

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Pemberville, Ohio
Wedding Guidelines

Please read the guidelines below and share them with all who will be involved in planning your wedding. When you confirm the date of your wedding, you are agreeing to these guidelines.

PRE-MARRIAGE CONVERSATIONS

Congratulations on your plans to marry! Few decisions in life are more important than this one, and, like you, we want what is good, pure and honorable in the eyes of God.

While clergy are licensed by the state of Ohio to officiate at any legal marriage, the responsibility of the Christian pastor and congregation goes beyond the requirements of the State. Pastors and congregations are also responsible to God and to the whole Christian Church. For this reason we have additional expectations:

1. Couples are expected to show interest in Christian life and faith.

- We expect couples to be active in worship in a Christian church during the months of marriage preparation and beyond.
- We expect those who have little history of participation in the Christian faith to participate in adult Christian instruction (see the pastor for possibilities for this instruction).
- Those who do not want to be involved in the Christian faith should not ask the congregation to host their wedding. Other options, including marriage by the Mayor or another civil authority, are available.

2. Couples are expected to meet with the pastor several times beginning at least six months prior to the wedding.

- Beginning at least six months prior to the wedding, couples will normally meet with the pastor two or three times. If your wedding is scheduled less than six months prior to the wedding, it is important to contact the pastor immediately.
- The pastor will ask the couple to complete a pre-marriage inventory at the couple's expense (\$30-35) or participate in an appropriate pre-marriage retreat or seminar, mutually agreed upon by the pastor and the couple.

3. Couples are expected to be completely honest with regard to previous marriage(s), divorce(s), children, child support, pregnancy, etc., because all of these things can and do affect marriages.

- A wedding will not be scheduled for someone whose previous marriage is not yet legally terminated.
- The pastor will not officiate at a wedding for someone who is not providing for his/her children.

SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING

- All arrangements with the pastor and/or congregation should be made by the bride or groom, not by friends, professional wedding coordinators, or other members of the family.
- Weddings are not scheduled during Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday—check with the office for dates) or on special Christian festival days such as Ash Wednesday or Christmas.
- Because the pastor expects to meet with couples several times before the wedding, weddings are usually scheduled at least six months in advance of the desired wedding date.
- A pastor of Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church normally officiates at all weddings of the congregation. Other clergy may assist with the approval of the officiating pastor.
- You may contact Bethlehem's office secretary to check for available wedding dates. The secretary can tentatively reserve a date in your name for up to two weeks, but your wedding is not officially "on the calendar" until you have confirmed the date with the officiating pastor.
- When you schedule your wedding, the pastor will ask these questions:
 1. What is your preferred wedding date? (It needs to fit the pastor's schedule as well as yours.)
 2. Do you understand that you will meet with the pastor several times before the wedding?
 3. Are you participating in Christian life and worship? If not, do you intend to do so?
 4. Are you willing to participate in Christian instruction? (This will be asked of those who have little Christian background or of those who have been inactive in the church for some time.)

CHURCH WEDDING COORDINATOR

- Once you have scheduled a wedding with the pastor, you may be assigned a wedding coordinator from the congregation. If a wedding coordinator is assigned, the bride and/or groom should then meet with the coordinator as soon as possible.
- The congregation's wedding coordinator assists you with music selection, church etiquette, use of decorations, etc. He/she will also be here on the day of the wedding to be helpful. At times the wedding coordinator may even conduct the wedding rehearsal.
- If no wedding coordinator is assigned, the pastor will serve as the church's wedding coordinator.

BULLETINS

- Wedding bulletins are a helpful tool to assist your guests in participating fully in the marriage worship service. Many responses for the service may be printed in the wedding bulletin (check with the pastor for details).
- Bulletins may be printed either by the church or by a professional printer. The bride and groom are responsible for the cost for bulletins and printing.
- Bulletins may be ordered through the church office. They should be ordered at least one month in advance. Information for the bulletin should be given to the church secretary at least one month in advance.
- When bulletins are printed by someone other than the church, a copy of the proposed bulletin should be given to the church office or pastor before final printing to verify the order of the service and other details.

MUSIC

- Music is encouraged for a wedding! Music celebrates the fullness of the worship of God and is a wonderful way for those gathered to participate more fully in the wedding worship service.
- Christian weddings are worship services. While the style of worship music is a matter of taste, the lyrics (words) for worship music should have clear Christian content. *Non-Christian lyrics are never used for worship.* Christian bookstores and publishers are usually a good source for appropriate wedding worship music.
- A list of all musical selections chosen for the wedding worship service should be shared with pastor at least one month before the wedding.
- *If there are questions about whether a particular musical selection is appropriate, check with the pastor far in advance of the wedding date.*
- Congregational singing of hymns during the worship service is encouraged. Many couples have found that this is a wonderful way of more fully involving the whole congregation in the wedding worship celebration.
- Pre-recorded music (CDs, tapes, etc.) and photocopied sheet music *cannot be used at your wedding without written permission from the copyright holder.* This includes music used by all musicians. Copyright permission must be shared with the pastor or wedding coordinator at least one month in advance of the wedding.

MUSICIANS

- Musicians are not required for a wedding. All arrangements for musical accompanists are handled by the couple.
- The regular organists of the congregation may be available to play for your wedding. Please contact them directly well in advance of the date of your wedding:
Rev. Ron Diener 734-847-2416 or Mrs. Joyce Eisenhour 419-287-3733.
- Any other organist who is competent with a pipe organ may be chosen to play for your wedding. The name, address, and phone number of the organist shall be given to the pastor as soon as possible.
- When vocalists or other musicians are desired, it is the responsibility of the bride and/or groom to make those arrangements. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of all musicians shall be given to the pastor as soon as possible.
- When one musician will accompany others, it is the responsibility of the bride and/or groom to make sure the musicians know how to contact each other to arrange practice time.
- All musicians shall be informed of the congregation's policy concerning what is and what is not appropriate worship music (*see above*).
- If you purchase music for use by the church organist, it will be returned to you after the wedding.

RECEPTIONS AT THE CHURCH

- The congregation's fellowship hall may be available for wedding receptions. It should be reserved as soon as possible by contacting the church office secretary (419-287-4182). The Fellowship Hall must be reserved separately from the scheduling of your wedding.

- The church does not cater wedding meals or receptions. The couple may choose their own caterer.
- The caterer and wedding party are responsible for kitchen cleanup and any damage or breakage to church equipment or property. The custodian will set up tables, clean the Fellowship Hall, clean the kitchen floor, and dispose of trash.
- Alcohol may not be served or consumed in or on church property.
- Smoking indoors is prohibited.

DECORATIONS

- Special decorations are permitted but not necessary.
- Decorations used shall be in good taste and not conflict or obscure the central symbols of the church: Cross, Altar, Baptismal Font, etc. Please consult with the wedding coordinator or pastor for assistance and guidance.
- The color for altar and pulpit hangings reflects the current season of the Church Year. Colors are not changed to “coordinate” with wedding colors. Church colors have particular meanings which are not altered by a wedding.
- Special aisle candlesticks are available for your use, if desired. Candles are provided by the congregation for a nominal charge.
- The church owns a unity candle holder which you may use, or you may use your own unity candle arrangement. In either case, these candles are not provided. A unity candle is not required for weddings.
- No fastening materials shall be used that will mark or damage church furniture, walls, or property in any way.
- Altar flowers (not required) are purchased by the bride and groom. After the wedding, flowers may be taken by the family or left in the church for use on Sunday. If you plan to leave the flowers for Sunday worship, please inform the church office (419-287-4182) so that we may acknowledge your gift. Flowers not picked up after the final worship service on Sunday are distributed to the sick and homebound.

REHEARSAL

- A rehearsal is not usually necessary for a small or informal wedding. However, the more people that are involved in the wedding or wedding party, the more important is the rehearsal.
- The rehearsal time and date should be set with the pastor or wedding coordinator as soon as possible and at least two months in advance of the wedding.
- The bride and groom, maid or matron of honor, best man, bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girls, ring bearers, readers/lectors, parents of the bride, and parents of the groom should be present for the rehearsal. Soloists need not be present since practice can take place at any time. At least one usher should be present to receive instructions, which can be passed on to all other ushers before the wedding.
- It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to decide where members of the bridal party will stand in the chancel (front of the worship space) *before the rehearsal*. It is best to consult wedding etiquette books for guidelines.

DETAILS FOR THE WEDDING DAY

- As a courtesy to all who are involved, all weddings will begin promptly at the appointed time.
- Ushers should arrive a full hour before the service.
- All members of the wedding party should arrive at least 30 minutes before the service.
- The bride and bride's party may dress in the church lounge. Remember to remove all personal belongings immediately after the wedding. **NO SMOKING OR ALCOHOL ALLOWED.**
- If a dressing room is desired at the church; please ask for one. **NO SMOKING OR ALCOHOL ALLOWED.**
- Seating arrangements are the responsibility of the bride and groom, who instruct ushers as to their desires. We offer no instructions regarding traditional wedding etiquette. It is best to consult wedding etiquette books for guidelines.
- The throwing of rice or confetti is not permitted within the church building or on the church property. Bird seed may be used, but it shall be used outside the building and swept into the grass before the wedding party leaves.
- Please inform photographers and video camera operators that they must check with the pastor for instructions at least 30 minutes before the service, or at the rehearsal.
- Personal clothing and other possessions should be removed from the church immediately after the wedding so the church building can be set up for other functions. It may be helpful for you to designate someone to do this for you following the wedding.

- *Members of the wedding party who have been using alcohol, who smell of alcohol, or who act in an intoxicated manner will not participate in the wedding. This is true even if the drinking took place prior to the arrival at the church.*
- Pastors, wedding coordinators, organists, and other church workers do *not* assume that they are invited to receptions and/or rehearsal dinners. If you desire their attendance, please send an invitation or invite them well in advance.

PAYMENT OF FEES AND EXPENSES

- Fees for building use, candles, and or bulletins should be paid on the day of the rehearsal or before. Checks are made out to Bethlehem Lutheran Church and may be given to the office secretary or to the pastor.
- Fees or gifts for organists, pastor, or custodian should be paid on the day of the rehearsal or before. Checks are made out to the individual for whom they are intended.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL EXPENSES

- Musicians: Musicians other than Bethlehem's regular organists set their own fees. Ask about their fees when you schedule them for your wedding.
- Flowers: *(not required)* Flowers are ordered from the florist of your choice.
- Aisle runner: *(not required)* An aisle runner is ordered from the florist.

BASIC EXPENSE CHART

Description	For Active Members	For Inactive and Non Members
Use of building (covers building maintenance, utilities, etc.)	No cost	No cost.
Use of hall/kitchen for reception <i>(not required)</i>	No cost	\$150
Aisle candles <i>(not required)</i>	\$12	\$12
Bulletins <i>(not required)</i>	Varies, usually \$10-\$15 per 100	Varies, usually \$10-\$15 per 100
Bulletin printing by church <i>(not required)</i>	\$20	\$20
Custodial services for wedding	\$100 (payable to Dan Magrum)	\$100 (payable to Dan Magrum)
Custodial services for wedding and reception	\$200 (payable to Dan Magrum)	\$200 (payable to Dan Magrum)
Church organist (non-church organists set their own fees)	\$200 (payable to Joyce Eisenhour)	\$200 (payable to Joyce Eisenhour)
Pastor	Honorarium at discretion of couple	\$250 (payable to Pr. Matt Musteric)

MUSICIAN GUIDELINES

Dear Bride and Groom:

Please give a copy of this policy to all vocalists and musicians who are asked to assist in your wedding at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Wedding Music at Bethlehem Lutheran Church

- Weddings at Bethlehem Lutheran Church are conducted as Christian worship services.
- Worship music may be of any style—traditional, contemporary, etc.
- Lyrics for worship music should have clear Christian content. Secular (non Christian) songs are not appropriate.
 - Christian bookstores and publishers are a good source for appropriate Christian wedding music.
 - If there is a question about whether a particular vocal music selection is appropriate, lyrics should be submitted to the pastor or wedding coordinator as soon as possible and at least one month before the wedding.
 - Most popular “love” songs are not appropriate for worship and could be better used at the reception.
- Pre-recorded music (CDs, tapes, etc.) and photocopied sheet music cannot not be used without written permission from the copyright holder. This includes any music used by any musician. Evidence of copyright permission must be given to the pastor or wedding coordinator at least one month before the wedding.

PHOTOGRAPHER / VIDEOGRAPHER GUIDELINES

Dear Bride and Groom:

Please give a copy of this policy to all photographers and videographers who are asked to assist in your wedding at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Wedding Photography and Videography at Bethlehem Lutheran Church

- A wedding at Bethlehem Lutheran Church is conducted as a Christian worship service. Therefore, photography and videography should not interfere with the worshipful spirit of the event.
- During the procession of the bridal party to the front of the church, photographers and videographers may work from the center aisle, and photographers may use a flash.
- After the procession of the bridal party to the front of the church, photographers and videographers shall move to the back of the church (behind all worshipers and guests) until the end of the wedding service.
- Photographers and video camera operators are permitted to work quietly from the back of the church during the worship service. Movement should be kept to a minimum.
- No flash photography is permitted after the procession of the bridal party to the front of the church.
- An unattended video camera may be placed to the side of the chancel (platform) area prior to the wedding service. There may be other locations available for an unattended camera; check with the pastor.