

Weddings
at Tree of Life Lutheran Church
in Conroe, Texas

The Wedding Policy

The marriage ceremony is one of the most sacred rites pastors perform under the ordination and authority of the church. It is a service of worship and requires thorough preparation, both in the spiritual sense and in the temporal sense. It is a joyous occasion overflowing with joy, and those who celebrate it rejoice in the gifts of God: life, health, strength, sexuality, the family; all that God declared from the beginning to be "very good." The pastor and staff of Tree of Life wish to extend every possible assistance to you toward the end that your wedding will be a memorable and happy experience.

Careful judgment and study have gone into the preparation of the church's wedding policies and regulations. These policies have been reviewed and approved by the Council, Pastor, and Director of Worship and Music. Therefore, please read the material carefully.

Wedding Date Requests should be made at least 60 days in advance. An Event Coordinator from Tree of Life will be present at such functions to answer questions and offer assistance.

The use of anything in the church building, other than the sanctuary, must be approved prior to the wedding. Approval is needed before moving any furnishings. All persons using the facilities are liable for any damage to church property.

DATE AND TIME OF WEDDING:

Weddings may not be scheduled when in conflict with facility use, church ministry events, during Holy Week, on Sunday mornings, or on church holidays observed by Tree of Life Lutheran Church.

Saturday weddings should be scheduled to begin no later than 7:00 pm.

MAKING THE RESERVATION:

A tentative reservation for wedding and rehearsal dates can be made by submitting a Wedding Date Request form. The Tree of Life pastor and/or event coordinator will contact the bride and groom to finalize the date and time. The bride and groom will then submit the more detailed Wedding Plans form.

PASTOR:

The presiding pastor will perform a wedding only after a conference with the bride and groom. This conference is to be held at least 45 days before the wedding. Pre-marital meetings are expected and required. Christian marriage is more than a public ceremony. Generally, at least three sessions led by the pastor are needed to properly cover many of the vital issues in marriage and the planning of the service.

EVENT COORDINATOR:

The Event Coordinator will work with the bride and groom and the pastor to coordinate details of the wedding ceremony and the use of the church facilities. The Event Coordinator will ensure that the projection slides and Bulletin/Order of Worship are ready for the rehearsal and wedding and will work with the Worship Team to secure people to handle production (livestream, slides, sound, lights) for the service people to serve as ushers/altar guild if Holy Communion is to be a part of the ceremony. It is the Event Coordinator's responsibility to supervise the use and care of church property; the Event Coordinator will attend the rehearsal (arriving 30 minutes early) and the wedding (arriving two hours early) and will close the facility, ensuring that the facility is ready for worship and Sunday School. The Event Coordinator will make sure that the marriage license is signed and will mail the original for recording.

FACILITIES AND COSTS:

Church facilities available for use in the wedding and the reception are the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, and the kitchen. If needed, the Music Room or classrooms may be used for preparing for the ceremony. All usage fees for the use of the church facilities must be paid at least 30 days in advance of the wedding date. Any honorariums/payments for the pastor, event coordinator, organist/pianist, etc. are paid directly to the individuals on the day of the event. (The event coordinator will provide a list of names in advance.)

RECEPTION:

All evening receptions must be over by 10:00 pm. It is the Event Coordinator's responsibility to supervise the use and care of church property. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to set up tables and chairs and any décor, and to clean up the church facilities afterward. The church will provide garbage bags, cleaning supplies, and use of dishes (NOT disposable plates, utensils, napkins or cups), serving utensils, punch bowl, and pots/pans.

All church facilities and items must be left in the condition in which found. If the Fellowship Hall and/kitchen are used:

- all tables and chairs should be wiped with a damp cloth and returned to their original position;

- the stove and countertops must be thoroughly cleaned;
- All dishes, pots and pans, and utensils must be washed, dried, and put in their proper places;
- the hard floors should be swept (and mopped, if needed) and the carpeted areas should be vacuumed; and
- all trash is to be taken to the dumpster.

Failure to clean up after the reception may result in the loss of some or part of the damage deposit.

In the event a caterer is used, the church provides facilities only, including a limited number of tables and chairs. Everything else necessary for a complete reception must be provided by the caterer.

Champagne and/or wine may be served at the reception with Council approval at least one month in advance.

MUSIC:

The Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship before God. The music that accompanies the ceremony should direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage, and special care should be taken to make sure that it is suitable. All music used must be reviewed and approved by the Pastor and/or Director of Worship and Music.

The purpose of the music in a wedding ceremony, like the ceremony itself, is to glorify God. Music must be sacred in nature, in good taste, be theologically sound, and suitable for a Christian worship service. The Pastor and/or Director of Worship and Music will assist you in your selection.

A Tree of Life organist/pianist should be used at weddings in which the organ or piano is played unless other arrangements are made with the Director of Worship and Music in advance. Use of other instruments, soloists, or musicians should be made known to the Director of Worship and Music.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY:

The use of photographs during the service should be restricted. Photographs with a flash should not be taken during the service once the bride has entered the sanctuary. Exposures without flash may be taken from the rear of the church or from side aisles using utmost discretion. Unmanned video cameras will be allowed near the altar area during the ceremony at the discretion of the pastor.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WEDDING PARTY:

1. The church will not be responsible or liable for loss, theft, or damage to any items belonging to a member of the wedding party. This includes dresses for the wedding, suits or tuxedos, purses, money, wraps, vehicles, etc. It is strongly suggested that valuables not be left unattended.
2. Smoking is not allowed in the church facilities.
3. No food or drink is allowed in the Sanctuary.
4. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to set up tables and chairs and any décor, and to clean up the church facilities afterward. **All church facilities must be left in the condition in which found.** If the Fellowship Hall and/kitchen are used:
 - all tables and chairs should be wiped with a damp cloth and returned to their original position;
 - the stove and countertops must be thoroughly cleaned;
 - All dishes, pots and pans, and utensils must be washed, dried, and put in their proper places;
 - the hard floors should be swept (and mopped, if needed) and the carpeted areas should be vacuumed; and
 - all trash is to be taken to the dumpster.
5. Children must be under constant adult supervision. At no time are children permitted to be alone in any room of the building or on the church grounds (including the playground area).

Failure to comply with any of these regulations may result in forfeit of the damage deposit. The pastor(s) and/or church officials maintain the right to correct any violation of these regulations.

WEDDING FEE SCHEDULE

Fees are payable (by cash or check) due 30 days prior to the event date. Fees are fully refundable due to cancellation at least 14 days prior to the event date.

Damage Deposit: \$350

Fully refundable within 14 days following the wedding, assuming no damages.
Partially refundable if damages or cleaning required.

Use of Sanctuary: \$800

Includes use of the sanctuary for Wedding Rehearsal and Wedding.

Use of Fellowship Hall and Kitchen: \$400

Includes the use of the Fellowship Hall for Wedding Reception

ADDITIONAL FEES

Honorariums are paid directly to the individuals on the day of the wedding. (A list of names will be provided ahead of time by the Event Coordinator.)

- **Pastor:** The honorarium is discretionary, but generally begins at **\$300** for weddings held at Tree of Life.
(If the wedding is to be held at another location, the honorarium generally begins at **\$500** and may also include travel costs.)
- **Event Coordinator:** The honorarium is discretionary, but generally begins at **\$200**.
- **Livestream, Slides, Sound and Lights:** The honorarium is discretionary, but generally begins at **\$200 each**.
- **Organist/Pianist, Soloist (if provided by Tree of Life):** The honorarium is discretionary, but generally begins at **\$200 each**.
- **Other Musician (if provided by Tree of Life):** *Discuss with Pastor and/or Director of Worship and Music*
- **Child Care (if provided by Tree of Life):** Nursery coverage for children up to age four may be available during the event at a per-hour charge payable directly to the Nursery staff. *Discuss with the Event Coordinator and Nursery staff.*