

# *Wedding Guidelines*

*St. John's Lutheran Church  
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# *Wedding Guidelines*

Marriage in the church is a religious service and all elements of the service have significance whether it is an informal wedding in the sanctuary or a large formal affair. In order that you may have a sacred wedding service, you are urged to make thorough preparations - spiritual as well as temporal. The Pastor and staff of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church wishes to extend every possible avenue of assistance in order for your wedding service to be a memorable experience.

These guidelines have been adopted by the Worship and Music Committee and the Congregational Council as the official guidelines and procedures for wedding and receptions. Keep in mind that photographers, florists, caterers, musicians, directors, and family members do not necessarily know the guidelines of the church. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform all those participating in the service. Please read the following material carefully so that all may cooperate fully with these guidelines.

## **Service**

Formal – A wedding which requires the use of the sanctuary for the wedding and, if desired, the Fellowship Hall for the reception. Bridesmaids and ushers will be

used as well as church musical instruments. Decorations and/or candles may be used if desired and acceptable with the pastor of St. John's. Rehearsals for the wedding are required.

Informal – A single ceremony in the sanctuary in front of the pastor of St. John's with limited guest attending.

### **Holy Communion**

The Marriage service may be placed within the context of the Holy Communion, and doing this enhances and makes vivid the wedding imagery of the Eucharist and the Eucharistic intimacy of the marriage. When Holy Communion is celebrated, however, **it must be open to the congregation** and not be limited to the bride and groom or the wedding party. The sacrament is always for the gathered congregation. If circumstances prevent including the congregation, the Marriage Service should be used by itself, and if the bride and groom wish to receive the sacrament they should receive it at a regularly scheduled service of the congregation. *St. John's uses wine and wheaten wafers.* The wedding reception may be understood as an extension of the banquet shared in the Lord's Supper.

### **Conduct**

The wedding rehearsal, vows and service are the

responsibility of the pastor of St. John's. There may be some innovations, but sacred vows will be used in all wedding services.

The bride and groom will be held directly responsible for any of the church's facilities used and the conduct during the rehearsal and wedding.

There is to be no use of tobacco or alcohol products of any kind in any part of the church's buildings or facilities. A sober wedding party is expected.

### **Theft or Damage**

The church is not responsible for loss, theft or damage to personal items such as wedding dresses, clothes, wraps, purses, or silver and glassware brought to the church for use during the wedding or reception. However, the church will use every reasonable effort to assist the wedding party on protecting such property.

### **Making Reservations**

You may call the church office to find out if a date is available; however, no reservations are confirmed before the bride and groom's first premarital counseling appointment with the pastor of St. John's. The date and hour of the wedding and rehearsal should be arranged as soon as possible and placed on the church calendar. It will also be necessary to reserve the fellowship hall or any

other facility needed at this time. Reservations will be made on a first-come, first served basis. All rehearsals will be scheduled on the day preceding the wedding service unless otherwise arranged by the pastor of St. John's. Again, no reservations are final until confirmed by the pastor. Typically, weddings are not appropriate during Lent and never during Holy Week.

### **Pastor's Responsibilities**

The pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, ELCA, Walhalla, South Carolina, has full responsibility for weddings in this church.

The pastor requires a time for counseling and general discussion regarding marriage and the wedding; usually four or five appointments totaling eight to ten hours. The bride and groom should schedule all appointments with the pastor as soon as possible so that adequate time is planned for counseling.

### **Wedding Directors**

The pastor of St. John's has the responsibility for conducting rehearsals and weddings. St. John's will provide a wedding director to assist with the church ceremony and church related matters. However, if an outside wedding director is desired, her/his role must be discussed with the pastor and church wedding director

prior to the rehearsal date. During the rehearsal and wedding service all directors will operate under the direct supervision of the pastor of St. John's.

### **Outside Minister**

The pastor of St. John's has the responsibility and final approval of all wedding services performed in this church.

If another minister is conducting the wedding service, he/she must meet with the pastor of St. John's to have the service plans discussed and approved. The bride and groom also must meet with the pastor to make sure all guidelines are clearly understood and followed.

### **Furniture Removal**

The church sexton must be contacted and is strictly responsible for moving or directing the moving of any sanctuary furniture and **ONLY** by the approval of the pastor. Should it be necessary to move furniture, the bride and groom are responsible for providing adequate assistance.

### **Decorations**

Nothing is to be taped or stuck to the church pews or furniture. Pew clamps are to be non-abrasive. Decorations should be placed so as to eliminate the danger of fire. Rented candelabra must have protective floor coverings such as clear plastic. If attendants hand carry candles, drip

guards are to be used.

Floral arrangements, candelabra, etc., may not be placed so as to obstruct the view of the altar or detract from the chancel. Floral arrangements may not be taller than the cross. Artificial flowers are not to be used on the Pulpit and no flowers at all may be placed directly on the Altar.

Live flower petals may not be dropped in the sanctuary by flower girls to prevent staining of the carpet.

No artificial platforms or any kind of carpentry work may be used on any surface.

Rice or confetti are not to be used inside or outside because of the difficulty of cleanup. Bird seed may be thrown outside as the bride and groom exit. The bride and groom are responsible for having the sidewalk and steps swept following the exit.

### **Bulletin**

The church office will provide a bulletin at the cost of a ream of paper of your choosing or you may purchase a preprinted bulletin cover. (Remember if you order a preprinted cover; you must do so in time for it to arrive and be published.) The church office will work with the bride and groom in any way possible to obtain a layout suitable.

## **Room Use**

Other than the church offices, any room in the Parish Building or Sunday School Building may be used for dressing and waiting if the use has been discussed with the pastor or church wedding director.

## **Heat and air-conditioning**

Thermostats for heating and air conditioning in the sanctuary, parish buildings and fellowship hall are not to be adjusted without first contacting the pastor or church wedding director.

## **Cleaning**

The church sexton is responsible for general cleaning in the sanctuary, parish buildings and fellowship hall. The bride and groom are responsible for seeing that someone washes and put away any linen or dishes used from the church kitchen and that all cleaning has been discussed and agreed to with the sexton. Setting up and returning chairs and tables are responsibility of the bride and groom. Caterers and florists must remove their own equipment, decorations and trash.

## **Music**

Wedding music should be consistent with the sacred meaning of the wedding service. All music is to be discussed with the pastor and musicians well in advance.

With the consent of the pastor and church organist, an outside organist/pianist may be used.

## **Pictures**

No flash pictures may be taken during the service. Video taping of the service will be allowed from the choir loft only without additional lighting.

## **Rehearsals and Receptions**

The rehearsal should begin promptly at the time scheduled. Delay in beginning consumes the time of the pastor, organist and others, and delays arriving for the rehearsal dinner. The bride and groom should insist that all members of the wedding party, including parents and any guests who will be seated before the mothers, be present for the rehearsal.

## **Fees**

Payment of all fees for the use of the church facilities and services listed below are required to be paid by the last counseling appointment. Separate checks made payable to each provider should be given to the wedding director to be distributed on the day of the wedding. All expenses related to your wedding will be the responsibility of the bride and groom.

## **Organist**

A \$200 fee for rehearsal and wedding service is charged.

An additional fee of \$50 is charged if the organist has to spend time rehearsing with vocalists or instrumentalists.

### **Handbell Choir**

There is a fee of \$75 to \$125 rehearsal and wedding service.

### **Vocalists and Musicians**

Individual and group fees made with these individuals shall be a separate cost apart from church expenses. The bride and groom should discuss fees directly with them.

### **Sexton**

There is a \$50 minimum charge for cleaning the church only or \$150 for both church and hall – total cleaning time 1 ½ hours. **Note:** there will be some extra pay involved if sexton is required to work after 9:00 p.m.

An additional fee will be charged if the fellowship hall is also used for the rehearsal dinner. Cleaning the facility your self is well intended but the fee is necessary because there is a typical Sunday morning set up.

### **Wedding Director**

For non-member \$100 minimum charge for Meeting – 1 hour total, Rehearsal – 2 hours, and Wedding – 3 hours. There is no charge for members.

## **Pastor**

For members a donation to Pastor's discretionary fund or honorarium is at the discretion of the bride and groom. For non members, realizing the time in prep sessions is approximately 12 hours, rehearsal 2 hours, and the day of the wedding 2 hours, the fee is \$150.

## **Counseling**

Pastor Coffman also uses a prepared counseling material. The cost of this material is \$35.00. The pastor may utilize a professional counselor for the pre-marital counseling sessions. The fee for this is \$150 to be given to the church.

## **Sanctuary**

There is a \$100 fee for non-members only. The sanctuary is free for the use of members.

## **Fellowship Hall**

There is a \$150 fee for non-members only. The fellowship hall is free for the use of members.

## **Conclusion**

A wedding is a beautiful, sacred part of life. The pastor of St. John's and the congregation want it to be a special beginning for the bride and groom and their family and friends. We hope that these guidelines help you to prepare for your wedding service and life together as a family.

**Phone Numbers:**

Pastor: David Coffman. . . . .(864) 638-6363  
[pastorsaintjohns@bellsouth.net](mailto:pastorsaintjohns@bellsouth.net)

Organist: John Perry Reed. . . . .(864) 646-5846  
[mjpreed@carol.net](mailto:mjpreed@carol.net)

Church Office . . . . .(864) 638-6363  
[stjohnsluther@bellsouth.net](mailto:stjohnsluther@bellsouth.net)

**Check List**

**Reservations made for Sanctuary** \_\_\_\_\_ **Sexton fees (Sanct. \$50)**  
Sanct./FSH \$150 \_\_\_\_\_

**Reservations made / Fellowship Hall** \_\_\_\_\_ **Extra fees** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fees paid for Sanctuary** \_\_\_\_\_ **Wedding Director**  
(Non-Member Fee) \_\_\_\_\_

**Fees paid for Fellowship Hall** \_\_\_\_\_  
Rehearsal Dinner (\$150) \_\_\_\_\_ **Pastor’s fees**  
Wedding Reception (\$150) \_\_\_\_\_ (Member Fee) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Non-Member Fee) \_\_\_\_\_

**Organist fees paid (\$200)** \_\_\_\_\_  
Extra fee (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_ **Counseling fee**  
Material @ \$35.00 \_\_\_\_\_

**Hand Bell fees (\$200)** \_\_\_\_\_  
Extra fees (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_ **Profes. Counselor (\$150)**  
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