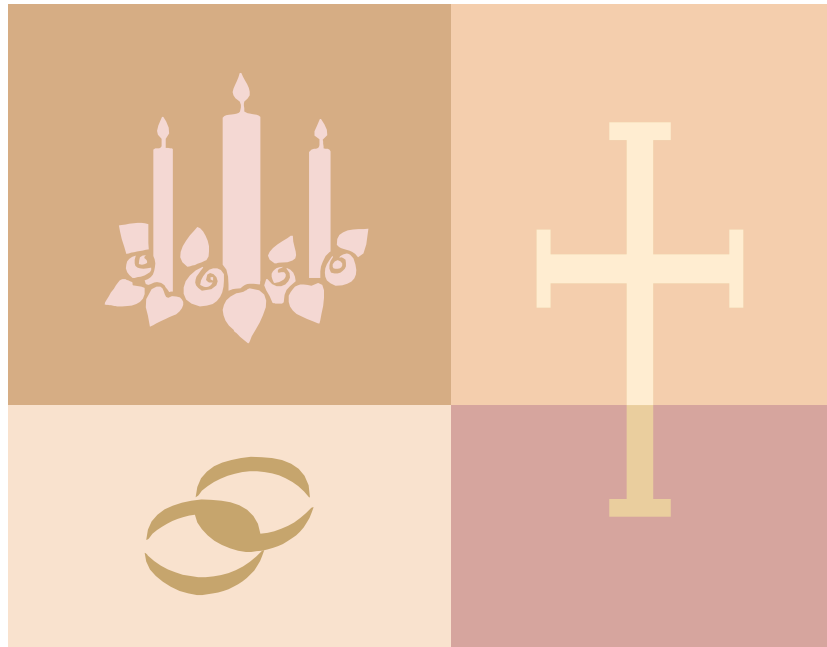


ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
101 NORTH GREENWOOD STREET
TAMAQUA, PA 18252
(570) 668-2180



WEDDING PLANNING HANDBOOK AND POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

The following material is provided to assist you in planning your wedding at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church. The people of Zion's celebrate the love you have found in each other and are glad to serve you in your preparations for marriage.

Marriage is not an exclusively Christian possession. It has been taking place for centuries, across all cultural lines and within all faith traditions. But, in its Christian form, God's steadfast love is lifted up and celebrated as the model of faithfulness and love for the couple being joined together and for all in attendance. Marriage is a glad occasion overflowing with joy in which the participants (congregation and couple) celebrate within the context of worship all the gifts received from the Creator.

As you plan your wedding, you will find that there are choices that you can make to individualize your service. However, there are certain guidelines that you will wish to observe as a guest in God's house.

This planning guide takes precedence over all previous statements regarding wedding policies of this congregation.

SCHEDULING AND ARRANGEMENTS

1. Contact the pastor as soon as you have any idea regarding a possible date for the wedding. It will be expected that this will take place no later than four months before such a 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. There also needs to be ample time in which to meet with the pastor for the premarital counseling sessions.
2. No weddings are to be performed on church festival days (Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Holy Week, etc.).
3. Only the called pastor of this congregation will officiate at weddings performed in this church. 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.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING

1. Couples planning their weddings at Zion will meet with the pastor for counseling. The number and length of sessions will vary in accordance to the outcome of the *Prepare* inventory and the schedules of the couple.
2. The counseling sessions are designed to afford the pastor and couple opportunities to share, in an informal atmosphere, the significant meaning of Christian marriage, to discuss details of the wedding service, and to provide tools for a growing relationship. This will be done through the aide of the *Prepare* inventory. The cost for the processing of the inventory will be the responsibility of the couple.

USE OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

A wedding in the church is to be in the context 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. Therefore:

1. Smoking is not permitted in the Church buildings. No drugs or alcohol are permitted on the church property.
2. Balloons may be used as decorations, but are not to be used in the sanctuary. Due to the harm inflicted on land and ocean wild life, the release of helium-filled balloons is also prohibited. Neither the use of birdseed nor rice is allowed.
3. It is the obligation of the bride and groom to make certain that these regulations are made known to the members of the wedding party and guests prior to the wedding.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

In keeping with the worship character of a wedding ceremony all photographers will observe the following:

1. No flash photographs are to be taken during the ceremony. This applies to all photographers, professional and amateur.
2. During the ceremony only inaudible, time exposure, natural light pictures may be taken only from areas designated by the pastor.
3. The professional photographer may take pictures of the processional and recessional only from an area designated by the pastor.
4. All other pictures may be posed prior to or following the wedding. The pastor will be available, upon prior request, for any reenactments or poses.
5. Videography is permitted without floodlight. Those who videotape must remain stationary during the ceremony, that is, from the beginning of the Prelude before the ceremony to the completion of the Postlude following the ceremony. The wedding may be videotaped only from areas designated by the pastor.

All photographers and videographers should respect the solemnity of the worship service. Distracting movements and positions must be avoided. The professional photographer and/or videographer should consult with the pastor in advance with regard to appropriate positions and locations from which the photographer /videographer can operate.

It is the responsibility of the couple to inform all professionals and guests of these policies. Guests can be informed by including an announcement of such in the wedding bulletin.

WEDDING DECORATIONS

1. All floral arrangements are the responsibility of the couple. Flowers may be placed on the wall shelf or other small tables in the chancel. If you desire to use the flowers for the following Sunday, arrangements must be made with the Parish Administrator. If you desire to leave your arrangements for Sunday worship, in addition to the Sunday flowers, please give ample notice to the pastor so an announcement regarding the arrangements can be published in the Sunday worship bulletin.
2. The use of any screws, nails, tacks, staples, wires or any other fastening device on furnishings or structure is prohibited. We recommend the use of rubber bands or ribbons that can be tied around the pew end.
3. Furnishings of the church (baptismal font, paschal candle, etc) shall not be moved for the convenience of a wedding. Items used for the celebration of the sacraments and seasons of the church take precedence in their positioning over other acts and should remain in place.
4. Use of an aisle runner (paper or otherwise) for use upon entry of the bridal party in the center aisle is NOT permitted.
5. The church interior (sanctuary) should be decorated to your satisfaction and within the above guidelines no later than two hours before the ceremony begins. You will need to insist on this requirement when you make the initial contact with the florist.
6. All decorations must be removed from the church as soon as photographs are completed and before leaving the church for the reception.

MUSIC

1. Contact the Director of Music as soon as your wedding and rehearsal date has been scheduled with the pastor so that your wedding music can be planned, any initial questions answered, and any soloist or special music arrangements planned.
2. Ordinarily the Director of Music of Zion will play for all weddings. In the event that 1) he/she is not available; or 2) the couple desires another organist, Zion's Director must be assured of the guest organist's competence to use our organ.
3. The music for the wedding will be selected in consultation with Zion's Director of Music and with the approval of the pastor.
4. In keeping with the Christian character of a church wedding all music will be Christian in character and message. Favored secular music shall be reserved for a special and meaningful time during the reception.
5. If your plans for the wedding 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 in preparation for their part in the wedding. Please do not place the organist under the pressure of a last minute rehearsal. If there is a difference between the wishes of the organist and the soloist that reaches an impasse, the pastor shall have the final word in resolving the issue.

BULLETINS

The purchase of wedding bulletins is the responsibility of the couple. The secretary will print the bulletins for the couple provided the proper information is delivered to her at least two weeks prior to the wedding. Samples of bulletins are available from the pastor upon request.

FLOWER GIRLS/RING BEARERS

Children selected for these tasks should be at least 4 years of age. Smaller children make both the rehearsal and the wedding difficult since they usually cannot handle the duties. Exceptions **MAY** be made on a case by case basis. To ensure the safety of the rings the best man and/or maid or matron of honor will carry them to the altar. If a ring bearer is used other rings can be used as display. The flower girl **MAY NOT** spread flower petals or any other material in the sanctuary.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal will usually be held the evening before the wedding. It is requested that the parents or guardians of the couple be in attendance at the rehearsal if they are to be in attendance or participate in the wedding. All of the wedding party shall be in attendance at the rehearsal and it is urged that all members of the wedding party be prompt.

LEGAL ISSUES

Pennsylvania law outlines the following steps to obtain a marriage license.

1. Application for a marriage license may be made in person at the Clerk of the Orphans Court office in any Pennsylvania county.
2. Persons under the age of 18 need parental consent and persons under the age of 16 also need the approval of a Judge of the Orphans Court.
3. No persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs may either apply for a marriage license or be married.
4. The license will be issued 3 days following the receipt of the application by the court's clerk.
5. The license is valid for sixty days from date of issuance.

The license must be given to the pastor at the wedding rehearsal, or earlier if possible. Please be aware that the pastor cannot officiate at a wedding ceremony unless he/she has been presented with the license that allows him/her to do so. The pastor will complete and sign all the forms necessary, return the certificate portion to the couple, and forward the certification form to the clerk of the Orphans Court for registry.

REMEMBER: The pastor can **NOT** officiate at a marriage if the bride or groom or both are under the influence of alcohol.

FEES

	*VotingMembers	All Others
Pastor	\$ 0	\$ 125.00
Secretary(If bulletins)	35.00	35.00
Sexton	50.00	50.00
Use of church Building	0	200.00
Organist	varies	varies
Prepare Inventory	current rate	current rate

If you desire to use the parish hall for your reception please contact the Church Administrator regarding, fees, scheduling, and details. All requests for use of the parish hall will be brought before the Council for approval.

The couple is responsible for supplying wedding bulletin covers, any candles other than the altar candles, and the aisle runner should they choose to use one.

The organist's fee is established by the organist and payment due directly to the organist

With the exception of the organist's fee, both the signed "*Agreement for Use of Facilities*" form and all fees should be received by the church as soon as possible to insure your requested date and time. ALL fees must be received by the church no later than two weeks before the wedding to allow for check clearance. Please pay to the order of "Zion Lutheran Church". A receipt will be issued in cases where payment is by cash. No wedding will be performed unless all fees have been paid.

The Prepare Marital Inventory must be paid, by check, upon administration of the inventory. Please pay to the order of "Prepare/Enrich, Inc."

(*The term 'voting member' is synonymous with the term 'active member'. An active member status is in accord with our constitutional guidelines as a person who during the current or preceding year has both a contribution of record and a communion of record. In regards to weddings, voting member (active member) status will be determined using the date of initial contact to schedule the wedding, NOT the actual date of the wedding.)

PERSONALIZING YOUR CEREMONY

SCRIPTURE LESSONS (Choose one from each category- First Lesson, Second Lesson, Psalm, and Gospel)

Suggested Old Testament readings for the First Lesson:

Genesis 1:26-31	Male and female created by God
Genesis 2:18-24	God creates man and woman
Song of Solomon 2:10-13	Love in the spring
Isaiah 63:7-9	The steadfast love of God
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12	Two are better than one

Suggested Epistle readings for the Second Lesson:

Romans 12:1-2	A living offering
I Corinthians 12:31-13:13	A hymn of love
Ephesians 5:21-33	Marriage and mutual respect
Philippians 1:9-11	Love that grows
Colossians 3:12-17	Living in love and thanksgiving

Suggested Psalms:

33, 100, 117, 127, 128, 136, 150

Suggested Gospels:

Matthew 7:24-29	House built upon a rock
Matthew 19:4-6	Two become one
John 2:1-10	Wedding at Cana
John 15:9-12	Love one another

HYMNS (Lutheran Book of Worship [selection is optional])

164	Creator spirit, By Whose Aid
264	When All Your Mercies, O My God
320	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
245	All people that on Earth Do Dwell
256	Oh, Sing Jubilee to the Lord
531	Before Jehovah's Awesome Throne
250	Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty
550	From All That Swell Below the Skies
520	Give to our God Immortal Praise
541	Let Us With a Gladsome Mind
542	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
287	O Perfect Love
78	All Praise to You, O Lord
263	Abide With Us, Our Savior
288	Hear Us Now, Our God and Father
289	Heavenly Father, Hear Our Prayer
315	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
354	Eternal God, Before Your Throne We Bend

- 512 Oh, Blest the House
 513 Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life
 533-4 Now Thank We All Our God
 540 Praise the Lord! O Heavens
 541 Sing Praise to God, the Highest Good
 551 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
 552 In Thee Is Gladness
 560 Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices
 561 For the Beauty of the Earth

VOWS (Select one)

1. 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.
2. _____, 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.
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 we live.

(NOTE: You may feel free to compose your own vows or use vows from another source with the understanding that the final wording must be approved by the pastor. The final wording should reflect the recognition of God as Creator and should be consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.)

**SOME SUGGESTED ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTICES
FOR A WEDDING BULLETIN**

You may wish to read over this list to find some suggestions for any announcements or notices you wish to include in your wedding bulletin.

1. TO OUR FAMILIES

We thank you each and everyone
For joining us this day
You've added to our happiness
In a very special way.
And as the years shall come and go
our dreams will give us pleasure,
And bring you back to us again
In memories to treasure.

2. We would like to thank you for coming together to celebrate our declaration of love for each other. And please, each and everyone of you, accept our heart-felt invitation to be as important a part of our tomorrow as you are of our today.
3. We wish to thank all of you for sharing with us the celebration of our marriage. We especially want to thank our parents for their love, support, and prayers.
4. A rose has been placed on the altar in memory of
5. The wedding flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of NAME. We wish to extend our love and thanks not only for your attendance here today, but also for the friendships, prayers, and precious memories that you have given us to carry forever.
6. We would like to thank all of our family and friends for joining us on our wedding day. You've added to our happiness in a very special way.
7. Please refrain from taking pictures during the marriage ceremony.
8. Please restrict photographs to the period prior to and following the wedding ceremony.
9. The Bride and Groom request that no pictures be taken during the ceremony.
10. Please do not take photographs during the worship service. The wedding party will return after the ceremony for pictures. Everyone is invited to (the reception's place with address).

Adopted by Council March 11, 2008

Zion Lutheran Church

Agreement for the Use of Our Facilities

For Weddings

Fees:

	*VotingMembers	All Others
Pastor	\$ 0	\$ 125.00
Secretary(If bulletins)	35.00	35.00
Sexton	50.00	50.00
Use of church Building	0	200.00
Organist	varies	varies
Prepare Inventory	current rate	current rate

If you desire to use the parish hall for your reception please contact the Church Administrator regarding, fees, scheduling, and details. All requests for use of the parish hall will be brought before the Council for approval.

Please refer to the accompanying “Wedding Handbook and Policies” for detailed description of fees.

*The term ‘voting member’ is synonymous with the term ‘active member’. An active member status is in accord with our constitutional guidelines as a person who during the current or preceding year has both a contribution of record and a communion of record. In regards to weddings, voting member (active member) status will be determined using the date of initial contact to schedule the wedding, NOT the actual date of the wedding.

Your Name _____

Date of Event _____

Time for Event **Start** _____ **Finish** _____

Phone Number _____ **Number of People** _____

Payment Received _____

If this policy and guidelines are amenable please sign below to indicate your willingness to comply.

I have read the attached policy as well as the compensation guidelines and will comply with them. Furthermore, I indemnify and hold harmless Zion Lutheran Church from all claims of personal and property damage that might occur during the use of the facility.

Signed _____ **Date** _____