

Honorariums

The Pastor and church staff do not solicit money nor payment for their services. However, some couples wish to express their gratitude to the Pastor and staff with a monetary gift and ask for guidelines for such a gift. If this is the case, the Pastor might receive \$150, the organist \$100. This is only a suggestion any amount less or more is up to the couple.

Bridal Consultants

Bridal consultants can be helpful. However, whenever the services of such a person are obtained, the bride and her family are responsible for acquainting them with the rules and guidelines set forth in this pamphlet. All activities conducted in the Church are under the direction of the Pastor or Elders, and in the event of any problems regarding the wedding service, they will, in consultation with the couple, make decisions necessary to maintain the dignity and solemnity of the occasion. The minister, by virtue of his priestly authority and training, shall make final decisions pertaining to the order of the service and ceremony.

A Final Word About Your Wedding

We hope these guidelines and suggestions will help to make your wedding as memorable and meaningful as possible. We look forward to sharing this happy day with you and pray God's blessing upon it.

The pastor is available throughout the planning period if you have any questions. He can be reached at the Church Office Monday to Thursday mornings at 716-731-4433.

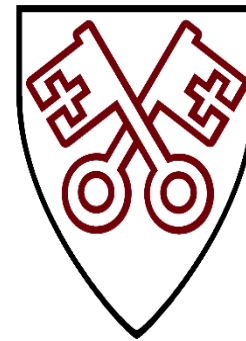
Once again, congratulations, best wishes, and God's blessings be upon you during this exciting time of your life!

In Christ's Love,
The Reverend Thomas Thorstad, Pastor



**St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Walmore
Pastor Tom Thorstad**

Wedding Guide



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Introduction

You have chosen to have your wedding honored before God as you begin this new life in holy matrimony. It is indeed a joyful occasion for yourself, your future spouse and for your friends and family. The wedding planning can be a challenging time, and these guidelines are intended to help each of us understand the mutual expectations during this special time.

We are thankful that you have chosen St. Peter's Lutheran Church to perform your wedding. Our church guidelines require at least the bride or the groom to be a confirmed and active status member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church. This requirement is the same for offsite weddings. If you are in an inactive member status, it would be important to reestablish your membership by attending church and talking with the Pastor. To be moved to active status requires approval of church council.

The Nature of Christian Marriage

For us as Christians and here at St. Peter's, marriage is not a mere legal agreement between two people. It is a holy, lifelong union between one man and one woman that is based on solemn vows declared before God and in the presence of others. Although we refer to the wedding ceremony as a ceremony, it is more than that. It is a worship service in which we praise God and ask his blessing of marriage to be bestowed upon the man and woman being united together in the holy estate of marriage that He Himself established and ordained.

Getting Started

Those who plan to be married in the Church should contact the Pastor to discuss their intentions. The date and time of the wedding should be reserved on the church calendar at the earliest possible time. The first to apply shall receive priority for the date. Do not make arrangements with the florist, reception hall, printers, etc. before having a confirmed date and time for use of the church. The pastor should know the date and time of the rehearsal and wedding before receiving the wedding announcements.

Other Observances

A white runner is available to be used which is supplied by the church. It must be cleaned after the service at the following dry cleaner at the cost of the couple:

North East Cleaners 692-2928

99 Niagara Street

Tonawanda, NY 14150

No other cleaner is accepted.

- If a unity candle or unity sand ceremony is to be used, candles and candle holders or supplies for the unity sand are to be supplied by the couple.
- **Rice, bird seed or confetti is not permitted at any time inside or outside.** Bubbles are permitted.
- **No balloons** may be used as decorations inside the church nor may balloons be "launched" by well-wishers outside after the service.
- Cleaning of the church is the responsibility of the couple and should be completed after the service.

General Rules Applied Before, During and After the Wedding

No alcoholic beverages are permitted to be served on the grounds at any time.

No smoking is allowed in any of our buildings.

The care of guest wraps or personal possessions are the responsibility of the hosts, not the Church.

No nails, thumb tacks, or scotch tape may be used in putting up decorations.

Unless arrangements have been made with the church office, the church should be left in the condition it was found.

Flowers and Decorations

Flowers and decorations are allowed with some restrictions. The Altar of St. Peter's makes a beautiful appearance with just the flowers in the vase on either side. Inside the sanctuary often the simpler the decorations the more beautiful it will look. You may decorate the church prior to the wedding day. Please keep in mind church service time or events.

Photographs

Any professional photographer will provide the standard pictures for your wedding. He or she is permitted to take pictures of the service, but we ask that they respect the worship service elements and be wise on placement of cameras and standing. He or she should remain out of the Altar area but may approach the first few pews.

Video Cameras—whether friends or professionals, no one will be permitted anywhere in the chancel or altar areas during the wedding, nor may unattended cameras be set up in these areas. Operators of the video cameras may sit in one of the pews toward the front of the church or stand near the narthex.

Photos after the wedding service is completed and guests have left are permitted in the church area. The pastor requests one photo with the couple and another with the bridal party with his wife as a personal record after the wedding ceremony. It is the responsibility of the couple to make these restrictions clear to the photographer and videographer.

The Day of the Wedding

The ushers should be present and “ready to go” at least 40 minutes before the start of the service. If the bridal party is arriving just before the wedding start, please ensure that they arrive at least 20 minutes prior to starting the ceremony. The meeting room is available to stay in until the wedding start time. The church will be open at least one hour prior to the wedding.

At least a six-month notice is required for all weddings located at the church. At least three and up to six premarital counseling sessions with the Pastor and couple will take place before the wedding. The arrangement of these sessions is the responsibility of the couple to work within the Pastor's schedule, and flexibility may be required on the couple's part. Sessions must be conducted in person with both Bride and Groom present. Officiating at a wedding is a solemn responsibility, and the Pastor does not take it lightly. He must be assured in his own mind that this marriage is in order with what the Church teaches and in accord with God's will as he (the Pastor) understands it.

It is expected that the couple will have demonstrated and will continue to demonstrate a commitment to the Church of Jesus Christ. The bride or groom shall be an active member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church.

Rubrics for the Wedding

All aspects of the wedding service shall be consistent with the teachings and practices of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), Augustana District of LCMC, the rubrics of the Lutheran Service Book, Lutheran Book of Worship, or other rubrics at the discretion of the Pastor in consultation with the couple.

Who Will Officiate?

The Pastor of St. Peter's is responsible for all wedding services held in our Church. If he is sick or on vacation, he will supply the substitute, in conjunction with the approval of the couple. In the event another Pastor is desired, the guest minister may assist by reading scripture lessons or prayer, with approval of the Pastor.

Only under very special circumstances does an outside minister perform the service of marriage in our Church, and then only with the approval of the Church Council and Pastor.

The Music at Your Wedding

The music for weddings held in the church sanctuary shall be selected in consultation with the Church Organist and the Pastor and shall be consistent with the teachings and worship practices of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) and Augustana District of LCMC. The marriage service is a worship service, and for this reason, we use music that is appropriate to a service of worship in a house of God.

The Church Worship and Music Director (Organist) has the right of first refusal, which means he/she is expected to play for weddings in our Church. A guest organist may be used with approval of the Church Worship and Music Director and consent of the Pastor; however, a bench fee at the current service cost for an organist will be required to be paid directly to the Worship and Music Director on agreement of another organist. Soloists and instruments are permissible within the above specifications.

An appointment should be made with the Church Worship and Music Director after your initial interview with the Pastor. The Church Worship and Music Director will then help you choose music for your wedding.

Bulletins

Bulletins which state the order of service and participants' names may be used. The couple shall be responsible for the purchasing, printing, and the cost of the wedding bulletins. The Church Secretary will print the bulletin for you if you choose. The fee for printing (which does not include the purchase price of the bulletins) is twenty (\$20) dollars.

Legal Arrangements

Check carefully with the Office of the Clerk of the town in which you reside in the State of New York to be sure you are thoroughly acquainted with the necessary legal steps you must take. The license must be applied for a designated time before the date of the wedding and is valid only within certain time limits thereafter. **The license should be dropped off at the Church Office at least three (3) days prior to the wedding.** If this does not occur, the Pastor must have the license at the time of rehearsal. He cannot perform the wedding unless he has the license.

The Rehearsal

Rehearsals are usually held the evening before the wedding and last approximately one hour. The Pastor and Organist may have other arrangements for the evening, and if the rehearsal is late in starting, it may have to be curtailed. Having the full hour for your rehearsal depends upon you and your wedding party. Please be prompt.

The following persons should be present for rehearsals for a formal wedding: the bride and all her attendants, the groom, his best man and ushers, the ring bearer and flower girl (if used), any soloist(s) and parents of the bride and groom

Dressing at the Church

The Church meeting room and the rest rooms are available at the Church for both the bridal party and the groom, and best man and ushers. It is up to you whether you want to get dressed at the Church or elsewhere. Following the service, be sure to take all clothes, purses, flowers, paper, etc. with you to the reception.