

WEDDING POLICY

Overview

We believe that human beings are created for community. It is in relationship with others that we discover our humanity and grow in our ability to love, forgive, and trust. When two people make a loving, mutual, and intentional commitment to each other, they are expressing their God-given nature in a special, life-giving way.

A marriage may be formalized in a civil or private ceremony without the rites of the church, but we believe that it is appropriate for Christians to exchange their vows in a place of worship, before a pastor and in the presence of family, friends, and the community of faith. Solemnizing our promises in this context reflects our recognition of God's love for us and our need for God's grace in our lives. In the rite of marriage, we ask for God's continuing presence with us and in our relationships, that with God's help we may grow in our covenant relationship and may be empowered by the Gospel to fully realize our individual gifts. We also ask for the prayers, support, and encouragement of the congregation, the faith community of which we are a part.

Weddings are part of the public ministry of the congregation. For this reason, we ask those who wish to celebrate a wedding at St. Paul's to meet with the pastor and with the parish administrator well in advance of the requested date, to receive counseling and help with planning.

Weddings are appropriately announced in the bulletin and/or newsletter and are regularly included in the prayers of the church during Sunday morning worship.

We welcome the opportunity to serve couples as they plan their lives together and the wedding that celebrates their commitment. We welcome those individuals and any children nurtured through the years into the life and ministry of this congregation. We trust that they all will be blessed within this community of faith and will, in turn, be a blessing to others.

Requirements for Consideration

A wedding is best scheduled at least six months in advance and should be scheduled no later than three months in advance so that it can be coordinated with other activities and so that there will be adequate time for the couples' counseling.

Couples requesting marriage at St. Paul's Lutheran Church should:

1. Be part of a worshipping community of faith. In the ceremony, God is asked to bless the relationship, and the community is requested to be witnesses and to support the couple. Such vows are empty if they are not lived out in the faith community. Being involved in a worshipping community is important for the blessing and support of the couple, and allows them to live out their baptismal vocation to be blessings to others. It is preferable, but not necessary, that St. Paul's Lutheran Church be that worshipping community of faith.
2. Undergo couples' counseling. Such counseling is an important step in awareness and intentional work on the relationship. It also helps the couple to be comfortable with outside (church) assistance in their relationship - assistance which may be invaluable in times of stress or division. The tool used at St. Paul's Lutheran Church for couples' counseling is "Prepare/Enrich," which makes use of computer-tabulated forms to provide information for four counseling sessions. If the couple would prefer couples' counseling from another source, they should discuss this request with the pastor before making outside arrangements.

3. Meet with the pastor and parish administrator to plan the ceremony. This includes selecting readings, hymns, and vows. Any special requests (such as additional or alternative officiants, ecumenical or interfaith services) should be made as soon as possible.

GUIDELINES

DATE AND HOUR: It is recommended that you contact the pastor and church concerning availability before you arrange receptions, etc. As you make your plans, remember to plan the service at a time convenient for relatives and friends and allowing time for travel between the events of the day.

REHEARSAL DATE AND HOUR: No matter what the size of the wedding, a rehearsal is usually essential. All participants and parents should be present. The rehearsal is normally the evening before the wedding at 6-7:00 p.m. The license should be brought at this time.

THE CEREMONY: The wedding service has several options open to the couple. These options will be discussed in conjunction with the first counseling session.

THE MUSIC: The music director should be consulted before any arrangements are made with other musicians. Music in connection with weddings should reflect our understanding of the event. Church musicians can assist in the selection of appropriate pieces. At least two weeks prior to the wedding:

- a. Call the church musician(s) with final music selection.
- b. All music for soloists must be received by musician(s).
- c. Rehearsal for soloist(s) and musician(s) must be scheduled by soloist(s).

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO: Picture taking is allowed before and after the service; available light photography (no flash) is allowed from the rear of the church during the service. At no time may the photographer move about during the service. Reference Photography/Recording Policy. Video taping is allowed, provided it uses no additional lighting and is done from a single, discreet location.

FLOWERS: The types of any floral arrangements are the choice of the couple and must be in their own vases. Please make sure the florist understands clearly that your flowers are to be delivered to St. Paul's Lutheran Church at 104 S. Village Ave. Exton PA 19341 - there are two other St. Paul's churches in the Exton area! Please advise the wedding coordinators if flowers are not being taken with you after the ceremony.

RUNNERS AND SAFETY CONCERNS: . Because of safety concerns and time involved in clean-up, rice, bird seed, confetti, and balloons are not permitted. It is generally recommended that runners not be used in the church. Runners carry over from a time when church floors were dirty. Runners are hard for the ushers to place and can be dangerous to walk on

Wedding Expenses at St. Paul's

An updated fee schedule is available from St. Paul's Director of Administration.

All fees are payable one week before the wedding.

Marriage licenses should be brought to church one week before the wedding or to the rehearsal.

A general list of expenses follows:

	<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
1. Use of Congregation Sanctuary - <i>Check payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church</i>	\$ * * *	\$ * * *
2. The Pastor - Planning, Rehearsal & Service <i>Cash, or Check payable to the pastor</i>	\$ * * *	\$ * * *
- Couples' Counseling (required)	\$ * * *	\$ * * *
3. The Musician(s) - selected in consultation with the music director <i>Consultation with couple, music for rehearsal, 15-minute prelude & 15-minute postlude</i>		
One musician (organ, piano, other)	\$ * * *	\$ * * *
Multiple musicians, team, etc.		
Rehearsal with soloist (<i>required</i>)	\$ * * *	\$ * * *
<i>Two weeks prior to wedding: Call musician with final music selection All music for soloists must be <u>received</u> by musician Rehearsal for soloist and musician must be scheduled by soloist</i>		
4. Wedding Coordinators / Sextons -	\$ * * *	\$ * * *
<i>Required for all weddings. Prepares church, assists Pastor at rehearsal/wedding; assists wedding party and guests on day of wedding, restores church after ceremony.</i>		

Optional

5. Wedding bulletins (per 100, includes paper, printing and folding)	\$ * * *	\$ * * *
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**** Those leading the wedding and preparations are entitled to be paid for their services. In addition, significant donations to the church help to establish the religious and congregational nature of the celebration as a priority over and against the other expenses and elements of the event. St. Paul's members are entitled to the use of the church facilities and the congregational ministry time of the pastor without charge. However, they are encouraged to consider the recommended donations for non-members as a guide in budgeting in a way that keeps priorities in perspective. Donations to St. Paul's, and/or honorariums to the pastor, are accepted.*

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