

St. Johannes Lutheran Church

Wedding Policy

Introduction:

Thank you for considering **St. Johannes Evangelical Lutheran Church** as the place in which to have your wedding. We are honored that you have chosen to take a look at the beauty and intimacy of our congregation, our facilities, and our location.

This beautiful and historic place of worship has long been a favorite among Charlestonians as well as couples from all over the country. Our congregation encourages you to join us for worship. It will allow you to experience the beauty of the sanctuary, our exquisite stained glass windows, and last but not least, the rich, full sound of our Austin pipe organ which was first installed in 1949.

This document will familiarize you with the wedding policies and procedures of St. Johannes Lutheran Church. If you have additional questions, please contact the church office at (843) 722-8906 or email: office@stjohanneschurch.org. You may also contact our wedding coordinator, Barbara Pace, at (843) 789-0639 or email: parsonage-weddings@stjohanneschurch.org.

The Ceremony:

St. Johannes Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and therefore considers the Rite of Christian Marriage an act of worship and is conducted as such. All weddings performed by the pastor of St. Johannes will use the approved rite of the ELCA. Popular secular rites such as lighting a unity candle are not inserted into the marriage rite, but such may be appropriate to observe during the reception. If a pastor from another denomination is to perform the ceremony, he/she will determine the rite to be used.

If a couple wishes to have Holy Communion included in the service, it will be offered to the whole congregation in accordance with the policy of the ELCA. St. Johannes' pastor can assist in making the decision whether or not Holy Communion is appropriate.

Officiating Minister:

For all weddings in St. Johannes sanctuary, it is expected that the Pastor of St. Johannes will officiate. If you have another minister that you would like to participate in the service, approval must be given by the Pastor and/or the Council of St. Johannes. If the pastor of St. Johannes is unavailable, the Wedding Guild will contact another pastor to officiate.

Music and Musician:

The parish musician of St. Johannes will play for all weddings conducted in the sanctuary. In the event that he/she is unable to play, he/she will recommend another local organist. The use of any substitute musician must be approved by the Parish Musician and/or Pastor of St. Johannes. The musician's fee includes one consultation with the bride and groom, one rehearsal, and the wedding ceremony. Additional fees are charged for rehearsals with a soloist or additional meetings with the bride and groom.

Wedding music should be discussed and approved by the Parish Musician and/or the Pastor no later than two weeks prior to the rehearsal.

Recorded music is not permitted.

Sacred music is used for the ceremony. The use of ballads and popular love songs is not allowed and is more appropriate for use during the reception. The traditional Wagner (*Here Comes the Bride*) and Mendelssohn processions are secular compositions and are not used. The Pastor can suggest places during the wedding rite where hymns, instrumentals, or vocal music may be used. The congregation St. Johannes understands that The Lord's Prayer is a prayer of the Christian community and is prayed by the whole congregation. For that reason, the singing of The Lord's Prayer by a soloist is strongly discouraged.

In the event that vocalists and/or instrumentalists (brass, woodwind, or string) are requested, recommendations of local musicians can be made. All additional musicians must be approved by the Parish Musician and/or Pastor. Fees for these musicians are negotiated by the bride and groom and are payable directly to the individual(s) contracted.

Sanctuary/Chapel:

The sanctuary seats approximately 200 people comfortably including the gallery (balcony). The Taizé Chapel seats approximately fifty people. The paraments (cloth hangings) reflect the particular season of the church year. The color is not changed for a wedding and should be considered during the wedding planning. The Pastor or a Wedding Guild representative can offer you assistance to determine what the color will be on a date you are interested in.

Also, permanent and seasonal worship appointments (baptismal font, crosses, lectern, etc.) remain in place during weddings. Limited assistance to accommodate handicapped persons is possible.

Due to the risk of tripping in high heels and long gowns, the church does not allow use of an aisle runner. For safety reasons, attendants are not be allowed to drop flower petals along the aisle.

Liquid wax candles with hurricane globes for use in the windows are available upon request. The use of additional candles other than those routinely used in worship services must be approved by the Pastor.

Marriage License:

A valid marriage license issued by the State of South Carolina is required. All three copies and a stamped and addressed envelope must be presented to the officiating pastor prior to or at the rehearsal. A license may be obtained at any county courthouse in South Carolina. For more information, please click:

<http://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/probate/marriage-license.php>

Premarital Counseling:

Premarital counseling is a requirement for **all couples** who choose to be married at St. Johannes. For couples who are not disciples (members) of St. Johannes, the pastor of St. Johannes is available for counseling at a fee of \$100 per session with a minimum of four sessions. Disciples (members) of the congregation are not charged a fee. If desired, counseling services may also be obtained from another pastor or licensed therapist. In that event, a letter on the letterhead of the pastor or counselor indicating satisfactory completion of counseling is required and must be sent to the pastor of St. Johannes no later than one month before the wedding is scheduled.

Flowers:

Flowers are purchased for the altar each Sunday by members of the congregation and are provided through arrangement with a local florist. The bride and groom may choose either to use the flowers that will be available or make their own arrangements for altar flowers. The Wedding Guild can recommend a florist experienced in design for this particular sanctuary. If the bride and groom decide to purchase altar flowers, a set of liners designed to fit the brass altar vases must be purchased from the church office at a cost of \$10.00. **Altar vases may not be used without these liners.**

Rehearsal:

The rehearsal **must begin promptly** at the time stated in the application and will not exceed one hour. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make sure that members of the wedding party are present and prompt. If bulletins are to be used, they must be brought to the rehearsal. The Pastor conducts the rehearsal along with a Wedding Guild member.

Photography:

In order to preserve the dignity and reverence of the ceremony, we ask guests to refrain from all photography during the ceremony. The photographer may take pictures from the back of the church or from the gallery (balcony) without using a flash. Videotaping is allowed only from the gallery (balcony). Video cameras, equipment, etc. should remain stationary for the entire ceremony.

Wedding Guild and Wedding Coordinators:

A representative of the church's Wedding Guild will contact the bride and groom once the application and fees are submitted to the Church Office. Wedding Guild members are present during the rehearsal and the wedding. If you have contracted with a wedding coordinator, he or she is welcome to be present, and our Guild member(s) will work with your coordinator so that the wedding party is aware of plans made by the Pastor and the bride and groom.

Showering:

Showering of the bride and groom with anything while on church property – including bird seed, rice, or flower petals is prohibited for the safety of the wedding party and guests.

Rehearsal Dinner/Reception:

Gatch Hall and the kitchen are available to be used for a rehearsal dinner or wedding reception for an additional fee. It can seat 80-100 people, 6-8 people at round tables. Tables, dishes, and silverware are available.

Custodial Services:

Custodial services include opening and closing of the church as well as ensuring that the facilities are cleaned before and after the ceremony. It is expected that members of the wedding party leave the church facilities in the condition in which they were found.

Vendor Deliveries:

It will be necessary for vendors – e.g., florist, caterer, decorator, etc. – to make prior arrangements with the Wedding Guild or Church Office to make deliveries outside of regular office hours. Hours are Monday through Thursday, 10:00AM -3:00PM.

Miscellaneous:

- Members of the wedding party may find it more convenient to dress prior to arriving at the church.
- It is expected that all personnel connected with the wedding respect church property. The Church Office should be notified immediately of any damage that may accidentally occur.
- Cell phones and/or pagers must be turned OFF during the rehearsal and wedding ceremony.
- All personal property must be removed after the wedding and/or reception.

Application:

The date and time of your rehearsal and wedding will be held for up to fourteen days after initially contacting St. Johannes. Once the application and appropriate fees are received the date and time are reserved the \$250 deposit becomes non-refundable. When necessary inform the Church Office or Wedding Guild of changes to the application information provided as soon as possible.

Scheduling:

No weddings will be scheduled for Holy Week, the week of Christmas, and the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.