



Wedding Handbook

St. John's Lutheran Church

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Contact Information

IMPORTANT STAFF INFORMATION. To contact by email: first name@stjohns-salisbury.org

The Rev. Daniel Joyner Miller	Senior Pastor
The Rev. Lori Carter	Pastor for Congregational Care
The Rev. James Demmel	Pastor for Youth and Outreach
The Rev. Spence Roberston	Pastor for Worship and the Arts
Michael Board and Ondria Witt	Contemporary Worship Leaders
Taylor Hutchins	Production Manager
Deborah Cross	Church Administrator
Vivian Connor	Office Manager
David Ellenburg	Facilities Manager

A Wedding and a Marriage: A Pastor's Perspective

Weddings in the Christian church are unique worship experiences that beautifully mark a couple's entrance into a lifetime union. They are also opportunities to seek God's blessings, give thanks for God's goodness, and celebrate the loving companionship of friends and family who are present.

A "church wedding" reaches far beyond simply a "wedding in a church." In a holy and somewhat mysterious way, the wedding creates time and space for solemn promises to be made between two people and the God they serve. Christians make these promises to one another in faith and cling to the promise of a faithful God who will love and support them in their life together. These promises are best lived out in relationship with others – the Christian community – who encourage, support, love, challenge, and hold one another accountable.

It seems to take a village to make a wedding. Please know that the pastor will always be open to your ideas and suggestions and will work with you to make sure that your wedding will suit your individual needs and tastes, while maintaining a sense of worship and praise.



You are encouraged to be personally involved in the selection of music for your wedding. Our Minister of Music has years of experience in worship design and will be fully available to provide advice, counsel, and consent when needed. While individual needs and tastes vary, we want to be cognizant of the worshipful nature of the wedding service and strive to maintain our focus on God and God's promises.

As you know, there are many other items that need to be discussed, including flowers, photographers, rehearsals, candles, facility use, receptions, and fees. Most of that information is outlined in this handbook, but please know that the Wedding Director and pastor will be more than happy to provide guidance in any way possible.

The pastors, Minister of Music, your Wedding Director, the church staff, and the entire congregation offer our best wishes as you take this exciting, faithful, and joyous next step in your journey together.

And now ... the Marriage

Your wedding service will be a wonderful, mountaintop experience that celebrates your new life together, your life with Christ, and the joy and love found in community. What ultimately matters, however, is your marriage. Planning for your wedding should never distract from planning for your marriage – cultivating and nurturing the love that will carry you through thick and thin in the years to come. It begins with God's blessing through His Church and is lived out in a unique relationship of love, trust, faith, and endurance.

With that in mind, St. John's requires all couples to participate in Pre-Marriage Counseling with one of our pastors or a pastor approved by our staff.



Planning for your Wedding

When planning a wedding, your first responsibility is to consult with the Business Manager and complete a **Marriage Request Form** (see page 18). Please note that the **facility is not reserved until a date has been cleared with the pastor of choice**. A more detailed form will need to be completed at a later date, which will include the scheduling of your Pre-Marriage Counseling.

Please note:

- **Pre-Marriage Counseling is required for all weddings at St John's.**

The following will be helpful in planning your wedding at St. John's:

1. MARRIAGE SERVICE

- A. The Service: The Marriage Service that is part of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* is printed on pages 10-11 of this handbook. The celebration of **Holy Communion** is optional in the wedding service. If Holy Communion is desired, all baptized and communing Christians will be invited to receive the Sacrament. The method of distribution will be by intinction -- that is, with communicants dipping a wafer into a chalice of wine.
- B. Music: A number of musical options are possible as part of the wedding music: organ, instrumental music, vocal or instrumental solo, ensemble, choral music, congregational hymns, or music employing a combination of these media.

NOTES ON MUSIC:

- Most weddings include 15 to 30 minutes of prelude music.
- As soon as the wedding date has been set with one of the pastors and scheduled by the church office, you should contact the Minister of Music.
- While it is not necessary for the Pastor of Worship and the Arts to be the organist for the wedding, guest musicians must always receive instruction from the Pastor of Worship and the Arts before using the organ or any other of the church's instruments.

D. Marriage License: Bring the license to the pastor **on the day** of the wedding.

E. Fees: Fees **must be received** by the church office at least **two weeks** before the wedding.

F. Marriage Record: Following the marriage service, witnesses are asked to sign the marriage license. After a church officer registers the pertinent information in St. John's church records, the license is sent to the Rowan County Register of Deeds. Legal copies of the certificate can be obtained from the Register of Deeds.



2. REHEARSAL

- A. All wedding participants, including parents, grandparents and honorees, should be present and arrive on time for the rehearsal.
- B. The Wedding Director and pastor are in charge of the rehearsal.

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR FACILITIES & PARTICIPANTS

- A. Facilities: Three places are available for weddings: the Chapel, the Sanctuary, and the Faith Center. The seating capacity for the Sanctuary is approximately 900, and the seating capacity for the Chapel is approximately 120. The Faith Center seats 250. The desired space must be reserved by filling out the forms and approved by the Senior Pastor.
- B. Pastor(s): Depending on availability, weddings will be conducted by one of the pastors of St. John's. If you wish to invite the pastor (and spouse) to be present at your rehearsal dinner or wedding reception, please extend that invitation as early as possible. If you wish to have a guest minister officiate the service, arrangements must be made through the pastor of St. John's.
- C. Director of the Wedding: **All weddings at St. John's will be coordinated by one of St. John's Wedding Directors.** At her earliest convenience, the Wedding Director will make an appointment with the bride and groom. She will communicate church policies, conduct the wedding rehearsal, and assist during the ceremony.
- D. Facilities Manager: No later than six weeks before the wedding, the bride will meet with the Facilities Manager to make arrangements for use of the church facilities and liturgical appointments (candelabra, kneelers, etc.).

Acolyte(s), Banner Bearer, Crucifer, Torch Bearers: These worship assistants are optional. The bridal couple may ask relatives or friends to serve in this capacity or request assignment from the Worship Ministry Group. All worship assistants not trained by the church must be at least 13 years of age and be present for training at the rehearsal.

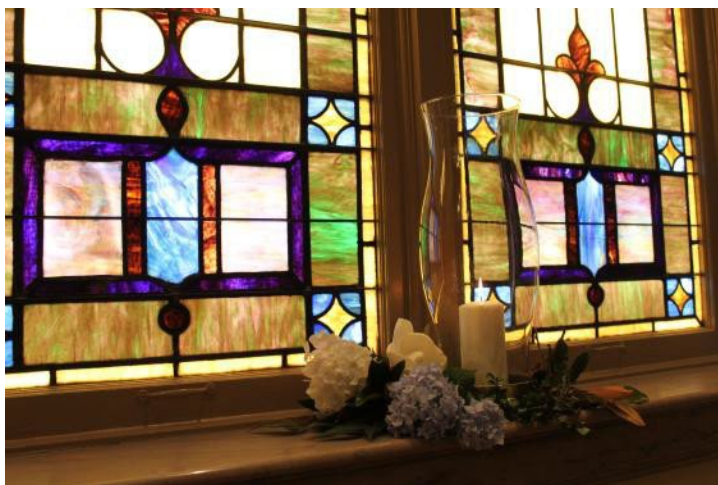
- E. To Invite the Congregation: When all members of the congregation of St. John's are invited to a wedding, the invitation may be printed in the church newsletter.

- F. Request for Prayer: It is customary that the wedding couple will be included in St. John's prayers the Sunday after the wedding.

- G. Photographs, Audio Tapes, Video Tapes: We ask that you would chat with your photographer about being respectful of the holy nature of the wedding ceremony. The pastor will be happy to talk with the photographer ahead of time.

- H. Decorations: Our Sanctuary, Chapel, and Faith Center have been designed as places of dignified beauty for all church services. Therefore, elaborate decorations are not necessary. The following regulations are given to safeguard sanctuary furnishings:

1. Arrangements should be made with the Facilities Manager to open the church for the florist on the day of the wedding. All decorating must be completed two hours before the wedding.
2. No decorations will be placed on the altar. No one may move anything on the altar or change altar linens.



3. Floral arrangements of freshly cut flowers may be placed on the flower stands on either side of the altar only. Artificial arrangements are not used in the chancel.
4. No tacks, pins, nails, or glue may be used to fasten any decorations or aisle cloth to the furniture or building.
5. No furniture, fixture, or ornamentation of the Sanctuary, Chapel, or Faith Center may be introduced without the consent of the Wedding Director.
6. The furniture and floor must be fully protected at all times from moisture and candle wax. The decorator will be held responsible for any damage done to the building or furniture, and is responsible for cleaning dripped wax from the floor and furniture.
7. No glitter may be used inside or outside of the three worship spaces.
8. Arrangements must be made to remove all decorations from the building immediately after the wedding.
9. Please contact the Wedding Director with any questions or requests for further information.



I. Bride and Bridesmaids' Room: For Sanctuary weddings, the Goodman Dining Room is used for the bride and bridesmaids. Be sure the door is locked during the wedding. For Chapel weddings, a room near the Chapel will be used. Adjacent restrooms are available. For Faith Center weddings, a room near the Faith Center will be used. Adjacent restrooms are available.

J. Groomsmen: For Sanctuary weddings, the groomsmen may use one of the rooms in the education wing. If there is a chapel wedding, the groomsmen may use the Goodman Dining Room.

4. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RECEPTION

- A. Reception Room: Upon request, either Ritchie Hall or Peeler Hall is available for a reception after the wedding. The Facilities Manager will assist with the physical arrangement of the room when the couple elects to have the reception at the church.
- B. Decorations: As they are applicable, the same rules that are specified in the arrangements for the wedding also apply to the reception.
- C. No rice or birdseed may be thrown.
- D. No alcoholic beverages may be served or consumed on the church premises.

5. OTHER REGULATIONS

[Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

5. OTHER REGULATIONS

- A. Smoking is not permitted in the Sanctuary, Chapel, Faith Center, or any of the church buildings.
- B. As a church policy, alcohol is not permitted on-site. (Duplicated from D above)
- C. Under no circumstances may any member of the wedding party come to the rehearsal or the wedding under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- D. All fees must be paid according to the schedule before the wedding.

Options for Your Wedding Service

The following follows the general outline found in our worship book, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Option 1). Within the service, you will notice a variety of options from which you are free to choose. Following this example is another service you may find useful (Option 2). If there are any questions about the service itself, please speak with one of the pastors.

OPTION 1

PRELUDE

ENTRANCE

*The assembly stands as the ministers and the wedding group enter. Music — hymn, song, psalm, instrumental music — may accompany the entrance. NOTE: The congregation's responses are in **bold**.*

GREETING

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other with the following exchange:

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.

Will all of you, by God's grace, uphold and care for *name* and *name* in their life together?

We will.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The presiding minister leads the following or another prayer of the day.

Let us pray.

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.

READINGS

The assembly is seated. Two or three scripture readings are read. When the service includes communion, the last is a reading from the gospels. Responses may include a psalm in response to a reading from the Old Testament, a sung acclamation preceding the reading of the gospel, or other appropriate hymns, songs, and psalms.

SERMON

A hymn or solo may be sung.

VOWS

The couple may join hands. Each promises faithfulness to the other in these or similar words.

OPTION 1A:

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.

OPTION 1B:

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

OPTION 1A:

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

OPTION 1B:

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.

Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

A hymn, solo, or other music may follow.

MARRIAGE BLESSING

The couple may kneel. The presiding minister may extend a hand over the couple while praying for God's blessing in the following or similar words.

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 about 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 work 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.

If the couple desires, communion follows, beginning with the sharing of the peace. For specifics about a service with Holy Communion, speak with the pastor.

A service without communion continues as follows.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

BLESSING

God Almighty send you light and truth
to keep you all the days of your life.
The hand of God protect you;
the holy angels accompany you;
and the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with you now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

The couple kisses. Then the pastor introduces the couple to the congregation:

It is my privilege to introduce to you _____ and _____.

The congregation may respond with applause

The pastor sends the congregation forth with these words:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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



OPTION 2

ENTRANCE MUSIC

GREETING: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

Congregation is seated

We have come together in the presence of God to witness the marriage of _____ and _____, to surround them with our prayers, and to share in their joy. The scriptures teach us that the bond and covenant of marriage is a gift of God, a holy mystery in which two become one. As _____ and _____ give themselves to each other today, we can be confident that Christ is with us, as well, eagerly welcoming us into a celebration of God's love for us.

Let us pray. 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.**

Who gives _____ to be married to _____?

SYMBOLIC APPROVAL

I invite family members to stand and offer their blessing and encouragement. (*stand*) Will you do your best to honor this new family - to nurture, sustain, and bless them as they begin their new life together?

We will.

The family is seated.

To the rest of you: friends and extended family members. Will all of you, by God's grace, do everything in your power to uphold and care for _____ and _____ in their life together?

We will.

READINGS

HOMILY

Hymn, solo, or other music may be sung

MARRIAGE PROMISES

_____ and _____, if it is your intention to share with each other, your joys and your sorrows and all that the years will bring, with your promises bind yourselves to each other as husband and wife.

(To the Groom) _____, will you give yourself to this woman as her husband? Will you be faithful to her? Will you love and honor her, offering her encouragement and companionship; and will you live with her and cherish her, as Christ leads you in the bond of marriage? (Answer: I WILL)

(To the Bride) _____, will you give yourself to this man as his wife? Will you be faithful to him? Will you love and honor him, offering him encouragement and companionship; will you live with him and cherish him, as Christ leads you in the bond of marriage? (Answer: I WILL)

Wedding party moves to the altar

VOWS

To the Groom: (_____, repeat after me.)

Groom: _____, I pledge to you on this our day, my eternal love before God, our family and our friends. I do promise to celebrate with you life's victories and to console you in life's defeats. I give you my hand to hold as we begin this journey together. I will be your helpmate, your companion and your friend through all the days of our lives. I will be faithful to you, honor you and with God's guidance now become your husband.

To the Bride: (_____, repeat after me.)

Bride: _____, I pledge to you on this our day, my eternal love before God, our family and our friends. I do promise to celebrate with you life's victories and to console you in life's defeats. I give you my hand to hold as we begin this journey together. I will be your helpmate, your companion and your friend through all the days of our lives. I will be faithful to you, honor you, and with God's guidance, I now become your wife.

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

To the Groom: _____, take this ring and place it on the wedding finger of _____ and repeat after me...

Groom: _____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my faithfulness and devotion, because I love you. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

To the Bride: _____, take this ring and place it on the wedding finger of _____ and repeat after me...

Bride: _____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my faithfulness and devotion, because I love you. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

_____and _____have declared before God and before you that they will live together in marriage. They have made sacred promises to each other, and they have symbolized these promises by joining hands and by exchanging rings.

I therefore pronounce them husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

Hymn, solo, or other music may be sung here

Holy Communion may be celebrated here

The bride and groom kneel

PRAYER

Let us pray. Faithful Lord, source of love, pour down your grace upon _____and _____that they may fulfill their vows they have made this day and reflect your steadfast love in their life-long faithfulness to each other. As members with them of the body of Christ, use us to support their life together; and from your great store of strength give them power and patience, affection and understanding, courage, love toward You, toward each other, and toward the world, that they may continue together in mutual growth according to Your will in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

The bride and groom stand

BENEDICTION

Now may God Almighty grant you his light and his truth to keep you all the days of your life. May the hand of God protect you and his holy angels accompany you throughout your journey together. May God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share with you abundant grace today and forever more. Amen.

The couple kisses. Then the pastor introduces the couple to the congregation:

It is my privilege to introduce to you _____and _____.

The congregation may respond with applause. The pastor then sends the congregation forth with these words:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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

ALTERNATE WEDDING VOWS

I. 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. *Lutheran Book of Worship, 287*

(Name), 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.

III. I take you, **(name)**, 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.

IV. I take you, **(name)**, 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 share my life with you;
I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and
I will try with you better to understand ourselves, the world, and God;
through the best and the worst of what is to come, as long as we live.

V. I, **(name)**, in the presence of God and these witnesses,
take you, **(name)**, to be my wife/husband.
All that I am I give to you
and all that I have I share with you.
Whatever the future holds,
I will love you and stand by you,
as long as we both shall live.
This is my solemn vow.

- VI. I, **(name)**, take you, **(name)**,
to be my wedded wife/husband,
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 ordinance;
and thereto, I plight thee my troth. *Service Book and Hymnal, 270*
- VII. I, **(name)**, take you, **(name)**, to be my wedded wife/husband
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 ordinance;
and to you I pledge myself truly with all my heart.
- VIII. I, **(name)**, take you, **(name)**, to be my wedded wife/husband; and I do promise and covenant 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.
This is my solemn vow.

Suggested Readings for Your Wedding

Choose at least two readings, with one reading from the New Testament.

Suggested Old Testament readings:

Genesis 1:26-31	Male and female created by God
Genesis 2:18-24	God creates man and woman
Song of Solomon 2:10-13	Love in the spring
Song of Solomon 8:7	Unquenchable love
Isaiah 63:7-9	The steadfast love of God

Suggested Psalms: 33, 100, 117, 127, 128, 136, 150

Suggested New Testament readings:

Romans 12:1-2	A living offering
Romans 15:5-6	Live in harmony with one another
1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13	The hymn of divine love
Ephesians 4:32-5:2	Be imitators of God's love
Ephesians 5:21-33	Marriage and the Church

Gospel Readings:

Matthew 19:4-6	Faithfulness in marriage
John 2:1-10	The wedding at Cana

Suggested Hymns

From Evangelical Lutheran Worship

648 – Beloved, God's Chosen	816 – Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life
312 – Jesus, Come! For We Invite You	836 – Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
839 – Now Thank We All Our God	308 – O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!
488 – Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness	732 – Morning Cry

Other suggested hymns with consultation with the Minister of Music

Eternal God, Before Your Throne	In Thee is Gladness
Our Father, by Whose Name	When Love is Found
Blest be the Tie that Binds	Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus

Marriage Request Form

Please complete this form with as much information as you have at this time. **Please note that the reservation is not complete until you have been contacted by the Church Administrator or a Pastor.**



<https://stjalisbury.onechurchsoftware.com/api/share/forms/173>

Wedding Information Form

Please complete and submit to the church office SIX weeks prior to the wedding.

This information will be used to prepare the worship space for your wedding.



<https://stjalisbury.onechurchsoftware.com/api/share/forms/177>

Wedding Fees

The following fees recognize our non-pastoral staff for their personal/professional services or reimburse the congregation for the actual costs of a wedding. For more information, please contact our Church Administrator.

Please note: Payment for services to be presented two weeks in advance of the wedding.

For active members of St. John's

Custodial Services

Chapel	\$ 75
Chapel w/Reception	\$125
Sanctuary	\$100
Sanctuary w/Reception	\$200
Faith Center	\$100
Faith Center w/Reception	\$200

Professional Services

Organist	\$150
Soloist/Instrumentalist (arranged through Minister of Music)	\$100
PA Operator (arranged through Media Specialist)	\$ 50
Pre-Marriage Counseling material	\$ 75
Engagement Retreat, if scheduled	\$ 60
Wedding Director	\$100

Additional Fees for Inactive/Associate Members*

Use of Sanctuary	\$ 500
Use of Chapel	\$ 200
Use of Faith Center	\$ 500
Use of Ritchie Hall	\$ 200
Use of Peeler Hall	\$ 200

Additional Fees for Non-Members

Sanctuary	\$1500
Chapel	\$ 500
Ritchie Hall	\$ 200
Faith Center	\$1500
Peeler Hall	\$ 200

*Policy Statement

Inactive members are those members of St. John's who have not communed or contributed to the ministry of the congregation in the last year.

Associate Members are (1) active members of St. John's Lutheran Church as well as another congregation of the ELCA or, (2) are active members of another Christian Congregation and have relatives other than parents or grandparents who are active members of St. John's. (Congregation Council, May 1992)