

# **TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

175 S. Third Street  
Lehighton, Pennsylvania 18235-2029

## **MARRIAGE CEREMONY PLANNING BOOKLET**

*Approved by Congregation Council  
September 5, 2002  
(Revised May 2018)*

## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to answer questions and assist you in planning your wedding at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. Trinity's Pastor will guide you in making use of this booklet.

Your marriage ceremony is a very important occasion for you and for our congregation. It is an event of great joy and religious significance. It is, therefore, essential that your ceremony be a blend of both joy and reverence.

The Order for Marriage is a special ceremony of the church in which a man and woman promise, in the presence of God and witnesses, to live together in holy love. It is a joyous and festive occasion greeted by the prayers and blessings of family and friends. It is also a solemn occasion in which two become one and declare their intentions before God and those present.

Your congregation is eager to assist you in making your marriage meaningful. This booklet has been prepared with that aim in mind, and seeks to provide answers to as many details as possible. However, if your questions are not answered in these pages, please call the church office or the Pastor.

Couples are encouraged to attend the Marriage Preparedness Series sponsored by the Lutheran Congregational Services at their own expense. The Pastor will inform you of the current schedule for the series. If for some reason the couple cannot attend, then the couple will make arrangements with the Pastor for pre-marital counseling (subject to the availability of the Pastor).

In addition to the Marriage Series, couples should expect to meet with the pastor two or three times in preparing for their ceremony.

## **MARRIAGE LICENSE INFORMATION**

A valid Marriage License from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must be brought to the Church on the evening of the rehearsal. The ceremony may not take place in the absence of a valid license.

The Marriage Law of 1997 provides that no person shall be joined in marriage in Pennsylvania until a marriage license is obtained from the Clerk of the Orphan's Court Division of that county, or before an alderman or justice of the peace of that county, or any other county of Pennsylvania to complete an application. The application must include the relevant information establishing the legality of the marriage, as described above, and list any prior marriages and their dissolution as well as the name, race, occupation, birthplace, residence, and ages of the parties and their parents.

A marriage license may not be issued until three (3) days following receipt by the Clerk of the Orphans' Court Division of the last application for it.

A marriage license issued in Pennsylvania is valid for 60 days after it is issued.

No person under 18 may obtain a marriage license without the consent of a parent or guardian. In addition, no person under the age of 16 may obtain a marriage license without the approval of a judge of the Orphans' Court Division.

No person may apply for a marriage license or be married while they might be deemed incompetent - under the influence of alcohol, a narcotic or other controlled substance, or have diminished mental capacity.

## GENERAL POLICIES

**Securing the Date:** Contact the church office as soon as possible to be sure the day and pastor are available and to arrange for further conferences. Inform the Pastor of any special arrangements to be made such as Altar Flowers, Soloists, Photographers, or other Clergy.

**Eligibility:** The bride and/or the groom must be a voting member of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, as defined by our Congregation Constitution. If neither are members of Trinity, a letter of request must be submitted to Congregation Council for approval. Any approval given by the Council to non-members will be granted on the condition that all other guidelines will be followed, including a \$500 facility usage fee.

**Unavailable dates:** No marriages will be scheduled for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Holy Week, Easter. Please note that on Pentecost, Reformation, or Harvest Home Weekend (the fourth full weekend in September) the church will be decorated for those special Sundays.

**The Service:** A marriage ceremony in the Church is an order of worship. Therefore, it is expected that members of the marriage party, family members, and guests will conduct themselves with the respect shown any house of worship.

**Saturday afternoon weddings:** When there is a Saturday evening Worship Service scheduled, we ask that the building be vacated by 4:00 p.m.

**Arrival times for wedding party:** Ushers should be present at least 45 minutes prior to the ceremony to assist with seating guests. The groom and best man should be present at least 15 minutes before the ceremony. The bride, her parents and others in the Wedding Party should be present 10 minutes before the ceremony begins.

**Conclusion of Service:** As the couple is departing, birdseed, *not rice*, may be thrown. While rice does not negatively affect birds, it can become mushy and slippery when wet. We ask that the birdseed not be brought into the church facilities. It may be distributed to guests as they leave the church.

**Receptions:** If Luther Hall is to be used for the wedding reception, the date must be secured and the rental form submitted to the church office.

While consumption of alcoholic beverages is not allowed on premises, receptions held in Luther Hall may include a wine toast. The host is responsible for the department of all guests.

The consumption of any alcoholic beverage is **NOT** permitted at the Marriage Ceremony or Rehearsal. Any member of the wedding party under the influence of alcohol or other drugs at the time of the ceremony will **NOT** be allowed to participate in the service regardless of whom that person might be. Under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a marriage ceremony will not proceed if either party in the marriage is intoxicated, under the influence of a narcotic, or has diminished mental capacity. The Pastor reserves the right to dismiss anyone, or to not allow the ceremony to proceed, if such behavior is evident.

The Pastor and family, and the Organist and family will not automatically consider themselves invited to the reception. If you wish to include them at your reception and/or rehearsal dinner, please send a written invitation at the time you invite your other guests. Please do not wait until the night of the rehearsal to invite them.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make certain these guidelines are known by the members of the Wedding Party and guests prior to the ceremony

Please note that the entire Trinity complex is a **NO SMOKING** facility.

## **THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY**

The Marriage Ceremony will follow the worship order set forth in the Lutheran Book of Worship Minister's Desk Edition. This order allows for variations within the given ceremony. These variations will be discussed with you by the Pastor at one of the sessions.

The Pastor of this congregation shall officiate at all marriage ceremonies. If an assisting pastor(s) or another pastor to officiate is desired, a request must be made to Trinity's Pastor for approval. When another pastor assists or officiates, Trinity's Pastor shall remain in charge of the ceremony and other clergy shall abide by her/his wishes.

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

The Marriage Ceremony may take place within a celebration of Holy Communion. This is an appropriate option if one person or both in the couple are currently voting members of the congregation. Consult with the pastor if you desire this option.

Holy Communion by intent and definition is a corporate act for all who are baptized and believe. Therefore, all assembled shall be invited to participate. Private communion for just the couple or the bridal party is not allowed.

In situations where families are from several different faith denominations, we ask that you give careful consideration of this option so as not to offend.

Consult with the Pastor as to the ways in which Holy Communion may be included in your ceremony.

## **FLOWERS**

All floral arrangements are the responsibility of the couple. Cut flowers may be placed on the stands in the Chancel. You may order flowers from the florist of your choice to be arranged in their own vases. No flowers are permitted on the Altar, the candelabra or the pews. Artificial flowers are not permitted in the Chancel. Pew Bows must be attached **WITHOUT TAPE**. Our Altar Guild will assist with these decorations.

## **MUSIC DURING THE CEREMONY**

The couple will meet with the organist at least one month prior to the ceremony to select music. Both classical and contemporary music may be used. However, “the music selected should embody high standards of quality and, in general, reflect the Praise of God, God’s steadfast love in Christ as the foundation and model for marriage, and the asking of God’s presence and blessing.” The organist, in consultation with pastor, will decide if the music is suitable for the occasion. Popular, secular selections are more properly reserved for receptions. In addition, the organist has the right to reject any piece not known to her/him and whose difficulty cannot be mastered in a reasonable time.

Musical accompaniment other than the church organ is permitted. Such music shall be suitable and respectful of the reverence for the occasion. The organist, in consultation with the pastor, will have supervision and discretion in this matter.

We encourage the couple to consider having the guests join in singing at least one hymn during the ceremony. Such hymn(s) should be selected in consultation with the organist.

When soloists are to take part in the ceremony the above rules concerning suitability and difficulty apply. The organist will determine a date in consultation with the soloist to rehearse the music to be presented at the ceremony. If special music, unknown to the organist is to be considered, a copy of the music must be given to the organist at least six weeks prior to the ceremony.

It is assumed that our church organist will play for the ceremony when available. If you desire a guest organist, a request must be made to our Worship and Music Committee for approval. The guest organist must be instructed by our organist and comply with all policies regarding suitable music for marriage ceremonies.



## **CANDLES**

Altar candles and other candles in use during the season in which you are married will be lighted for the marriage ceremony.

If a candlelight wedding which includes candles placed at the pews down the center aisle is requested by the couple, there is an additional charge for the use of the Altar and Candelabra candles and pew candles. *See Page 10 for Honoraria and Fees.*

If the couple desires to include the lighting of the Marriage/Unity Candle as a part of their ceremony, it is the responsibility of the couple to provide the Marriage/Unity Candle. The congregation can provide the candle holder for the Marriage/Unity Candle, the two small candles and candle holders. Our Altar Guild will assist with these arrangements.

## **RUNNER**

It is the responsibility of the couple to order the aisle runner from the florist of their choice if one is desired. Please consult with the Altar Guild. The length for the runner is 75 feet.

## **OTHER ADORNMENT**

If other adornments are desired, a request must be made to the Worship & Music Committee for approval.

## **BULLETINS**

It is the responsibility of the couple to provide the bulletin covers two weeks prior to the ceremony.

A bulletin is prepared the week prior to the ceremony. The church office will contact the couple to proofread the bulletin for errors and corrections prior to printing the bulletins for the Marriage Ceremony.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOS**

Flash pictures are only permitted as the Bride processes down the aisle and as the newly married couple recesses down the aisle. NO FLASH PICTURES are permitted during the ceremony by the photographer, family, or friends. Worship furnishings may NOT be moved. Photographers may NOT be in the chancel during the ceremony. However, the photographer may take time exposures from the rear of the church or from the side aisle.

A video camera may be used from a stationary position along one of the side walls or from the choir loft. Videotaping may NOT be done from the chancel unless the camera is on a tripod and is left unattended.

All photographing must be completed immediately after all guests have been greeted and before the couple departs. One half hour shall be allowed and should be sufficient for all photos. The church is NOT a photo studio

## YOUNG CHILDREN

We advise that special consideration be given when including children in your bridal party. Children enjoy taking part and can add a special moment of joy to the occasion. Some, however, are too immature to handle the responsibility of the service.

## REHEARSALS

Rehearsals are normally held the evening prior to the ceremony. The License and Honoraria should be brought to the rehearsal to save confusion on the day of your marriage.

## HONORARIA and FEES

NON-MEMBER Facility Rental – TELC	\$ 500.00
ORGANIST – <i>Susan Lovejoy</i>	\$ 150.00
ORGANIST support of soloists	\$ 25.00
SOLOIST	\$ 75.00
SEXTON – <i>Pete Balogach Jr.</i> (Wedding Only)	\$ 35.00
(Wedding & Reception)	\$ 65.00
OFFICE SECRETARY – <i>Beverly Mills</i>	\$ 35.00
ALTAR GUILD - TELC	\$ 25.00
CANDLELIGHT WEDDINGS – TELC	\$ 100.00
PASTOR – <i>The Reverend Nancy L. Moore</i>	
to be determined by couple in consultation with the Pastor.	

## A CHECKLIST FOR REHEARSAL

The items listed below should be brought by the bride and groom the night of the rehearsal:

- \_\_\_ Marriage License
- \_\_\_ Wedding Guest Book
- \_\_\_ Bows or other pew decorations
- \_\_\_ Wedding Candle (if one is used)
- \_\_\_ Organist's Honorarium
- \_\_\_ Sexton's Honorarium
- \_\_\_ Office Secretary's Honorarium
- \_\_\_ Pastor's Honorarium
- \_\_\_ Soloist's Honorarium (If the soloist is provided by Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church)
- \_\_\_ Altar Guild's honorarium plus candlelight wedding fee if not previously submitted
- \_\_\_ Bubbles/Bird Seed packets if they will be used