

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
3606 Beauchamp
Houston, Texas 77009

Guidelines for Use of Church Facilities and Property

General Statement

- Use of church facilities and property for worship services and activities of official church organizations will usually be given first priority.
- Permission for use of all or any part of the buildings or equipment rests with the Advisory Board which is responsible to the congregation as owners of the property. The pastor(s), and the Office Administrator are authorized by the Advisory Board to act in their behalf in approving or denying the use of church facilities and equipment in accordance with the guidelines set forth herein. An exception to this guideline is for funeral arrangements; in which case, the pastor(s) will have that authority. There will be no charge to active members for use of Zion facilities in connection with funeral services and accompanying family gathering (including meal). Fees charged to active members (for other than funerals) and others shall be those set forth in the Fee Schedule.
- The buildings and facilities should be used in ways that are consistent with the Mission Statement of Zion Lutheran Church.

Usage Guidelines

- I. In keeping with the mission statement of Zion Lutheran Church regarding the use of church facilities consistent with the purpose of the congregation, the following guidelines should be used:
 - A. Non-profit organizations serving social or educational needs will be permitted to use the facilities whenever possible, provided their usage does not conflict with the use of the congregation for worship and congregational activities. Although they are neither expected nor solicited, the congregation will accept financial donations from such organizations.
 - B. Profit making organizations or organizations which charge admission or registration fees will not be permitted to use the facilities unless the intended use is determined to be in the interest of the general welfare of the community, such as organizations offering educational, health/fitness, enrichment activities, etc. Such organizations will be subject to the fee schedule outlined in the Fee Schedule.
 - C. Active members are welcome to use their church facilities for family and social functions, i.e., anniversary parties, birthday parties, etc., subject to the usage guidelines and appropriate fees.

The church facilities may be used for private parties, receptions, etc., not related to church or community activities by others not sponsored by an active member of the congregation or known to the congregation or staff. Such groups will be subject to the policies and applicable rates in the Fee Schedule

- D. Zion reserves the right to refuse use of facilities to any person, group, or organization.
- E. Facilities must be vacated no later than 11 P.M.
- F. Security is recommended for functions ending later than 6 P.M. (one peace officer).
- II. The user is responsible for all table and chair setup. The user is also responsible for leaving the inside and outside "as found", i. e., kitchen clean, trash picked up and removed to the dumpster, decorations removed, and tables and chairs returned to their original position (unless instructed otherwise).
- III. The user is responsible for following decorating guidelines. No decorations or table covers are to be stapled, nailed, glued, or taped to church property as these items mar and damage finishes and fixtures. Failure to comply with these instructions will require the forfeiture of all or part of the damage deposit.
- IV. The services of the church cleaning crew is required for all large events for both active members and others and subject to applicable rates in the Fee Schedule.
- V. Alcoholic beverages may be served. These include only wine, champagne, and beer (no pitchers). Hard liquor may not be served. There are no exceptions to this policy. A minimum of two (2) certified peace officers must be hired and paid by the user at any function of 50 or more persons where alcoholic beverages are served. The certified peace officers must be on site at least 15 minutes prior to alcohol being served and remain until event has concluded. The sale of alcoholic beverages will not be permitted on any property of Zion Lutheran Church. Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed by persons under the legal drinking age.
- VI. Zion Lutheran Church is a non-smoking facility. The user is to make sure their guests honor this policy. Smoking will be permitted outside the rear entrance only.
- VII. The user agrees that they will be responsible for any and all costs arising from damage to the premises and facilities for the contract period. In addition, it is understood and agreed that Zion Lutheran Church will not be responsible for any injuries or losses incurred by the user, its guests, and/or employees. It is further agreed that Zion Lutheran Church will not be responsible to any rental company the user may engage, even though a church representative signs for deliveries the rental company makes for the user. This includes any and all services contracted or secured by the user.

VIII. The Wedding Policy

- A. This statement of policy is presented to all couples contemplating marriage at Zion and reflects the Lutheran understanding that the Service of Marriage is primarily a worship service. This means that the main focus at a wedding (as in any other worship service) is the Triune God. The center of attention is not the bride or groom, the pastor(s), the attendants, the musicians, or anyone else.

This then means the wedding guests are not mere spectators; rather, they are worshipers who have gathered to praise God, witness the vows of the couple, and pray for the couple. The active participation of the guests is therefore encouraged.

- B. Consultation - Each couple desiring to be married at Zion is required to make a reservation for the service well in advance of the desired date by speaking to the pastor(s) you desire to conduct your service. Clergy of other denominations and faiths may be used, but it is recommended that one of Zion's pastors participate in the service and/or be consulted with regard to the format.

As a general rule, the order of worship will be the Order of Marriage as expressed in the Lutheran Book of Worship; however, some variations on this basic order may be made in consultation with the pastor(s).

Some pre-marital counseling is required:

The couple will meet with the pastor in several scheduled sessions to discuss the Christian understanding of marriage, the couple's relationship, and the particular plans for the marriage service. For other than active members, the pastor will have a fee for these services. The dates and time for the wedding and the rehearsal (optional) must be set at the initial consultation.

- C. Date Restriction - Because of solemnity of the season, any wedding during Holy Week (Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday) will not be allowed. A wedding during Lent (Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday) is also discouraged. Due to the busyness of the Advent / Christmas season, no wedding will be allowed the 3 weekends prior to Christmas Day.
- D. Music - Within the Marriage Service, music should be 'worshipful.' This does not mean somber or non-contemporary; rather, it means directed toward God in either prayer or praise. Popular or secular love songs may be sung prior to the processional and/or after the recessional, but should not be used in the Marriage Service; not because they are bad, but simply because they are inappropriate.

Couples should consider having the guests sing hymns. Hymns can be used instead of solos, and can be used even as processionals and recessionals.

All couples should consult with the pastor(s) and the organist concerning the music. Zion's organist will play for all weddings and rehearsals unless unavailable or another organist or replacement has been approved by Zion's organist. The organist at Zion has a fee for the wedding and rehearsal. If Zion's organist is not used, there will be a fee for rental of the piano and organ.¹

¹ See Building Use Fee Schedule
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- E. Holy Communion - The celebration of the Sacrament is encouraged. The Sacrament must, however, be available to all members of the assembled congregation and not just to the bride and groom or wedding party.
- F. Flowers/Accessories - Please use good taste in the use of flowers and other accessories. They should not overpower the altar. The couple may use the congregation's candelabras and floral stands as is. They should be returned to the storage location following the service or reception. Only beeswax, oil fueled, or metal candles may be used.
- G. The throwing of potpourri will be permitted in front of the entrance of the church at the sidewalk level. The sidewalk should be swept after the service or reception. The use of bird seed, rice, paper, potpourri, or any other material is not permitted in the sanctuary. Artificial flower petals may be thrown by the flower girl(s).
- H. Photographs - No flash photos may be taken by anyone during the service. Existing light photographs or video taping may be taken from the balcony, rear of the sanctuary, or the choir loft during the service. Flash photos may be taken by the photographer during the processional or recessional. Any poses may be taken before or after the worship service.