

Wedding Guidelines

Saint Paul's Lutheran Church

Egbertsville, New York

Steve Biegner, pastor

Congratulations on this exciting phase of life. We are thrilled that you are considering St. Paul's Church to be the place that you begin your marriage. What lies in this document are some thoughts and suggestions pertaining to your wedding process. Please ask questions along the way!

Arrangements

The bride and groom should make an appointment with the pastor to discuss wedding dates and plans as soon as is possible. Prior to this meeting IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT NO DATES OR DEFINITE PLANS BE ANNOUNCED since they may not fit in with the calendar for the use of the church facility or the pastor's other commitments. If for any reason it becomes necessary to cancel or postpone a wedding, please contact the pastor as soon as possible.

Church Office - 716-835-0407

Steve Biegner, pastor - 716-868-1232

Pre-Marital Counseling

The pastor provides pre-marital counseling prior to the wedding. In order to prepare a couple for marriage there are usually two to four sessions, some of which may be combined if the couple is traveling from far away. Portions of this time will focus upon planning the wedding service in detail. Other significant portions of time will be spent discussing the couple's relationship in anticipation of marriage. A pre-marital inventory is used to focus these conversations.

Application and License

You must allow sufficient time to comply with the laws of New York State in securing a marriage license. The license must be secured at least 24 hours prior to the wedding and is valid for 60 days

The license must be given to the pastor no later than at the wedding rehearsal. Normally the best man and maid of honor sign the license as witnesses following the ceremony and before leaving the church.

Check the web site of your town or municipality. Licenses are usually issued by the Town Clerk. Some URL's that we have found that may help you are:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/4210/#skiptocontent>

http://www.usmarriagelaws.com/search/united_states/new_york/marriage_licenses/buffalo_clerk.shtml

http://www.amherst.ny.us/govt/clerk/clerk_detail.asp?dept_id=dept_20&div_id=div_37&menu_id=menu_51

The Ceremony

No marriage service will be performed if on the day of the service it is either evident or suspected that any of the individuals participating in the Wedding Party have engaged in substance abuse of any kind, including alcohol consumption.

The Lutheran Book of Worship offers a well-crafted order for worship for a wedding. This service is flexible and can be as simple or as formal as you choose. The service can stand alone as a simple service of Word and Prayer, or it can be included within a full service of Holy Communion. Because the couple knows who will be in the worshipping congregation the choice of whether or not to include Holy Communion is left up to you. The church offers the Sacrament as a sign of unity and blessing. If the Sacrament brings your families together in the presence of Christ it is a wonderful offering. If the Sacrament would cause division, or make large portions of your family uncomfortable, then it does not serve as a sign of unity and should not be included.

In special circumstances the service can be modified to embrace diverse religious traditions and recognize special needs of you and your families. All such considerations should be discussed with the pastor in detail well in advance of the wedding day.

Couples may want to write their own vows. The vows should contain specific promises, include the name of your spouse, and should declare a clear lifelong pledge of love and faithfulness. The vows do not need to be worded exactly the same but should be roughly parallel, so that both bride and groom pledge similar and equal things. The pastor will review and edit all such vows in advance of the wedding day.

The church administrator can help produce a bulletin or program for your wedding ceremony. You may also do this partially or entirely on your own. The information included in the program is up to you. Pastor may wish to review it before printing.

Couples who wish to include other clergy in the service should speak with pastor well in advance to arrange the details. Some clergy require permission from their religious leaders to participate in services outside their church. Some clergy are limited in what they can do in services outside of their own church. Couples who wish to have a marriage recognized by the Roman Catholic Church need to apply for the appropriate dispensations through a local parish.

Music

Music is an important part of every service of the church and is especially appropriate at weddings.

Music used during the service should be sacred in character and not detract from the attitude of worship. Secular and popular music is best used at the reception celebration. Some more secular music can be appropriate for use as the congregation is gathering.

The parish organist, Paul Storfer - 716-861-5252, will help you select music for the procession and recession that is both appropriate for worship and in keeping with your chosen style. Soloists can be used during the service and the music used by them is equally subject to the approval of our parish organist.

A soloist may be employed. Please remember that this person should have the music well in advance and that the organist also needs a copy of the music.

There is an additional fee for the organist when additional rehearsal time is required.

Occasionally, the couple may desire to have a personal acquaintance play the organ. If another person is to be substituted, it should be with the permission of the music director. When family friends use their musical talents in a wedding service they should be offered payment, allowing them to accept payment or to provide their services as a gift.

Because the wedding service is a service of worship it is also appropriate to use hymns that are sung by the entire gathered congregation. A list of suggested hymns is attached.

Church Decorations

All decorations should be put in place within a few hours of the ceremony. No decorations may be fastened to the pews with tacks.

The color of the altar hangings and vestments are determined by the church calendar. Seasonal decorations may also be in place in the church and they are expected to be left in place.

The church will have two floral bouquets behind the altar. Other flowers may be placed in the sanctuary or on the ends of the pews, but not on the altar. You should pre-arrange a person to take away flowers and decorations you have provided. Flowers left at the church will be displayed at the church at worship and then disposed of.

As the couple leaves the sanctuary, please refrain from using rice. Bubbles or horns are preferred.

A candlelight wedding using the 16 pew candleholders in the center aisle and chancel may be arranged for an additional fee.

The "Unity Candle"

The Unity Candle is a visual symbol that you may choose to incorporate into your wedding service. The bride is expected to provide a large central pillar candle and two long white tapers for the outside candles. The outer candles are lighted as the service begins often by the mothers of the bride and groom (or another representative). These outer candles symbolize the separate lives lead by the bride and groom to this point. Following the vows and exchange of rings the bride and groom each take the outer candles and light the single center candle symbolizing their unity in the bonds of holy matrimony.

Aisle Runners

No aisle runners are permitted.

Rehearsal

Only those in the wedding party and parents need to be present for the rehearsal. Other friends and family are welcome to attend and sit. Please ask your attendants to be prompt. During the rehearsal the pastor will explain the details of the ceremony, answer questions, and guide the wedding party through the processional, recessional and other movements that will occur during the service. The rehearsal normally takes about forty-five minutes after all of the wedding party has arrived.

Pre-Nuptial Agreements

Because pre-nuptial agreements can place conditions and expectations upon the promises made by the couple, they should be a part of the pre-marital discussion. The pastor asks to see and read any pre-nuptial agreements. All such agreements and any details contained in them are held in strict confidence, and no copies of the document are made or filed.

Pictures

Photography of the procession and recession are permitted, but no flash photography is allowed between the end of the processional and the benediction by either professional photographers or guests. Portions of the service may be posed after the service has concluded. No special lighting for video is permitted during the service. Professional photographers and videographers may only use available lighting and are never to enter the center aisle during the service. They can be in the back, side aisles or in the balcony.

Off Site Services

When a wedding service is held in a place other than the church the service is still religious in character and will be conducted as a service of worship. In keeping with this understanding religious symbols may be included in the setting for the service.

Wedding Coordinator: (Sara Gallagher - 834-1833)

The church has a wedding ministry team. You can call the wedding coordinator any time prior to your wedding if you have questions, and she will contact the bride by phone the week of the wedding to go over your plans. The coordinator will be at your rehearsal and your wedding to help you and the pastor with logistics, flowers, candle lighting, procession and ring the bell during the Lord's Prayer. She arrives early to open the facility for you and will close the building and hold any items that the guests may have left behind for you to pick up another day.

FEES

Saint Paul's Lutheran Church makes our services available to members of the congregation and the community at large upon request. In consideration for services rendered we ask that the following fees be rendered.

For Members

Pastoral Services:	\$200 for premarital, rehearsal, service
Organist	\$150
Soloist	\$100
Custodian	\$ 75

Candles (Candlelight wedding only)	\$ 20
Church Use	No Charge
Parish Hall Use	No Charge
Wedding Coordinator	\$ 75
Program development and/or printing	\$ 35

For Non-Members

Pastoral Services: \$250 for premarital work, rehearsal, service for non-holiday weekend weddings. \$350 for holiday weekend weddings.

Organist	\$200
Soloist (Suggested)	\$100
Custodian	\$ 75
Candles (Candlelight wedding only)	\$ 20
Church Use	\$250
Parish Hall Use	\$250
Wedding Coordinator	\$ 75
Program development and/or printing	\$ 35

Considerations

If you wish to invite the pastor to the rehearsal dinner, or the reception please extend the courtesy as your other guests by sending a formal invitation or asking in advance of the wedding day and indicate if the pastor's spouse is also invited to attend. Although, due to many weekends being filled with worship services and family functions, the pastor might not be able to attend the reception.

Pr. Steve Biegner
9685 Hilton Dr.
Clarence Center NY 14032

VOWS

Choose one or write your own

1. I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband
 from this day forward,
 to join with you and to share all that is to come,
 and I promise to be faithful to you
 until death parts us.
 (. . . as long as we both shall live.)

2. _____, I take you to be my wife/husband
 from this time onward,
 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.

3. I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband;
 I promise before God and these witnesses
 to be your faithful wife/husband,
 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.

4. I take you, _____, to be my wife/husband,
 and these things I promise you:
 I will be faithful to you and honest with you;
 I will respect, trust, help, and care for you;
 I will share my life with you;
 I will forgive you as we have been forgiven;
 and I will try with you better to understand ourselves, the world, and God;
 through the best and the worst of what is to come; as long as I live.

5. In the name of God; I, _____, take you _____,
 to be my 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,
 until we are parted by death.
 This is my solemn vow.

6. _____, 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 forgive and strengthen you in all circumstances of our life together,
 and to be loyal to you
 with my whole life and with all my being.

7. I, _____, take you, _____, for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward,
 for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

8. I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband.
 I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad,
 in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you
 all the days of my life.

9. I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wife/husband,
 and I promise before God and these friends that I will share my life with you in all love and honor, in all faith and tenderness, through joy and sorrow, in sickness and health, as long as we both shall live.

LESSONS AND READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS - (Choose one)

Genesis 1:26-28, 31a [Genesis 1:26-28]
 Genesis 2:18-24 [Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24]
 Song of Solomon 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a [Song of Solomon 2:10-13 or 2:8-13; 8:6-7]
 Song of Solomon 8:7
 Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8
 Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a [Jeremiah 31:31-34]
 Isaiah 54:5-8
 Isaiah 63:7-9
 Hosea 2:16-23
 Tobit 7:9c-10, 11c-17
 Tobit 8:4-9 [Tobit 8:5-9]
 Ecclesiasticus 26:1-4, 16-21

PSALMS - Choose one

Psalm 23
 Psalm 33 [Psalm 33:12, 18, 20-22]
 Psalm 34 [Psalm 34:2-9]
 Psalm 37:3-7
 Psalm 67
 Psalm 100
 Psalm 103 [Psalm 103:1-2, 8, 13, 17-18a]
 Psalm 112 [Psalm 112:1-9]
 Psalm 117
 Psalm 121
 Psalm 127
 Psalm128 [Psalm128:1-5]
 Psalm 136
 Psalm 145 [Psalm 145:8-10, 15, 17-18]
 Psalm 148 [Psalm 148:1-4, 9-14]
 Psalm 150

NEW TESTAMENT LESSONS - Choose one

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39 [Romans 8:31b-39]
 Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 [Romans 12:1-2, 9-13]
 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-19 [1 Corinthians 6:15-20]
 1 Corinthians 12:31-138a [1 Corinthians 13:1-13]
 Ephesians 3:14-21
 Ephesians 5:2a, 21-33
 Galatians 5: 22-26
 Philippians 1: 3-11
 Colossians 3:12-17
 Hebrews 13: 1-6
 1 Peter 3:1-9
 1 John 3:18-24
 1 John 4:7-12 [1 John 4:7-16]
 Revelation 19:1, 5-9a

GOSPEL LESSONS - Choose one

Matthew 5:1-12a [Matthew 5:1-10]
 Matthew 5:13-16
 Matthew 7:21, 24-29
 Matthew 19:3-6
 Matthew 22:35-40
 Mark 10:6-9 [Mark 10:6-9, 13-16]
 John 2:1-11
 John 15:9-12 [9-17]

HYMNS:

LUTHERAN BOOK OF WORSHIP

I Will sing the Story of Your Love	16
Sent Forth by God's Blessing	221
Perfect Love	287
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father	288
Heavenly Father, Hear Our Prayer	289
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	315
Eternal God, Before Your Throne	354
Our Father, By Whose Name	357
Christians, While on Earth Abiding	440
Children of the Heavenly Father	474
Oh, Blest the House	512
Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life	513
Now Thank We all Our God	533, 534
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee	551
In Thee is Gladness	552
Let All Things Now Living	557
For the Beauty of the Earth	561

WITH ONE VOICE

Jesus, Come! For We Invite You	648
Bind Us Together	748
When Love is Found	749
As Man and Woman we Were Made	751
I Was There to Hear your Borning Cry	770
Lord. Listen to your Children Praying	775
Praise to You, O God of Mercy	790
O Sing to the Lord	795

Saint Paul's Lutheran Church
 4007 Main Street, Eggertsville, New York 14226
 (716) 835-0407

E-mail stpauls1827@juno.com
stevebiegner@gmail.com