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**St. Peter  
Lutheran Church  
L.C.M.C.**

Walburg, Texas

**WEDDING  
GUIDELINES**

INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES  
TO HELP COUPLES  
PREPARE AND PLAN FOR THEIR  
MARRIAGE IN A CHURCH IN THE  
LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS  
IN MISSION FOR CHRIST

**St. Peter  
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WEDDING GUIDELINES  
Table of Contents**

- Guidelines for Planning
  - Your Wedding Service Page 1
- General Arrangements and Planning Steps Page 2
  1. Make a Reservation Page 2
  2. Consultation with the Pastor Page 2
  3. Arrange for Church Musicians Page 3
  4. Arrange for Photography Page 3
  5. Decorations Page 3
  6. Cleaning the Buildings Page 4
  7. Wedding Planning with the Pastor Page 4
  8. Miscellaneous Page 5
  9. Financial Arrangements Page 7
  10. Reimbursable Fee Schedule Page 8

**St. Peter Lutheran Church  
Walburg, Texas**

*Your Wedding Service*

Congratulations on your wedding! Our desire is for you to have a wedding that will be a joyful Christian ceremony of great thanksgiving to God. This Guidelines Booklet is intended to help you make your wedding the beautiful experience you deserve. May God bless you as you make your plans, both for the wedding as well as your future.

“Marriage is a holy estate, ordained of God, and to be held in honor by all. It becomes those who enter therein to weigh with reverent minds what the Word of God teaches concerning it.”

(Service Book and Hymnal)

Your desire to have a church wedding is indicative of the fact that you want to ask God’s blessing upon your marriage and to expand both the relationship you have with God and the relationship you will have as husband and wife. It is strongly suggested that you carefully study and understand the Order of Marriage in the Lutheran Book of Worship, page 202.

The purpose of a church wedding is to share your joy with the congregation and to enable the congregation to join you in asking God’s blessing upon your marriage. There may be portions of a typical secular wedding ceremony that are not appropriate for a church wedding worship service. The wedding event is first, and foremost, an act of worshipping God, which does set certain limitation upon what may properly be done as part of this worship service.

## **General Arrangements and Planning Steps**

### **1. Make a Reservation for your wedding date.**

The dates for both wedding and rehearsal must be cleared in advance with the church office and the Pastor. No weddings will be scheduled at the church during the following holidays: New Year's Eve and Day, Lent and Holy Week, Easter, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, Advent, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. This includes weekends of these days also.

Scheduling of all weddings shall be prioritized by:

- A. Scheduled church use of the facilities
- B. Members of St. Peter getting married\*
- C. Non-members getting married. (When time-demands adversely affect pastoral work, the non-member requests may be denied.)
  - To qualify as a member for purposes of scheduling weddings, at least one of the couple, or an immediate family member, shall be a current active member for at least 12 months prior to the scheduled wedding date. Active membership is defined by the church's constitution and is determined by regular attendance, communion, and financial support. Referral by another Lutheran pastor, under certain circumstances, may be considered as a waiver to this membership requirement.

### **2. Consultation with the Pastor.**

Make a preliminary appointment with the Pastor to begin detailed preparation. This should be done at least 6 months, and preferably 12 months prior to the wedding to allow for adequate premarital counseling. The Pastor requires premarital counseling sessions with all the couples getting married at St. Peter before any ceremony will be performed. If the minister performing the wedding is someone other than the Pastor of St. Peter, this shall be discussed and approved by the Pastor of St. Peter in advance. The Pastor has the sole right of approval of another minister performing weddings at St. Peter.

At least four premarital consultation sessions with the Pastor are required. In addition, regular attendance at St. Peter worship services during the time between setting a wedding date and the actual wedding are strongly encouraged.

### 3. **Arrange for church musicians.**

In keeping with the nature of Christian marriage as a joyful, Christ-centered experience, all music played or sung, shall be selected, from those songs and hymns, which are in harmony with the spirit of true worship of the Lord. Music requests shall be submitted to the Pastor for approval at least two weeks before the wedding date. The Pastor has sole approval rights over all music to be used as part of the worship service, including music played before and after the actual worship service.

If you need an organist, you will need to contact one of the organists from St. Peter. Other organists may not be used. However, an instrument other than the church organ may be used by anyone, with the Pastor's approval. The organist's fee is determined and identified in this booklet, and is to be paid no later than the rehearsal, or no later than the day prior to the wedding.

### 4. **Arrange for photography.**

If you decide to hire a photographer or videographer, that person(s) shall **NOT** use flash equipment during the actual wedding service, except during the procession and recession. These photographs may not be taken from the chancel area of the church. The photographer/videographer should speak with the Pastor at least two days before the wedding and should be available before the wedding for any discussions with the Pastor. These persons are to dress in attire appropriate for church worship.

You are encouraged to take all the photographs of the wedding you desire. Any necessary photographs can be staged after the completion of the service. There will be allocated at least 30 minutes after the completion of the service for this to occur, should two weddings happen on the same day.

### 5. **Decorations.**

One of the reasons that you have selected St. Peter Lutheran Church for your wedding is the feeling and image that this church has. Because of the natural beauty of the sanctuary, we request that you keep your decorating to a minimum so that you do not cover up the chosen setting. The altar and pulpit will remain exactly like they would be for a normal Sunday worship service, including the color of the paraments on them. All church furnishings are to remain in the standard locations in the church.

No tacks, tape, wire, clamps, nails, glues or pins (other than the recommended floral tape that will not leave any residue). Pew bows may be attached with string or ribbons. Due to fire hazard concerns, candles on the pews or on the windows are not permitted.

If extra candles are used in the chancel, they must be placed so as to avoid air-conditioning or heating vents, and protective floor coverings shall be used under all candles. Extra candles shall be limited to two candelabras and an “unity candle” set, if desired. These are to be furnished by the bridal party and are not available from the church.

The florist is responsible for furnishing drip-less type candles and will provide wax savers on all real candles. There must be sufficient plastic under the additional candle stands to protect the carpet and all adjacent furniture.

Dropping of real flowers or petals by the flower-girl(s) on the church carpet is prohibited. No flowers will be placed on the altar. Chancel flower stands adjacent to the altar are available for placement of flowers. The florist or other responsible persons are to remove all decorations and equipment promptly following the ceremony and/or reception, and to remove only those flowers designated by the family.

No rice throwing inside or outside any of the church buildings is allowed.

#### **6. Cleaning of the buildings.**

You will be responsible for restoring the building(s) to the condition in which you found them. Please clean the sanctuary and dressing rooms immediately after the worship service, or at least before the next day. You are asked to be especially careful to remove any and all pins from the church and other areas.

The parents of the bride and groom are responsible for cleaning up the church, the fellowship hall, the bathroom, and any other rooms used.

#### **7. Wedding planning with the Pastor.**

A. The couple shall plan the wedding in consultation with the Pastor. There are some options that the couple may choose from, including the scripture readings, music, vows, etc.

B. Music: Since a church wedding is a worship event it is important that the music be appropriate to the setting. All music with regards to solos and other special music should be approved by the Pastor before selection choices are finalized.

Consult with the Pastor regarding the choice of solos and other special music before making musical selection. Hymns sung by the congregation can be very effective.

C. Sound System: When the church's sound system is used, it shall not be reset, but used as is. If any special sound equipment is necessary, the bridal party is responsible for providing this equipment. It must "stand alone", that is, it cannot be connected to the existing sound system of the church.

D. Holy Communion: Should the wedding service include Holy Communion, which is highly recommended the Sacrament is offered to the entire congregation in attendance, with the caveat that all are welcome at the Lord's Table who believe that the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus comes to you in this Sacrament. Under certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for the Bride and Groom to assist in the distribution of Communion.

E. Additional Wedding Items: The church does NOT provide any additional items, such as bulletins, "unity candle", aisle runner, etc. If any of these items are needed, the Bridal party is responsible for obtaining them at their cost.

If programs or bulletins are desired, the Bridal party will be solely responsible for the printing of programs and bulletins. The Bridal party should consult with the Pastor regarding the ceremony.

## 8. **Miscellaneous.**

### A. The Marriage License:

The Bridal party is responsible for obtaining the Marriage License. St. Peter Lutheran Church is in Williamson County, Texas and Marriage Licenses are available from the Williamson County Courthouse in Georgetown. Texas state law requires that the marriage ceremony may not be performed during the 72-hour period immediately following the issuance of the Marriage License. The Marriage License may be obtained from the County Clerk's office and must be obtained only between 3 and 30 days preceding the wedding. The Marriage License should be obtained and left with the Pastor on the night of the last

consulting session, or at least one week before the rehearsal. This is to ensure that the license is properly prepared.

B. The Rehearsal. If you plan to have two or more attendants in your wedding service, a rehearsal is to be held and directed by the Pastor. The rehearsal typically occurs the evening before the wedding. All times need to be discussed with the Pastor to determine that no conflict occurs for either the Pastor or the church facilities.

C. The Rehearsal Dinner. The church gym, which can hold approximately 200 people, is available for your rehearsal dinner. If you choose to use the church facility, you may want to use the kitchen or arrange for a caterer. No alcoholic beverages are to be served. This area is air conditioned. Please make a reservation for these areas as you reserve the wedding date.

D. Restroom. The restroom and Sunday school rooms of the Fellowship Hall may be used by the Bride and her attendants to dress in on the day of the wedding. Please clean up after the service. A cleaning fee will be assessed for cleaning these areas, in addition to a cleaning damage deposit.

E. Respect for the Lord's House. At all times, there is to be reverence and respect for the Lord's House. No running or horseplay is to be permitted in the church, particularly the chancel area by the altar. No smoking is permitted in any of the church buildings. No rehearsal or wedding ceremony will be conducted with any members of the wedding party under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

F. Invitations. If the presence of the Pastor, the organist, and their spouses is desired at the rehearsal dinner and/or wedding reception, please send them an invitation. Don't take their presence for granted; with no invitation, they will presume they are not expected to attend.

G. Wedding Monitor. A wedding monitor is required for all weddings. The duties of the monitor are to insure that the lights, heating or A/C systems, sound system, etc. are turned on and off, and to handle any emergencies that arise. The wedding monitor will also walk the church facilities with a responsible person from the Bridal party before and after the rehearsal and wedding services to determine the condition of the facilities. The pastor may fulfill this role as a courtesy.



## 9. Financial Arrangements.

These are established on membership status at the time of the first contact with the Pastor. It is not the policy of the church or the Pastor to look upon weddings as a source of revenue; however, there are expenses connected with the operation of the various areas used for weddings and receptions.

All weddings, members and non-members, are to provide the church with a **security deposit of \$250** at the time that the wedding date is to be secured. This deposit will be cashed and will be refunded if the facilities are left in satisfactory condition after the completion of the rehearsal and wedding. Refunds will occur within three weeks of the wedding. A walk-through inspection will be done by the Wedding Monitor and a responsible person from the Wedding Party at the time the church facility is opened for the rehearsal and/or wedding, whichever comes first. A similar walk through will be made by the same parties at the time the Wedding Party leaves the church facility.

**ALL REIMBURSABLE FEES** (in addition to the security deposit) are to be paid to the church office prior to the rehearsal, including fees to the organist and soloists, The reimbursement covers cost of utilities and maintenance of church facilities used for your rehearsal and wedding. It also includes use of the Sacristy for the Groom's room and the Fellowship Hall for the Bride's rooms.

Reimbursable Fees are as follows:

### MEMBERS:

Church	- wedding	At Your Discretion
	- rehearsal	At Your Discretion
Fellowship Hall	-wedding reception	At Your Discretion
	- rehearsal dinner	At Your Discretion

### Personnel:

Pastor:	\$200.00
Organist, if provided by the church:	Minimum of \$150.00...to be decided between bridal party and organist.

**Note:** Additional fees may be charged at the discretion of the organist. Please arrange this with the organist.

Cleaning Fee	\$100.00
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**NON-MEMBERS:**

Church	- wedding	\$500.00
	- rehearsal	\$200.00
Fellowship Hall	- wedding reception	\$150.00
	- rehearsal dinner	\$75.00

Personnel:

Pastor	\$300.00
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**Note:** This is to be paid prior to the rehearsal and/or wedding.

Organist	Minimum of \$150.00...
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to be decided between bridal party and organist

**Note:** Additional fees may be charged at the discretion of the organist. Please arrange this with the organist.

Wedding Monitor	\$ 75.00
Cleaning Fee	\$100.00

**ALL fees** shall be paid in full by the last pre-marital counseling session between the Bride and Groom and the Pastor. Failure to pay all fees is cause for the wedding to be canceled with the church and/or the Pastor being responsible for any situations resulting from this cancellation. Any circumstances that will prevent this from occurring need to be discussed with the Pastor in advance. The Pastor has the authority in making any adjustments to the fees.