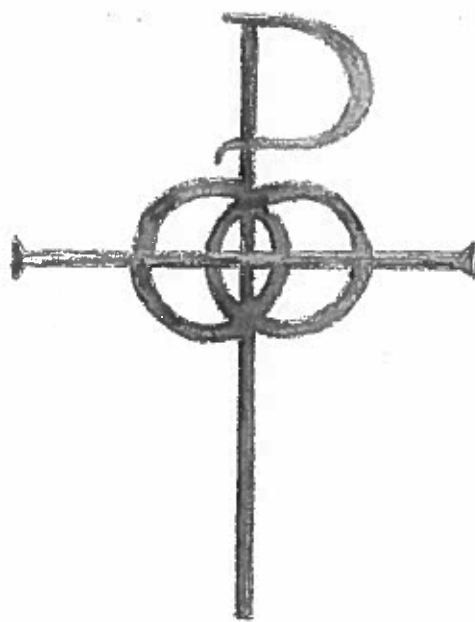
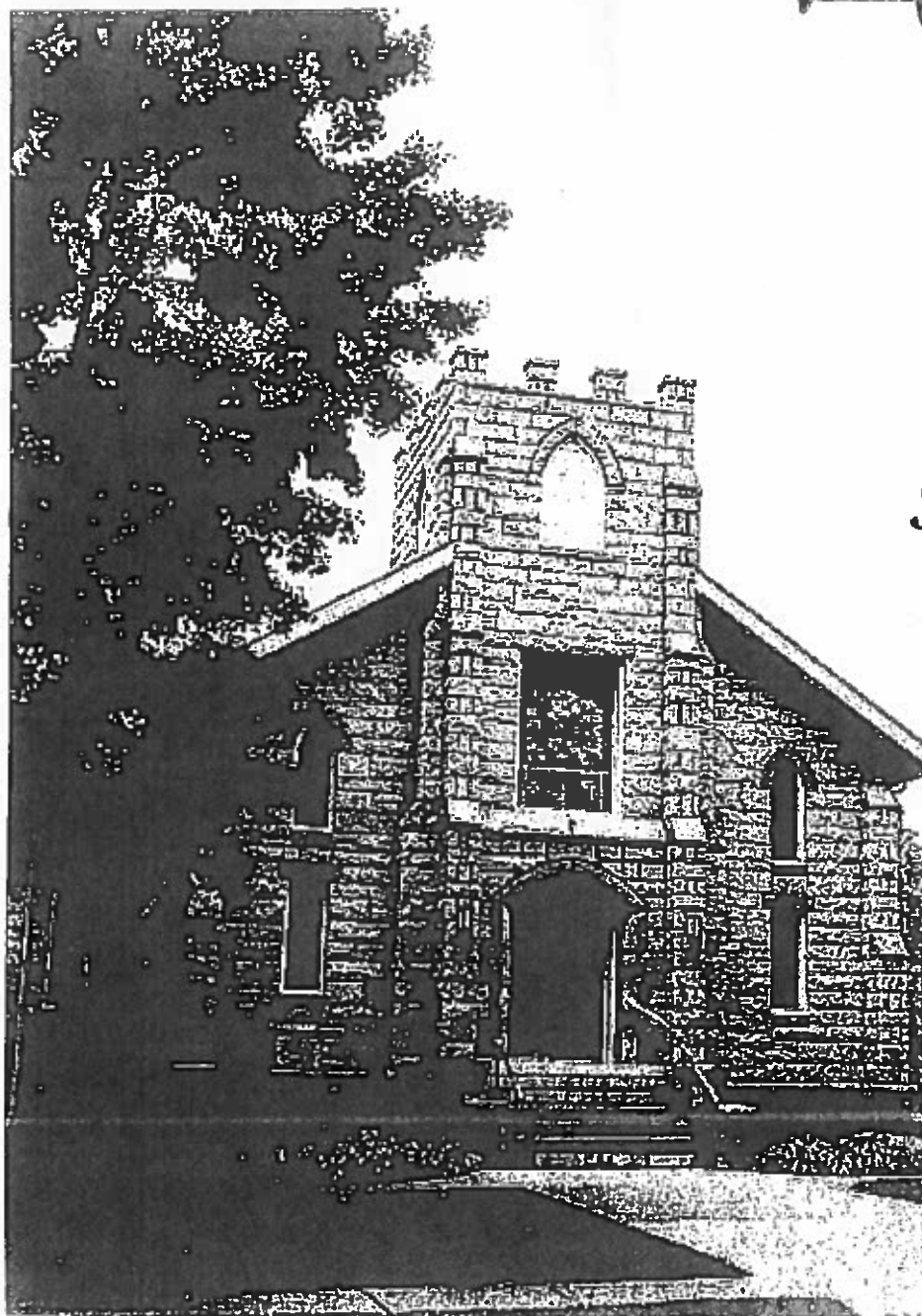




Wedding Handbook

Wittenberg Lutheran Church

*114 West Bank Street • Granite Quarry, NC 28072
704-279-4505 • wittenberglc.org*

**And now these three remain: Faith, Hope, and Love.
But the greatest of these is Love. 1 Corinthians 13:13**

INTRODUCTION

The people of Wittenberg wish you happiness and God's blessing on your wedding day. We hope that your marriage will always be a sign of God's grace and presence to you and to others. In a Christian wedding, the couple invites their guests to join them in asking God's blessing on their marriage. This unique worship experience is an opportunity to seek God's blessings, give thanks for God's goodness, and celebrate the loving companionship of friends and family who are present.

We believe that making a life decision as important as entering into marriage deserves the best and most careful preparation possible. In the excitement of planning a church wedding, questions are sure to arise. To assist those desiring to be married at Wittenberg, we have developed the following guidelines, which concur with practices of the Church, the rubrics of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship, the laws of the state, and the policies of this parish. Please consider them carefully; we want your wedding to be planned as smoothly as possible, and your wedding ceremony to be a meaningful and memorable occasion; one that will be remembered with favor.

PLANNING THE CEREMONY

The pastor at Wittenberg is the Officiant at all marriage ceremonies. It is important to remember that, since a wedding involves the people of God gathered in worship, the pastor is the final authority in its implementation. The pastor will always be open to your ideas and suggestions and will work with you to make sure that your wedding will suit your individual needs and tastes, while maintains a sense of worship and praise. Guest pastors are welcome to participate should the couple desire another clergy to assist in the ceremony. The couple should discuss this with the pastor first and get consent for another clergy to assist the pastor of Wittenberg. It is customary that the host (*Wittenberg*) pastor issue an invitation to the guest clergy.

You are encouraged to be personally involved in the selection of music for your wedding. Our organist has years of experience in worship design and will be fully available to provide advice, counsel, and consent when needed. While individual needs and tastes vary, we want to be aware of the worshipful nature of the wedding service and strive to maintain our focus on God and God's promises.

There are many other items that need to be discussed, including flowers, photographers, videographers, rehearsals, candles, facility usage, receptions, and fees. You will find information outlined to address those items in this handbook. The pastor will be more than happy to provide guidance in any way possible to assist further questions about those items.

PLANNING THE MARRIAGE

Planning for your wedding should never distract from planning for your marriage; cultivating and nurturing the love that will carry you through thick and thin in the years to come. It begins with God's blessing through His Church and is lived out in a unique relationship of love, trust, faith, and endurance. Once the date has been confirmed, the pastor will issue a copy of Wittenberg's Wedding Handbook to the couple at the initial meeting. At this meeting information will be gathered concerning the wedding and the pastor will arrange dates for two to three sessions for counseling. Therefore, there must be time allotted between the initial meeting with the pastor and the wedding date for all couples to participate in premarital counseling. Through the counseling process, you will be challenged to look carefully at yourselves, individually, and as a couple.

A marriage license from the state of North Carolina is prerequisite to the wedding ceremony. The couple must fully comply with all provisions of state law and secure a marriage license; which can be obtained within thirty days before the wedding from the Register of Deeds office in any county in North Carolina. The license is good for sixty days. The marriage license must be given to the officiating pastor at the rehearsal. The marriage license will be mailed to the County Clerk's office following the ceremony.

MUSIC

Music for the wedding service should be planned in consultation with the organist. Since the marriage service is an act of worship, the music used during, before, or following the ceremony should embody the same high standards aspired to in other services of worship in the Lutheran Church. In accordance with the Evangelical Lutheran Book of Worship manual on the Liturgy *"whenever music is employed in the service and by whatever instruments or voices, it should be of high quality and not cloud the mood of the service with triteness or sentimentality. It should moreover be within the ability of the performers at hand to play or sing with assurance."* All music selected must be sacred in nature as well as glorify God. The so-called "traditional wedding march" by Wagner (*Bridal Chorus*) is not to be used; it is a theater piece that has nothing to do with the sacred worship service and is contrary to the values and theology of marriage. Secular music or recorded secular music is not permitted in the church sanctuary. All music selected is subject to the approval of the pastor and organist. They will gladly advise and help you plan your service with music that is beautiful and appropriate.

It is our policy that the organist at Wittenberg plays for all weddings when organ music is desired in the sanctuary. The church organist should be contacted well in advance of the wedding to ensure his or her availability for the rehearsal and the wedding. Guest organists may be used; however first-time users of the Wittenberg organ must request a conference with the church organist for orientation.

Other musicians may be a part of the ceremony if you wish. Soloists and instrumentalists are all appropriate for a beautiful wedding. Any texts that are sung must be from the Holy Bible, the Evangelical Lutheran Worship, the hymnals of the Lutheran Church, or be theologically consistent with them. Not all "wedding songs" fit this directive. Selections require great sensitivity and discernment and therefore, must be approved in advance by the pastor and choir director. Soloists and instrumentalists should be dressed appropriately in the house of worship and may also use a choir robe if they so choose.

PHOTOGRAPY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

Wittenberg is beautiful as a setting for photography and wedding couples naturally like to have pictures of their special occasion. It is imperative that the following policies be communicated to your photographer before engaging his or her services.

- **Flash photography during the wedding service is forbidden.** Once the service begins, the only photographs allowed to be taken in the sanctuary *(by either professional or amateur photographers)* are those that can be made silently and without flash from the rear or balcony. This includes but is not limited to auxiliary lighting, videos, cell phones, and other recording equipment.
- The photographer *(or other guests with cameras, cell phones, etc.)* may not step into the chancel, center aisle, or either aisle during the ceremony. Climbing on pews, moving furniture, etc. at any time is not allowed.
- Posed pictures in the sanctuary may be taken prior to the wedding or reenacted afterward. However, the sanctuary needs to be cleared one hour prior to the wedding service of photographers and the wedding party in order for the musicians and Pastor to get prepared for the service to begin.
- Videotaping is allowed, provided the camera is stationary with no extra lighting, and placed so that its use is not distracting. Video recordings may be taken only from the balcony, or from a pre-arranged position at the side. The video camera must remain stationary for the duration of the service.
- Arrangements for all photography including videography must be discussed with the pastor before the rehearsal.
- Photographers, videographers and their assistants must wear appropriate professional attire for a wedding ceremony.
- Photographers, videographers and their assistants must agree to not inhibit the job of the Wedding Director, Pastor, Organist or Wedding Assistants, particularly in regards to the timing and sacredness of the ceremony.
- A photographer/videographer agreement must be signed, dated, and returned to the pastor two weeks prior to the wedding date. **It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform the photographer/videographer of these regulations as well as securing signatures that are necessary to complete the agreement form.** *(Please note that the photographer's/videographer's privileges will be revoked if the guidelines are not followed. Failure to sign the form will also result in privileges being revoked.)*
- It is the bride and groom's responsibility to inform the photographer, videographer, family, and friends of the no-flash policy.

Wittenberg Evangelical Lutheran Church, Inc.

Post Office Box 345 Granite Quarry, North Carolina 28072 Telephone 704-279-4505

PHOTOGRAPHER / VIDEOGRAPHER AGREEMENT

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform and provide a copy of the regulations for photographers and videographers. This form is to be personally signed by the photographer/videographer that will be providing photography and/or video recording services for the wedding couple. Additional employees assisting those of the responsible signatures below must be informed of these policies as well.

I have read and agree to follow the guidelines of the wedding policy for photographs / video recordings at Wittenberg Lutheran Church.

Name of Photographer: _____

Photography Business Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Videographer: _____

Video Business Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

****This form must be completed and returned to the pastor two weeks prior to the wedding date.***

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Our church sanctuary is a sacred place of dignity and beauty. The guiding principle followed in establishing rules for flowers and decorations is that the church sanctuary is designed for all church services including weddings. Therefore, elaborate decorations are not necessary. Due to the sacred nature of the altar, any decorations should be arranged in such a way that the attention is directed toward the altar, not away from it. The following policies are given to preserve and safeguard the sanctuary furnishings.

- Altar, pulpit, and lectern paraments (*cloths*) are required to be the color of the liturgical season during which the wedding occurs. This also includes any other chancel appointments in use for the particular season or day of the church year may not be changed for the wedding. The pastor will be able to tell you the color of the paraments for the date of your wedding.
- Flowers and candles are recommended to be limited to the normal two altar vases and two altar candles placed on the altar. All decorations should be arranged to direct attention toward the altar. Care should be taken to arrange decorations so that guests may have a clear view of the ceremony and altar. Floral arrangements are not to be placed on the piano or organ.
- Bows and/or sprays of greenery may be used on the pews. However, no tacks, pins, nails, staples, glue, or other marring materials are to be used to fasten decorations on the pews. Nothing may be attached permanently to any pews or windows. Some suggested materials that can be used are command strips and/or ribbons.
- Additional flowers, candelabras, or unity candles are unnecessary but optional. ***Extreme caution is urged in the use of candles.*** It is mandatory that some kind of protective covering (*plastic*) be placed under all additional candles to protect the carpet. You must arrange through your florist for the aforementioned items. All additional candles and decorations must be discussed with the pastor early in the planning process.
- If window decorations are used, any candles must be contained within glass. The pastor must be informed of these intentions as well as the facilities manager for approval.
- A kneeling bench is available for use and there is a white covering to use for weddings.
- Christmas decorations cannot be disturbed, moved, or changed without special permission from the pastor and altar guild.
- Please inform the church office and pastor as to your intentions regarding leaving altar flowers for the Sunday morning worship service.
- Rice, confetti, or glitter is not permitted inside or outside of Wittenberg. Nothing may be thrown inside the church sanctuary or building. Bubbles are only to be used outdoors.

- Reception – As they are applicable, the same rules that are specified for the wedding ceremony also apply to the reception if held in Wittenberg's fellowship hall.
- Arrangements must be made to remove all decorations from the building immediately after the wedding and/or after post-wedding photographs are completed.
- Persons arranging for the use of facilities will be held responsible and billed accordingly for damage done to furniture, building, or premises.
- It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to inform florists and those decorating of the regulations outlined above.

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS

- Attire sets the atmosphere. Wedding attire for participants should always be in good taste. Two basic factors should be observed: (a) the marriage is a worship service (b) the church is a house of worship. The attire should enhance the meaning of the service and not detract from it.
- No animals or pets are allowed in the sanctuary or church building prior to the wedding, during the wedding ceremony, and afterward. Only service dogs can enter the building.
- The use of alcohol, in any form, is not permitted in the church building or on the grounds of the church, with the exception of the celebration of Holy Communion. Under no circumstances may any member of the wedding party come to the rehearsal or wedding under the influence of alcohol or drugs. **Intoxicated individuals will be dismissed and not be permitted to participate in the wedding service.**
- Smoking is not permitted inside the building of Wittenberg Lutheran Church.
- For security reasons, personal items and valuables should be entrusted to a designated person or locked and out of sight in your personal vehicle before the ceremony begins.
- A friend or family member should be designated to take care of any gifts brought to the church. Wittenberg cannot be responsible for the loss or theft of any gifts, personal items, or clothing.
- Most couples desire to have a printed program for their wedding ceremony. There are many printing companies in the area that can provide this service for you. Wittenberg does not provide nor print wedding programs. However, the pastor and organist can assist you by providing the order of the music selections as well as the order of the wedding service. It would be helpful to include information that flash photography (*cell phones included*) is not permitted by anyone during the service in your program.

- A facilities manager will need to be present on the day of the wedding. A facilities manager will open the church for the bridal party, know who to contact if the air/heat is not working properly, check classrooms and restrooms for items left by the bridal party, oversee that food and drinks are not brought into the sanctuary by the bridal party or wedding guests, see that lights are turned off, see that all candles are extinguished (*including the eternal flame*), and make sure that all doors are secure once everyone has left the building.
- A facilities manager must be a current member of Wittenberg, understand the policies within the wedding handbook, and be willing to assist in following through with the guidelines as listed within the wedding handbook. A facilities manager will be assigned from a pool/list of church volunteers for the wedding and is to be compensated for their services. A facilities manager must remain on the premises throughout the duration of the wedding.

FEES AND HONORARIA

The following fees recognize our pastoral and non-pastoral staff for their personal and professional services.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| • Pastor | sets their own fees (<i>Includes counseling services prior to wedding as suggested by the Synod guidelines</i>) |
| • Organist | sets their own fees |
| • Soloist | sets their own fees |
| • Wedding Director | sets their own fees |
| • Sound Operator | \$50 or honoraria |
| • Facilities Manager | \$100 |
| • Custodial Staff | \$100 (<i>if needed after the wedding</i>) |

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WEDDING AGREEMENT FORM

By my signature, I have read and agree to the wedding guidelines and regulations for Wittenberg Lutheran Church. I understand that all fees must be paid according to schedule before the wedding ceremony.

Bride's Signature

Date

Groom's Signature

Date

Pastor's Signature

Date

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MARRIAGE REQUEST FORM

Bride's full name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Home Congregation: _____

Parents of the Bride: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Groom's full name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Home Congregation: _____

Parents of the Groom: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Dinner in Fellowship Hall: _____ Yes _____ No

Reception Location: _____

Guest Pastor (if any): _____

Guest Pastor's church (affiliation and congregation): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(person filling out form)