



EIGHT MILE PLAINS LUTHERAN PARISH

Basic Guidelines for Weddings

When a couple asks to have a Christian wedding ceremony, their wedding goes beyond the merely personal and legal to the spiritual and religious.

They are asking the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to bless and strengthen their union as husband and wife. As such the wedding ceremony is not a mere social occasion, but is actually a worship service, at which God serves the couple (and others there) with his grace through the Word (and the Sacrament of the Altar, where this is used). It also now involves a congregation and its church, and the congregation's pastor and pastoral care.

Because the wedding ceremony is both a worship service with God's activity at its centre and a legal ceremony held under the laws of the Commonwealth of Australia, these two aspects imply certain matters about how such a service should be organised and conducted. Therefore the following are the basic guidelines that need to be adhered to for weddings held at either congregation in the Eight Mile Plains Lutheran Parish.

1. Ordinarily the pastor of the Eight Mile Plains Parish will be the **MARRIAGE CELEBRANT**. Any other arrangement is at the Eight Mile Plains Parish pastor's discretion. Under no circumstances will a wedding be officiated by a civil celebrant or a non-ordained minister or a minister from a non-Christian religion.
2. The **MOST APPROPRIATE PLACE** for a Christian wedding is in a Christian church or chapel. Where other places are used, they should be conducive to a mood of worshipfulness. It is not appropriate for couples to use a church simply because it has the nicest setting for the wedding.
3. In regard to **WHOM MAY BE MARRIED** in our congregations, it is assumed that couples wanting a Christian wedding value Christian beliefs and worship; and that at least one of them is a member of the congregation that worships at that church. The Parish's congregations are not obligated to hold weddings for non-members, but they do extend the privilege to hold weddings as a ministry and mission to the local community. Ordinarily, weddings are held for members of the congregations, people who have a connection through our congregations' ministries, and people in the local community who are not affiliated with any congregation or religion. Couples who have an affiliation with a congregation or other religion are encouraged to be married there, with their local minister officiating.
4. Couples are required to go through a brief **MARRIAGE PREPARATION** course. This will ordinarily be with the pastor of the Eight Mile Plains Parish. However, where circumstances make this difficult or impractical, special arrangements may be made with a local pastor in consultation with the Eight Mile Plains Parish pastor. Couples are, of course, free to seek other counselling services.
5. The wedding service will be conducted according to the **rites of the Lutheran Church of Australia**. There is some flexibility in this order,

and these matters can be worked out with the pastor; but in any case where the pastor of the Eight Mile Plains Parish is the marriage celebrant he has the final say in every aspect of the wedding service order. Please also note that couples are required to make use of the vows that are provided in the Order for Marriage. This is a legal requirement of the Australian Federal Government. Since a couple is being married according to the rites of the Lutheran Church of Australia, the marriage vows must follow the wording in the marriage rite.

7. APPROPRIATE DRESS and BEHAVIOUR are to be used for the wedding. On the one hand, fancy wedding dresses and suits are not necessary, but on the other, untidy or revealing dressing is not acceptable. Also, a wedding cannot take place where one or both of the couple, or one of the required two witnesses, is under the influence of alcohol or other stupefying drugs. Your guests are also expected to behave in a decent and respectful manner at the church, and especially during the ceremony.

8. As much as it is in your power, BE ON TIME. Apart from being good manners, it is also a sign of respect to God, to your future spouse, to the guests gathered for the wedding, and to the congregation members who are assisting with the holding of the wedding ceremony in the church.

9. The choice of HYMNS, SONGS AND OTHER MUSIC should reflect the Christian nature of the service. Other religious or secular music (favourite song, for example) may be appropriate for the Reception, but not in a worship service.

10. In regard to PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS: It is distracting and rude towards the worshippers and disrespectful towards God for people to be moving about during the service in order to take photographs and videos. However, use of modern camera equipment, which is far more silent in operation and often does not need the use of flashes, and the setting up of video cameras, may allow some photographs or videos to be taken. In any case, the wedding party is encouraged to reserve photographs for before or after the wedding ceremony.

11. Be aware that congregations have PARTICULAR RULES AND PRACTICES about flowers, decorations, rice and confetti etc. Please check with the pastor of the Eight Mile Plains Parish, or, for St John's, with the Wedding Coordinator about these matters.

12. Please check with the pastor, and for St John's with the Wedding Coordinator in regard to DONATIONS, FEES and any other matters.

13. Note that a wedding will not be regarded as 'booked in' until the NOTICE OF INTENTION TO MARRY FORM is completed and in the hands of the pastor. This is a Commonwealth legal document, and must be completed at least one calendar month before the wedding. So it is usually wise to have this in place before booking any other matters for the wedding (reception, vehicles etc).

St John's Wedding Coordinator:

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