

Wedding Guidelines

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Pemberville, Ohio
Revised September 2020

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.

1. Pre-Marriage Conversations with the Pastor

1. You will be expected to meet with the pastor two or three times before marriage.
2. You will be expected to complete a pre-marriage inventory at your cost (approximately \$35).

2. Previous Marriages and Relationships

1. Couples are expected to be completely honest regarding previous marriage(s), divorce(s), children, child support, pregnancy, etc.
2. A wedding will not be scheduled for someone whose previous marriage is not yet legally terminated.
3. The pastor will not officiate at a wedding for someone who is not providing for his/her children.

3. Scheduling the Wedding and Reception

1. A phone call to the church secretary begins the wedding scheduling process to see if the date is available on the church calendar, usually at least six months in advance.
2. All weddings must be confirmed directly with the pastor (in person, by phone or by email) by the bride or groom.
3. 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 and Christmas.
4. The 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.

4. Details of the Wedding Service

1. The details of the wedding worship service will be worked out in conversation with the pastor. The pastor has final say in matters of worship. A helpful guide is in our wedding workbook.
2. The details of the order of worship (what appears in the bulletin) should be confirmed with the pastor at least a month in advance. Once the details are confirmed, you may print your own bulletins or request the church secretary do this (for a small fee).

5. Music

1. All arrangements for musicians and music will be handled by the couple. The church organist may be available and should be contacted directly.
2. The church organist can provide either organ or piano music and accompaniment, and can arrange for additional instrumentation should the couple chose (schedules permitting), and must be decided at least one month before the wedding date (earlier the better). Any additional instrumentalists (that are provided through the organist) may charge additional fees determined by them, and to be paid directly to them.
3. All fees are to be paid in full on the date of the wedding rehearsal. If there is no rehearsal, fees are to be paid in full on the date of the wedding.
4. The pastor has final say in matters of music used during the worship service.
5. A list of musical selections should be given to the organist at least one month before the wedding date, in order to provide the organist enough time to order/purchase music if needed. If the organist needs to purchase additional music, the couple will be informed and (should they chose to still utilize that particular piece) the cost of the music will be the responsibility of the couple. A copy of the music will be returned to the couple after the wedding.
6. Christian weddings are worship services. While the style of worship music is a matter of taste, the lyrics for worship music should have clear Christian content. Non-Christian lyrics are not appropriate for worship. If you have questions, just ask the pastor (at least a month before the wedding date).
7. Congregational singing of hymns during the worship service is strongly encouraged. Ask the organist and pastor about hymn/song choices.

8. 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. It is the responsibility of the couple to secure such permission.
9. If the couple opts to use outside musicians, all musicians shall be informed of the congregation's policy concerning what is and what is not appropriate worship music (see above and give your musicians the guidelines for-musicians).

6. Building Use

1. The congregation's fellowship hall may be available for wedding receptions. It should be reserved as soon as possible by contacting the church administrative assistant (419-287-4182). The Fellowship Hall must be reserved separately from the scheduling of your wedding.
2. The church does not cater wedding meals or receptions. The couple may choose their own caterer.
3. 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.
4. The use of alcohol and smoking are strictly prohibited on church property.

7. Decorations

1. Special decorations are permitted but not necessary. Decorations used shall be in good taste and not conflict with or obscure the central symbols of the church: Cross, Altar, Baptismal Font, etc. Please consult with the pastor if you have questions.
2. The color for altar and pulpit hangings reflects the current season of the Church Year. Colors are not changed to coordinate with wedding colors.
3. Special aisle candlesticks are available for your use, if desired.
4. 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.
5. Do not use fastening materials that will mark or damage church furniture, walls, or property in any way.
6. 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.

8. Rehearsal and Wedding Day

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 do not need to 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.
4. 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.
5. All weddings will begin promptly at the appointed time.
6. Arrival: Ushers should arrive a full hour before the service. All members of the wedding party should arrive at least 30 minutes before the service.
7. The upstairs classrooms, basement and / or fellowship hall may be used as dressing rooms. *No smoking or alcohol allowed.*
8. 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.

9. 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.
10. Photographers and videographers must check with the pastor for instructions at least 30 minutes before the service or at the rehearsal.
11. 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.
12. *Members of the wedding party who have been using alcohol or drugs, who smell of alcohol, or who act in an intoxicated manner will not participate in the wedding, even if the drinking took place prior to the arrival at the church. If either the bride or groom has been using alcohol or drugs, the wedding will not take place.*

9. Fees and Expenses (see Wedding Costs and Fees sheet)

1. Fees for building use, candles, bulletins, etc. 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 administrative assistant or to the pastor.
2. Fees or gifts for organists, pastor, etc. should be paid on the day of the rehearsal or before. Checks are made out to the individual for whom they are intended.
3. Musicians: Musicians other than Bethlehem's regular organists set their own fees. Ask about their fees when you schedule them for your wedding.
4. Flowers: *(not required)* Flowers are ordered from the florist of your choice.
5. Aisle runner: *(not required)* An aisle runner is ordered from the florist.

MUSICIAN GUIDELINES

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Pemberville, Ohio
419-287-4182

Please give a copy of this policy to all vocalists and musicians who are asked to assist in your wedding 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

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Pemberville, Ohio
419-287-4182

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