

Further Guidelines

No flash pictures may be taken during the ceremony. Flash pictures may be taken during the processional and recessionals. Videographers and photographers shall be respectful of the service and all in attendance and not distract from the service. Pictures may be taken of the bridal party in the chancel following the ceremony. Arrangements for a re-enactment of any part of the service should be made with the pastor.

All floral arrangements or decorations should be in keeping with the church and its appointments. A simple setting will be found lovelier than an extreme arrangement. No nails, thumb tacks or scotch tape should be used on the church furniture or walls. Birdseed may be thrown in the church parking lot.

The Wedding Rehearsal

The marriage license should be brought to the rehearsal and given to the pastor. The rehearsal, including general instructions, will take approximately one hour. Please have the wedding party, including all parents, arrive promptly, fifteen minutes early is preferable.

Fees

All fees should be paid in one check made out to: Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church during the couple's last premarital session. The church nave is open to all members for wedding services by proper arrangements with the church staff. The parish administrator should be called with times at 610-779-0534.

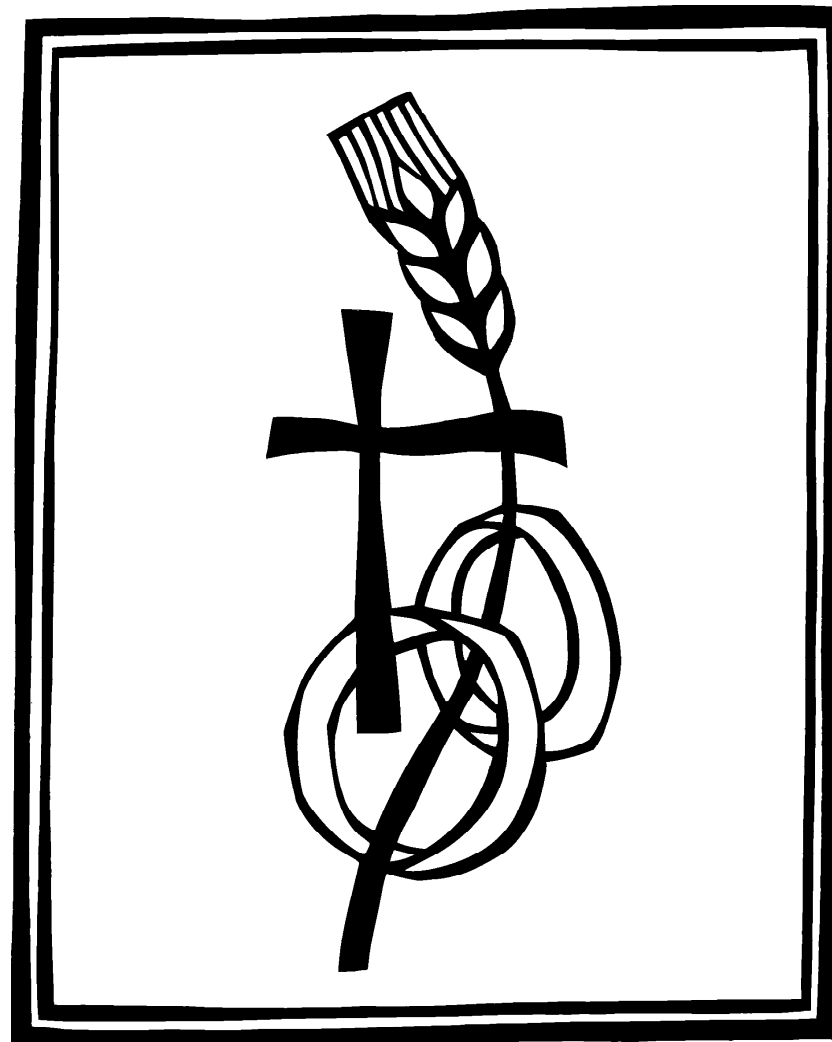
For active members of Reformation Lutheran a check should be made out in the amount of \$350. For non-members or inactive members one check should be made out to Reformation Lutheran Church in the amount of \$500. This covers all costs associated with the wedding including the compensation for the organist, pastor, sexton, printing costs and use of the facility. Additional pastors, musicians or soloists should be paid separately.

Guidelines for Weddings

These guidelines have been reviewed and established by the Worship and Music Committee and the Congregational Council of Reformation Lutheran Church.

Approved: 10/16/07

Wedding Guidelines **Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church**



3670 Perkiomen Avenue
Reading, Pennsylvania
610-779-0534

mail@reformationlutheran.org

The Wedding

The reason for a Christian church wedding rather than a civil one is the acknowledgement by the bride and groom that their marriage is an important step in their lives as Christians, requiring the blessing of God and the solemnization of the church.

If the couple is not active in a church and has no plans for active participation in a church community the couple should consider a civil instead of a religious ceremony.

Weddings are complex and it is easy to forget that a wedding service asks God's blessing as the central act of the service. The focus on what God is doing in your lives should be central, yet often gets lost amidst invitations, flowers, photographer, and reception hall.

For people of faith, a wedding is not just a personal or even a family rite of passage. However small or large, simple or elaborate, those who are gathered are greeted in God's name. As God promises, God is present. The language of prayer and blessing, the choice of Bible readings and music, the words of the sermon or homily, and the vows make it clear that the wedding is a worship service. The service gives praise to God for unfailing love, it celebrates the gift of marriage and it asks God's blessing.

What Marriage Means to a Christian

To a Christian, marriage is not merely a legal contract. It is the lifelong union of one man and one woman based on sacred and solemn vows made before a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ and witnesses. When we say that marriage is a 'lifelong union' we mean that it is a union: in body, mind, and spirit (with a common faith in God and in the sacred nature of the Christian home).

What Part the Church Plays in Your Marriage

A church wedding is more than a social event. It recognizes the importance of spiritual values in our individual lives. If the church wedding is to be particularly meaningful, those who participate in it ought to have a sincere desire to establish their marriage on the firm foundation of a Christian life *within* the church. As God's blessing is invoked upon the new relationship, so it should continue to be sought in private meditation and prayer.

Whenever you establish your new home, make a sincere effort to unite with a church in which you may serve and in which your family may participate.

Premarital Counseling

Before the wedding ceremony the couple will meet with the pastor for a period of preparation. This preparation includes the utilization of a premarital inventory, the cost of which is to be covered by the couple.

During this time of preparation it is also appropriate to share with the congregation an announcement of the upcoming wedding with the congregation such as: _____ and _____ have announced their intention to marry on date , and ask for your prayers.

Weddings at Reformation Lutheran Church

The pastor of Reformation shall officiate at all weddings and Reformation's organist shall play. Any exceptions to this policy must be made through the pastor in writing in consultation with the Worship and Music Committee.

The Service

The order for marriage is a worship service of the church. A marriage is more than a ceremony to be performed. It is an order of the church, a religious service, and as such ought to be treated with the same principles that govern a service on a Sunday.

The pastor will go over the order of service in the worship book *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and the options available in the service. If Holy Communion is to be a part of the ceremony, it shall be open to all those present who are confessing Christians.

Music in the Service:

Since music is such an important part of the church service, serious thought should be given to musical selections. It is not necessary to have music at any service of the church, but when music is played it must be a part of the praise and prayer of worship. *All music* played and sung at weddings must be approved *by both* the pastor and organist at least one month before the service. It is the couple's responsibility to submit such music in writing to the organist and the pastor.

Because of the importance of these guidelines it is necessary for you to meet with the organist *prior* to the selection of music. Whether the congregational organist or a visiting organist plays, all music must be approved by the congregation's organist.