official date of the ceremony.
3. Couples must attend a minimum of 3 private pre-marital counseling sessions with the officiating pastor.
4. One of the pre-marital counseling sessions will include a financial dynamic.
5. Call the church office (715-845-2313) and inquire about your tentative date of the rite of Holy Matrimony.
6. Once the date is confirmed; discuss with the officiating pastor the time and other details.
7. Officiating pastor for all rites of holy Matrimony held at RMLC will be a pastor from RMLC. Any exceptions must be approved by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders of Rib Mountain Lutheran Church.
8. Confirm all planned decorations and floral arrangements with RMLC's Mary Martha Guild or Pastor.
9. Only qualified organists / pianist of RMLC are permitted to play the church's organ or piano. The couple should make arrangements to meet with the organist/ pianist to select and agree upon the appropriate music for the service. **All music must be selected & agreed upon by all parties one month prior to the agreed upon date; if these criteria are not met – the organist/ pianist will be allowed to select the music to be played.** (If no organist or pianist is desired for the rite – the couple must inform the Pastor of the music plans)
10. If the couple obtains a marriage license at the county court house of their residence, the marriage license should be presented to the Pastor at the rehearsal. The pastor will sign the license the day of the rite as a convenience to the couple incidental of the rite of Holy Matrimony.

See next page for Application for the Rite of Holy Matrimony at Rib Mountain Lutheran Church:

