

Wedding Planning Guidebook

St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
330 Ferry Street
Easton, Pennsylvania 18042

(610) 258—6119

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www.stjohnseaston.org

The Reverend Susan D. Ruggles

Revised June, 2013

NOTE: RETURN PAGES 13 AND 45 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Introduction

The people of St. John's Lutheran Congregation **celebrate the love** you have found in each other and along with the staff are glad to serve you in preparing for your union. Of all the many arrangements you make for your wedding day, the ones you make with the church are the most important. The information in this booklet is provided to assist you in planning with the staff at St. John's for your wedding.

Marriage is not an exclusively Christian possession. It has taken place for centuries, across cultural lines and within many faith traditions. Since you choose to be married in the church or by a called servant from this congregation, it changes the secular act to one of Christian worship. In its **Christian form**, God's steadfast love is lifted up and celebrated as the model of faithfulness and love for the couple who will join together and for all in attendance. Marriage in this context not only includes promises of lifelong faithfulness to each other but also a celebration of the good gifts of God, like life, health, sexuality, and family, as well as the petition for the blessings of God on your new life together.

You will find that there are choices to make about the service. However, there are certain guidelines you will wish to observe as a participant in a **worship service**. Just like when you ask someone to host an event, you would not wish to offend the host nor the dignity of those gathered.

If you have questions that are not answered by this handbook, please feel free to contact the pastor or the church office staff. These policy statements take precedence over all other previous statements regarding marriage services and St. John's Lutheran Congregation.

Scheduling and Arrangements

Careful planning for a church wedding or with the church staff is necessary. It is strongly recommended that you contact the pastor as soon as you have any idea regarding a possible date for the wedding. Hopefully, this will be not less than six months prior to such date. It is important that the date and time be confirmed early to avoid any possible conflicts on the schedule of the pastor or the church building.

No weddings are to be performed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, or during Holy Week. Weddings are discouraged during the season of Lent as well, due to the church's emphasis on self-denial during this season of preparation and reflection on the Passion of our Lord.

No wedding shall be performed in the church without the elected and called pastor of St. John's congregation as officiant. Other clergy may be invited to participate in a ceremony with the consent of the pastor. The pastor shall be in full charge of the wedding and all other clergy shall abide by the pastor's wishes. St. John's has a beautiful organ whose use is managed by the church and it is expected that the Director of Music will play the church's organ unless arrangements are made to the Director of Music's satisfaction.

If your wedding is planned to be somewhere other than the church, you and the pastor will discuss the music that is deemed acceptable.

___ Contact the church, (610) 258-6119 check on the date

___ Contact the pastor, (610) 258-6119 check on the date

Premarital Counseling

Couples planning for their union under the auspices of St. John's Congregation will meet with the pastor for premarital counseling and attend some other premarital classes. Counseling is appropriate and necessary to discuss the service with the pastor. In accord with the long-standing policy of the Lutheran Church, *"Before solemnizing a marriage, The Minister shall diligently inquire: first, as to whether the union contemplated be in accordance with the Word of God; second, whether it be in accordance with the laws of the state. No marriage shall be solemnized unless the Minister be convinced that God's blessing may properly be asked upon it."*

Couples can attend a three session Marriage Preparedness Series offered by *Lutheran Congregational Services*.

The series covers "topics which promote a couple's relationship by deepening mutual understanding, strengthening communication skills, and encouraging meaningful dialogue". Couples should contact Lutheran Congregational Services to enroll in the classes on their own. Certificates are given upon completion.

Register early, classes are limited!

Sometimes scheduling conflicts limit the availability for the Marriage Preparedness Class, again, contact the pastor with any concerns.

___ sign up for premarital classes

www.info@lutherancongregationalservices.org

or call Lutheran Congregational Services: 610-770-9205

___ make appointment with pastor

When Using the Church Building

The wedding in the church is part of a **service of worship**. Therefore, it is expected that members of the wedding party, family and guests will conduct themselves in accordance with the respect shown for all sacred institutions.

The bridal party (all attendants, drivers, parents, guardians of the couple) are requested to **refrain** from the use of alcoholic beverages or mind altering drugs of any kind before or during the wedding ceremony. There is absolutely no alcohol allowed on the church property.

Smoking is permitted **outside** the church building near the ‘butt buckets’, **ONLY**. All discarded cigarette butts and matches are to be placed in the containers as indicated. Ushers are expected to enforce the church’s policies.

In respect for the food needs of the world, **rice will NOT be thrown** as the bride and groom leave the church. We also prohibit bird seed, confetti, or other paper or plastic type sprays. Because of the danger to wild creatures, helium balloons are also prohibited. These create clutter on the church grounds and unnecessary clean-up costs which will be the responsibility of the bridal couple. If you insist on something to ‘shower’ on the couple, we suggest bubbles or well wishes.

Altar flowers are the responsibility of the couple. Flowers may be placed on the altar or other small tables in the chancel. **NO** artificial flowers are permitted. **The bridal party should consult their choice of florist who then should contact the church regarding delivery and placement allowed**. Certain vases may not be appropriate if there is risk of tipping and ruin of the altar cloths so they will not be allowed. If the flowers are to remain for the Sunday church service, notify the church office at least 2 weeks before so proper acknowledgement will be in the bulletin.

Decorations on the pews such as simple floral arrangements or ribbons are allowed without screws, nails, tacks, staples, wires or other devices that will mar the white pews. Again, contact the church office for questions and to arrange a time to come in to decorate.

The **furnishings of the church** (baptismal font, paschal candle, altar) and the **paraments** will not be moved for the convenience of a wedding. The paraments will reflect the liturgical color of the day, according to the season of the Church year in which the wedding takes place. If you are not familiar with the liturgical calendar, contact the church office and ask what colors will be present for the wedding.

St. John's has extra **candle stands** and they are permitted for use especially for a night wedding. The candle stands can be placed by the altar and attached to every other pew that is not under the balcony. The cost of using the candles is the responsibility of the bride and groom.

Please note that the decorations for your wedding service should be completed well before the scheduled wedding service! Many find time to **decorate** immediately before or after the scheduled rehearsal time. The church schedule must be consulted before the decorations are put in the church.

There is a place for the bride and attendants to wait prior to the ceremony. There is a women's restroom adjacent to the Hospitality Room for convenience. Please note care should be left to protect any **personal or valuable items** as these rooms are not secured during the ceremony.

Flash photography is inappropriate during a worship service such as the wedding service. This applies to all photographers, professional and amateur. As the parties enter the church, pictures are permitted as the service has not started. Available light shots and time exposures are permitted if they are not distracting to the service by photographers moving about and undue noise. The professional photographer should consult with the pastor in advance. Photo sessions after the ceremony are encouraged. Video photography is permitted without special lights. Please notify your photographer.

The **wedding rehearsal** is held shortly before the wedding (usually the evening before). It is a time when the entire wedding party can become familiar with the wedding service. It is requested that all in the wedding party and any parents or guardians be present. Please be prompt. Couples should bring any unity candles (if used), registry book (if used) and license to the rehearsal.

Music at the Church Wedding Service

As soon as the dates and times of the wedding and rehearsal have been decided, the church Director of Music is to be contacted. The Director of Music will arrange for a meeting with the couple to review music and make selections. The organist employed by St. John's congregation will ordinarily provide his or her services for the wedding. If another musician is desired, the Director of Music makes the decision who plays on the instruments in the church.

A marriage service in the church is in the context of worship. Therefore, couples may select from a wide range of religious music appropriate for weddings. Favored secular music shall be reserved for a special and meaningful time during the reception. Requests for music other than that which is offered by the Director of Music's list shall be approved by the organist and the pastor. Special music purchases shall be paid by the couple.

If the wedding service is to include a soloist, the congregation requests that the soloist respect and defer to the organist as the resident musician and provide ample opportunity for the two to rehearse together. Please do not ask for last minute musician rehearsal. If there is a difference between the wishes of the organist and the soloist, the pastor will have the final word in resolving the issue.

Any musical version of the Lord's Prayer, as a solo, should be sung during the recital preceding the ceremony. The Lord's Prayer is meant to be prayed by the congregation as a corporate act at the appropriate time in the worship service.

Musical accompaniment other than the church organ is permitted but should be chosen in good taste to reflect the reverence for the occasion. All preferences in this matter should be discussed with the Director of Music and the pastor.

___ make appointment with Director of Music from St. John's

___ decide on if any soloist desired, give info to Director of music

Suggested Musical Selections for the Wedding Service

Preludes

From the "Water Music Suite"	Handel
Minuet	
Air	
Siciliana	
Bourée	
Entr'acte	Schubert
From Suite No. 3	Bach
Air	
Minuet	
Gavotte	Arne
Minuet	Purcell
Rigadon	Purcell
Largo	Handel

Processionals

Canon in D	Pachelbel
St. Anthony Chorale	Haydn
The Prince of Denmark's March	Clarke
Trumpet Tune	Clarke
Psalm XIX	Marcello

Recessionals

From the "Water Music Suite"	Handel
Hornpipe	
Finale	
Voluntary in G	Stanley
Voluntary in B flat	Stanley
Trumpet Voluntary	Goodwin
Allegro	Boyce
All Glory be to God on High	Pachelbel
Christ is Our Cornerstone	Miles

Sample VOWS

1.
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
until death parts us.

2.
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.

3.
_____,
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,
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.

4.
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.

5.
I _____ take you _____
to be my (wife/husband), my partner in life and
my one true love.
I will cherish our friendship and love you
today, tomorrow, and forever.
I will trust you and honor you
I will laugh with you and cry with you.
I will love you faithfully
Through the best and the worst,
Through the difficult and the easy.
What may come I will always be there.
As I have given you my hand to hold
So I give you my love,
As long as we live.

6.
I _____ take you, _____ to be
my husband/wife.
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 to better understand
ourselves, the world and God,
through the best and the worst of what is to
come
as long as we live.

**Couples are free to write their own vows but
they must be approved by Pastor.**

**Please note-promises
indicate the complete sharing which
marriage implies and make clear the
promises are a lifelong commitment. It is not
a formula but the promise of fidelity that
makes the marriage.**

All applicable fees are requested in the church office THREE weeks before the wedding service, please! Cash or local checks are accepted.

(+ applies if using the church at 330 Ferry Street, X if at another location)

	<u>Member of St. John's</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
+X Pastor	no fee	\$200.00
gas if not at the church	couple's discretion	
+ Organist (add \$25 extra for each additional rehearsal with soloist).....	\$150.00	\$150.00
+ Sexton	75.00	75.00
+ Use of the church	no fee	300.00
+ Festival Candle Stands (if applicable)	25.00	50.00
+ Bulletin copying (you supply paper)	no fee	35.00
(note-final draft MUST be approved by Pastor or it may not be allowed)		

(These fees were approved by St. John's Church Council, September, 2007)

Other fees required:

1. Couples are expected to attend a **marriage preparedness** series approved by the pastor. Lutheran Congregational Services offers this service to churches. The church office can supply you with information/schedule. PLEASE NOTE-the classes fill up quickly and it is the Pastor's request that you complete a class so sign up soon. Certificates are given at completion. (Fee in 2007—\$55)

2. It is the couple's responsibility **to secure a marriage license**. Fees are subject to change as per PA regulations. Contact the Orphans Court in your county in Pennsylvania for information on what to present when at the courthouse applying for license. (For Northampton County, you can call 610-559-3776 information line). Fee has been about \$50. Please note the expiration date of the issuance is usually 60 days and Pastor abides by PA regulations. **Bring license to the rehearsal.**

Basic Bulletin or Service – Pastor Ruggles’ services are roughly 20 minutes long, depending on how many vocalists the couple adds to the service and if there is communion

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE OF

And

Date

Time

PRELUDE (*music before the ceremony begins.*)

PROCESSIONAL (*music where the bridal party enters-usually mothers, bridal party (women/men), children (if in the party), bride w. father or alone*)

INVOCATION (*Here the pastor says, “in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”*)

SCRIPTURE LESSONS (*usually three – at least one or two from the Bible, sometimes an appropriate poem, check with Pastor*)

HOMILY (*this is a short message from the pastor*)

WEDDING VOWS (*pastor has some vows available which couple does not need to memorize and can change or write their own; pastor must approve*)

BLESSING FOR THE RINGS

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

LIGHTING OF THE WEDDING CANDLE (*if applicable, not all weddings use a unity candle*)

PRESENTATION OF FLOWERS (*if applicable, some weddings bride/groom present flowers to mothers and greet the immediate family members during a song or while music plays*)

PRAYERS

BENEDICTION

RECESSIONAL

Some other notes:

Rehearsal

As with many things, there is a wedding rehearsal. Usually, the day before the wedding, the bridal party (including the parents) is asked to gather for about an hour at the site of the wedding (church or other venue). Contact the pastor to affirm times. Note: if the venue (a non-church wedding- is not available, rehearsal can take place at another location)

Weddings not at the church

Please include the pastor when you mail out directions. Although Pastor appreciates being invited to wedding receptions, she seldom attends (schedule) so you do not need to feel obligated to invite her to the wedding reception but directions are helpful.

Please note that generally weddings not at the church still abide by Pastor's and St. John's policies of what consists of a ceremony. Make sure you have contact with Pastor about the ceremony. **Any bulletin or ceremony publication should be approved by Pastor before you print it!**

License

The bridal couple are responsible for securing the license and the must bring it to the rehearsal. Pastor will only sign it after the wedding takes place. Any fees for other state license are the responsibility of the bridal party. Check with the Pastor.

RETURN NEXT TWO PAGES TO ST. JOHN'S ASAP

Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

330 Ferry Street

Easton, Pennsylvania 18042

610-258-6119

stjohnseaston@verizon.net

A reconciling in Christ congregation

The Reverend Susan D. Ruggles

Wedding Planning Information –the wedding is not scheduled until this is in the church office
(Please return to church office as soon as possible)

Today's Date _____ Wedding Date _____ Time (am/pm) _____

Where is the wedding ceremony: _____

Bride's full name/address

Groom's full name/address

email: _____

Telephone-(home/work)

Telephone-(home/work)

Church Affiliation

Church Affiliation

Is this a first marriage? YES NO

Is this a first marriage? YES NO

Parent's name – indicate if present at wedding

Parent's names– indicate if present at wedding

Ring Ceremony? Double or Single

Do you wish to celebrate Holy Communion at rehearsal YES/NO or the service? YES/ NO

Names of persons in the wedding party

Maid/Matron of Honor _____

Bridesmaids _____

Best Man _____

Ushers/Groomsmen _____

Flower Girl _____

Ring Bearer _____

Other: _____

Do you plan to have a vocalist/special music? (note: must be approved by Pastor and Organist) Y N

Details: _____

As part of the **wedding ceremony**, please indicate which of the following you plan to include:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| You are using a Guest register book | YES | NO |
| You have someone to light the worship candle | YES | NO |
| You have someone in mind to act as a Reader | YES | NO |
| You are using a Unity candle | YES | NO |
| Flowers for mothers will be given out after lighting the unity candle | YES | NO |
| This is a Candlelight service | YES | NO |
| If service is in church, are you leaving altar flowers for worship services? | YES | NO |
| If so, how they should be presented in the bulletin: (in memory of...from the wedding of...) | | |

Note – All bulletins must be approved by the Pastor before printing. Office is happy to type the bulletin but bride or groom must purchase the bulletin covers and deliver to the office at least three weeks prior to the wedding date. If you type bulletin and photocopy, pastor must approve the draft three weeks prior to the wedding.

All fees must be received in the church office 3 weeks before the wedding please.