



Guidelines for Marriage at St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Revised July 2022

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Marriages at St. Paul's: An Introduction

Christian marriage is a service of worship that celebrates and blesses a covenant between two people and takes place within the context of the life of the congregation and the whole Church. Couples of whom at least one person is not an active communicant or the child of an active communicant may not be married at St. Paul's. Persons seeking God's blessing through the Church for their marriage are expected to be regular in worship, especially during the months prior to their wedding, and are expected to continue in regular worship following their wedding.

The Church believes that marriage is intended by God “for our mutual joy, for the help and comfort we will give to each other in prosperity and adversity, and, when it is God's will, for the gift and heritage of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God.” The Church understands marriage of two persons to be an “unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong” union that is an image of God's love for the world as revealed in Jesus Christ. If the couple does not feel that their marriage reflects this understanding, getting married in the church is inappropriate. Many people find that civil marriage is a more suitable expression of their vows, and the Church fully recognizes civil marriage.

In all cases, marriage ceremonies held at St. Paul's will be performed according to the authorized liturgies of The Episcopal Church. These liturgies reflect the communal aspect of the Church's life and the reality that marriage reflects the union between Christ and the Church.

First Steps

1. Read this entire booklet carefully as it will answer most of your questions.
2. Contact Leslie Alexander, our Parish Secretary, to initiate the process of setting up premarital preparation sessions with the minister. She can also help you identify potential dates that are available on the church calendar. Contact Leslie at leslie@stpaulsfay.org or 479-442-7373.

The Requirements

Premarital Counseling

The canons of The Episcopal Church require that all clergy provide premarital preparation to those couples at whose marriage they will officiate. Not including the initial visit, the minister will usually meet with the couple for three to five one-hour sessions, depending on the specific circumstance of the couple. These sessions are to be scheduled with the minister and normally take place during regular business hours.

Marriage after Divorce

In the case of marriage following divorce, the following additional requirements apply: (1) the minister has appropriate evidence that any previous marriage has been annulled or dissolved (copies of all divorce decrees constitute evidence of the termination of any previous marriages); (2) the divorce decree or annulment has been in effect for at least one full year prior to the date of the re-marriage; (3) the minister consults with the parties as to continuing concern for the former spouse and children of the prior marriage; and (4) the minister has the consent of the Diocesan Bishop (requires at least 30 days). Because the request for the Bishop's permission occurs after the premarital counseling period, the typical preparation time for marriage of a divorced person begins several months prior to the wedding date.

Setting the Date of the Service

The minister cannot consent to performing the service until after the canonical requirements have been fulfilled; therefore, before any date is set or other marriage plans made, contact should be made with the minister. The date is subject to the schedule of the priest and the church. Because of the penitential and preparatory nature of the seasons of Advent and Lent, it is not appropriate to perform weddings from the First Sunday of Advent until Christmas Day or from Ash Wednesday until Easter Day. As you choose the hour of the service, keep in mind that St. Paul's windows are beautiful during the daylight.

The Marriage License

Marriage licenses are required and can be obtained Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at the County Clerk's office in the Washington County Courthouse or in any County Courthouse in Arkansas. The fee for a marriage license is \$60.00 (cash only; no checks or credit cards). Both applicants must be present and together when applying for the license and must present a valid government-issued photo identification (driver's license, passport or military identification). A marriage license is valid for sixty (60) days and must be returned to be recorded, whether used or unused, within 60 days of issuance. The marriage license should be brought to the rehearsal.

The Marriage Service

The Minister and Visiting Clergy

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is a service of worship and is therefore under the complete direction of the clergy. The Rector at St. Paul's is the individual who determines which member of the clergy from St. Paul's will serve as the minister at your wedding, but you may make your preference known when contacting the Parish Secretary. Other clergy, including clergy from other denominations or faiths, may be invited to participate in the service but only at the invitation of the Rector. All clergy taking part in the wedding should be invited to any post-rehearsal dinner as well as the wedding reception, but please understand that clergy are not always able to attend.

Wedding Consultants

Wedding consultants are not necessary and will not be allowed to direct the rehearsal or the wedding. The minister will conduct the rehearsal and the marriage service.

The Acolytes

Couples are required to have at least one acolyte and may have as many as five. Ordinarily, the acolytes will be those who also serve at St. Paul's on Sundays. If you wish to request particular parish acolytes, please clear those choices with the minister. You are asked to include acolytes who take part in the service in your invitation list. Couples are asked to provide a \$20 honorarium to each acolyte taking part in the service.

The Congregation

Weddings are important occasions in the lives of the couple and their friends and families. It is expected that the invitation list will include many who are not members of the congregation. Since marriage is a worship service undertaken in the context of this community of worship, it is understood that the service itself is a public event. The reception, however, may always be a private affair. The nave at St. Paul's holds about 220 people.

Before the Service

Members of the wedding party are invited to use the facility on the day of the wedding to get ready for the service. The facility is available beginning three hours before the service and must be emptied no later than forty-five minutes after the service or, if the reception takes place at St. Paul's, thirty minutes after the reception has ended and no later than 10:30 p.m..

The Music

Music is optional, but, if music is desired, only sacred music is allowed at a marriage service. Popular music should be saved for the reception. The Parish Organist has the right of first refusal on all weddings performed at St. Paul's. The Parish Secretary will help you contact the Parish Organist at least 30 days prior to the service. All arrangements for music must be approved by the Parish Organist and the minister. On all music decisions, the Rector is the final authority.

As an act of worship, marriage services normally include hymns selected from *Hymnal 1982*. If you would like, you may ask the parish choir to sing for an additional fee. Quality instrumentalists can add a festive tone to the celebration of a marriage. Such instrumentalists are under the direction of the Parish Organist and the minister. The use of Wagner's *Bridal Chorus* ("Here Comes the Bride") and Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* are not permitted in the service because they are operatic compositions with no religious connotation except that invented by Hollywood.

Please be advised that the Parish Organist communicates directly with the couple. To avoid confusion and miscommunication, the organist is not available to communicate with wedding planners, friends, or relatives of the couple.

Recommended Hymns

#321	My God Thy Table Now is Spread
#335	I Am the Bread of Life
#353	Your Love, O God Has Called Us Here
#370	I Bind Unto Myself Today
#376	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
#390	Praise to the Lord
#416	For the Beauty of the Earth
#488	Be Thou My Vision
#488/489	O Love How Deep
#513	Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song
#516	Come Down O Love Divine
#576	God is Love
#645/646	The King of Love My Shepherd Is
#657	Love Divine All Loves Excelling
#700	O Love That Casts Out Fear

Altar Hangings and Candles

The altar hangings may be either the color of the liturgical season, our tapestry set, or traditional white. The church's altar candles, torches, and window candles may be used during the marriage service. During the Easter season, the paschal candle is used at all services. We do not use pew candles or unity candles.

The Bulletin

St. Paul's normally prepares the bulletin to be used at your marriage service. The cost of this is included with the fee for the use of the building (see below). If you would like to have an outside firm prepare the bulletin, a proof must be approved by the minister officiating at your wedding. Bulletins that have not been proofed before printing will not be used. Please allow at least one week for the clergyperson to approve the bulletin.

The Processions

Since marriage is an act of worship, our entrance procession looks like our procession on Sunday. As the congregation sings a hymn or as instrumental music is played, the ministers of the service enter down the aisle from the back of the church. The use of a processional hymn of praise is particularly encouraged to highlight the focus on worship and to reinforce the connections with our Sunday practice.

Here is the order of procession [with optional parts placed in brackets]:

[Thurifer with Incense]
Crucifer with Cross
[Torches]
[Choir]
[Lay Reader(s) / Chalice Bearer(s)]
[Gospel Acolyte or Deacon]
[Assisting Clergy]
Minister
Wedding Party Attendants
[Ring Bearer]
[Flower Attendant]
[Parents/Family of Betrothed]
Couple [and Parent(s)]*

** The members of the couple may walk in at the end of the procession together or separate, each unaccompanied or accompanied by one or two parents. If preferred, one member of the couple may walk in behind the minister and beside the honor attendant.*

Everyone who is part of the procession enters in a smooth and dignified manner as one act of procession. The music does not change when the couple or either member of the couple enters at the end of the procession. At the end of the marriage service, the cross [and torches] will process out ahead of the couple, who will be followed by the wedding party, members of the couple's family, and the clergy.

The Readings

The minister for your marriage service will guide you through a selection of the readings from those permitted by the liturgy. Typically, couples choose three lessons for the service—one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament, and one from the Gospel. Lay people, including wedding attendants, friends, or family, may read any of the lessons except a reading from the Gospel. At least one reading of scripture is required, and, if Communion is part of the marriage service, a Gospel lesson must be read. It is the minister's prerogative to preach a homily after the readings.

The Eucharist

The Eucharist or Holy Communion provides an appropriate context for the marriage service as a symbol of the unity between Christ and the Church, a unity reflected in the marital union itself. You are encouraged to celebrate the Holy Eucharist during the marriage service or, alternately, before the rehearsal. In The Episcopal Church, "opportunity is always given to every communicant to receive the consecrated Bread and Wine."

Flowers

One of the joys of being in a liturgical church is that it is already beautifully appointed for worship. There is no need to import flower baskets, ferns, and candelabra to make it look festive. Only altar flowers, handheld bouquets, boutonnieres, window decorations, and pew markers may be used. Only fresh flowers and real greenery are used. If used, pew markers should not be attached by tape or other sticky substances. No other flowers are necessary.

The Flower Guild is willing to arrange altar flowers on your behalf if you would like, or you may use a florist as long as that florist follows St. Paul's guidelines. The altar flowers should follow the scale and proportion of arrangements used on Sundays. We recommend that the dominant color of arrangements be white. The only vases we use are those supplied by St. Paul's, which may not be removed from the church. Please make arrangements with the office for your florist to pick up the vase liners. Flowers for the altar may not be taller than 23" from the bottom of the vase. Once placed on or near the altar, flowers are given to the glory of God and may not be removed by the wedding party. Instead, those flowers will be used on Sunday morning (if appropriate) and then taken to sick or homebound parishioners.

Photographs

A wedding is a service of worship. No photographs may be taken during the service, including during the processions in and out of the church. This is a firm requirement and is expected to be communicated by the couple to the photographer and to friends and family. The photographer may take pictures in the Guild Hall prior to the procession but should not take photographs from the Narthex.

Posed photographs may be taken before and after the service, for which we can pose any parts of the marriage service. Photographs may begin two hours and must stop thirty minutes before the service. Photographs also may be taken for up to thirty minutes after the service. Remember, posing pictures after the service delays the wedding party's arrival at the reception.

There may be one stationary video camera on a tripod placed in the church behind the last pew. There may be an additional video camera on a tripod placed next to the east end of the organ console. Either or both may be supervised, but any photographer should be dressed as if they were a guest at the service. Artificial light for photography is inappropriate for a wedding.

The Rehearsal

Wedding rehearsals are usually held in the early evening of the day before the wedding. The minister will conduct the rehearsal. The rehearsal will last approximately thirty minutes. If the Eucharist is celebrated before the rehearsal, it will last an additional thirty minutes. All members of the wedding party (i.e. couple, wedding attendants, parents of couple, and readers) are expected to attend, to be on time, and to remember that the rehearsal is conducted with reverence. For some small weddings, it is preferable to have a brief rehearsal on the day of the wedding sometime prior to the arrival of the congregation, or at some other suitable time.

The Reception

If the reception is to be held in the Parish Hall or Garth (courtyard), arrangements should be made in advance to reserve the building and to ensure that the event occurs smoothly. In all cases, we will provide a kitchen coordinator to supervise access to the kitchen (included with the fee for reception). You may not use any tablecloths, plates, cups, silverware, napkins, or serving dishes that belong to St. Paul's. Those should be provided by your caterer. You are responsible for cleaning up and returning everything to its pre-reception condition. That is not the work of the kitchen coordinator, whose job is only to supervise the use of the kitchen. Receptions cannot be held in any of the carpeted areas of the building or the upstairs. All rented equipment and reception flowers must be removed from the kitchen and Parish Hall immediately after the reception. You are welcome to use the audio system and projector in the Parish Hall, but arrangements must be made in advance with the Media Director for tech support.

The use of alcoholic beverages must adhere to the attached policy (found on page 13 of this guidebook). Please read it carefully, sign it, and return it. If champagne is served, take caution when opening to prevent damage to people, walls, ceiling, and floors.

The cleaning service will come in afterwards to prepare the church for the following Sunday. The reception must end in time for the hall to be empty by 10:30 p.m. so we can set up for Sunday.

Child Care

Our trained, professional nursery workers may be available to provide childcare during the service and, if held on site, the reception. If any on-site childcare is provided, except that offered by parents or guardians to their own children, only St. Paul's nursery workers may provide it. Arrangements for nursery workers must be made through the Nursery Director. There is a fee for this service.

Miscellaneous

If you use rice or birdseed or sparklers, please use them outside only. Please remove hangers, cleaning bags, and other items from the dressing areas when the service (or reception) is over. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on the premises except when served at the reception in accordance with the Alcohol Policy. Anyone, including the couple, who has been drinking before the service will not be allowed to take part in the service.

Typical Wedding Timeline

AT LEAST 6 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

Individuals who have previously been married and divorced need to make initial contact with the Parish Secretary.

AT LEAST 3 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

All other couples need to make initial contact with the Parish Secretary.

ONE TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

Couples meet with the minister three to five times for premarital preparation.

EIGHT WEEKS BEFORE THE WEDDING

Couples need to contact the Parish Organist to discuss music (if desired) and the Media Specialist to discuss A/V (if desired). Couples need to contact the Flower Guild Chair if they are arranging flowers. If an outside florist is arranging flowers, that florist needs to contact the Parish Secretary to arrange delivery on the day of the wedding. If the reception is on-site, the caterer needs to contact the Parish Secretary to coordinate logistics.

ONE MONTH BEFORE THE WEDDING

Couples need to obtain a marriage license from an Arkansas courthouse no more than 60 days before the intended wedding date and bring it to the rehearsal. Couples need to return signed copies of the Photography Agreement, Alcohol Policy Agreement (if applicable), and Wedding Guidelines Agreement to the Church Office. Couples need to submit to the minister final details for the service bulletin if the church is printing it or a proof of the bulletin if an outside firm is printing it.

ONE WEEK BEFORE THE WEDDING

Couples need to bring payment for the use of the facility to the Church Office.

THE DAY BEFORE THE WEDDING

The rehearsal typically begins at 5:30pm and lasts thirty minutes to an hour.

THE DAY OF THE WEDDING

Access to the facility is offered three hours before the service. Photographs may begin two hours before and must cease thirty minutes before the service and may resume for no more than thirty minutes after the service. The facility must be vacated no more than forty-five minutes after the service or, if held on-site, thirty minutes after the reception but no later than 10:30pm.

Fees

OFFICIANT: There are no charges for the minister's services. An honorarium or gift to the clergy discretionary fund is appropriate but not expected.

MUSIC: If you desire music, we request an honorarium for the Parish Organist of \$300 and of \$500 for the Parish Organist and Choir. Other instrumentalists will require additional fees. Please pay all fees and honoraria directly to the Organist.

BUILDING USE: For a wedding without a reception on-site, the parish requests \$200 for care and upkeep of the church. If you have a reception at St. Paul's, we ask for an additional \$500. If you would like to set up for a reception in the Parish Hall one day in advance, please add \$200 to your venue fees. Please pay building use fees to St. Paul's.

A/V NEEDS: Video recording by our Media Specialist is available for \$300. A livestream web broadcast is available for an additional \$200. These include a fully integrated recording using multiple cameras, which provide shots that outside videographers are unable to capture. The Parish Hall rental fee includes the use of the audio system and projector. Contact the Media Specialist if you are interested. Please pay A/V fees to St. Paul's. An honorarium for the Media Specialist is appropriate but not expected.

ACOLYTES: Between one and five acolytes will serve at your wedding. You may request certain acolytes, and the clergy can also help select them. We request an honorarium of \$20.00 for each acolyte provided by the church. Please pay those honoraria directly to the acolytes through the clergy.

Unless paid directly to an individual (e.g. the Parish Organist or an Acolyte), all fees should be paid at the Church Office at least one week prior to the wedding. Fees given to individuals may be delivered directly to them or to the clergy before or after the rehearsal.

Contact Information

Name	Role	Email Address	Phone Number
Leslie Alexander	Parish Secretary (initial contact)	leslie@stpaulsfay.org	479-442-7373
Joy Poole	Parish Administrator (financial matters)	joy@stpaulsfay.org	479-442-7373
Jack Cleghorn	Parish Organist	jack@stpaulsfay.org	479-442-7373
Dan Robinson	Media Specialist	dan@stpaulsfay.org	479-442-7373
Jana Mayfield	Flower Guild Chair	janafrostmayfield@gmail.com	479-601-3158

Frequently Asked Questions

Can someone who is not a member of St. Paul's be married there?

Weddings are services of worship undertaken in the context of the spiritual life of the congregation. Only active members of St. Paul's or the children of active members may be married at the church. If you are not a member but would like to join, please contact a member of the clergy, who can discuss with you the process for becoming an active member of the church.

How do I schedule my wedding at St. Paul's?

Call the Church Office (479-442-7373) and ask to speak to our Parish Secretary. She will send your request to the Rector, who will assign a clergyperson to contact you about premarital preparation. Although we can pencil a date onto the church's calendar, a firm date for the wedding is only set by the minister during premarital preparation.

Can a minister from another church or tradition take part?

While it may be possible for someone from another church or tradition to take part in the service, that must be determined in the course of premarital preparation and in conversation with the Rector, who is the only person authorized to invite outside clergy to take part in services at St. Paul's.

May we write and say our own vows or use our own language for part of the service?

In The Episcopal Church, all language used in worship is established in the *Book of Common Prayer* or other officially approved liturgical texts. Couples may not write their own vows and must use those provided in an officially authorized liturgical text.

Why doesn't one wedding party enter from one direction and the other party process down the aisle as I've seen in other weddings?

Many of the ritual actions of weddings come from days when marriages were contractual events arranged by families as a way to exchange property. Back then, it made sense for two parties to enter from different directions in order to begin the contractual process safely "at arm's length." We no longer enter marriage as potentially adversarial parties agreeing to enter a contract. Thus, the wedding party enters together as friends intending to show their support for these two persons in their marriage. It makes sense for them to enter the church together as a sign of their mutual support and loving relationship.

Why isn't there a break in the procession or a change in music when the spouse or couple enters?

Some of that practice has its origins in the days of arranged marriages, when brides were kept safely hidden from grooms until the contract between their two families had been negotiated. At St. Paul's, we enter together joyfully in an act of worship and thanksgiving. The focus is on God, not on a property contract or even on the bride. Our procession, therefore, is a single shared entrance into worship instead of two separate processions or a bridal fanfare.

**LETTER OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN
ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND
ALL WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS**

There will be no wedding photography without a signed letter of agreement. Please return to St. Paul's at least one month prior to the wedding.

Still Photographs

The only pictures that can be taken once music has begun are those from a camera that is on a tripod, does not move during the service, has a silent shutter, and uses no flash. No photograph may hold a camera or move within the church once the music for the wedding has begun. This includes the music that is played prior to the marriage service.

There are two permitted locations for the photographer to set up a camera and tripod:

1. in the rear of the church behind the back pew
2. behind the choir pews next to the organ

Camcorders, Movie, and/or Television Cameras

These recording devices may be used with no additional lighting, must be on tripods, and may not be moved during the service. The two permitted locations are the same as above.

Agreement

I have read the above agreement and hereby indicate my willingness to abide by the requirements set forth by St. Paul's. I also understand that if I do not abide by these principles that I will not be allowed to take pictures at future weddings at St. Paul's.

Name of Photographer _____

Signature of Photographer _____

Names of Wedding Couple _____

Signatures of Wedding Couple _____

ALCOHOL POLICY

Adopted August 10, 2004; Revised March 28, 2018

The Episcopal Church has never endorsed the prohibition of the moderate, adult enjoyment of beverages containing alcohol. Scripture offers Jesus' example of the presence of wine at a wedding party in his first miracle at Cana of Galilee and at the Last Supper when he instituted the Holy Eucharist. Hebrew tradition honors wine as a gift from God when used moderately in accordance and purpose of the Creator. The following guidelines will direct the enjoyment of alcoholic beverages at church functions within the life of St. Paul's Parish:

1. The serving of alcohol must be approved in advance by the Vestry. The Rector may approve the use of alcohol at parish functions (or may refer such approval to the Vestry); the Vestry must approve the use of alcohol at all functions that are not directly church-related.
2. Only champagne, beer, or wine may be served.
3. All applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations are to be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcohol to minors. Alcoholic beverages cannot be sold (no "cash bars" will be approved). Donations may be accepted.
4. The use of alcohol will not be approved for events primarily designed for children or youth.
5. Alcoholic beverages and food containing alcohol must be clearly labeled as such and supervised by a mature person who has the sole responsibility of serving the alcohol. This shall include supervision of anyone working at the event (kitchen staff, etc.). Unsupervised access to alcohol (i.e. champagne fountains, open bottles in the kitchen or other work areas) is not allowed.
6. Whenever alcohol is served, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal attractiveness and accessibility. Food appropriate for the event should always be available.
7. The serving of alcoholic beverages should not be publicized as an attraction of the event (i.e. "Shrimp & Beer," "Wine & Cheese").
8. Only moderate consumption of alcohol is allowed. The sponsors of the event assume responsibility for monitoring consumption and for the safe travel of anyone who might become intoxicated. A maximum limit of 2 alcoholic beverages per person must be strictly enforced by servers.
9. All alcoholic beverages will be removed from the church immediately following the event, or stored securely in the Parish Administrator's office (which must be arranged in advance).
10. All groups or parishioners who serve alcohol on St. Paul's property are required to purchase (and provide proof of) a \$1 million liability insurance policy.

**ALCOHOL POLICY:
ACKNOWLEDGMENT & AGREEMENT**

We have read and understand the Alcohol Policy for St. Paul's Episcopal Church in full, and we commit to complying with this policy.

Partner 1 Signature: _____

Partner 1 Printed Name: _____

Partner 2 Signature: _____

Partner 2 Printed Name: _____

Please attach proof of liability coverage of up to \$1,000,000.

**LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GUIDELINES
FOR MARRIAGE AT ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

We have read this guidebook in full and been informed about the expectations and policies for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. We have received a copy of this guidebook and agree to abide by the policy guidelines.

Please read this guidebook carefully to ensure that you understand and agree to the policies herein before signing this document.

Partner 1 Signature: _____

Partner 1 Printed Name: _____

Partner 2 Signature: _____

Partner 2 Printed Name: _____