

## **GUIDELINES FOR YOUR WEDDING AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

St. Paul Lutheran Church  
108 Dutch Hill Road  
LATROBE, PA. 15650  
Approved by the Congregation Council  
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### **A CHURCH WEDDING IS A WORSHIP SERVICE**

A church wedding is a worship service. Couples come to God's house to be united in marriage, and to ask God's blessing on their union. Together they make a covenant of love and faithfulness in God's holy presence and in the presence of the congregation.

It is well to remember that a wedding, like every other event which takes place in church, whether it is a Baptism, a funeral, a service of Holy Communion, or any service of prayer or preaching, is a congregational event. As there are no private events in the church, weddings held here will be announced in the Sunday bulletin, and congregation members are welcome to attend.

A wedding could appropriately take place at a Sunday morning service of worship, and couples are encouraged to consider this in their plans.

The fact that a wedding in the church is a service of worship lends a certain perspective to all the things which happen at the wedding. Feeling the need to make this perspective clear, the Worship *and Music* Committee of St. Paul has put together some guidelines to help couples plan a worshipful wedding service.

If a couple plans to be married at St. Paul, it is expected that they will contact the pastor, and clear the date as early as possible. It is also expected that the couple will meet with the pastor for pre-marriage counseling four times. Rare exceptions to these expectations may be made at the discretion of the pastor.

Weddings during Lent are discouraged, due to the solemn nature of the season, but exceptions may be made when no other date is possible.

### **WHERE DO WE BEGIN TO PLAN?**

The *Evangelical Lutheran Worship Leaders Desk Edition* (p. 45) sets the tone for preparing for a church wedding when it states: "*The marriage liturgy is normally preceded by a period of preparation. Preferably beginning at least six months before the marriage, this time of preparation may involve those to be married in conversation and*

*counsel with the pastor...regarding the liturgy of marriage and the gifts and responsibilities of marriage."*

Marriage plans can become conflicted by consulting too many self-appointed authorities. Make sure any professional wedding consultant you use is aware of these guidelines for weddings at St. Paul. Photographers and florists especially should be informed of these guidelines well in advance of any final plans.

### **HOW CAN WE CHOOSE APPROPRIATE AND MEANINGFUL WEDDING MUSIC?**

*Whereas* the Marriage liturgy is a service of worship, the music therefore must be carefully and discriminatingly chosen. *Such music will* embody high standards of quality, and the texts should reflect the praise of God, the steadfast love of Christ for his Church as the foundation and model for love and fidelity in marriage, the invocation of God's presence and blessing. The guideline of our Church is that all music chosen for a wedding should be in keeping with the spirit of praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the song texts must reflect it.

### **WHERE CAN WE FIND A WEDDING MUSIC REPERTOIRE?**

The best place to seek advice for appropriate music is with our musical staff, especially with our music director. The couple should contact the organist (Ray Hamill -- 423-2176) [rhamill@wpa.net](mailto:rhamill@wpa.net) after consulting the pastor. This should be as early as possible, so that adequate preparation can be made for music and rehearsal with a soloist, if used. These pieces of music have already been approved for use:

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Genre</u></b>
Nicolai	<i>O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright</i>	Hymn 308
Friedell	<i>Jesus, Come! For We Invite You</i>	Hymn 312
Nicolai	<i>Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying</i>	Hymn 436
Schalk	<i>Now the Silence</i>	Hymn 460
Cruger	<i>Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness</i>	Hymn 488
Prichard	<i>Hear Us Now, Our God and Father</i>	Hymn 585
Gaelic tune	<i>This Is a Day, Lord, Gladly Awaited</i>	Hymn 586
Prichard	<i>Love Divine, All Loves Excelling</i>	Hymn 631
Croft	<i>O God, Our Help In Ages Past</i>	Hymn 632
Berthier	<i>Ubi Caritas et amor</i>	Hymn 642
English Traditional	<i>Although I Speak with Angel's Tongue</i>	Hymn 644
Hobby	<i>Beloved, God's Chosen</i>	Hymn 648
Ylvisaker	<i>Borning Cry</i>	Hymn 732
Williams, Ralph	<i>Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life</i>	Hymn 816
Beethoven, L.V.	<i>Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee</i>	Hymn 836
SBH 434	<i>Beautiful Savior</i>	Hymn 838
Cruger	<i>Now Thank We All Our God</i>	Hymn 840
Marcello	<i>Psalm XIX</i>	Organ Postlude

Bach, J.S.	Arioso	Organ Prelude
Bach, J.S.	When Thou Art Near	Organ Prelude
Bach, J.S.	Jesu, Joy Of Man's Desiring	Organ Prelude
von Beethoven, Ludwig	Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee	Organ Prelude/Postlude
Brahms	St. Anthony Chorale	Organ Prelude
Franz	Dedication	Organ Prelude
Handel, G.F.	Air	Organ Prelude/Processional.
Handel, G.F.	Arioso	Organ Prelude
Irvine	The Lord's My Shepherd	Organ Prelude
Landohl	Eternal God, Before Thy Throne	Organ Prelude
Pachelbel, Johann	Canon In D	Organ Prelude
Schultz	In Thee Is Gladness	Organ Prelude/Pst.
Clark, Jeremiah	Trumpet Voluntary	Processional/Recess
Purcell, Henry	Trumpet Tune	Processional/Recess
Rodgers, Richard	Wedding Processional	Processional
Wagner, Richard	Bridal Chorus From "Lohengrin"	Processional
Mendelssohn, Felix	Wedding March	Recessional
Barnby	O Perfect Love	Vocal Solo/Organ Sol
Bradbury	Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us	VocalSolo/Organ Solo/Hymn
Dunlap	Wedding Prayer	Vocal Solo
Malotte	The Lord's Prayer	Vocal Solo/Prelude
Schubert, Franz	Ave Maria	Vocal Solo
Stuckey, Paul	Wedding Song (There Is Love)	Vocal Solo

The use of hymns to be sung by the congregation is encouraged. Some hymns in the Lutheran Book of Worship which are appropriate are 287, 288, 289, 557, and 565. *If there are hymns from hymnals of another denomination they must be reviewed by both the Pastor and organist and proper copyright permission must be secured.*

The Austin pipe organ at St. Paul is to be played only by those authorized by the congregation council. Special permission for others to play the organ must be given by our music director.

### **HOW MAY WE DECORATE THE CHURCH ?**

It is most proper that the church setting remain intact. Sweeping changes of decor are not suitable for a church wedding, but simplicity is often the maker of good taste.

Paraments, the colored hangings on the altar, pulpit and lectern, shall be those appropriate for the current season of the church year.

Altar candles are provided for weddings by the church. Additional candles **must** be dripleless candles. The Unity candle may be purchased through the Church if the couple wishes. Colored candles are not recommended, but ivory or cream is acceptable.

Flowers are not mandatory. When flowers are used, they should also follow the principle of simplicity. Care should be taken not to create an overbearing floral display. Palms, ferns, or other greens may be used according to the formality of the occasion. Only live flowers are acceptable beside the altar.

A white aisle runner (crash) is appropriate but not essential when the bride wears a train which extends onto the floor. A 50 ft. runner is adequate for our center aisle. The runner can be purchased from the florist. The florist should check with the pastor before installing it. Its proper use requires two ushers. Please allow for this when naming your attendants.

Lighting of the church interior should lend itself to the service. Again, there should be no overbearing dramatic effect. If needed, consult our sexton if ushers are not familiar with lighting.

### **ARE THERE SOME STANDARDS ABOUT ATTIRE?**

In keeping with the Christian spirit of humility during worship, tasteful attire is expected. If the groom is in the military service at the time of the wedding, a military uniform may be appropriate for him. Other men in the wedding may be suited in civilian clothes to the degree of formality desired. Other military personnel may wear their uniforms if desired.

### **WHAT ABOUT THE SEATING OF GUESTS?**

Ushers should be on hand to seat guests at least one half hour before the service, and to distribute wedding bulletins if they are used. The bride's family and friends are customarily seated on the left facing the altar. The groom's are on the right side. At most weddings at St. Paul, the groom's mother is seated a few minutes before the ceremony begins. The bride's mother is seated immediately after that. The ushers should not formally seat anyone after the mother of the bride is seated. *St. Paul seating capacity is 250 persons.*

### **WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR THE BRIDAL PROCESSION?**

There is no specific Church guideline concerning how a procession should take place. Most bridal parties still prefer the traditional one which is as follows:

The groom, best man, and any ushers who are designated to be in the party at the front of the church usually enter from the side door at the front of the nave. After they are in place, the bridesmaids enter from the rear and proceed down the center aisle. The order for their entrance is: junior bridesmaids, bridesmaids, maid or matron of honor; ring bearer; flower girl; bride and father or escort. The bride's father or escort is on the bride's right. This order may be revised at the rehearsal as the couple desires.

Having many bridesmaids sometimes creates a problem at St. Paul due to the size of the chancel, so it is wise to plan carefully for this. It is not inappropriate to have more ushers than bridesmaids.

### **WHAT ABOUT EXPENSES?**

#### **Fee for the use of the church**

There is no fee for use of the church for a wedding if one of the marriage partners is a member of St. Paul. For non-members who have been given permission to be married here the fee for the use of the church is \$200.00. *Please bring the fee to the rehearsal. Give it to the pastor for distribution to the church.*

#### **Sexton**

The sexton (custodian) of St. Paul does the normal clean-up after weddings and returns the church to its normal state. The sexton's fee for all weddings is \$50.00. The enclosed envelope is for your convenience. If the social room is used for the reception, please consult the sexton for clean-up procedures. *Please bring the fee in the envelope to the rehearsal. Give it to the pastor for distribution to the Sexton.*

#### **Organist**

The fee paid to the organist for weddings at St. Paul is \$100.00. This will include the organist's attendance at the wedding rehearsal unless otherwise arranged with the bridal party. Monetary consideration should be given to extra work with soloists and/or instrumentalists at a rate of \$25.00 per ½ hour. The enclosed envelope is for your convenience. Please make your own arrangements with your soloist. Ray Hamill's telephone number is 724-423-2176. *Please bring the fee in the envelope to the rehearsal. Give it to the organist or the pastor for distribution to the organist.*

#### **Pastor**

As the Pastor's call to this congregation includes the responsibility to marry its members, there is no expected honorarium when one of the marriage partners is a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church. The expected honorarium for a non-member wedding is \$100.00.

### **WHAT ABOUT ASKING OTHER PASTORS TO PARTICIPATE?**

The pastor of St. Paul should always be consulted before another pastor is asked to participate in a wedding held here. Other pastors are welcome to participate in the service at the discretion of the pastor of St. Paul.

## **WHERE AND HOW ARE WE TO ARRANGE A RECEIVING LINE?**

Good etiquette calls for the bride and groom to greet their guests at some point after the ceremony or during the reception. It is no longer a standard that a formal receiving line take place, but most couples still prefer it, either at the church or at the reception.

The narthex of St. Paul church is small, making it uncomfortable to have a receiving line there, although it may be done in inclement weather. On warm days a line on the front porch works well. No rice or birdseed is permitted.

The order for the line may vary, but we have found the following to be comfortable and appropriate:

Mother of the bride  
Father of the bride  
Bride  
Groom  
Mother of the groom  
Father of the groom  
Maid or Matron of honor  
Best Man  
Bridesmaids  
(Ushers, flower girl and ring bearer need not stand in the receiving line.)

## **MAY WE HAVE OUR REHERSAL DINNER AND/OR RECEPTION AT THE CHURCH?**

*Yes. Your preference to have either the wedding rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception at the church should be noted when scheduling the wedding. Any decorations that you put up must be taken down immediately following the reception. The fellowship room should be returned as you found it.*

*There is a \$300 user fee for the fellowship hall and kitchen facilities for non-members.*

*No alcoholic beverages are permitted on the premises of the Church.*

## **WHAT ARE SOME OTHER DETAILS TO BE CONSIDERED?**

Wedding rings may either be carried by the best man and attendant of honor, or they may be carried on a pillow by the ring bearer, although this does incur some risk.

The taking of flash pictures is not appropriate during the service from the time the bride enters until after she and the groom have gone back the aisle. It is more appropriate

to pose for pictures after the service than to interrupt the focus of worship to capture a certain moment on film. Photographers may not follow the bride up the aisle, or walk around at the front of the church during the service. It is acceptable for the photographer to be at the back of the church to catch the bride coming in and proceeding up the aisle. The balcony at rear of the church provides an inconspicuous location for a video camera. Please have your photographer consult with the pastor before the day of the wedding.

Wedding bulletins are a helpful addition to the service to let guests know the names of all in the party, and to provide either an outline of the service, or present the entire service printed out. Couples are asked to purchase their own bulletin covers and bring them to the Church office at least a week before the wedding. The Church secretary will type the bulletins.

Flowers in the altar vase may be given to the church to be used the following Sunday service. Notification about this ought to be given to the altar guild as soon as possible. Church vases and liners should not be taken home. If the same flowers are to be used at the reception, the florist can provide suitable vases.

It is up to the wedding party to decide whether the guests are to be ushered out. The mothers of the bride and groom are always escorted out first. If ushering is desired, remember to plan for it at the rehearsal.

Picture sessions following weddings seldom take less than 45 minutes, so plan for this when deciding on reception times. Plan on 1/2 hour to 45 minutes for a receiving line. Pictures at another site may add another 1/2 hour to 45 minutes.

## **THE ORDER FOR MARRIAGE**

### Apostolic Greeting

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

### Prayer of the Day

Pastor: Let us pray:

Eternal God, our Creator and Redeemer, as you gladdened the wedding at Cana in Galilee by the presence of your Son, so by his presence now bring your joy to this wedding. Look in favor upon \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and grant that they, rejoicing in all your gifts, may at length celebrate with Christ the marriage feast which has no end.

### Scripture Readings

The following is a list of scripture lessons suitable for the service. Normally one reading is selected from each of the following categories.

The First Reading:

Genesis 1:26-31	Song of Solomon 2:10-13	Isaiah 63:7-9
Genesis 2:18-24	Song of Solomon 8:7	

The Psalm

Psalm 33	Psalm 100	Psalm 117
Psalm 127	Psalm 128	Psalm 136
Psalm 150		

The Second Reading

Romans 12:1-2	Ephesians 5:21-33	Philippians 4:4-7
I John 4:7-12	I Corinthians 12:31-13:13	

The Holy Gospel

Matthew 19:4-6	John 2:1-10	John 15:9-12
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### Homily

The pastor will preach a short sermon based on the readings chosen.

### Vows

Here are several versions of the wedding vows which may be used. Couples may also write their own vows and present them to the pastor for approval before the service of marriage.

**A)** I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death parts us, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I pledge you my faithfulness.

**B)** I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband/wife, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.

**C)** \_\_\_\_\_, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being until death parts us.

**D)** I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.

### Exchange of Rings

Groom/Bride: I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

### Announcement of Marriage

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, by their promises before God and in the presence of this congregation, have bound themselves to one another as husband and wife. Blessed be the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder. Amen

### Blessing

The bride and groom kneel for the blessing

Pastor: The Lord God, who created our first parents and established them in marriage, establish and sustain you, that you may find delight in each other, and grow in holy love until your life's end. Amen

If it is used, the unity candle is lighted at this point.  
Flowers may be given to the parents at this point as well.

### Prayers

Prayers are included here for the couple, and for all families throughout the world. Family members who have recently passed on may be remembered in the prayers.

### Holy Communion

The couple should consult with the pastor about whether to include Holy Communion in the service. Although Holy Communion is always appropriate at a Christian wedding, it may be better not to include the sacrament when the extended family comes from different faith traditions. When Holy Communion is celebrated, the service continues with the sharing of the peace. When Holy Communion is celebrated, all those in the congregation who are communing members of their home congregations are invited to receive the sacrament.

### Benediction

Almighty God, Father + Son, and Holy Spirit, keep you in his light and truth and love now and forever.

