
The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage



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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage!

This customary has been created to ensure that your wedding is a beautiful, sacred, and stress-free day. The Episcopal Church regards weddings as a service of worship and a means through which the grace and love of God are given and made known through the words and actions of the people. Indeed, in Christian marriage partners enter into a Christ-centered union, make their vows before God and the Christian community, and receive the blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows. These guidelines are in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer and church canons. As such, couples are expected to adhere to them in their entirety.

WHO MAY MARRY AT ST. PAUL'S

We believe that marriage is not just a ceremony held in a church building. Rather it is the joining of two people within the context of a particular community of faith that promises to support them in their marriage. Accordingly, one of the following must be met:

- 1) couples with at least one person who has been an active, giving member of record for at least one year.
- 2) couples with a strong familial connection to the church who are baptized and active members of another parish.

In accordance with the laws of Maryland and the canons of The Episcopal Church, St. Paul's offers the sacrament of marriage to couples of the same gender or sex.

FEES

(Church usage fee is due at the time of the application)

- Use of Church/Sanctuary
 - no fee for active members of record
 - \$500 (non-members and inactive members). Payable directly to St. Paul's Episcopal Church. *(Please note that active family members, including parents and grandparents, do not disqualify a couple from payment if they themselves are not active members).*
 - Minister of Music –includes consultation, rehearsal, and wedding day (members & non-members)
 - \$200
 - Payable Minister of Music two weeks before the service.
 - Clergy
 - As a sacrament of the church, the priest officiates at weddings without charge. However, in thanksgiving for their marriage, many couples provide an honorarium of \$200-300 payable directly to The Rev. Dr. Maria A. Kane.
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SCHEDULING

- Those desiring to be married must complete an application and meet with the rector before a date can be confirmed on the church calendar. At the initial meeting the Rector will discuss the couple's request to be married at St. Paul's, answer any questions the couple may have, set out the preparation process, and clarify Church teachings regarding Christian marriage. Please do not schedule the reception venue before confirming a date with the church.
- Weddings must be scheduled at least 3 months in advance. All weddings take place on Saturdays between 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Friday weddings may be scheduled in consultation with the rector. Per Canons of the Episcopal Church no wedding may be scheduled with less than 90 days' notice.
- There are no weddings during Lent (Ash Wednesday-Holy Saturday), the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, and the week after Easter.
- The rector officiates at all weddings. Additional ministers may officiate alongside the rector at the rector's invitation.

MARRIAGE AFTER DIVORCE

Marriage after divorce is allowed in the Episcopal Church. However, a minimum of one year from the date of the final divorce decree must have passed and Canon Law prohibits clergy from solemnizing the marriage of anyone who has been divorced without the consent of the Diocesan Bishop. Generally speaking, the bishop responds within thirty (30) days in regard to a priest's request to solemnize a second marriage. In order to receive the bishop's consent, the rector must write a formal letter to the Bishop stating that she has seen copies of the divorce decree(s), believes that the couple has done the appropriate work in regard to addressing the issues surrounding a previous marriage or marriages, and believes in good conscience that the couple is prepared to enter into covenantal life together. It is recommended, therefore, that before seeking marriage in the church individuals who have been divorced seek appropriate counseling.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING

- All couples getting married at St. Paul's are required to undergo premarital counseling. Per the recommendation of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, couples are urged to meet with a licensed professional counselor for a minimum of 4 sessions. In some instances, couples may request that their counseling be completed with the rector. The counseling must be completed at least 60 days before the wedding. In some cases, the rector may recommend more extensive counseling.
 - We can provide a list of therapists we have worked with in the past, but you may use a therapist of your own choosing as long as the person specializes in couples counseling.
 - The rector also has the right of refusal should a couple not complete premarital counseling satisfactorily.
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MARRIAGE LICENSE

Please bring your marriage license with you to the rehearsal. We must have your marriage license in hand the day before the ceremony to ensure that all legal obligations are satisfied and so that the parish can complete the necessary paperwork before you arrive for the wedding. After the wedding the rector will mail the license to the County Courthouse.

THE LITURGY

- All weddings must conform to the liturgy for The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage found on page 423 of the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* and approved liturgical supplements, which the church can provide.
- All readings must come from the Holy Bible. One additional reading may come from secular poetry or prose.
- The Episcopal Church requires that the vows be stated precisely as they appear in the *Book of Common Prayer* and approved liturgical supplements. Couples may not write their own vows.

MUSIC

- The Minister of Music plays at all weddings unless otherwise unavailable, upon which she will provide recommendations. It is important that the couple contacts the Minister of Music as soon as the wedding date is confirmed with the rector. The Minister of Music will work closely with the couple and is a valuable resource for the selection of music.
- As this is a service of worship, weddings may not employ show tunes or pop music, etc. Because the contexts of the familiar Mendelssohn and Wagner pieces are not in harmony with the holiness of marriage and love, these two pieces are not an option. The Minister of Music has a wide repertoire of musical pieces and will be happy to help couples find more appropriate selections.
- Vocalists and instrumentalists are welcomed, but the Minister of Music must meet with the musicians in advance of the wedding, as well.

FLOWERS AND CANDLES

- Altar candles are lit for a wedding as they are for all worship services. You may also request the use of our two candelabras to be placed in the chancel near the altar.
 - Candles in hurricane glasses may be placed in the windowsills along the side aisles. Couples must provide candles for hurricane glasses.
 - The Episcopal Church does not allow unity candles or sand ceremonies, etc. Unity may be expressed by a celebration of the Holy Eucharist.
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- Flowers may be placed in the windowsills or on the ledges near the altar.
 - Rice, birdseed, confetti and other objects are not to be strewn or blown anywhere inside or outside the church. You may blow bubbles outside the church. Flower petals may be placed on the aisle.
 - Small floral arrangements or bows may be attached to the ends of the pews.
 - All decorations must be removed within one hour following the conclusion of the service.
 - If altar flowers are to remain for Sunday morning, the couple may request a dedication for the flowers in the weekly Sunday church bulletin. If so, the exact wording of the dedication must be given to the parish secretary no later than 21 days before the ceremony.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

- While we are sensitive to the desire of the couple to preserve this important in their lives, the marriage ceremony is first and foremost a worship service. Photographers and videographers must follow the church's guidelines in order to preserve the sacramental nature of the ceremony. Please inform your photographer and/or videographer of these guidelines in advance of the wedding.
 - **Flash photography is only allowed during the processional.**
 - The photographer/videographer is not permitted in the altar area and must not enter the center aisle, nor in any way come between the members of the procession, the congregation, or the clergy after the processional.
 - Photographs taken before the ceremony must be completed 30 minutes prior to the wedding. This allows guests to be seated in a timely manner and ensures that the wedding starts on time.
 - Any video camera visible to the congregation must be positioned and left on a tripod during the entire ceremony. An attendant may stand near the tripod to adjust focus as necessary. The tripod may not be situated in the altar area.
 - A sign will be placed in the narthex (lobby) of the church to alert guests that photography is not permitted during the service after the processional. This is so that people will focus their attention on the ceremony.
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HOLY COMMUNION

Since the Marriage Rite is a service of worship involving the whole congregation, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is encouraged, though entirely optional.

ACOLYTES AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

The couple may choose relatives or family friends to serve as acolytes if they have served in this capacity elsewhere. The church does not provide acolytes for weddings but will provide a Eucharistic Minister if needed.

AISLE RUNNERS

Due to the nature of bridal gowns and trains, new shoes, wedding jitters and the possible hazard of tripping and entanglement, the use of a white aisle cloth or runner for the entrance of the bride and her escort is not permitted.

SERVICE LEAFLET

We have a standard program design that we can produce for you at no extra charge on beige paper. If you would like a particular kind of paper, you must provide the office with the paper 21 days before the wedding. All information for the program must be submitted to the church office no later than 21 days before the wedding.

If a couple designs and prints their own bulletin, a draft must be sent to the church office no later than 21 days before the ceremony.

REHEARSAL

- The wedding rehearsal will take place the day before the wedding and will last 30 minutes. Everyone should arrive at least 10 minutes before the scheduled time for the rehearsal and be seated at the front of the church.
- The following must be present at the rehearsal: honor attendants, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ring bearers, flower girls, readers, ushers, anyone who will walk in the procession, and visiting clergy.
- The rector conducts the wedding rehearsal with support from a member of the Altar Guild. Wedding consultants or planners may attend the rehearsal as observers if they wish; however, the consultant or planner has no role during the rehearsal.

DRESSING FOR THE WEDDING

- The wedding party may use the Bride's Room, upstairs classrooms, and downstairs break-out rooms to get dressed and to store personal items during the ceremony. Use of the room is limited to 5 hours before the ceremony and 1 hour following the ceremony, unless you are using the arish Hall for your reception.
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- As the Bride's Room is the only room with an outside lock, the wedding party assumes all liability for items stored in the classrooms.
 - Classroom furniture, if moved for convenience, should be put back in order before leaving the church after the ceremony.
 - No alcohol or smoking is prohibited on church grounds before the ceremony.

RECEPTION

Hamilton Hall is available to rent for your reception. The hall seats up to 150 people comfortably. For more information and pricing guidelines visit our website.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The rector does not expect to be invited to social functions in connection with the wedding. If you would like the Rector to attend please issue a written invitation and she will attend if possible.
 - **All members of the wedding party must be sober at the rehearsal and before the ceremony. The rector reserves the right to postpone the wedding or dismiss members of the wedding party if there are any signs of inebriation.**
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APPLICATION FOR MARRIAGE
ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, PINEY PARISH

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT.

Requested Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

(1) Full Name _____

Member of St. Paul's? Yes No

If no, indicate where you regularly worship

_____ City _____ State _____

Date of Birth _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone: _____

Email Address _____

Baptismal date _____ Church _____

City _____ State _____

Confirmation date (*if applicable*) _____ Church _____

City _____ State _____

Full name of parents and hometown (required for Church Register)

Have you been previously married? Yes No Dates: _____

If divorced, was counseling completed? How long did you attend?

(2) Full Name _____

Member of St. Paul's? Yes No

If no, indicate where you regularly worship

_____ City _____ State _____

Date of Birth _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Baptismal date _____ Church _____

City _____ State _____

Confirmation date (*if applicable*) _____ Church _____

City _____ State _____

Full name of parents and hometown (required for Church Register)

Have you been previously married? Yes No Dates: _____

If divorced, was counseling completed? How long did you attend?

We acknowledge that we have read and agree to abide by the provisions outlined in this customary.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Declaration of Intention

We, _____ and _____
desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly
declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is
set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.

We believe that 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.

And we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to
establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

2003 Constitution & Canons of the Episcopal Church: Canon I.18.3 (e, f and g)

Return this application and the Declaration of Intention to:

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Attn: Mrs. Diane Hess, Office Administrator

4535 Piney Church Road, Waldorf, MD 20602

To submit by fax: (301) 638-5894; to submit by email: office@stpaulswaldorf.org

Office Use Only:

Application received: _____

Payments: _____
