



Weddings at Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church

God's blessings to you!

God delights in your plans for marriage, and the love which you and your fiancée share is a sign of God's love for us all. Your preparation for marriage, and your wedding ceremony itself are an important ministry of this congregation. The purpose of this guide is to assist you in your preparations, to familiarize you with Mt. Tabor's wedding policies, and to ensure the sanctity of this important day.

Much of this wedding guide can be summarized by our deep conviction that the Wedding Ceremony is a service of worship. Christ is surely present in your ceremony, just as He will be present in your marriage. Your wedding service, therefore, will be shaped and guided by the same solemn and joyful rituals which shape and guide the other important festivals of the church.

We ask that you read the guidelines carefully and honor them so that your wedding will be a memorable worship experience and a witness to Christ's presence among us.

Scheduling the Wedding

- A wedding is best scheduled at least 6 months in advance so that it can be coordinated with other church activities and adequate time for premarital counseling is allowed. **In order to reserve the desired date, contact the senior pastor at the church office (803-796-5948).** Once the pastor confirms that the date and facilities are available, your wedding date will be added to the church calendar. When you have received confirmation of this, you may begin other wedding planning.
- Schedule the Ceremony. Confirm with Wedding Consultants.
- Schedule the Rehearsal.
- Reserve the necessary facilities (Assembly Room, classrooms, etc.).
- Schedule Premarital Counseling (required).
- Read the Wedding Guidelines carefully (required).

Due to the penitential nature of the Lenten Season, weddings are not scheduled between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Additionally, we prefer not to have weddings on the 2nd weekend of December.



Contact a Mt. Tabor Wedding Consultant

As soon as your wedding date is confirmed, schedule an appointment with one of Mt. Tabor's Wedding Consultants. The consultants work closely with the pastor and staff to ensure that the sanctity of worship is maintained, and that the mechanics of the wedding go smoothly. The list of current wedding consultants is at the end of this guide.

Try to include those who are significantly involved in the planning process (e.g. bride, groom, parents) in the meeting with the consultants. The consultant(s) will review the policies of the church, fees, and try to answer questions you may have.

If you have a close friend or family member who would like to assist in coordinating your wedding, our Wedding Consultants will be happy to work with that person. You will be responsible for the Mt. Tabor Wedding Consultants' fee in addition to whatever you pay any outside coordinator. Mt. Tabor's Wedding Consultants will have final responsibility for coordinating the ceremony.

The wedding Consultant is responsible for unlocking the church prior to events associated with the wedding and locking the church after the events. Florists or other service providers must coordinate access to the church with the Wedding Consultant. The Consultants are familiar with the church facilities and church policies and can answer most questions that arise during the planning process. Particularly for larger weddings, two or more of Mt. Tabor's Wedding Consultants may work together as a team to ensure that things run smoothly.



Communicating with the Church Sexton

The church sexton will be notified by the church office of the date and time of your wedding. The sexton will come in after the wedding to clean and reset the sanctuary and other church facilities for the next worship service. Please communicate (written communication is preferred) any special needs for the wedding ceremony, dinner, or reception. Also advise the sexton of how to dispose of decorations (flowers, etc.) after the wedding. This should be turned into the church office NO later than 2 weeks before the ceremony. There are no exceptions to the use of our sexton, as this individual is familiar with the facilities and responsibility for its being ready for worship rests on him.



Contact the Music Director

As soon as your wedding date is confirmed, contact the Music Director to confirm availability. The music director will schedule a music consultation with you to help you choose music that is appropriate for a liturgical worship service. If soloists or instrumentalists are desired, the music director will help you contract musicians.

Mt. Tabor's music director/organist will be the music consultant for your wedding. If the Music Director is unavailable for your wedding, she will help in the selection of a suitable organist. All music, including that of guest musicians, must be approved by the Music Director.

The Marriage License

At least one week prior to your wedding, obtain the Marriage License from any county courthouse in South Carolina.

Bring the license to the rehearsal and give it to the officiating pastor. Following the wedding, the newly married couple and the pastor will sign it, and the church office will mail the license to the appropriate office to be recorded. Copies may be obtained through the courthouse where the marriage is recorded.

Note: The Lexington County Marriage License Division of the Probate Court is located at the corner of East Main Street and South Lake Drive, Suite 134. The telephone number is 803-785-7718. A voice mail recording gives current information about fees, method of payment, identification requirements, waiting periods, and hours of operation.

The Rehearsal

A rehearsal of the wedding prepares wedding participants for the wedding ceremony. The result of a well-planned rehearsal is a smoothly flowing, stress-free and worship filled ceremony.

Wedding participants who should be invited to the rehearsal include the wedding party, the parents, grandparents and any other friends or relatives who will be ushered in at a special time, soloists, and worship assistants (crucifer, acolyte, lector, etc.).

The bride and groom should notify the wedding party of the date and time of the rehearsal to ensure that it begins and ends on time.

The rehearsal generally lasts one hour. Your rehearsal dinner should be planned accordingly.



The Worship Service

The Wedding Ceremony is first and foremost a **service of worship**. All aspects of the ceremony should appropriately reflect a reverent atmosphere, including liturgy, music, decorations, procession and recession, behavior, attitude and manner of dress for wedding party and guests.

Unless unavailable, a **pastor** of Mt. Tabor will preside at your wedding. Other pastors may participate in the service with the approval of the pastor who is conducting your ceremony. If a Mt. Tabor pastor is not available for your wedding, the pastor will advise you regarding pastors who might be available. All final decisions concerning the wedding ceremony ultimately reside with the senior pastor.

The music director will be the organist/music director for your wedding, unless unavailable. All **music** used in the ceremony should be appropriate to a Christ-centered service of worship. The music director will help you with your choices and will need to approve all musical selections for the ceremony--including those played or sung by guest soloists or instrumentalists.

Though not required, couples are encouraged to choose the meaningful celebration of **Holy Communion** in their marriage service. Above all, it is important to note that Holy Communion is for the entire congregation—not just the wedding party.

If you choose to have a wedding **bulletin**, you must either furnish the bulletin covers and all necessary information to the church office at least 10 days prior to the wedding or prepare the bulletin and have the pastor approve it. Please be advised that not all bulletin stock is compatible with the church's copier.

If you would like to include **acolytes, crucifers and banner bearers** in your service, they will need to wear the proper vestments used in worship. Referral of names can be provided if needed.

Flowers, Candles, Decorations...

All sanctuary décor should be **appropriate to worship** and focus attention upon the altar. **Fresh flowers** should be placed in altar vases, as is customary for all worship services. Although additional decorations are not necessary, candelabras, palms, additional flowers, aisle candles, and a unity candle may be used with the approval of the pastor or a Mt. Tabor wedding consultant.



The proper **paraments** for the season of the church year will be used.

Potted plants must be placed on a water-proof cloth or plant liner.

No additional decorations are to be placed on the **altar**.

All décor used for pew markers must not be attached by tacks, nails, clamps or any material that may damage the pews or furnishings.

The pulpit, altar, cross, Bible, altar candles, lectern, piano, organ and baptismal font will not be moved or obstructed from view by floral arrangements or decorations.

If **aisle candles** and/or **unity candles** are used, precautions must be taken to prevent wax damage to flooring or furnishings. Any damage will be the responsibility of those reserving the candles.

Photography and Videography

No **flash photography** is permitted during the ceremony. Flash pictures are permitted **ONLY** during the procession of the bride, groom and parents. These pictures must be made from behind the baptismal font.

Time exposures, with no flash of light involved, are permitted from the back of the church. Otherwise, picture-taking is not permitted during the service of worship.

Videotaping of the ceremony is permitted provided the camera and its operator remain behind the baptismal font or at the back of the transepts.

The officiating pastor will gladly recreate any portion of the service after the wedding.

Pre-ceremony photography in the sanctuary should be completed by the time the wedding Prelude begins (usually at least 30 minutes before the wedding procession takes place). Post-ceremony photography should last no longer than 30 minutes.



Facilities and Fees



- **Facilities** of Mt. Tabor may be used for the rehearsal dinner and/or reception.
- The **pastor** must approve all requests and plans for use of Mt. Tabor facilities.
- The Bernhardt Room is available as a dressing area for the bride. The Nursery and/or a Sunday School Room will be available for use by the bridesmaids. Other dressing rooms will be provided, upon request, for the groom and his groomsmen.
- **Alcoholic beverages** are prohibited on church property, including the parking lot. The church is under the jurisdiction of the West Columbia City Police Department. If this policy is found to be in violation, the police department will be called.
- **Smoking is not permitted** in any part of the church building, including restrooms.
- Please do not misplace or damage equipment or supplies of the church.
- **Birdseed**, not rice, may be thrown on the outside of church buildings.
- Following the ceremony, promptly **remove any personal items**, dishes, decorations or

accessories from the church facilities.

- **Members** of Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church are not charged for the use of the church facilities; however, they do pay fees to the church custodian (sexton) for set-up and clean-up.
- **Minimum fees** are charged for the services of those who assist with your wedding.
- Payment of all fees is required at least **two weeks before** the wedding date.
- Contracting with certain individuals, such as guest musicians, may require a down payment and/or a signed contract when they are booked.

Minimum Fees & Honorariums

		<u>Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
Use of Facilities	Sanctuary (Rehearsal and Wedding)	No Fee	\$1,000
	Assembly Room	No Fee	\$500
Pastor(s)	Includes counseling, rehearsal	Honorarium	\$300
Wedding			
Consultant(s)	Includes Consultation, Rehearsal, and Wedding. <i>If two or more are working together, only one honorarium is required.</i>	\$400	\$600
Sexton	Wedding Facility Clean-Up	\$200	\$400
	-If using Aisle Candles, Add	\$100	\$150
	-If Rehearsal Dinner is at Church, Add	\$250	\$450
	-If Reception is at Church, Add	\$250	\$450
Music Director	Includes Consultation, Rehearsal Wedding and working with up to one Soloist OR Ensemble. For each additional Soloist or Ensemble, add \$50 to the honorarium	\$300	\$400
Soloists	Amount is set by Soloist. If using the Music Director as a soloist, an additional honorarium is appropriate.		
Office Staff	Wedding bulletins	Cost of bulletins	
	Preparation of bulletins	\$100	\$150

Deposit to hold the church: \$300

Payment of all fees and honorariums is required at least 2 weeks before the wedding date and can be dropped off in the church office. The check should be made as a single payment and is payable to Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church.

Wedding Consultants at Mt. Tabor

*Ann Spainhour

*Pam Hoskins

Elise Helms

*Asterisk denotes those individuals who have extensive experience directing weddings at Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church.

These guidelines were reviewed, revised, and approved by the Church Council on August 10, 2025.