

*Trinity Lutheran Church*  
 132 E. Main Street  
 Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
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## **Wedding Information and Guidelines**

As you plan your wedding, you will have many questions regarding the service, traditions, and facilities available to serve you here at Trinity Lutheran. A wedding is an important event in the life of our church community and you can be assured of our interest in assisting you with your plans. We trust that you will find this information booklet helpful.

### **The Lutheran Church's Understanding of Marriage**

Marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and mutual strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family. God created us male and female and blessed humankind with the gifts of companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. Jesus affirmed the covenant of marriage and revealed God's own self-giving love on the cross. The Holy Spirit helps those who are united in marriage to be living signs of God's grace, love, and faithfulness.

Marriage is also a human estate, with vows publicly witnessed. The church in worship surrounds these promises with the gathering of God's people, the witness of the word of God, and prayers of blessing and intercession.

### **Preparing for Marriage**

Preparing for the marriage is more important than preparing for the wedding. The church and its pastor desire to provide you with the best possible preparation for your wedding and your marriage. Therefore, it is required that you meet with the pastor for preparation classes at least 4 times before the wedding. These times will be arranged by the pastor. The pastor will not officiate any marriage that has not had these sessions of preparation; the pastor additionally will not preside at the wedding unless they are convinced that God's blessing may be properly asked upon it in good conscience.

### **The Wedding Service**

#### **Choosing the date**

Dates will be selected only with the approval of the presiding Pastor. It is the practice of the church that no wedding should be held during the solemn occasion of Holy Week (the Sunday of Palm Sunday through the Sunday of Easter). Likewise, the church discourages planning a wedding during the season of Lent. The rehearsal date will most likely fall the evening before, or when all members of the wedding party and those participating the service can be gathered.

#### **Publishing the Banns**

This is an ancient practice in the church, especially within the history of the Lutheran church. The publishing of the banns is a formal way of referring to your announcement of the marriage and your intention to marry one another. This may be published in a local newspaper; we would also encourage you to include publishing them in our congregational newsletter and bulletin. This is one way to involve the whole community in supporting you as you prepare for marriage.

The basic format for publishing the banns is:

\_\_\_\_\_(name)\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_(name)\_\_\_\_\_ have announced their intention to marry on \_\_\_\_\_(date)\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_(location of ceremony)\_\_\_\_\_, and ask your prayers.

#### **Church capacity**

The sanctuary of Trinity Lutheran has a capacity of approximately 200 persons. Please keep this in mind as you are preparing your guest list.

#### **The Presider**

All weddings held at Trinity Lutheran Church will be presided over by the current pastor. If the couple

desires another pastor or religious leader to participate in the service, please talk with the pastor first about these arrangements.

### **Scripture Readings**

Scripture readings from the Holy Bible declare the steadfast love of God, proclaim the blessings of God, and call the couple to live out God's love within the covenant of their life together. We invite you to include members of the family, the wedding party, or special friends to participate in the service by being a lector.

### **Wedding Bulletins/Programs**

Since the marriage rite is a service of this church, the church office will prepare worship bulletins. Both members and non-members will be expected to purchase their own bulletin covers if they desire to have them used. Books will be provided by the church for selection of these covers. The content of the worship bulletin must be approved by the Pastor.

### **Music**

The music selected for use at a wedding should embody the 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.

All couples seeking marriage in this church must contact the minister of music. All music selections must be approved by the minister of music and the pastor. If another musician is desired to provide music *instead of* the church's musician, this must also be cleared with the current church musician and pastor.

### **The Altar Guild**

The Altar Guild has the direction of floral arrangements, decorations, candles, etc. Please contact the Altar Guild chairperson to make arrangements for any items you may need as well as questions you may have. As part of its service, the church can provide altar candles, candlelabras, and pew-end candle holders, as well as a kneeler for the couple if they so desire. Please note: the church does not provide unity candles, altar flowers or any other flowers, nor flower vases. We encourage you to use live flowers as they reflect the bounty of creation, God's gift to us, and remind us of the daily rebirth and growth we all share in through this wedding celebration.

The colors of the altar paraments are dictated by the Church year season and/or festival day. To find out what color is assigned for your wedding date, please contact the altar guild chairperson or ask the Pastor.

### **Pictures and Videos**

The marriage rite is a worship service. It is our invitation to all present to participate fully in that worship and celebration of marriage. Therefore, we ask that you please refrain from photographing during the ceremony. **Absolutely no flash photography** is to be used during the service. Videotaping should be done from a discreet location so as not to interfere with the flow of the worship service. All photographers and videographers must speak with the pastor before setting up. Opportunities for posed pictures can be arranged for both before and after the worship service.

### **Other traditions**

You may wish to include many traditions from "typical" weddings and/or your cultural heritage. We would like your wedding to be a celebratory occasion and we encourage you to think about these items that you would like to include, and speak with the Pastor about them. However, we do discourage the use of throwing rice or birdseed because it is dangerous, messy, and harmful to creatures entrusted to our care. Please speak with the pastor for other options that might take the place of this custom.

### **Other rooms in the church**

The church is willing to provide use of other rooms for the bridal party and the groomsmen to get ready for the ceremony. However, this must be scheduled with the church office in advance of the ceremony to ensure they are available.

### **Custodian**

Weddings are not included in the regular duties of the sexton and an honorarium is in order. For the custodians the wedding involves additional time putting the church in perfect condition before and after the service, as well

