

Christ Lutheran Church

Policies on Rites of the church

1. Baptism

- a. Baptism is a sacrament of the Lutheran Church, commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. Members¹ of Christ Lutheran Church (CLC) are expected to bring their children to be baptized in a divine service at the altar of CLC soon after birth. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend a pre-baptism class with the Pastor and are expected to schedule the baptism in advance.
- b. Children of parents who are not members may be baptized before the altar of CLC, provided that the parents -- or in exceptional cases, sponsors or guardians -- attend a pre-baptism class with the Pastor and schedule the baptism in advance.
- c. In an emergency, the Pastor will baptize any child at home or in a health care facility upon request.
- d. Adults who had not been previously been baptized are normally baptized as part of the process of reception to Communicant Membership as described in paragraph 3.c of the Membership Policy.

2. Holy Communion

- a. Holy Communion -- also referred to as the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist -- is a sacrament of the Lutheran Church and is regularly offered at Divine Services of Christ Lutheran Church.
- b. Reception of Holy Communion at the altar of CLC is a right, privilege, and duty of all Communicant members of CLC as defined by the Membership policy¹. However, any individual who is under church discipline² shall be excluded from Holy Communion.
- c. Communicant members of Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) churches or of other Lutheran bodies with which the LCMS is in fellowship are welcome to partake of Holy Communion after notifying the Pastor, an Elder, or an Usher.
- d. Regarding those who are not members of CLC or the LCMS the policy is based on the following. Since Holy Communion is a confession of our mutual faith it is important that all who receive this meal affirm that (1) they have been baptized and believe that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior; (2) they believe in the Real Presence of Christ, that is, that they receive, in and with the bread and wine, also Christ's body and blood; and (3) they desire the gift of Holy Communion because of the personal need for forgiveness and the power of the Holy Spirit to live a life in Christ. Before first communing at our altar they should speak to the Pastor and affirm the above statements.
- e. The Pastor will provide Holy Communion to home or institution-bound members by arrangement

3. Wedding Services

- a. While marriage is not a sacrament of the Lutheran Church, a wedding performed in the church and by the Pastor is part of a Divine Service and is considered to be Holy Matrimony and a profession of belief by the partners.
- b. Weddings at CLC and by the Pastor are limited to couples in which at least one partner is a communicant member in good standing of CLC or well along in the process of instruction for communicant membership.
- c. Both partners in the marriage are expected to accept the marriage beliefs of CLC and of The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, specifically that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24-25), and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:32).
- d. Supporting information on these beliefs can be found on the LCMS website³. LCMS pastors will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception, or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy.
- e. A couple desiring to be married at CLC is expected to attend a pre-marriage class with the Pastor and to schedule the service well in advance. All music and service arrangements are subject to approval by the Pastor.
- f. The Pastor may participate as an officiant in weddings other than at CLC (e.g., another Lutheran Church, Heinz Chapel), provided that it is consistent with the above beliefs and policies.

¹ Christ Lutheran Church Membership Policy, adopted May 24, 2016, as posted on the church's web site.

² As defined by The Constitution of Christ Lutheran Church, Article IV. B. 4.c

³ <http://www.lcms.org/social-issues/marriage>

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4. Funeral Services

- a. A funeral service in the church is recognition of God's grace at work in the life of the deceased. It also places the blessing of the triune God upon the remains of the deceased and gives assurance of everlasting life for the deceased.
- b. Funerals of members of Christ Lutheran Church who were in good standing may and should be held in the church. A funeral service is a Divine Service of the church and shall be officiated over by the Pastor. In addition, the Pastor will normally participate in any grave-side committal.
- c. In the case of family members of CLC members who have no church home but are considered to have been Christian the Pastor may, upon request, hold a memorial service at a funeral home or a grave side committal.
- d. In exceptional circumstances, funerals for persons closely associated with members of CLC may be held in CLC with permission of the Pastor and an Elder. (For example, aged grandparents who no longer have a church home.)
- e. In any funeral service in or associated with CLC, the Pastor must approve any musical selections or family participation in the service, such as the delivery of a eulogy.