

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**  
**1208 Rose Creek Drive, Woodstock, GA 30189**  
**770-924-7286**  
**gslutheran.org**

## **WEDDING GUIDELINES**

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is an assembly of baptized children of God. The most essential thing that we do is gathering to worship our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe that a wedding is a service of worship. When two people enter into the holy bond of marriage, they pledge their faith and trust to each other and to God. The guests gather as a congregation to express their support of these promises and to add their prayers and praise to God for the marriage being enacted. The trappings (clothing, music, flowers, candles, etc.) are selected to elicit a sense of reverence, dignity and joy.

Because the most important thing you are planning is a marriage and not the wedding ceremony, the planning process should be entered into with Christian sensitivity. We will provide guidance and support to you for the ceremony and your life together.

It is expected that those wishing to be married at Good Shepherd are members of the congregation or are actively involved with the congregation.

The guidelines provided here were approved by the Congregation Council of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church on February 11, 2020.

## **INITIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Before making any other plans, please call the pastor to secure a date for your wedding and rehearsal. The pastor will confirm his availability and the availability of our facilities for the wedding. If the date and time are approved, then the wedding information form and the initial deposit for the facilities are due within 10 days. Appointments will then be set up with the pastor for pre-marital conversations.

Weddings will not be scheduled if they conflict with activities of the church, but once the wedding is placed on the calendar, church activities will not be scheduled which conflict with the wedding rehearsal, wedding or reception. Weddings will not be scheduled during Holy Week or on holidays except under extraordinary circumstances (e.g., military deployment). Remember that Advent and Lent are extremely busy seasons in the life of the congregation and that liturgical appointments and seasonal decorations are not changed or taken down for weddings. Likewise, all equipment used for Sunday worship, such as Praise Team equipment, is not removed for weddings. For a fee of \$250 the Praise Team equipment can be consolidated and covered. The Praise Team sound equipment is not available for use at weddings.

## **PASTORS**

The pastor's primary responsibility is continuing support for the marriage of the couple; therefore, the expectation of an ongoing pastoral relationship is assumed.

Should you desire to be married at Good Shepherd by someone other than our pastor, that person must be an ordained pastor of a recognized Christian denomination whose teachings are consistent with our Lutheran understanding of marriage. Approval of such officiants will be at the discretion of our pastor.

## **PRE-MARITAL CONVERSATIONS**

The primary responsibility of the couple, besides preparing for the ceremony, is preparing themselves for a life-long commitment to each other. Pre-marital conversations with the pastor will assist you in fulfilling this responsibility and are required. These conversations do not fulfill state requirements for a reduced marriage license fee.

## **THE MARRIAGE LICENSE**

You must have a valid marriage license for the service to take place. The marriage license must be presented to the pastor before the wedding rehearsal.

## **THE WEDDING CEREMONY**

The Service of Marriage from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* will be discussed with you at your pre-marital conversations. The pastor will go over the standard order of service. Any variations to the service should be discussed with the pastor at this time and must be approved by the pastor in order to be included. Approvals are granted based on whether the addition or variation is worshipful and consistent with our Lutheran/Christian theology of marriage.

For weddings in the Good Shepherd sanctuary, a wedding consultant does not direct the wedding, nor are they required for the wedding. For weddings at other locations, an outside director is expected, and the pastor will direct only the liturgy. In all matters pertaining to the marriage ceremony, the pastor has final authority.

## **COMMUNION**

Holy Communion may be celebrated as a part of your wedding service. We believe that Communion is a sacrament and that everyone who acknowledges the presence of Christ in our midst should be invited to the Lord's Table. If Communion is celebrated, it is

always offered to the entire congregation. This necessitates accommodation and movement of the wedding party away from the altar during the sacrament.

### **FACILITIES FOR THE WEDDING CEREMONY**

Our sanctuary has a center aisle for a procession. Seasonal elements and decorations relate to the ongoing worship life of the congregation and are not changed for weddings. Worship equipment is not removed for weddings. There is a refundable damage security deposit required for use of the sanctuary.

### **FACILITIES FOR THE RECEPTION**

Our fellowship hall can be used for the wedding reception. The fellowship hall kitchen has one oven and a double sink. Round tables that seat 8 people each are available. The hall can accommodate approximately 15 of the round tables and 4 of our 8-foot rectangular tables for food. If you desire to put up a small dance floor, you must make the arrangements with an outside company and coordinate delivery and pickup with the office coordinator. There is a refundable damage security deposit required for use of the fellowship hall.

*Fire codes prohibit open flames in the fellowship hall. Candles may be used only with glass chimneys.*

### **THE WEDDING PARTY**

You will determine the size of the wedding party. We recommend that children participating in weddings be old enough (at least 5 years old) that they will not be disruptive to the worship service. Younger children are often unable to complete the duration of the service.

In consultation with the pastor, you will decide who will enter in the wedding procession and in what order, where they will stand, etc.

### **THE REHEARSAL**

The required wedding rehearsal should be scheduled when the wedding date is confirmed. You and the pastor will set the hour during the pre-marital conversations.

The average duration of a wedding rehearsal is one hour, and the rehearsal will be directed by the pastor. This hour begins when the rehearsal is able to start, not when it is scheduled to start. Please direct members of your wedding party to arrive fifteen minutes

before the scheduled start of the rehearsal. All members of the wedding party, including parents of the couple, are expected to attend.

If you have a wedding consultant, they should be present to observe the rehearsal in order to best assist the wedding party the day of the wedding.

## **WEDDING MUSIC**

The music for the wedding should be appropriate for a service of worship and focus on God's presence and blessings in marriage. Secular music should be saved for the wedding reception. The pastor will have final approval of all music.

If organ music is desired, it is expected that our congregation's organist will play. You will, however, need to make arrangements to secure his/her services. If any music requested and approved is not in the music library of the congregation's organist, you must provide it with ample time for preparation. If you desire to use an organist other than ours, they must be approved by our organist and the pastor. The congregation's organist may be contracted to play the piano at the wedding reception for an additional fee.

Good Shepherd has a Rodgers digitally simulated pipe organ. An upright piano is also available.

Any other music and musicians must be approved by the pastor. All negotiations and payment of fees to other musicians are the responsibility of the couple.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

*Please share this information with your photographer.*

*The photographer must cooperate with our established practices regarding photography at the wedding to assure reverence and dignity in the service itself, to enhance the joyous atmosphere of the wedding day, and to expedite the taking of pictures in the most enjoyable way.*

Pictures of the wedding party may be taken in the entryway before they enter the sanctuary. Once the service begins, no flash photography is permitted. It is allowable for non-flash shots to be made from the rear of the sanctuary during the ceremony as long as worshippers are not distracted. Flash pictures of the wedding party may be taken from the rear of the sanctuary as they recess at the conclusion of the service.

Following the service, the wedding party may return to the sanctuary for formal pictures. You may also choose to take all of your formal pictures prior to the ceremony. We recommend that all possible pictures be taken prior to the service and that picture taking after the service be limited, particularly if guests are waiting for the wedding party at a

reception. You may also want to have someone invite guests to begin eating while they wait.

As much as you are able, you should request that your guests refrain from taking pictures during your service of marriage.

### **VIDEO TAPING**

The use of video cameras is allowed in the sanctuary during the ceremony from a fixed, rear location. Locations of cameras must be approved by the pastor. As with photographs, videos must be made with available light during the service.

### **DECORATIONS AND FLORAL ARRANGMENTS**

*Please share this information with your florist. Your florist must cooperate with our established practices.*

No permanent fixtures, liturgical appointments, seasonal decorations or worship equipment in the sanctuary are to be moved or removed.

Only wedding decorations which can be placed without being affixed to the walls, woodwork or floor may be used (i.e., no hooks, nails, screws, tacks or sticking tape).

One or two floral arrangements may be placed on flower stands inside or outside the altar area, or on the floor in front of the altar. Flower stands are not provided by the church. No flowers or greenery may be placed on the altar itself. Other tasteful and appropriate flowers, potted plants or greenery may be used in the sanctuary.

All decorations, flowers, etc., must be removed immediately following the ceremony. If any floral arrangements are to be donated to the church, the pastor should be informed in advance.

The church's sanctuary altar candles will be used for all services and are not to be adorned in any way. Other candelabra are allowed outside of the altar area and may be adorned, but must use oil-burning candles and must be obtained from an outside supplier. Wax candles are not permitted except for "Unity Candles." The Unity Candles are not a part of the Lutheran tradition but are allowed. You must provide the candles if you wish to have them. The church owns a tabletop stand that can be placed on the altar.

### **THE RECEPTION**

When using the fellowship hall for the reception, you must furnish a caterer, who shall be responsible for all details. The caterer must leave the premises clean and orderly. The

caterer must provide the equipment needed to serve the guests, including tablecloths, silver, china, glassware, flower containers, etc.

***No alcoholic beverages in any form are permitted in the church buildings at any time.***

***No smoking is allowed in the church buildings at any time.***

No rice, birdseed, confetti or candy may be thrown at your departure. We suggest bubbles or the ringing of small bells. Please check with the pastor if you have a different departure idea.

It is generally understood that your reception will not exceed two hours following the wedding service.