



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

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CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR UPCOMING MARRIAGE!

In the months ahead you will experience many things as we prepare your wedding service. We at St. Paul's are here to journey with you as together we prepare for your wedding. We are committed to working with you to make your church wedding a memorable occasion. We know from our experience, that a wedding can be a time of joy and wonder, a time when the bride and groom share their joy with family and friends. A wedding is an event blessed by God and His Church. Weddings can also be demanding. You can spend months, even years attending to every detail. If you don't plan carefully, handling the details of planning your wedding service can get lost in the logistics.

You have chosen St. Paul's and the Book of Common Prayer for your Wedding Service. The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, as outlined in the Prayer Book, is a beautiful and ancient tradition in which we take pride. We will work with you to personalize the Service to bring a personal touch to your wedding ceremony. Unlike a civil ceremony, a service of Christian marriage is, in every way, an act of worship. It glorifies God and affirms the unconditional and life-long covenant between husband and wife. Any man and woman seeking to be married in the church need to demonstrate the maturity of their relationship and their clear intention to build a **Christian** home.

The following pages are designed to help facilitate your wedding experience. Allow these pages to assist you in being creative in the design of your ceremony. Please take the time to read this guide, reflect on the suggestions it offers, and stay in conversation with us so that your wedding will be a celebration that you, your families and your guests will long remember.

In Christ,

The Rev. John R. Martinichio

CANON LAW

Canon Law of the Episcopal Church states the Rector of the parish in which the ceremony is to take place must be notified at least 30 days before the date of the wedding. However, it is expected that the couple will meet with the Rector for a minimum of five sessions of pre-marital counseling, and will meet at least once with the church organist. **THESE MEETINGS MUST BE COMPLETED AT LEAST SIX WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING DATE.** Therefore, the Rector needs to be informed of the couple's desire to be married at St. Paul's as early as possible. This allows sufficient time for the couple to receive assistance and guidance in preparing for marriage. **PLEASE** do not issue wedding invitations or confirm any wedding arrangements until the Rector has been able to confirm that he will be able to perform the ceremony. The Rector has sole authority in determining whether or not a couple may be married at St. Paul's, and **he must clear all arrangements pertaining to the church.** If you choose a date near any holiday, the entire staff must consent before the date can be confirmed.

Without consent of the Diocesan Bishop, the clergy of the Episcopal Church is prevented by Canon Law from solemnizing the marriage of persons who are divorced or whose previous marriage has been annulled. If the previous marriage of the bride and/or groom ended in divorce or annulment, this must be discussed with the Rector at the first counseling session. The Rector will explain the application process necessary for the Bishop to grant permission for your marriage in the church to proceed. No plans can be made for your wedding service to proceed in the church until permission is granted by the Bishop. Keeping all this in mind, please bring the following items with you to your first counseling session:

- Baptismal Certificates
- Letters of Transfers, if necessary (not already a member)
- Divorce Decree/ Annulment Papers (if applicable)
- Any other documents requested by the Rector

CIVIL LAW

A valid New York State marriage license must be obtained from the City/Town/Village Clerk where you reside. There is a fee and both parties must apply together in person. Regarding the time limits within which marriages can be solemnized: New York State law states the following: "A marriage shall not be solemnized until twenty-four hours after the issuance of the marriage license, nor shall it be solemnized after sixty days from the date of the issuance of the marriage license." Please contact your local City, Town or Village Clerk for further information and requirements.

Please bring the license with you to the Rehearsal.

THE BRIDE AND GROOM

In general, the bride or bridegroom must be an active, baptized member of St. Paul's Church to have his or her marriage solemnized in this parish. Baptized members of another Episcopal church, or baptized members of other branches of the one, holy, Catholic Church, in dialogue with the Episcopal Church will also be considered. Premarital counseling is required in all cases. Only worshipping/supporting members of St. Paul's are eligible for our reduced fee schedule.

OTHER ORDAINED MINISTERS

It is expected that the Rector of St. Paul's Church will officiate at all wedding services. However, other priests of the Episcopal Church and ministers in denominations outside of the Episcopal Church may be cordially invited to participate in the service, with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop. If this is something you would desire, please make arrangements with the Rector at your first counseling session.

TIMES AND DATES

Weddings can be scheduled for dates and times that do not conflict with our regularly scheduled services. Advent, Lent and Sundays are not appropriate choices due to the additional worship preparation that is required.

THE SITE

It is the custom of the Episcopal Church that all weddings will be performed in the church building. The nave can comfortably seat 200 people. There are 15 pews on the left and 13 on the right as you face the altar. Couples also have the option of using the Chapel as alternative site for their wedding ceremony.

PARKING

The Church parking lot, the school lot across the street (providing no school activities are happening) and on street parking is available.

MEMBERS ONLY

The church fellowship hall (undercroft) is available for rehearsal dinners and/or wedding receptions and parishioners are encouraged to use it. **Seating capacity is 125; standing capacity is 200.** The Rector will discuss the guidelines and requirements with you for hosting this type of event. **NO** wine, champagne, wine-based punch and champagne-based punch and beer may be served unless the required insurance is secured. Diocesan guidelines require that non-alcoholic beverages also be available as an attractive and viable alternative.

USE OF CHURCH SPACE FOR WEDDINGS

Clergy who are in good standing within their own denominations may be allowed to use St. Paul's Church for wedding of their members. Approval of this request will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Vestry and Rector of St. Paul's Church. A non-refundable fee of \$500.00, payable in advance, is required. Additional fees are incurred for use of the church organist, acolyte, altar guild, and/or custodial services.

This policy is binding without exception.

MUSIC

The Celebration and Blessing of a marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church. As such, your musical choices for the ceremony should reflect this. The canons and rubrics of the Episcopal Church govern these choices. At St. Paul's, all efforts are made to insure the highest

quality of **SACRED** music is used; music that is appropriate for the marriage rite and that is in keeping with Canon 5, Section 2, governing the use of music within the church:

Canon 5: Of the Music of the Church: It shall be the duty of every Member of the Clergy to see that music is used as an offering for the glory of God and as a help to the people in their worship in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer and as authorized by the rubrics or by the General Convention of this Church. To this end the Member of the Clergy shall have final authority in the administration of the matters pertaining to music. In fulfilling this responsibility the Member of the Clergy shall seek assistance from persons skilled in music. Together they shall see that music is appropriate to the context in which it is used.

After meeting with the Rector and confirming the date and time for your service **AND BEFORE** you engage the services of other musicians, you need to contact the church organist to schedule a consultation with regard to the musical selections for your wedding service. At this consultation, the organist will confirm with you the musical selections, all rehearsal times and the total amount of compensation due. Additionally, this consultation will provide you with an opportunity to listen to various processional and recessional musical options.

PLEASE NOTE: If you wish to have an organist other than the St. Paul's organist, the Rector and staff organist must give their consent. The use of other instrumentalists must also receive their approval. Payment of the St. Paul's Church organist is required, as per our fee schedule, even if you choose to use someone else.

This means that the music must:

- have lyrics that express a Christian way of life and love;
- have words, the intent of which go beyond the human love of one person for another, expressing God's love for His people;
- fit the part of the ceremony where it is to be used, e.g. the processional and recessional music should be march type;
- be carefully timed, so as to keep the service progressing and moving smoothly from one part to another.

The music should be the best of its style (Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Contemporary, etc.) in that it should:

- have a meaningful text which fulfills the sacramental moment;
- have a well constructed melody;
- be within the capabilities of the one who will perform it;
- be appropriate for playing on the instrument which it is to be performed.

This means that the music should:

- be free of negative connotations.
- express sentiments of happy, hopeful expectations (not sad or sentimental);
- express a positive Christian view of life and love. Your personal selections from current popular music (Broadway, films, operatic, etc.) should be reserved for the wedding reception.

Remember, the church setting is one of prayer and sacrament. Everything used should be appropriate to the sacred and spiritual context in which it will be performed.

CHURCH SOLOIST

To enhance the splendor for your wedding ceremony, include special music before and/or during your ceremony. You may hire your own soloist, however please note, the soloist must provide the St. Paul's Church organist with copies of the musical selections at least **eight weeks** before the wedding. Failure to provide the music in a timely fashion may result in not having the music you have requested for the ceremony. The fee to the organist will increase by \$75.00 when a guest soloist is used; this covers one rehearsal with the soloist at a time convenient to the organist and soloist.

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT ALLOWED: rice, confetti, scented wood chips, potpourri, birdseed, or the like anywhere inside or outside the church buildings for health and ecological reasons. Additionally, please do not release helium balloons because of pollution concerns. Small wedding bells and wedding bubbles are an excellent alternative but please do not use the bubbles inside the church building.

NO alcohol is to be consumed by any member of the wedding party prior to the ceremony. No alcohol is to be consumed on church property and/or on the street or other parking areas.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The wedding ceremony is a service of worship. It is important that all involved be able to give their full attention to this solemn and joyous event. **Therefore, we ask that no flashbulb photographs, professional or amateur, be taken during the service.** Pictures may be taken before or after the service. Photographers may not leave their seat after the service has started; all pictures must be taken from that position. For couples hosting their reception off-site, there is a one-hour limit on remaining in the church after the ceremony, as the church needs to be prepared for the next service. Video taping during the ceremony using available light is available with permission of the Rector. No videotaping or photographs are allowed from the chancel area. Please have your photographer and/or videographer consult with the Rector in advance of your wedding. Although photographers and video tapers are permitted in the nave during the ceremony, they are expected to be unobtrusive and still. Also, we ask they not stop the flow of the processions to take photographs.

REHEARSAL

A wedding rehearsal gives the entire wedding party an opportunity to practice for the ceremony, allowing your wedding party to feel more relaxed and comfortable with their roles in your special day. The rehearsal is usually conducted the day before the wedding (other days/times may be substituted. Please consult the Rector). The rehearsal lasts approximately one hour. Certain members of your wedding party are required to attend the rehearsal including: the bride and groom, best man, maid/matron of honor, bridesmaids, ushers, whoever presents the bride at the altar, readers, soloist(s), instrumentalist(s), acolytes (if other than St. Paul's Church acolytes). Anyone else you would like to attend is more than welcome. **PLEASE BE ON TIME** for the rehearsal so that there will be ample opportunity to cover all the details and answer any questions anyone has about the ceremony. Please gather together and sit in the back of the sanctuary prior to the beginning of the rehearsal.

ACOLYTE

An acolyte may be present at weddings. He or she will light the candles and assist the Rector during the ceremony. As such, we require an honorarium to compensate them for his or her time.

THE WEDDING DAY

The following schedule will be helpful to you as you plan events for your special day (*all times are approximate*).

BEFORE THE CEREMONY

Ushers Arrive at Church	30 minutes prior
Bridegroom and Best Man to Vesting Room	15 minutes prior
Bride and Bridal Party	15 minutes prior

DURING THE CEREMONY

Wedding Service without Holy Eucharist	30 minutes
Wedding Service with Holy Eucharist	60 minutes

(Please note: the use of additional vocal and/or instrumental pieces will lengthen the service accordingly).

AFTER THE CEREMONY

Guest Receiving Line	20-30 minutes
Photography	30 minutes
All parties vacate church premises	60 minutes after

(Allowing preparation of the church for its worship services).

WEDDING FLOWERS

The bride may use the florist of her choice. Please note that two floral arrangements are needed for the altar. These two floral arrangements remain after the wedding service as an offering to God for our next scheduled Sunday services. Following those services, the flowers will be distributed to the ill and homebound. For this reason, these flowers are considered a gift to the congregation. A notation of your gift and that it is given to the honor and glory of God, in thanksgiving for your marriage, will be noted in our Sunday bulletin. You also need to note that aisle runners are **not** allowed. They present a significant risk of injury should someone trip and fall. Real floral petals cannot be scattered on the carpet; however, silk petals can be used in their place.

EXPLANATION OF FEES

*All fees are due in the parish office **45 days** before the wedding. It is your responsibility to see that these fees are paid on time. If you are unsure of what fees are required, please consult with the Rector. In the case of a cancellation, **50%** of the fees paid are refundable.*

FOR WORSHIPPING & SUPPORTING MEMBERS:

*The cost for having your wedding at St. Paul's is \$350.00.
(Organist-\$175.00, Rector's Discretionary Fund 75.00, St. Paul's Church \$100.00)*

FOR THOSE NOT WORSHIPPING & SUPPORTING:

The cost for having your wedding at St. Paul's Church is \$650.00.

FOR ST. PAUL'S CHURCH MEMBERS ONLY REHEARSAL DINNER/WEDDING RECEPTION

If you choose to host your rehearsal dinner and/or wedding reception in the church fellowship hall (undercroft), arrangements need to be made as early as possible with the Rector. He will provide you with a **Building Use Form** that you will need to complete and return to him. **Maximum** number for seating in the Great Hall is **125**. Maximum number standing only is 200. There can be no exceptions due to fire code regulations. If you wish to use the Great Hall for either or both of these events, please provide the Rector with the following at your earliest convenience:

- Completed Building Use Form
- Number of guests

A FINAL NOTE

The members of St. Paul's Church believe that your wedding should be among the happiest and most beautiful moments in your life. We are glad that you have decided to be married in our church, and we are pleased to share in this joyful occasion with you. We look forward to helping make your wedding a witness to the conviction that God instituted marriage, and that God does indeed bless those who make a sacred covenant to one another in His Name and before His altar. May God richly bless you always!

CONTACT INFORMATION

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