

Wedding Guidelines

INTRO

Marriage is a gift of God by which men and women are established in community with one another for their own nourishment, and for the nourishment of their families. It is God's will that the relationship of marriage reflect the depth of love which Christ has for the church. Therefore God promises to bless, comfort and sustain those who seek him in their marriage.

The church announces God's promise in a liturgy which begins marriage, in which a man and a woman commit themselves to one another with life-long promises by which they bind themselves to each other as husband and wife. And in this service the church prays that God will be present to bless the marriages of Christian people, and promises its love, prayer and support.

In Lutheran tradition, the Marriage Rite is a service of worship of the church. It belongs to the whole church, not just to the bride and the groom. Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are bound by certain guidelines for the conduct of worship which have been formulated through centuries of Christian tradition and teaching. These are not arbitrary things, but are a matter of the collective teaching of the church on the matter of the true meaning of worship.

HOUSE OF PRAYER GUIDELINES

1. **Pick a date.** This step is worked out collaboratively between the pastor and House of Prayer and the couple. All efforts will be made to be accommodating. However, complications do arise. The pastor at House of Prayer must be involved in all weddings at House of Prayer. In addition, we do not celebrate weddings during Lent or Holy Week due to its penitential nature.
2. **Pastoral meetings.** The pastor of House of Prayer will desire to meet with the couple 3-5 times. These meeting times have a variety of goals. First of all, it is important to learn about the love and blessing that God offers to us in the marriage ceremony. It is also important to talk about the expectations that God has for us in that sacred relationship. This meeting time will be spent getting to know one another in some deeper, intentional ways. Finally, this will be a time to talk through the details of the wedding worship service.
3. **Communion.** Celebrating marriage within a worship service of Holy Communion is an important, beautiful, meaningful way to experience God's love. It is a tangible way to share that wedding moment with the church universal and the church triumphant (those who have passed away).
4. **Music.** The music that is chosen at weddings is very important in both glorifying God

and telling of God's love for us. **All music will need to be approved by the musician and by the pastor at least a month ahead of the marriage date.** The music minister for House of Prayer will be the musician for all weddings. Exceptions may be made, but only with the authorization of both the pastor and music minister. Soloists may be used with our music minister. Please begin this communication between musicians months in advance.

*** There will be no recorded music for weddings at House of Prayer**

5. **Scripture texts and congregational songs.** Please see the handout/file (available on the website) for suggestions on these two topics.
6. **Rehearsal.** There will be a rehearsal for the pastor, wedding party, and music minister before all weddings. This rehearsal will take place at the location of the ceremony. A wedding coordinator (designated by House of Prayer) will lead the logistical part of this rehearsal.
7. **Fees.** All fees shall be paid at least one month in advance of the wedding date. All checks may be written out to House of Prayer Lutheran Church. They may be given to the pastor or mailed to: House of Prayer, 2100 Irwin St., Aliquippa, PA 15001. Please see the handout/file pertaining to the fees (available on the website).
8. **Miscellaneous.**
 - **Unity Candle:** At House of Prayer, we discourage the use of Unity Candles. The practice is not from any faith tradition. Rather, its roots are secular. Because of that history, and its weak symbolic nature, we discourage its use.
 - **Marriage License:** **Please present the marriage license to the pastor for completion at least one week prior to the wedding.** That way it does not get lost in the shuffle of the rehearsal and wedding day.
 - **Photographers/Videographers:** All photographers and videographers will consult with the pastor before the wedding. Generally, we do not allow any such individuals in the center aisle or within the first 10 rows of pews. Flash photography is to be used judiciously. With the age of zoom lenses, the rear of the church and balcony should suffice for these purposes. In addition, we can recreate scenes after the wedding is over.
 - **Birdseed/Rice/Flower Pedals/Bubbles:** We do not allow the use of rice, birdseed, or flower pedals. We have had some bad experiences with damages to our facility. Bubbles are permitted, but outside only.

At House of Prayer, we greatly look forward to being part of your wedding day! We look to serve you in any way we can. Here are ways in which you may contact us:

Church office (Holly): 724-375-2033 or [hopelc@hoplutheran.org](mailto:hopolc@hoplutheran.org)
Pastor Mike: 724-375-2033 or msourwine@hoplutheran.org