

WEDDING POLICIES

Congratulations on your decision to be married. Marriage is a gift of God, instituted by Him in creation, whereby a man and woman are united in heart, body, and mind through their promises of faithfulness to one another. The wedding ceremony is a worship service of the Church and is to be conducted with both joyfulness and reverence as the Church witnesses, proclaims, and asks God's blessing on the couple's entry into new life as husband and wife.

We at The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church are pleased to be involved in this event with you, and we pledge to assist you as we are able, both now as you plan your wedding and in the future throughout your married life.

To aid in your wedding planning, what follows is a continuing resolution of our Congregation Council regarding wedding policies for services celebrated at The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

I. Who May be Married at Good Shepherd

Either the Bride or the Groom (or both) must be members of The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Non-members may be married here only under special circumstance and then only with the permission of the Pastor.

II. Setting the Wedding Date and Place

The definite wedding date should be set in consultation with the Pastor prior to contracting with photographers, caterers, etc. The Pastor will normally meet at least two times with the couple for premarital conferences to discuss Christian marriage and plan the wedding ceremony. Often a rehearsal will be planned for the day before the wedding. Traditionally, weddings are not scheduled in the seasons of Advent and Lent. No weddings will be conducted during Holy Week.

The church building itself is the appropriate place for the weddings of members of The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. The Pastor cannot guarantee that he will be able to officiate at other sites.

III. General Fee for a Wedding

There is no fee for congregation members for a wedding at The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. However, the fees for the Wedding Coordinators and Organist total \$300.

Non-members general fee is \$150 plus \$100 for a candlelight service.

Note: There is no fee for the Pastor's services.

IV. Fee for the Organist

The fee for the Organist is \$150. This includes a consultation with the Bride and Groom, wedding rehearsal, and the ceremony itself. If vocal or instrumental music is desired, the Organist will need to rehearse with them. Special rehearsals with soloist(s) or instrumentalist(s) shall be extra at the rate of \$35 per hour.

If there is to be a guest Organist, that person will be required to meet with the Parish Organist prior to the wedding at a time convenient to The Good Shepherd Organist, for orientation to the organ and assurance of competence to operate it. The church Organist's fee will not be waived if a guest Organist plays for the ceremony (i.e., the church's Organist is paid for the wedding whether or not he/she actually plays). All music presented need be approved by the church Organist. All guest Organists are responsible for Christian behavior and care while using the organ. Any questions or problems which occur while using the organ should be directly relayed to the Organist; otherwise, guests will be responsible for the damage.

V. The Ceremony

The Pastor shall be the presiding officiant at the service. Other clergy and laypersons may assist with the service only with the permission of the Pastor. The wedding service will follow the form of the traditional rite. Appropriate additions or changes in the service are permitted only if approved by the Pastor.

The celebration of Holy Communion is encouraged as a part of the wedding service. When it is celebrated, it must be open to the congregation and not limited to the Bride and Groom or the wedding party. If circumstances prevent including the congregation, the marriage service should be used without Holy Communion.

VI. Music

The Organist, Leslie Thayer, of The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church shall be notified of the wedding date and time by the couple as soon as it is known. She can be reached at 412-952-0571

The Church enjoys a rich and varied heritage of music that reflects our theological understandings and marital commitments. All music should be selected with the Organist from his/her repertoire, which has been approved by the Pastor.

(quoting from the LBW MINISTERS DESK EDITION pp. 38-39):

“Music selected should embody high standards of quality and in general reflect the praise of God, God's steadfast love in Christ as the foundation of and model for marriage, and the asking of God's presence and blessing.”

“Wherever music is employed in the service, and by whatever instruments or voices, it should be high-quality examples of the art of composition, not cloud communication of the content and mood of the service with musical triteness or associations bordering on sentimentality, and be within the ability of the performers at hand to play or sing with assurance.”

VII. Rice

Rice, confetti, birdseed, etc., present a slip hazard and therefore, may not be thrown at The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

VIII. Flowers

Flowers, if desired, may be ordered from any of the local florists. The Wedding Coordinator will assist with their placement in the Nave/Chancel. Neither flowers nor any candle (including the "Unity Candle") may go on the Altar; they may go on the Credence Table.

IX. License

The license shall be presented to the Pastor usually a week before and no later than the day prior to the wedding. A wedding cannot legally be conducted unless the Pastor has the proper license in hand.

X. Photography

There will be no flash photography during the service, and this will be noted in the bulletin. Flash photographs may be taken, however, during the Processional and Recessional. Video recording of the service is permitted if the camera operator can be positioned in a stationary place that does not intrude on the reverence of the wedding service. No photographers or video personnel will be permitted in the Chancel prior to or during the service, and they must remain stationary once the service begins.

XI. Bulletins

If the couple wishes to have bulletins for the service, they may be done by an outside printer or by the church office. The couple will furnish the blank bulletin covers if they are to be printed by the church office. The text and layout of the bulletin will be set in consultation with the Pastor and be copy ready in the church office at least one week prior to the wedding.

XII. Bridal Showers and Receptions

Bridal Showers and Receptions may be held in the Fellowship Hall. There is no fee for any group using the facilities; however, a contribution of at least \$100 per event is encouraged to defray overhead expenses. Those using the Fellowship Hall for Bridal Showers and/or Receptions are subject to the same policies as are any groups using the building and should secure the appropriate forms from the church Secretary.

Additional Reception Regulations

1. Arrangements for catering receptions are to be handled by the wedding party. NO FOOD IS TO BE PREPARED OR STORED IN THE CHURCH.
2. Alcohol may be used for ONE TOAST ONLY to the Bride and Groom. No other use of alcohol is permitted in the church buildings or on the church grounds.

XIII. Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator

The Bride is to contact the Altar Guild for church preparation. Contact Adrienne McCurry at 724-327-3634. She will assist with flower arranging, ordering the procession, setting the Altar, etc.

XIV. Questions

Any questions or requests for more information regarding weddings at The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church or their policies should be addressed to the Pastor.

XV. A Concluding Note

Wedding planning, preparation, and even the service itself can become unnecessarily complicated and confusing if a couple attempts to include and give inordinate attention to too many archaic traditions and other details (many of which are merely superstitions). Part of the beauty and genius of the Church throughout the ages has been its ability to incorporate cultural customs into the traditional Christian rite, often redefining the customs in a more Christian way.

Although there is some flexibility in what can happen before the Invocation and after the Benediction, we encourage couples to be open to re-examining cultural presuppositions regarding the wedding practice and to plan a service that is simple, unostentatious and which focuses on the true meaning of Christian marriage.