

General Guidelines and Policies for Weddings

1. Those who will be married at St. Peter's are expected to participate in a pre-marital experience prior to their wedding. The Samaritan Counseling Center offers pre-marital sessions with staff therapists, or a couple may choose to participate in Pre-Cana classes, Engaged Encounter, or other similar programs. Arrangements should be made directly with the Samaritan Center or appropriate organization, in consultation with the pastor officiating over the wedding.
2. Normally one of St. Peter's pastors will coordinate the arrangements for the church ceremony and will officiate at the wedding, although both will be involved if the couple so desires. Other ministers or priests are permitted to assist in the ceremony. Those arrangements should be made with the officiating pastor.
3. **The pastor normally meets at least three (3) times with the bride and groom.** These meetings accomplish two purposes: 1) to discuss the nature of Christian marriage and 2) to make arrangements for the ceremony. The pastor does not attempt relational or psychological counseling unless a specific request is made or he/she feels circumstances necessitate it. In some of these cases the pastor will refer the couple or individual to a professional counselor.
4. It is not appropriate to provide the pastor with a fee or gift. It is appropriate to invite the pastor and his/her guest to the rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception, but it is not required.
5. When scheduling the church for the wedding date, **the bride and groom should contact the organist** (obtain phone number from pastor or church office) to reserve the date on the musician's calendar. General information can be shared at that time.
6. The wedding ceremony itself will be based upon the traditional Lutheran rite, which lends itself to a variety of options. The Lutheran Book of Worship is the basic form of the service that is normally used.

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7. **The Wedding Banns** (announcement) will be printed in the church bulletin one-week before the marriage date. An announcement of the wedding will also be printed in the bulletin on the Sunday following the wedding.
8. The church will order and install the **altar candles**. The bride will order the wedding candle from a florist or church supply store if it is to be used in the candle lighting ceremony. The church provides kneeling cushions. The use of a white runner down the aisle is discouraged unless flower petals are being dropped (see #11 below). If petals are used in the church, an aisle runner is required.
9. If **flowers** are desired for the altar area, the bride must order them. The altar vase liners may be used. If so, the florist or couple may pick up the vase liners any time during the week preceding the wedding. The couple should call ahead to make arrangements for pickup. The couple or florist must call the church office in order to make arrangements for flower delivery. In most cases the altar flowers should remain in the church for Sunday services.
10. **Wedding bulletins** may be prepared through the church office, or a couple may arrange to have the bulletin printed themselves. They are prepared from the order of service the pastor discusses with the couple, the music the organist arranges for, and the "Marriage Information" form which the bride returns to the pastor. If the bulletins are prepared through the church office, a rough draft of the bulletin is normally prepared on the Tuesday prior to the wedding. The couple is encouraged to come to the church office and proofread the bulletin on Wednesday. The bulletin is then printed on Thursday. It is the responsibility of couples to choose and pay for bulletin covers from a church supply store. The covers must be brought to the church office no later than the Monday prior to the wedding date.
11. If flower petals are to be dropped by a flower girl in the procession, they must be artificial (i.e. made of silk), or the use of an aisle runner will be required. If the aisle runner is used, it will remain in place until the conclusion of the recessional.
12. Rice, birdseed and helium balloons may not be used at any time during or after the ceremony, due to environmental, safety and property concerns.

13. **ONLY THE CONTRACTED PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER is permitted to take photographs during the actual ceremony, AND ONLY from the rear of the church when no extra lighting is required.** This rule is rigidly enforced! The bride should insure that the photographer is aware of the order of service. Photos may be taken following the ceremony. (See “Guidelines for Photography & Videotaping.”)
14. **Videotaping** of the service is permitted if no extra lighting is used. Attended video cameras may only be used from the rear of the church. An unattended camera may be stationed along the “east” wall outside of the altar area (space inside the communion rail). If an unattended camera is used, it will be turned on prior to the Prelude, and left running until the conclusion of the Postlude.
15. The bride and groom should provide their contracted photographer and/or videotaper with a copy of “Photography and Videotaping Guidelines at St. Peter’s Weddings.” Three copies are included in this booklet for the photographer, videographer, and the bride and groom.
16. The bride and groom and their attendants are invited to dress at the church. Rooms are available to accommodate both groups separately. **Smoking is not permitted in these rooms at any time.**
17. Although the “giving away of the bride” by the father is not included in the ritual in the Lutheran Book of Worship, it may be included or adapted for use in the wedding ceremony.
18. The pastor may give a short **wedding homily**. Holy Communion may be celebrated at the wedding, but must be offered to all that attend since this is a service of worship. Holy Communion will not be given exclusively to the bride and groom.
19. All couples planning to marry in Pennsylvania must have a **marriage license**. It may be obtained from the Register of Wills Office in the Lancaster County Courthouse, 50 N. Duke Street, 2nd floor. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For further information or questions, a 24-hour information line may be called at 295-3522.
20. It is not necessary for the bride’s family to provide a **marriage consultant**. St. Peter’s has a volunteer wedding assistant who, if

available, will help the pastor organize the rehearsal and the wedding day responsibilities.

21. The use of a **receiving line** at the church is optional. Couples may also choose to have a receiving line at the reception or not have one at all.
22. The signing of a **Guest Register** book normally occurs after the ceremony when a receiving line is being used at the church and before the ceremony when there is no receiving line at the church. The bride and groom provide the Guest Register book.
23. Normally the bridal party will be present for a **rehearsal** the evening prior to the wedding or at another time if schedules do not permit this. The rehearsal is usually about 45 to 60 minutes long. At the rehearsal the bridal party reviews the service with the pastor and organist, finalizes organizational concerns (receiving line, ushering, procession order, etc.) and discusses any last minute concerns.
24. Members of St. Peter's are permitted to use the **Fellowship Hall or the Assembly Room for receptions**. The cost for usage is the appointed sexton fee. If used, the rooms must be cleared by 9:00 p.m. to allow setups to be made for Sunday morning. Arrangements for food service must be made by the bride and groom. Alcoholic punch and wine may be served at the reception, but other alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
25. **NO SMOKING is permitted at any time in any part of the building, including the dressing rooms or reception halls.** Alcoholic beverages of any kind are also prohibited in the dressing rooms and other parts of the building except as specified in the above stated guideline #23. This rule is rigidly enforced!
26. A list of "Wedding Fees" is included in this booklet.

Wedding Music Guidelines and Policies

1. As a worship service of the church, the marriage ceremony requires music that reflects the spirit of congregational praise. All services of worship center upon God as the object and the reason for which the congregation gathers together. Thus, **musical selections** should focus on worship and the sacred nature of the service. Couples are encouraged to examine the

lyrics and nature of the vocal and instrumental music selected to insure its appropriateness to worship. Some selections, because of their secular nature might be more suitably scheduled for the reception.

2. The primary **organist** of St. Peter's shall be invited to play for all weddings. Under some special circumstances other organists may be used when the pastor and organist grant permission. The following suggestions are made for planning the wedding music:
 - ◆ Discuss music and hire special musicians three to six months **(3-6 months) before the wedding.**
 - ◆ Select processional and recessional music and specific titles **four to six weeks (4-6 weeks) before the wedding.**
 - ◆ Finalize rehearsals and details with special musicians **one to two weeks (1-2 weeks) before the wedding.**
3. In planning the marriage service with the pastor, couples may wish to include one or more **hymns** for congregational participation. The pastor and organist will assist the couple in placing vocal music at appropriate spots in the service.
4. St. Peter's has enjoyed a wide variety of musical talents during weddings. **Instrumentalists and vocalists** usually enhance the uniqueness of the service. Couples are encouraged to select these musicians carefully, so that a professional sound will be provided. If they so desire, the couple may contact the organist who can offer names of competent area vocalists and instrumentalists.
5. In selecting a friend or family member as **vocalist or instrumentalist** for the wedding service, the bride and groom should provide the organist with the special musician's telephone number. Approved selections should be provided to the organist a month before the wedding. The special musician(s) should be available for rehearsal in advance of the wedding rehearsal. Rehearsal times will be established at the mutual convenience of the organist and special musician.
6. If photographs are to be taken in the sanctuary prior to the wedding, photographers should be advised that the organist and soloists might be rehearsing there up to forty-five minutes before the ceremony.

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Photography and Videotaping Guidelines **For St. Peter's Weddings**

The "Wedding Guidelines and Policies" statement of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, approved by the Congregation Council on January 11, 1999, states the following in regard to the use of photography and videotaping at church weddings:

Only the contracted professional photographer is permitted to take photographs during the actual ceremony, and only from the rear of the church when no extra lighting is required. This rule is rigidly enforced! The bride should insure that the photographer is aware of the order of service. Photos may be taken following the ceremony.

Videotaping of the service is permitted if no extra lighting is used. Attended video cameras may only be used from the rear of the church. An unattended camera may be stationed along the "east" wall outside of the altar area. If an unattended camera is used it will be turned on prior to the Prelude and left running until the conclusion of the Postlude.

As further clarification of these two items, the following statements also apply:

1. The primary consideration during the wedding is the sanctity of the ceremony and the participation of guests in the service. The recording of the ceremony on film is of secondary importance.
2. When both photography and videotaping of the ceremony are used, and both are contracted with professionals, the bride and groom will decide which medium has priority as far as the placing of equipment is concerned.
3. Photographers are especially encouraged to take as many photographs prior to the ceremony as possible of the wedding party.
4. If the sanctuary area is to be used prior to the wedding for photography, the organist must be notified since rehearsals are usually scheduled in the two hours preceding the wedding
5. The officiating pastor always has final say over the interpretation of these guidelines.

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Wedding Fee Schedule

The following represents the current listing of fees for services provided through St. Peter's. The bride and groom and the pastor will decide together which parts of the fee schedule are applicable to the wedding service.

It is the couple's responsibility to reimburse participants according to these guidelines. Checks should be presented to those serving **no later** than the night of the rehearsal.

Administrative Fee (made out to "St. Peter's")	\$ 25.00*
Organist - negotiated directly with the musician selected	
Should additional musicians be involved that require rehearsal with the organist, anticipate an additional cost, again negotiated directly with the organist.	
Soloist (Cost is determined by musicians hired)	
Sexton	50.00
Additional Sexton Reception fee	75.00**
Aisle candelabra fee	45.00

* This fee covers office charges related to the wedding service.

** This applies only if the couple has their reception at St. Peter's.



Marriage Vow Options

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.

or

Groom then Bride....I promise before God, our family and friends to be your loving and faithful wife (husband), to share my life with you, in wealth and in poverty, in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad times for as long as we both shall live.

or

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 (obey,) 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 worst of what is to come until death parts us.

or

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.

or

_____, 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.

or

I, _____, take thee, _____ to be my wedded wife (husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

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Suggested Scripture Lessons

Genesis 1:26-31
Genesis 2:18-24

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

Ecclesiastics 4:5-12

Song of Solomon 2:10-13
Song of Solomon 8:7

Isaiah 63:7-9

Matthew 19:4-6

John 2:1-10
John 15:9-12
John 15:12-17

Romans 12:1-2
Romans 12:9-18

1 Corinthians 12:31 and 13:13

Ephesians 5:21-33

I John 4:7-12