

# Wedding Information Packet



St. Peter Lutheran Church, ELCA  
Greene, Iowa

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**St. Peter Lutheran Church**  
ELCA

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Dear Friends in Christ,

The fact that you are reading this letter means you are making plans to be married. Congratulations! I hope you find yourselves filled with a mixture of both joy and awe. On behalf of our congregation, I want to thank you for the privilege of working, praying, and planning with you as you prepare to begin your married life together as husband and wife!

As you look ahead to your wedding day, I bet you are happy and excited—and maybe even a little nervous or overwhelmed. A lot of preparation and planning needs to happen in the coming weeks and month! But as you will find out, this time will go by faster than you think and you will soon arrive at that day when you stand before God in the presence of your family and friends to make your promises of love and commitment to each other.

All of this will take place in that special worship service we call a Christian Wedding. As you begin planning, keep in mind that weddings in the church take place within the context of a worship service. This day is about giving thanks to God for bringing the two of you together, publicly affirming your relationship, and blessing you in Jesus' name as you enter into the covenant of marriage together.

Of course, your wedding service is also your special day, and there are a number of ways for you to personalize it. As you read through all the information in this packet, take notes and we'll discuss how to make this special day meaningful for you and your guests.

I look forward to helping you prepare well for your wedding day. But in the midst of all the preparations and excitement of preparing for this day, remember that your wedding is, ultimately, just one day, and it's only the beginning of what's to come. Our goal is to help you prepare for all the months and years that God will give you in your marriage.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this exciting time in your lives. We look forward to working with you toward a joy-filled and successful marriage. May God richly bless you as you embark on this lifelong journey together!

In Christ,  
Pastor Daniel Flucke



## **A Christian Understanding of Marriage**

*“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”*

*Genesis 1:1*

With these words, the Bible begins to tell us the story of God’s love and promises for us and for all of creation. The opening chapters of Genesis tell of God creating a good universe, lovingly fashioning humanity in God’s own image, both male and female. As part of the beauty and bounty of creation, God gave to people this most precious gift we call marriage, in which two people publicly pledge their lifelong love and faithfulness to each other. And should that marriage be blessed with children—whether through birth or adoption—the parents are called to reflect God’s love and care as they nurture and raise their children.

God’s intention is for marriage to reflect God’s own love. In fact, the Bible uses marriage as an illustration for God’s loving relationship with the church, God’s holy people. The Holy Spirit helps those who are united in marriage to be living signs of God’s grace, love, and forgiveness. Marriage is a wonderful gift from God!

However, as God’s story continues, we read about the entrance of sin into the world and the corruption of God’s good creation. Sin seeps into all of our relationships, despite our best intentions. Living a successful marriage requires God’s grace and forgiveness, gifts God desires to give in abundance! Because we acknowledge the reality of sin and brokenness in our world and in our lives, we believe pre-marital counseling is important. No pre-marital counseling program can guarantee a successful marriage, but valuable tools for resolving conflict and communicating well together can be taught and practiced.

We are delighted you want to celebrate your wedding here at St. Peter, because as Christians, we believe God’s self-giving love and faithfulness toward us is the foundation of a committed relationship between spouses. We believe God, along with the church, desires marriage to be a source of faith, joy, love, and fulfillment. Marriages rooted in God’s steadfast love will be the most likely to experience these qualities.

Of course, marriage does not belong exclusively to the church. While marriage is ordained by God and supported by the church, it is also a public social contract governed and regulated by the state for the purpose of protecting individuals and providing stability as a basic building block of society.

The Pastor officiating at your wedding represents both church and state. In the wedding service, you are legally joined together, making public vows in the presence of God and the gathered community to remain faithful to each other your whole life long. This is not a commitment to be entered into lightly, but rather after careful reflection and prayer for guidance.

By beginning your marriage within the church, your wedding ceremony becomes part of a worship service. While this joyous occasion is about the two of you and your relationship, it is primarily an occasion for worshipping God. While a reception is limited to invited guests, as a worship service, a church wedding is open to all who wish to attend. This focus on worship will help to shape all of your wedding planning.

You do not need to be a member of St. Peter to be married in this congregation, but at the same time, even though there are costs involved, the church is not “For Hire.” We see weddings as part of the ministry to which God calls us in service of our neighbor. If you are not currently active at St. Peter, please join us for worship on several occasions before you decide you want us to be involved in your wedding service.

The purpose of this packet is to make you aware of the wedding policies and practices here at St. Peter Lutheran Church. Please read it carefully and use this information as you make your plans. May God bless you as you prepare to celebrate the beginning of your marriage!

## **Scheduling Your Wedding**

As you know, there are lots of details involved in planning a wedding—and among the most challenging is finding a workable date and time for the service, reception, and all the people with whom you will be working.

Because of the nature of the Church Calendar, there are some “blackout dates” on which weddings may not be scheduled. These include Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Holy Week, Easter, and Thanksgiving. Typically, weddings take place on Saturdays. As our congregation has a weekly Saturday worship service at 6:00 pm, the latest in the afternoon a wedding may begin is 4:00 pm (and earlier in the afternoon is better).

One other very simple option is for a wedding ceremony to take place during one of the congregation’s regular worship services.

As soon as you have an idea of some dates and times that would work for you, please contact the Church Office to see what’s available on the calendar. In most cases, it is appropriate to contact the church regarding availability of the building and Pastor **9-12 months ahead of time**. Four months ahead is the bare minimum possible. In all cases, **make sure to confirm the date with the church before publicizing it** to any family or booking any vendors for the wedding or reception!

Once you’ve found a date and time, we’ll pencil it onto the church calendar so you can make sure it will work with your reception hall, musician(s), florist, etc. In order to secure your date and time, you will need to return a Couple’s Covenant (see page 22). and pay \$250 to the church office as a deposit (see page 18).

### **Initial Planning Session with the Pastor**

Once you have a wedding date scheduled, the next step is an initial meeting with the Pastor. Typically, this will happen **4-6 months before the wedding date**. This initial conversation will include conversation about yourselves and your wedding plans, going over the wedding policies in this packet, a tour of the church building, and making arrangements for pre-marital counseling. You will also be asked to sign the Couple's Covenant at this time. If you have not already paid deposit to the church, please bring that with you to this meeting.

### **Pre-Marital Counseling & Planning**

Pre-Marital counseling is required of all couples married in St. Peter Lutheran Church. This will include taking and discussing an online "Prepare-Enrich" inventory (cost included in Administrative Fee – see page 18), as well as planning the wedding service. Following our initial planning session, we will have 4-6 one-hour meetings prior to the wedding date. If meeting in person is not possible because of distance, it may be possible to meet via video-chat, or to do some of the pre-marital work with a local Pastor or agency.

## **Facilities**

### **Accessibility**

Our building has accessible restrooms, and there is a powered door off of the parking lot. A full elevator connects the fellowship hall basement, and an open lift elevator provides accessibility to the sanctuary. Unfortunately, the front of the sanctuary does have steps with no ramp, but creative arrangements can be made if needed for readers or members of the wedding party.

### **Capacity**

Our sanctuary can comfortably seat up to 300 people. Although children are most welcome in worship, we do have available if needed a small "cry room" at the back of the sanctuary with a window to witness the service.

### **Climate Control**

The sanctuary, fellowship hall, and fellowship hall basement are air conditioned and heated. The old basement is not air conditioned. Due to the size of the sanctuary and the amount of energy needed to heat and cool it on very hot or very cold days, we do ask that prior to guests arriving shortly before the service, the curtain doors into the sanctuary be kept closed as much as possible. Limiting the use of the main glass doors off the sanctuary and instead entering through the fellowship hall will also help keep the temperature comfortable.

### **Dressing**

There is a Sunday School room available with mirrors and hangers in the fellowship hall basement for the use of brides and bridesmaids. This room can be locked if you wish to store items overnight. Restrooms are also available in this area.

Grooms may use the conference room off the fellowship hall, or other Sunday School rooms in either the fellowship hall basement or the (non-airconditioned) sanctuary basement. Please ensure all rooms you use are picked up and free of debris prior to your leaving.

### **Flowers and Decorations**

Flowers and other decorations can add to the beauty of the service. Within reason, the sanctuary and fellowship hall may be decorated according to the couple's taste.

The sanctuary and fellowship hall are generally for decorating on the day before the wedding unless there is a funeral.

Decorative items such as bows or an aisle runner may be used in the seating area of the sanctuary. If you are using an aisle runner, know that the lengths of the aisle from the steps to the back of the sanctuary is 76 feet. There are 19 pews on each side, for a total of 38 (of those, 13 on each side are long, with one side having 6 short and the other 5 short pews).

As a wedding service takes place within the context of the church year, seasonal paraments, banners, and other decorations may not be changed for a wedding. Candles in front of the church will be lit. Couples desiring a unity element in the service (candle, sand, knot, etc.) should discuss options ahead of time with the Pastor.

No tacks, nails, cellophane tape, or similar material should be used in decorating. Decorations may not be attached to walls or furniture in a manner that will leave permanent marks. No glitter is permitted. Only flowers may be placed on the altar itself and a bow on the candelabras. The church does have wooden pillar flower stands available.

Please remove all flowers and other decorations from the church promptly following the service or reception. If you would like to leave flowers for use in worship, please let the church office know in advance.

### **Post-Wedding Traditions**

No rice, birdseed, glitter, or confetti is permitted on the church premises. Other options such as flower petals, bells, or bubbles are suggested as substitutes.

### **Technology**

We do not have the ability to play videos or project pictures in the sanctuary. Internet-connected Wi-Fi is available throughout the building, with the password posted near entrances.

## **Wedding Rehearsal**

### **Rehearsal**

All weddings need to have a rehearsal. Wedding rehearsals are usually held the evening before the day of the ceremony. The date and time should be arranged with the Pastor. A rehearsal usually lasts an hour, and includes the Pastor walking the wedding party through the ceremony from beginning to end.

The rehearsal includes the entire wedding party (Bride & Groom, Bridesmaids, Groomsmen, readers, etc.). If possible, it is helpful for outside musicians, parents, and ushers to be present as well. Please respect everyone's time by encouraging everyone to arrive promptly.

### **Rehearsal Dinners at St. Peter**

If you wish to have your rehearsal dinner at church, the WELCA Church Women have a dinner committee available to help serve. Please contact the church office to set up a conversation with the committee chair.

There is a charge of \$2.00 per plate for serving the food, and the family is responsible for furnishing and preparing it. The committee will set up and clean the dining area. There will be a \$50.00 fee for the use of the hall.

## **Wedding Reception**

### **Receptions at St. Peter**

Most couples decide to have their reception off site. However, depending on the time of the wedding, a reception here at church is possible. If you would like to have your reception at church, the WELCA Church Women have a wedding committee to help. Please contact the church office to set up a conversation with the committee chair.

Remember that the church's policy of no alcoholic beverages includes wedding receptions, and that due to Saturday worship, the fellowship hall is unavailable from 5:00 – 7:00 pm on Saturdays.

General policies of the WELCA Church Women for weddings are as follows:

1. The WELCA wedding committee will serve, but not plan the reception.
2. There will be a charge of \$100.00 for the first 200 people and another \$10.00 charge for each additional 50 people when the committee serves.
3. The Church Women will serve the reception. Sandwiches will be prepared at the request of the family. The family is responsible for preparing all other food.
4. There will be an additional cleaning charge of \$5.00 for each tablecloth used.
5. The committee will clean the kitchen.
6. **ALL charges must be paid in advance.**

### **The Pastor and the Wedding Reception**

Please note that the Pastor will not consider themselves invited to a wedding reception unless a formal invitation is given ahead of time as with other guests. The same applies to invitations for the rehearsal dinner.

It is certainly not necessary to include the Pastor, but if you want the Pastor included, please invite them ahead of time, rather than at the last minute or at the rehearsal. If you are inviting the Pastor and would like them to offer a prayer before the meal, please ask ahead of time.

## The Wedding Service

### **Bulletins**

To help the congregation follow along with what’s happening in the wedding service, it is a good idea to have a bulletin with an order of service. In addition to its practical usage, this is also often a good keepsake from the wedding!

You may print your own bulletins, or the church is able to provide them for a small cost. If you are having them printed elsewhere, please be sure to go over them and proofread the service order with the Pastor before ordering them.

If you would like to have them printed at church, the church secretary must have all the information ready for set up and proofing **at least two weeks prior to the ceremony**. Costs for printing bulletins at church must be paid in advance and are as follows:

- Setup Fee: \$20
- Single-sided Black & White: \$0.15
- Double-sided Black & White: \$0.25
- Single-sided Color: \$0.25
- Double-sided Color: \$0.35

### **Music**

As it is at any worship service, music is often an important part of a wedding service. Selecting music can often be one of the more challenging elements of planning a wedding—especially if there is a “favorite song” that ends up not being appropriate for the wedding service. Here are two hints to keep in mind:

First, because the wedding service is a worship service, all of its elements should help us keep this central focus. In a Christian wedding, we gather in the presence of God to witness and celebrate the marriage vows that will be made, and to give thanks for God’s faithfulness in the lives of the couple. Music in the service should point to this goal.

Second, while the reception is a continuation of the celebration that began in the wedding service, the focus and atmosphere can be quite different. Music and other elements of the celebration that would not fit into a wedding service may be perfectly appropriate at the reception.

So, when selecting music for the wedding service, ask some questions:

- Do the words of this song reflect praise to God?
- Is it based on or does it reflect a scriptural theme?
- Is it appropriate for a regular worship service?
- What does it say about love and marriage?
- What does it say about God?
- For congregational songs & hymns, is it singable?

If, after considering those questions, the music in question seems appropriate to you for the wedding service, then the lyrics need to be provided to the Pastor to review, and we can discuss how it might fit into the shape of the service, or whether it might be a better fit for the reception.

Live music is always preferable to a recording, but in some cases, it may be possible to play music from a recording. If it is for congregational singing, live music should always be used. In all cases, the Pastor must approve all musical selections prior to the rehearsal.

A wedding is a service of worship in which the guests are invited to be participants, not merely spectators. Therefore, you are encouraged to incorporate at least one or two congregational hymns into your wedding. This is far from a comprehensive list, but here are some hymns found in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (green hymnal) that are particularly appropriate for a wedding:

- |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| #241 We Praise You, O God             | #481 Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us   |
| #287 O Perfect Love                   | #514 O Savior, Precious Savior        |
| #289 Heavenly Father, Hear Our Prayer | #520 Give to Our God Immortal Praise  |
| #315 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling | #534 Now Thank We All Our God         |
| #356 O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts    | #535 Holy God, We Praise Your Name    |
| #364 Son of God, Eternal Savior       | #543 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty |
| #451 The Lord's My Shepherd           | #551 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee     |
| #456 The King of Love My Shepherd Is  | #557 Let All Things Now Living        |
| #474 Children of the Heavenly Father  | I Was There to Hear Your Boring Cry   |

In addition to these and other hymns, there are many excellent Christian wedding songs available that you could use. However, please keep in mind that worship is not a musical event for a couple's favorite secular songs; it is worship, and songs should be chosen accordingly. Going over music selections will be part of the pre-marital planning process with the Pastor.

**Musicians**

The organist, pianist, instrumentalists, or soloists at your wedding are entirely of your choice. If you do not have an organist, pianist, or special music person in mind, the Pastor can assist you in finding someone, but **you are responsible for contacting musicians**. Persons who are asked to provide special music should have the skill and talent to perform the music well.

Sandra Schucknecht is the organist for St. Peter Lutheran Church, and is often able to play for weddings if contacted early enough (at least three months ahead of time). Her phone number is (641) 816-4366. You are responsible for working out appropriate honorarium payments to musicians.

### **Scripture Readings**

For your wedding, you should select 2-3 passages from the Bible that you would like to have as part of your wedding service. These readings will help shape the sermon, and we will discuss them as part of pre-marital planning. The passages may be read by the Pastor, or by another person of your choosing. In general, our congregation uses the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible for public reading.

Readings may be read by the Pastor, or asking people to read can be a great way to involve others in your wedding. Here are some ideas for readings appropriate to a wedding, although this is by no means an exhaustive list and you are certainly not limited to the passages listed here:

#### **Old Testament Texts**

Genesis 1:26-31

Genesis 2:7-9, 15-25

Isaiah 63:7-9

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Song of Solomon 2:10-13

#### **Psalms**

Psalms 33:1-5, 20-22

Psalms 95:1-7

Psalms 100

Psalms 127

Psalms 128

Psalms 150

#### **Epistle Texts**

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18

Romans 15:5-6

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Philippians 4:4-7

Ephesians 5: 21-23

Colossians 3:12-17

1 John 4:7-12

#### **Gospel Texts**

Matthew 19:4-6

Matthew 22:35-40

Mark 10:6-9

John 2:1-11

John 15:9-12

### **Typical Wedding Order of Service**

At St. Peter Church, we want you to have a beautiful and meaningful wedding day to start your married life together. We want to help you plan a wedding consistent with the Christian understanding of marriage, which begins with a wedding ceremony with Christ at the center. Just as a strong marriage must hold Christ at the center, so too will the Christian worship service.

While there is certainly lots of room to customize this service and make it yours, the following order serves as a framework upon which to build your wedding service. The items in parenthesis are optional.

Prelude  
(Special Music/Hymn)  
Processional  
(Seating of the family...Grandparents, Parents etc..)  
(Wedding party and Bride Processional)  
Greeting and Prayer  
Declaration of Intent  
(Address the families and/or the whole assembly)  
Prayer of the Day  
Scripture Readings  
(Special music/hymn/solo)  
Sermon  
(Hymn, Special Music or other worship music)  
Exchange of Vows  
Exchange of Rings  
(Unity Symbol: candle, sand, etc...)  
(Special music/Solo)  
Announcement of Marriage  
Marriage Blessing and Prayer  
(Holy Communion\*\*)  
Lord's Prayer  
Benediction  
(Introduction of Couple & Kiss)  
Recessional

\* The celebration of Holy Communion is most appropriate in a wedding. One challenge, however, might be when family or guests are present from other religious traditions. While we as ELCA Lutherans at St. Peter celebrate "open table" communion welcoming to the Lord's Table all who desire to receive the sacrament, people of certain other traditions may hold beliefs precluding their participation, which should be considered when planning the service.

## Wedding Vows

The heart of the wedding service is the vows you and your spouse will make to each other in the presence of God and the congregation as witnesses. In many ways, these promises are the most important words you will ever say to each other. For this reason, it is a good idea to take some time to think about what you are saying in those words.

Listed below are several options you can choose from. While each of them has their own “flavor,” they all share the common themes of faithfulness and fidelity for a lifetime. For mutuality in the marriage, it is important that both partners make the same promises to each other—no surprises. If you do want to write your own vows or combine elements from these options, that needs to be discussed with the Pastor during pre-marital work and finalized before the last planning meeting.

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.
2. I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God’s holy ordinance; and to that I promise my faithfulness.
3. I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/ husband. I will be faithful to you and honest with you; I will respect, trust, help and care for you; I will share my life with you: I will forgive you as we have been forgiven; and I will try with you to better understand ourselves, the world, and God; through the best and worst of what is to come as long as we live.
4. I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I promise before God and these witnesses to be your faithful husband/wife, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, to forgive and strengthen you, and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we both shall live.
5. \_\_\_\_\_, I take you to be my wife/husband from this time onward, to join with you and to share all that is to come, to give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, and in all circumstances of our life together to be loyal to you with my whole life and with all my being.
6. I love you, \_\_\_\_\_, as I love no other. All that I am I share with you. I take you to be my wife/husband through joy and sorrow, through sickness and health, through poverty and plenty, now and forever.

7. I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love and honor you all the days of my life.
  
8. \_\_\_\_\_, I give myself to you to serve you as your husband/wife, to join with you and to share all that is to come. To give and to receive, to speak and to listen, to inspire and to respond, to forgive as we have been forgiven, so that together we might serve both God and neighbor, until our Lord comes to take us home.

## Photos and Video

### **Posed Wedding Photos**

We want you to capture all the memories possible on your special day! Photography is welcome before and after the service. If you are taking photos in the sanctuary ahead of time, plan to be done by about an hour before the service when guests will likely begin arriving. The courtyard between the fellowship hall and the sanctuary is also a nice place for couple or family photos.

If the Pastor is to be included in any pictures, please discuss this with them ahead of time.

### **Ceremony Photos & Video**

During the service, photos and video should not distract from our highest priority, which is worshiping God. That means no flash photography during the service, and while it may be helpful for a photographer to discreetly move around and change angles, they are not permitted to go up into the chancel area behind the Pastor during the service.

Video cameras may be placed discreetly to the side of the sanctuary, the back, or in the balcony where they will not obstruct the view of the congregation.

Please introduce your photographer to the Pastor before the service so any questions can be answered and policies clarified.

## Wedding License

Iowa state law requires couples to secure a license to marry. No wedding will be celebrated unless a Marriage License has been legally obtained. **Bring your Marriage License with you to the wedding rehearsal.**

You may apply for a license at the office of any County Clerk in the state. The couple intending to marry and a witness (who is acquainted with the couple and is 18 or older) must come into the office and fill out the application. The applicants and witness must have a photo ID. There is a \$35 fee for the license. **Application for the Marriage License must be made at least one week prior to the wedding date!**

The marriage license is valid for six months. The Certificate of Marriage will be signed immediately after the wedding service. Following the wedding, the Pastor will be responsible for returning the completed certificate to the Recorder's Office, which will then mail certified copies to the couple.

## **Other General Policies**

### **Alcohol**

With the exception of the wine used in Holy Communion, **no alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs are permitted in the church building or on the church property.** If in the judgment of the Pastor, a member of the wedding party is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the wedding will not begin until that person is sober or leaves the wedding. To have the best experience possible and avoid any embarrassment, please inform your wedding party of this policy.

Violation of this policy may result in cancellation of the wedding ceremony. The Pastor reserves the right to halt the wedding ceremony if a member of the wedding party or a guest is behaving in an inappropriate manner.

### **Language and Attire**

Please remember this is a Christian Church and a place of worship. All language and messages conveyed by clothing should be appropriate for a church setting.

### **Pastor**

The called (or interim) Pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church will officiate at all weddings at St. Peter. Other Pastors or religious leaders whom you wish to participate or officiate in the service must be approved by the currently called Pastor at St. Peter, who will extend the invitation to the guest clergy. Any invitation to another Pastor should be issued by the Pastor of St. Peter.

### **Smoking**

Our building and grounds are smoke free. If you or someone in the wedding party wants to smoke, please do so in your vehicle.

## **Deposit & Fees**

### **Deposit**

There is a **\$250 deposit** required at the time the church is reserved.

Of that deposit, \$200 of that will be refunded following the wedding provided there is no damage, no need for unusual clean-up by the custodian, or any major violations of the wedding policies and guidelines.

The remaining \$50 of the deposit is an administrative fee including pre-marital materials.

### **Other Costs & Fees:**

- **Musician:** Honorariums to be determined with organist, pianist, soloist, etc. (Payable directly to musician(s))
- **Custodian:** \$50 is required for wedding only. If you are also having your rehearsal dinner or reception at the church, there will be an additional \$100 charge for use of the fellowship hall.
- **Marriage License:** Currently \$35, payable when the license is obtained. See Wedding License on page 16
- **Use of Building for Wedding:** \$150\*\* (Payable to St. Peter)
- **Pastor:** \$200\*\* (Payable to Pastor)

*\*\*There are no costs or fees required for the use of the church building or the Pastor's services for members of the congregation, though donations and gifts are certainly acceptable and appreciated!*

- **Reception** (if hosted by St. Peter's WELCA): See *Receptions at St. Peter* on page 9.
- **Rehearsal Dinner** (if hosted by St. Peter's WELCA): See *Rehearsal Dinners at St. Peter* on page 8.

## **Off-Site Weddings**

Holding the wedding ceremony in a different location is certainly possible, and the Pastor may still be able to officiate, but there are a number of additional items to consider.

Regardless of the location, a wedding is still a worship service. As an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Pastor's primary role is as worship leader, not solely as wedding officiant. It would not, therefore, be appropriate for the called Pastor of the church to lead a "non-religious" wedding ceremony.

All weddings arranged through the church should also include pre-marital counseling.

### **Additional Fees for Offsite Weddings**

- **Pastor:** For member weddings, the honorarium for the pastor should not be less than \$100. \$200 remains the minimum amount for non-members.
- **Travel:** Travel shall be reimbursed at the current IRS business rate, calculated from Greene. This includes both the rehearsal (if applicable) and the ceremony.
  - If overnight travel is required, the couple will provide a hotel room for the night before and the night of the wedding.
  - If air travel is required, the couple will provide for the cost of two air travel tickets (Pastor and guest).
- **Musicians:** Travel arrangements and costs with church musicians shall be arranged directly with those involved.

## **Final Words**

in the midst of the stress and busy-ness and cultural and family expectations that goes along with planning and celebrating a wedding, remember that the wedding is not the point. As wonderful of a day as we hope it will be, your wedding is only the beginning of what we pray will be the start of a life of mutual joy found in living for each other and for the sake of your Lord.

Please jot down any questions you have about anything in this planning packet and bring it to the pre-marital planning conversations with the Pastor. We want your wedding day to be a memorable day filled with joyful memories for you, your family, and your guests. Thank you for including our congregation in your wedding celebration.

**May God bless you as you prepare for your wedding and marriage!**

**Notes & Questions to Discuss:**

## Wedding Service Information

Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Guests \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### WEDDING PARTY

Maid/Matron of Honor: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Man: \_\_\_\_\_

Bridesmaid: \_\_\_\_\_

Groomsman: \_\_\_\_\_

Flower Girl: \_\_\_\_\_

Ring Bearer: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Ushers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Organist/Pianist: \_\_\_\_\_

Soloist(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Song(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Solo? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Solo? \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture Lessons: \_\_\_\_\_

Reader(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Communion: Y N

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## Pre-Marital Information

### BRIDE

Bride's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ OK to Text? Y N

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ City & State: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_

Member of St. Peter? Y N If not, are you interested in joining? Y N

Mother of Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ Still living? Y N

Father of Bride: \_\_\_\_\_ Still living? Y N

If your parents are both living, are they currently married to each other? Y N

Current Church: \_\_\_\_\_ City & State: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you baptized? Y N

Briefly describe your current level of involvement in your church, if any?

Have you been married before? Y N  
(If yes, please outline the basic details.)

What is the best way and time to contact you?

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## GROOM

Groom's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ OK to Text? Y N

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ City & State: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_

Member of St. Peter? Y N If not, are you interested in joining? Y N

Mother of Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ Still living? Y N

Father of Groom: \_\_\_\_\_ Still living? Y N

If your parents are both living, are they currently married to each other? Y N

Current Church: \_\_\_\_\_ City & State: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you baptized? Y N

Briefly describe your current level of involvement in your church, if any?

Have you been married before? Y N

(If yes, please outline the basic details.)

What is the best way and time to contact you?

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# Couple's Covenant for Marriage Preparation

St. Peter Lutheran Church, Greene, Iowa

We are grateful to God for bringing us this far in our relationship—and we desire for God to take us even further down the path toward wholeness and joy in our marriage. We want to do everything we can to build a strong and healthy marriage!

By signing our names below, we commit ourselves to:

Be open and honest with the Pastor and each other as we together work to grow and strengthen our relationship.

Participate fully in the pre-marital counseling inventory and discussion.

Understand our wedding ceremony as taking place within the context of a Christian worship service and plan and act accordingly.

Follow the policies of St. Peter Lutheran Church as outlined in the wedding planning packet.

Encourage our family, friends, and all involved in our wedding to respect the property and policies of St. Peter Lutheran Church.

Be open to growing in our understanding of and relationship to God and the Church.

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Signature

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Printed Name

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Date