

Information on weddings at Good Shepherd



Thank you for researching Good Shepherd Para Vista concerning your wedding plans. We would be honoured to serve in one of the most meaning-filled moments of your life.

An important process

You have probably already discovered that a marriage takes some planning and preparation. Your wedding doesn't just happen and neither does marriage. Marriage is a gift from God. Jesus taught his disciples about marriage and in other places in the New Testament, marriage is described as a way for Christians to model the love Jesus has for his Church. This faithful lifetime commitment as husband and wife is one of the most important ways we can respond to the relationship we have with our Lord Jesus Christ.

At Good Shepherd, we have the following helps for people who seek to be married by one of the pastors serving the congregation.

Who will conduct the marriage?

Good Shepherd is privileged to have two pastors who are authorised celebrants, Pastor Noel Kluge and Pastor Rolly Stahl. Mostly we can accommodate peoples' requests for a certain pastor, but this is difficult when marriages are booked a long way in advance. We can say that one of the pastors here will be happy to perform the ceremony in line with what is shared in the rest of this letter. We are happy for you to speak to us if you would like the wedding conducted by another Lutheran pastor.

Notice of Intent

Marriage has a number of legal requirements, one of which is to fill in the Notice of Intent. This can happen at a meeting with the pastor approximately three to four months prior to the wedding. The Government requires you to provide your birth certificate when signing the Notice of Intent along with your “Decree Nisi” if you have been divorced or your previous partner’s death certificate if this is applicable.

Place of Marriage

Most marriages conducted by pastors of Good Shepherd will take place in the church, but we are open to hearing your thoughts should you wish to consider another venue.

Orders of Service

Marriages celebrated at Good Shepherd have a Christian foundation. The pastor will work with you as a couple to produce appropriate orders of service for the marriage and marriage vows. The pastor will also provide you with a selection of Bible readings you can choose from. Also some hymns/songs that are suitable for marriage should you wish to include these.

Investing in your marriage

Getting married is one of the biggest decisions a person/couple will make in life. When it comes to something simple like choosing paint for a pergola or more complex like buying a car, people invest a lot of time looking at various options and investigating all that is involved.

We ask the same for marriage. Marriage is a commitment and blessing for which you can never be over prepared.

For that reason we ask all couples to undergo pre-marriage preparation. In fact, we believe in this so much it is actually a requirement for being married through this church.

Pre-marriage preparation opportunities

Where possible, we encourage you to attend the most relevant marriage course for you and also to undertake the marriage preparation programme called **PREPARE**. Couples who have invested their time and energy into **PREPARE** and the marriage course often comment that they were well prepared for the blessings and challenges of life together. You can email Merv and Ros Thiele from Good Shepherd (mervrost@bigpond.net.au) for more information on this. Or go through Lutheran Community Care which provides marriage preparation (hschulz@lccsa.org.au or Tel 08 8331 3111),

<http://www.lccsa.org.au/trainingCourses/relationshipMarriageEducation/index.html>

<http://lccsa.org.au/ourPrograms/forFamilies/marriageRelationshipEducation.html>

You will find there are courses or camps for those where one or both partners have been married before. We highly recommend this.

Music



If a couple choose to have hymns or songs as part of their wedding service, we can provide an organist, small band, or a key board player.

Many people these days elect to have CD music of their choice for the entry, signing of the register, and exit.

If you have friends or family whom you would like to sing or play, we can try to accommodate that.

Cost (a guide only)

The two courses (above) cost about \$150 each. This is the major cost involved in a wedding here. The reason we do not charge for the use of the building here or for celebrant's fees (usually \$450 as a starting point) is so you can invest in the marriage preparation above.

Other costs here may include:

Pastor/Celebrant	\$200
Caretaker/PA operator	\$ 75
Band (where chosen)	\$250
Musician (where used)	\$100
Church building	No cost

We ask that the appropriate amount be paid to the office secretary one week before the wedding date.

There is no fee payable to the pastor. However, if couples wish to give a donation they should hand the donation to him on the day of the wedding in an envelope marked “The Minister”.

The next step

If you have decided upon Good Shepherd for your wedding, your next steps are to:

- contact the office (8263 5087 or churchenquiries@paravista.org.au) to see if your preferred date is free, see if one of the pastors are free, and book in the wedding
- book in for your marriage preparation
- once you have undertaken your marriage preparation, make an appointment with the pastor conducting your wedding about four months from the date

We wish you every blessing in this exciting journey you are taking.

A Guide To The Marriage Ceremony



This guide is provided for you to get a feel for the wedding ceremony and so you can work out the details of your own wedding.

TWO IMPORTANT WORDS OF ADVICE FOR ENGAGED COUPLES

Keeping the ceremony simple will save you stress and help you stay focused on what it is all about!

Many couples end up feeling like they never see each other before the wedding because they are so busy planning the whole show... What follows your wedding is much more important than the day - so start now by spending more energy investing in the relationship than in the wedding! Please see the other document and details re pre-marriage preparation.

WHERE TO HAVE THE CEREMONY

No matter what location you can still invite God to the wedding!

As Lutheran pastors we are happy to perform a wedding anywhere as long as people understand that what we do will show God's unconditional love (grace) available in Jesus Christ!

No matter where you choose to have the ceremony, please remember that "church" is not a building - "church" is what happens when people connect with God. The church is actually the people - who put their faith in God!

MUSIC

Music for the wedding is a very personal choice! It's normal to have music at the start and end and often during the signing of the marriage register. You are also free to have the performance of songs or the singing of songs of praise and these can be placed at any appropriate point throughout the ceremony.

BEFORE THE CEREMONY & THE ENTRANCE

A "Bridal Procession" is actually optional. You can start in a variety of ways...

1. The Groom may be waiting with pastor. The bride arrives and "walks down the aisle".
2. The Bride and Groom may simply stand together before the pastor.
3. Sometimes the pastor meets the Bride and Groom at the church door, the ceremony is begun at the door before the whole party enters together during singing/music. If you choose this option, please speak to pastor about how this can work!

What Happens In The Marriage Ceremony

1 OPENING

Pastor welcomes the people, says a few words introducing the marriage ceremony. The ceremony is formally begun with the words:
"In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

2 PRESENTATION

- Either:
- The bride is presented to be married.
 - Parents of both the bride and groom present them both to be married.

The pastor asks the presenter/s: *“Who presents N to be married? I/We do.”*

3 PRAYER FOR THE COUPLE

The following prayer may be used. We usually pray something more personal!

“Faithful God, since you established marriage, unite N and N as they make their vows publicly to each other, and help them to remain faithful and build each other up all their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

4 BIBLE READING/S

You may choose as few as one reading, or as many as you like!
Please ask your pastor for a new Bible so you can read these in an Australian English Bible.

Some to look at: Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 2:18-24; Genesis 24:50,51,58-67; Ecclesiastes 9:7-10; Song of Songs 2:10-13; Song of Songs 8:6,7; Isaiah 63:7-9; John 2:1-11; John 15:7-12; John 15:9-17; Romans 8:37-39; Romans 12:1,2,9-12; Romans 15:5-7; 1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13; Ephesians 5:31-33; Colossians 3:12-19; 1 John 4:7-11,19.

5 SERMON

I often offer a short (5 mins) and personal talk on the meaning of marriage (and the meaning of life). It's for you and based on the readings you choose. Sometimes we leave the sermon out and give a slightly longer “introduction” that follows.

6 INTRODUCTION TO THE MARRIAGE VOWS:

The following is the “traditional introduction” to the vows, but it's also possible to simply say a few words at the end of the sermon to introduce what follows:

“Our Lord Jesus Christ said: Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female', and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no-one separate. So then, N and N, our Lord promises to bless those who honour his purpose for marriage and remain faithful to each other in it...”

7 DECLARATION OF INTENT

Please choose your preferred form of declaration:

“I therefore ask you: N, will you have N as your wife/husband, to live together faithfully in marriage? Yes, I will.”

OR

“I therefore ask you: N, will you have N as your wife, to live together, as God has ordained, in the state of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her, as long as you both shall live? Yes, I will.”

8 THE VOWS

Please choose your preferred form of vows:

*“I, N, in the presence of God and these witnesses,
take you, N, to be my wife/husband;
and I promise to be faithful to you as long as we live.”*

OR

*“I, N, in the presence of God, take you, N, to be my wife;
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish,
so long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow.”*

9 EXCHANGE OF RINGS

Wedding rings are optional! They are traditionally worn on the fourth finger of the left hand! You may not say anything during the exchange of rings, or choose from the following:

*“(N,) Receive this ring as a pledge and token
of wedded love and faithfulness.”*

OR

*“(N,) I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage
and the vows we have made today.”*

10 DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

Bride and groom join right hands. The pastor places his right hand on their hands and says:

*“Since N and N have promised themselves to each other before God and in the presence of
us all, I, as a servant of God and by the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia,
declare them to be husband and wife. What God has joined together, let no-one separate.”*

If the bride is wearing a veil the groom may raise it here (in other words this is the “kiss”!).

11 OPTIONAL EXTRAS (SOME IDEAS HERE OR YOU MAY HAVE YOUR OWN!)

a. BLESSING BY PARENTS

b. CANDLE LIGHTING

OPTIONAL: THE LORD’S PRAYER

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on
earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom,
the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.”*

OR

“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. For ever and ever. Amen.”

SIGNING OF THE REGISTER

The bride and groom sign the wedding certificates.

Two witnesses are also needed to sign - they can be anyone you choose.

Often the signing witnesses are the “best man” and “matron of honour”.

PRESENTATION OF THE MARRIED COUPLE

When the party returns, the pastor may say the following or similar words.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Mr and Mrs N & N...”