


St. Paul's

EPISCOPAL  CHURCH

HOLY MATRIMONY

Information and Planning Guide

This brochure has been designed to offer an opportunity for you to understand the wedding ceremony as it takes place at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. As is stated in *The Book of Common Prayer*, "Holy Matrimony is Christian marriage, in which the man and woman enter into a life-long union, make their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows."

In this very special time, we are honored to perform this vital service in the lives of two people as they become one. The intention of the information here is to answer possible questions that arise, but we realize that there may be more. After you have completely read through the material, there will be time for additional questions that you may have. If you decide that St. Paul's may be the place for your wedding an appointment can be made with the officiating Priest in order to get the process of planning started.

There are a number of guidelines to this process, and it may seem overwhelming. In our awareness of the importance of this exciting time in the life of two people, we want to make sure there is a very clear understanding of expectations to facilitate better planning and eliminate any confusion in the process. There are various fees associated with a wedding ceremony at St. Paul's, depending on the services used. These fees are explained in this booklet. Our intentions are to foster comfort and confidence in the ceremony itself. No questions are foolish and we aim to create an environment that will facilitate and encourage them.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BE MARRIED IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH?

Subject to canonical guidelines, the following are preliminarily eligible to be married at St. Paul's:

- Members of the parish and children and grandchildren of members.
- People who are relatives (such as children) of Episcopal Priests in good standing in the Episcopal Church.
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Prior to scheduling a marriage a minimum of 60 days is required after the couple's first meeting with the Celebrant. There are obvious complications as we go through life. There are often obstacles that may seem overwhelming as a couple prepares to arrange for a wedding. These will be discussed at the first meeting. If this is not the first marriage for either party a longer minimum time frame may be required as permission of the Bishop of Tennessee must be obtained.

Please do not decide on a date for the wedding until you have met with the clergy!

WHAT DOES THE PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING INVOLVE?

Adequate discussion, instruction and counseling of the couple, together, must be done prior to the marriage. Marriage is more than a rite and a ceremony, it is a sacrament asking God's blessing on a covenant relationship.

The Celebrant must weigh how well the couple is aware of the major implications of this lifetime commitment they are making and be convinced that they have a realistic understanding of what marriage is. The rich words in the beginning of *The Book of Common Prayer* service describe this and can be valuable counseling tools:

The union of husband and wife in heart, body and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and when it is God's will for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore, marriage is not to be centered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

Because of this at least 3-5 **pre-marital instruction sessions are required**. Each session is one and one half hours in duration. **There is a one-time \$40.00 fee for pre-marital counseling materials.**

In unusual circumstances, marriages may be performed or blessed for couples not closely related to the parish, but only at the specific request of the Clergy-in-Charge of one of the couple's home parishes to the Celebrant. The Celebrant must be convinced that adequate marriage counseling has been done by either priest, by either him or herself, or by the home Parish Priest.

ONCE APPROVED FOR MARRIAGE, WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

It is very helpful to have a checklist of things that now have to be done. The items on that list include the following:

- Complete and sign a copy of the Declaration of Intent to Marry
- Decide on a projected date and time for the rehearsal
- Check the schedule of the officiating clergy person**
- Fill out the attached question and answer sheet
- Decide on whether there will be a Holy Eucharist
- Decide the readings, psalms, and gospel
- Schedule an appointment with the organist for choices of music
- Schedule an appointment with the Flower Guild director
- Obtain a marriage license

WHAT ABOUT THE SERVICE ITSELF?

All services in the Episcopal Church are open to the public. Hence, there is no such thing as a private service, although most weddings are only attended by those that are invited. *The Book of Common Prayer* will be followed without variation. There are options provided within the directions in *The Book of Common Prayer* and so flexibility does exist. The Celebrant can help with those choices. In addition, there are number of Scripture possibilities for the readings. Here, too, if you need help with the choosing of lessons, the Celebrant will help.

It is most appropriate and desirable that the ceremony of marriage between Christians be conducted within the rite of the Holy Eucharist which should be offered to all baptized Christians. This would also be something to discuss with the Celebrant regarding the service plan.

Weddings are not scheduled during the Season of Lent or on major Holidays.

WHAT ABOUT A POSSIBLE ROLE FOR CLERGY OF OTHER CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS IN THE CEREMONY?

Clergy of other Christian denominations may assist the Celebrant. This again would be something that is ultimately the decision of the Celebrant and it is something that should be discussed during the counseling and planning sessions with the Celebrant.

WHAT ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY AND/OR VIDEO?

A marriage ceremony is a holy event. As with all liturgies in the church, reverence is to be maintained. We encourage you to have photographs taken of your wedding ceremony, but pictures and noises from cameras are distracting to this sacred ceremony.

During the rehearsal, the photographer has free reign to take all the pictures he or she wishes. During the ceremony itself, the following guidelines must be followed:

1. No lights or flashes are allowed.
2. The photographer will be allowed to take pictures from the back of the church providing the camera that is used does not make a noise or flash
3. The area to take the photos will be pointed out to the wedding party to ensure that the photographer understands these limitations.
4. Prior to and after the ceremony the photographer will be able to take as many photos as he or she wishes.
5. Please have printed on your wedding program, **No photography during the service and turn off cell phones.**

WHAT ABOUT MUSIC FOR THE SERVICE?

The Organist at St. Paul's is a professional musician and there is a fee for his/her services. The organist will meet with you and go over the various music options available and discuss with you any ideas you may have. St. Paul's organist has many years experience in providing wedding music and is more than willing to help you in this aspect of the wedding plan. The ceremony itself is ordered according to the rubrics of *The Book of Common Prayer*. The music is infused throughout where various options for hymns, psalms, anthems and instrumental music that may be used. You must use St. Paul's organist. If our organist is not available he or she will make all arrangements to provide another organist. There are no exceptions to this requirement. **There is a \$200.00 fee for the organist. Special arrangements must be made for St. Andrew's Chapel.**

WHAT IS THE FLOWER GUILD?

The Flower Guild's primary purpose is the decoration of the altar area with flowers for the Sunday morning services. In the planning of a wedding, the Flower Guild Chair will meet with you in arranging for flowers. If you want to use a particular florist this is acceptable; in fact, the Flower Guild Chair will be happy to provide you with a list of florists who are experienced in doing weddings at St. Paul's. St. Paul's does require your florist to consult with the Flower Guild Chair, however, as the Episcopal Church has certain restrictions with respect to wedding flowers. **If you elect to have our Flower Guild do your wedding flowers the fee is \$300.00. This charge will cover the Altar and Narthex flowers only. If you need additional arrangements there is an additional charge. Please contact the Flower Guild Chair for any additional arrangements.** It is also a requirement that all altar flowers used in the wedding must remain for the following Sunday morning's worship services regardless of who arranges the flowers. We do not allow the use of artificial flowers in the church. No St. Paul's containers (vases or liners) may leave the church premises. If you wish to take the flowers following Sunday services, arrangements should be made with the Flower Guild Chair so that a suitable container may be arranged for. The use of rice and/or bird seed is not allowed on the church premises at any time due to safety reasons. **Special arrangements must be made for St. Andrew's Chapel.**

WHAT IS THE ALTAR GUILD?

The Altar Guild is responsible for setting up the altar for all the services in the church (candles, linens, chalice, etc). Once all the aspects of your ceremony have been discussed and determined, the Celebrant will communicate to the Altar Guild what is needed for the wedding ceremony. If you have questions regarding this aspect of the ceremony, please discuss this with the Celebrant. Remember, it is our intention for you to understand every aspect of the ceremony itself. We are more than willing to answer any questions that you may have.

WHAT ABOUT WEDDING CONSULTANTS?

St. Paul's has an exceptional wedding team. They have much experience in coordinating weddings and they can help as you make your plans. We are not adverse to wedding consultants but we see little need for them as the wedding will follow *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Obviously for receptions and/or pre wedding parties wedding coordinators may be helpful, but they will not be allowed to coordinate the wedding ceremony.

DOES ST. PAUL'S OFFER A FACILITY FOR A REHEARSAL DINNER/RECEPTION?

St. Paul's has a parish hall that can be used for receptions, as well as the kitchen area. **The fee for use of the parish hall for receptions is \$100.00. There is also a \$200.00 refundable clean-up deposit fee required to reserve the space.** We do allow the serving of beer and wine only. No other alcoholic beverages are allowed. If alcoholic beverages are served, it is required that you must also serve food and non-alcoholic drinks must be offered.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- A suggested gift to the clergy is \$250.00.
- If a service bulletin is to be used, the officiating Celebrant must approve it before being printed and distributed. If the church office is preparing your service bulletin your information must be submitted to the office three weeks prior to your wedding date. There is a \$25.00 fee for this service.
- A \$25.00 key deposit refundable upon return of the key.
- Space will be provided for the bride and groom wedding parties for dressing.
- Because most weddings take place on a week-end there is a \$125.00 clean-up fee to prepare the church for Sunday services. (*Nave weddings only.*)
- For the use of St. Paul's coffee there is a \$25 fee.
- The singing of the Lord's Prayer as a solo is not permitted.
- The unity candles should be used at the reception, not during the service.
- There is surrounding parking areas restricted from St. Paul's use. This information will be provided during consultations with the Celebrant.
- Flower Girls are not permitted to scatter red roses because of floor staining.
- No smoking is allowed in the building. Please dispose of cigarette butts appropriately.

FINAL WORD

As has been stated in a number of sections in this brochure, there will be many questions regarding the coordinating of a wedding here at St. Paul's. Please do not hesitate to ask the Celebrant.

We are especially happy that you are considering St. Paul's for your wedding plans. As you have read through this brochure and perhaps kept a list of questions, please make sure and bring them when you meet with the Clergy as this will be a convenient time for them to be asked.

INCLUDED IN THIS BOOKLET:

- Wedding Checklist for You
- Wedding Fee Checklist
- Diocesan Guidelines for First Marriages

SEPARATE ATTACHMENTS:

- Holy Matrimony Information Sheet
- Declaration of Intent to Marry
- Question and Answer Sheet for Your Wedding (to be emailed to frontoffice@stpaulsmurfreesboro.org)
- Wedding Hold Harmless Agreement

IF APPLICABLE:

- Diocesan Guidelines and Application for Remarriage (only provide information on application if applicable)

WEDDING CHECKLIST FOR YOU

- Set up meeting with the priest
- Complete and submit Question/Answer Sheet for Your Wedding
- Decide on projected date with priest and check/schedule with front office to reserve space and secure the date on church calendar.
- Schedule pre-marital counseling sessions and submit money for the materials when the sessions are scheduled.
- Decide on scripture readings
- Decide if there will be Holy Eucharist
- Meet with Director of Music
- Meet with Flower Guild Chairperson
- You or your wedding coordinator will need to contact St. Paul's Wedding Coordinator
- Obtain marriage license 30 days prior to wedding

Fees may be paid by check and should be received six weeks prior to your wedding. You may write out one check for the fees. Please list in the memo the amounts for each.

Separate Fees: Materials for pre-marital counseling, clergy, and marriage license, will need to be separate checks.

WEDDING FEE CHECKLIST

For your convenience below is an easy check list of the fees that are in the St. Paul's Holy Matrimony Handbook.

- \$ 40.00 Pre-marital counseling materials
- \$125.00 Cleaning Fee for the church (*Nave weddings only*)
- \$200.00 Organist
- \$300.00 Flower Guild for the Altar and Narthex flowers
- \$100.00 Reception fee for use of the Parish Hall
- \$200.00 Clean-up deposit fee—*refundable upon facility being left as found*
- \$ 25.00 Wedding program fee/to cover printing and paper costs for wedding program
- \$250.00 A suggested gift to the clergy
- \$ 25.00 Facility key deposit refundable upon key return
- \$ 25.00 Coffee Fee, for use of St. Paul's coffee

You may write one check for all EXCEPT the clergy's fee. Please pay all fees six weeks prior to your wedding. You may make checks payable to St. Paul's and please note in the memo line what each is for.

Payment for premarital materials will be needed when the sessions are scheduled.

OVERALL PASTORAL GUIDELINES

1. Prior to scheduling a marriage (a minimum of 30 days is required after the couples first meeting with the Celebrant or in the case of remarriage from the date of receiving the Bishop's approval). In the case of remarriage, a date for the wedding should not be set until after the Bishop's approval has been given. It should be ascertained that at least one of the couple are part of or related to the parish congregation, or are willing to make a commitment to become an active and faithful part of the congregation.

2. Adequate discussion and instruction of the couple, together, must be done prior to the marriage. It should be emphasized that marriage is more than a rite and a ceremony, it is a sacrament asking God's blessing on a covenant relationship.

The Celebrant must weigh how well the couple is aware of the major implications of the lifetime commitment they are making and be convinced that they have a realistic understanding of what marriage is. The rich words in the beginning of the Prayer Book service describe this and can be valuable counseling tools:

The union of husband and wife in heart, body and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and when it is God's will for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore, marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

It would seem that at least 3-6 pre-marital instruction sessions would be needed, depending on the circumstances.

3. After discussion and instruction, as evidence of their serious intentions to commitment, the couple should be asked to complete and sign a copy of the **Declaration of Intent to Marry** (2003 Constitution and Canons I. 18.3e).
4. In unusual circumstances, marriages may be performed or blessed for couples not closely related to the parish, but only at the specific request of the Clergy-in-Charge of one of the couple's home parishes to the Celebrant. The Celebrant must be convinced that adequate marriage counseling has been done by either priest, by either him or herself, or by the home Parish Priest.
5. It is most appropriate and desirable that the ceremony of marriage between Christians be conducted within the rite of the Holy Eucharist, which should be offered to all baptized Christians.
6. Except under very unusual conditions, it is desirable that the marriage ceremony should be conducted within the parish church.
7. All services in Episcopal churches are open to the public.
8. Clergy of other Christian denominations may assist the Celebrant, with the Bishop's approval (the rubrics in the Book of Common Prayer must be observed). The blessing of the marriage must be pronounced by the Celebrant.
9. The rubrics in the Book of Common Prayer specifying junctures in the marriage liturgy where hymns, psalms, antems and instrumental music may be used should be strictly observed. It is not appropriate in corporate worship for the Lord's Prayer to be sung by a solo musician. The Celebrant, or his or her delegated authority must agree with the choice of music to be used in advance of the service.
10. The Celebrant should consult with any photographers prior to the service emphasizing the sacramental worship aspects of the service and requiring that any operators or equipment to be employed be placed and used as unobtrusively as possible. Flash pictures should not be allowed during the service.

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