

St. Michael Lutheran Church

A Congregation of the ELCA
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



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A Guide to Planning Your Wedding at St. Michael Lutheran Church

You are reading this Wedding Guide because you are anticipating the celebration of your marriage in St. Michael Lutheran Church. We rejoice with you in the delight you have found in one another, and in your decision to commit your lives to each other.

God who has established marriage will continue to bless you with His abundant and ever-present support, so that standing strong in His steadfast love for you, you may be steadfast in your love for each other.

The guidelines contained in this booklet are intended not to be restrictive but to encourage the giving of our very best in response to God's best gifts of life and love, strength and health, sexuality and the family. It is our desire to assist you in making your wedding the truly high and holy occasion you want it to be. We will help you in every way possible.

Thank you for inviting us to share in your celebration. We look forward to it!

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following information is designed to help you plan a meaningful and beautiful wedding at St. Michael Lutheran Church. It is not our intent to provide information for your entire wedding celebration—just the service itself in our sanctuary. As you begin planning your wedding, your first step is to make sure you understand and adhere to the following guidelines.

1. **Offsite Ceremonies.** Offsite wedding ceremonies should be discussed with the St. Michael Pastor(s). Not all the following information will apply to your offsite wedding ceremony.
2. **Choosing Dates & Times.** All persons who wish to marry at St. Michael must, without exception, confer with the St. Michael Pastor(s) before announcing the date, time, or place of the wedding. At least three months before you would like to be married, contact the St. Michael Pastor(s) about the wedding. Because of various church events, it is best if you select a few possible dates and times. We cannot overlap wedding services.
3. **Conference with the St. Michael Pastor(s).** As part of preparing for your life together, St. Michael Pastor(s) will meet with the couple. At this initial meeting, you will have the opportunity to begin forming a relationship with the person who will officiate at your wedding. The wedding service will also be discussed. Additional conference time will then be scheduled to discuss your relationship in a supportive environment.
4. **Membership at St. Michael.** Our policy is that at least one member of the marrying couple must be an active member of St. Michael Lutheran Church to utilize the staff and facilities of our congregation for your wedding service. In rare circumstances an exception may be made for non-member couples, with approval from the Pastor(s) and Executive Committee.
5. **Your Wedding Committee Representative.** The couple will be referred to a member of the Wedding Committee after the date and time have been set with the Pastor. Your Wedding Committee Representative will assist you in planning your wedding ceremony. After you have read this guide, the couple will meet with the Wedding Committee Representative. Each member of the Wedding Committee is familiar with church policy and will help you understand the material discussed in this guide. Your Wedding Committee Representative will also attend your rehearsal.
6. All final decisions on any wedding details must rest with the St. Michael Pastor(s).

WEDDING SPECIFICS

As you are reviewing this information, make sure that everyone who will be participating in the wedding (planner, photographer, videographer, florists, etc.) is also aware of these guidelines.

Acolyte and Crucifer

All St. Michael weddings are services of worship and require an Acolyte and Crucifer. The Acolyte and Crucifer should have previously served or currently serve in the church. It is the responsibility of the couple to arrange for an Acolyte and Crucifer to serve in their wedding and provide the names to your Wedding Committee Representative. A list of active Acolytes and Crucifers is available upon request and your Wedding Committee Representative can assist you in making these arrangements.

Assisting Clergy

If the couple desires to have other clergy participate in the wedding, it should be discussed with the St. Michael Pastor(s) **before** extending an invitation to the other clergy. It is appropriate for the St. Michael Pastor(s) to assign certain parts of the service to the visiting clergy.

Birdseed and/or Bubbles

Birdseed and Bubbles may **not** be used inside any church buildings. The entire wedding party should be aware of this policy. If the couple will be departing from the church, birdseed may be thrown, and bubbles blown outside the buildings. To avoid any issues or confusion, please do not distribute birdseed bags or bubbles in the entrance hall or other parts of the church—wait and distribute outside.

NOTE: Because of the harmful effects to birds, rice is not allowed.

Candles

Candles for the altar are furnished by the church. Any additional candelabra must be approved. Unity candles are not used in the Lutheran marriage liturgy. Generally, any other use of candles is discouraged. Artificial and electric candles and lights are not permitted.

Dates and Times

The date and time of the wedding will be discussed with the St. Michael Pastor(s) before any other arrangements are made. To prepare the church for Sunday services, Saturday ceremonies must be held no later than 6:00pm and Sunday ceremonies must be held no earlier than 2:00pm. If the reception is to be held at the church, we request that the ceremony be no later than 5:00pm.

NOTE: Weddings at St. Michael are not typically scheduled during the Lenten season (the six weeks preceding Easter), or from the 4th Sunday in Advent (the Sunday before Christmas) through the New Year weekend.

Decorations

Any ceremony decor should not be used excessively or in such a way as to distract from the worshipful atmosphere of the church nave. In no case shall they obscure or stand behind the altar. Please discuss all decorations you plan to use with your Wedding Committee Representative **before** making any firm decisions. The final decision regarding placement or appropriateness of decorations will rest with the St. Michael Pastor(s).

NOTE: In **no** case shall chancel furnishing be moved or the color of paraments be changed from the appointed color of the season or the day.

Fees

Fees may be paid by cash or check. They must be placed in an envelope labeled for each individual and given to the Wedding Committee Representative at the Rehearsal.

Fees for Members

- **Acolyte and Crucifer-** \$50.00 each.
- **Church Sanctuary-** There is no fee. *However, it is customary for the couple to give an honorarium to the church.*
- **Fellowship Hall-** There is no fee. *However, it is customary for the couple to give an honorarium to the church.*
- **Pastor-** There is no fee. *However, it is customary for the couple to give an honorarium to the Pastor(s).*
- **Organist-** \$200.00 and includes the service and rehearsal. Additional rehearsals (to rehearse with soloists, etc.) will be \$50.00 each.
- **Wedding Committee Representative-** \$100.00.
- **Janitorial Service-** \$100.00. An additional \$200.00 is required if the reception is held at the church in the Fellowship Hall.

Fees for Non-Members

- **Acolyte and Crucifer-** \$50.00 each.
- **Church Sanctuary-** \$500.00

- **Fellowship Hall-** \$500.00
- **Pastor-** \$250.00 each
- **Organist-** \$250.00 and includes the service and rehearsal. Additional rehearsals (to rehearse with soloists, etc.) will be \$100.00 each.
- **Wedding Committee Representative-** \$100.00.
- **Janitorial Service-** \$100.00. An additional \$200.00 is required if the reception is held at the church in the Fellowship Hall.

Fellowship Hall

If you plan to use the Fellowship Hall, arrangements must be made when the wedding date and time are set. All set-up and clean-up are the responsibility of the couple. All items must be removed from the Fellowship Hall at the end of the evening, as the Fellowship Hall may be used the following day for other groups. Remembering that our church facilities belong to all the people, alcoholic beverages are not permitted. The couple will be financially responsible for any damages caused by the event, its guests, or its vendors.

Flowers and Plants

It is recommended that fresh flowers be used on the altar. It is not recommended that excessive flowers be used, so as not to distract from the service. It is also suggested that flowers are left in the church for Sunday services. After services they will be taken to the hospitals and home-bound members or picked up by your family.

NOTE: If your flowers are left for Sunday Services, the couple will be recognized in that Sunday's bulletin. Please coordinate this with the church's Flower Calendar. If you would like a copy of this bulletin, please ask your Wedding Committee Representative to reserve you a copy.

Guest Book

If you plan to have a Guest Book, please inform the Wedding Committee Representative where you would like the Guest Book to be and who will attend the Guest Book. The cross may not be removed from the round table in the Gathering Area.

Marriage License

A marriage license is required by the state of South Carolina. You may obtain one through Greenville County Probate Court. You should bring your marriage license to the rehearsal.

Meetings

As you are planning your wedding at St. Michael, you will meet with one of the Pastors and your Wedding Committee Representative. With the Pastor you will discuss your lives as a married couple and discuss the wedding liturgy. You will meet with your Wedding Committee Representative to discuss the details of the ceremony.

Music

Music for the wedding should be selected in consultation with the Director of Music and Organist of St. Michael. Music should reflect the nature of a worship service and must be approved by the Director of Music. Only the church Organist or his designate may play for the ceremony. Contact the Director of Music and Organist as soon as a date and time for the wedding are confirmed.

Paraments

The color of Paraments shall not be changed from the appointed color for the season or day.

Pew Markers

Pew markers are available for reserving pews for designated family and friends. No nails or tacks may be used to secure pew markers.

Photos and Videos

Photographers and Videographers should first be informed that taking photographs and video should not take preference or dominance over the service itself. Please follow these guidelines:

- To preserve the nature of a worship service, no photos or videos should be taken during the service by guests.
- The couple's professional photographer/videographer may utilize the balcony only to make non-flash photos, as long as this does not create a distraction.
- Posed pictures may be taken before and/or after the ceremony in the Sanctuary.

NOTE: If you plan to have both still photography and videography, inform both photographers before the wedding. This will help them communicate so pictures both before and after the wedding will be easier and faster.

Pre-Wedding Activities

You are not obligated to include the St. Michael Pastor(s), your Wedding Committee Representative, or anyone else at St. Michael who is assisting with your wedding in pre-nuptial festivities, the rehearsal dinner, or the wedding reception.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal is typically held on the evening preceding the wedding. The St. Michael Pastor(s), Church Organist, and Wedding Committee Representative will be present. All wedding party members and ceremony participants should be present and on time unless special arrangements are made. Please make every effort to only invite those participating in the ceremony. Everyone should be alert and pay close attention to instructions. Except for unusually large weddings, the rehearsal should take approximately one hour from the time you begin. The Pastor will first explain the wedding service to the wedding party. Then the wedding party will "run through" the ceremony. **NOTE:** You should bring the following to the rehearsal:

- Check for Acolyte
- Check for Crucifer
- Check for Organist
- Check for Janitor
- Check for Wedding Committee Representative
- Honorariums for church or Pastor(s)
- Marriage License

Wedding Bulletins/Programs

Wedding bulletins or programs may be used. They typically contain the Order of Service, a listing of the wedding party, directions to the reception, the couple's new address, etc. Your Wedding Committee Representative can show you examples. It is recommended that bulletins/programs be commercially printed. If you plan to use a bulletin/program, please be sure to have it reviewed by the St. Michael Pastor(s). When planning for your wedding, consider who will distribute the bulletins.

Wedding Party

Actual duties of the Wedding Party will be discussed at the rehearsal. Depending on your circumstances, you may have specific duties for the people in your wedding. Please make sure the following issues are addressed:

- Those individuals seating guests should inform them that photography during the ceremony is not permitted.

- Those individuals seating guests should lead them to the best available seat at the time of their arrival.
- The couple should decide in advance which members of the Wedding Party should escort any special guests (mothers, grandmothers, etc.) to their seats. A flow chart should be developed with the Wedding Committee Representative prior to the Rehearsal.
- On the day of the wedding, all members of the Wedding Party should be as quiet as possible while waiting in the entrance hall to enter the church.