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Weddings - General Information

from *www.stpaulshouston.org*

Frequently Asked Questions about Weddings at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Houston

updated July 2, 2009

May we have a wedding at St. Paul's if we are not members of the church?

Yes you may.

How far in advance can we book a wedding at St. Paul's?

You may book your wedding as far in advance as you wish. However, weddings of non-members will not be confirmed until 180 days prior to the wedding. Unless the bride or groom (or a parent, guardian, or grandparent) has been a member of St. Paul's for at least six months before scheduling a wedding, the wedding is regarded as a non-member wedding.

When are weddings held at St. Paul's?

Weddings are held on Saturdays at 11 a.m., 3 p.m., or 7 p.m. Weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays, certain holidays, or the weekends of those holidays — New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Weddings also will not be scheduled during Holy Week, which is from Palm Sunday through Easter Day.

How many people will St. Paul's sanctuary seat? The chapel?

The seating capacity for the sanctuary is 600 adults. The chapel seats 65 adults.

May we select our own minister to officiate at our wedding?

St. Paul's male or female clergy are assigned on a rotating basis to officiate. A minister from another United Methodist Church or other denomination or faith may assist. When the officiating minister for your service has been determined, the Wedding Coordinator will inform you. Please call 713-528-0527 to make an appointment with the designated minister for a conference to be held no later than three weeks before the ceremony. During the conference, the minister will discuss with you the details of the service and the meaning of marriage in the context of the Christian faith.

Is marriage counseling required?

An optional marriage seminar, "Being One," is included for couples who marry at St. Paul's. "Being One" is conducted, usually quarterly, by Dr. Sherry Beeman and Dr. Bill Kerley, who are psychotherapists married to each other. This seminar fulfills the "Twogether in Texas" marriage education requirements.

May we select our own music and musicians?

Responsibility for all music at St. Paul's is delegated to the Organist/Choirmaster, who will assist you in planning the music for your wedding. As soon as you have booked your wedding, please call the Organist/Choirmaster at 713-528-0529, extension 30.

Only St. Paul's staff musicians may play the organ or sing at a St. Paul's wedding. If you want the St. Paul's Choir to sing at your wedding, they should be booked at least six months prior to the wedding. Nonetheless, due to scheduling conflicts, the St. Paul's Choir may not be available for the requested date.

How old must one be to participate in a St. Paul's wedding?

Children must be at least six years old to participate in a St. Paul's wedding. That includes ring bearers and flower girls.

May we write our own service?

All weddings will use "A Service of Christian Marriage" as published in The United Methodist Hymnal or other services approved by The United Methodist Church.

How do we schedule our wedding?

To schedule your wedding, contact the Wedding Coordinator via email (anngunn@stpaulshouston.org) or call 713-528-0527.

Please remember that weddings scheduled by non-members will not be confirmed earlier than 180 days prior to the wedding; this allows priority to church members. However, non-member weddings may be scheduled with the Wedding Coordinator in advance of the 180-day period on a tentative basis. Deposits made prior to this time will secure a date from being given to another non-member couple.

Member weddings will be confirmed by St. Paul's upon payment of the wedding deposit.

If your wedding date is cancelled by the church prior to the 180 days before your wedding, your deposit will be refunded. However, any cancellation by the wedding

party will result in forfeiting all non-refundable payments.

What are the fees?

\$1,500 *Building Use for Sanctuary

\$800 *Building Use for Chapel

\$275 Minister's Honorarium

\$275 Organist

\$150 Vocalist, each (optional)

\$1,500 St. Paul's Choir (optional)

\$2 Candles (each)

**The Building Use Fee includes use of the Bride's Room, the Groom's Area, parking lots, safety staff, a wedding assistant and related services for two hours before through one-and-one-half hours after the wedding begins.*

What is the Payment schedule?

Deposit. A \$200 deposit is required to secure the availability of St. Paul's for your wedding. This deposit is partial payment of the total fees paid to St. Paul's for the wedding.

Second Payment. A non-refundable payment of \$500 for a sanctuary wedding or \$250 for a chapel wedding is due toward the total fees owed to St. Paul's at either six months before the wedding date or upon booking the wedding if the wedding date is fewer than six months from the booking date.

Balance. The balance of the fees is due and payable no later than 14 days prior to the wedding date.

Weddings will be removed from the calendar if the fees are not received according to the payment schedule.

What if we have a cancellation?

If you must cancel your wedding for any reason, please notify the Wedding Coordinator as soon as possible so this date may be made available for others.

When may we schedule our rehearsal and who must attend?

The rehearsal time must be set with the Wedding Coordinator when the wedding is scheduled. These are to be at 5, 6, or 7 p.m. on the evening preceding the wedding.

All members of the wedding party, including parents, grandparents, and ushers, should be present at the rehearsal. Please stress promptness to them. Due to the large number of weddings and rehearsals at St. Paul's, there may be as many as three rehearsals on the same evening. If members of your party are more than 15 minutes late, your rehearsal may be cancelled.

Any Other Pertinent Details?

- A Wedding Guild member will be available at the rehearsal and wedding to help make the wedding go smoothly.
- A Bride's Room is available for the bride and her attendants to use beginning no sooner than two hours before the wedding begins. A Groom's Area is available during this same period.
- If the St. Paul's parking lots are to be used longer than 1.5 hours after the wedding begins, the bride and groom must provide professional security.
- No rice, bird seed, or flower petals (real or artificial), or anything of this nature may be thrown on the church premises by anyone, including a flower girl.
- Absolutely no alcohol is allowed on the church premises at any time before, during, or after the wedding. Smoking is permitted only outside the buildings.

Responsibility

These FAQs are not intended to provide every answer about weddings at St. Paul's. For more information, including reservation forms and policies, please see elsewhere in the Weddings section of this Website. It is the responsibility of the bride and the groom to ensure that any outside vendors to whom these policies apply be provided a copy of the relevant policies and that these policies are followed.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Wedding Coordinator, Ann Gunn at anngunn@stpaulshouston.org or 713-528-0527.

Policies for Wedding Music and Musicians

Updated July 2, 2009

Responsibility for all music at St. Paul's United Methodist Church is delegated to the Organist/Choirmaster, who will assist you in planning the music for your wedding. To make a music appointment, contact the Organist/Choirmaster at 713-528-0529, ext. 30.

The following music policies are in effect for all weddings:

- Because a wedding is a service of worship, the liturgical guidelines for music are subject to the same standards as music for any other worship service at St. Paul's.
- Texts of hymns, anthems, or solos are to be taken from Holy Scripture, the *United Methodist Hymnal*, or the *Book of Common Prayer*, or shall be texts congruent with them. Only music appropriate for a church service is to be used. Music with commercial associations, whether textual or musical — including, but not limited to, music from Broadway-style shows — is not appropriate.
- The Organist/Choirmaster will have final say as to the appropriateness of all music to be included in a wedding at St. Paul's.
- St. Paul's staff organists play at all weddings at which organ music is desired. When vocal solos are desired, they are sung by St. Paul's staff singers only. The St. Paul's Choir may also be engaged to sing at a wedding, provided that ample notice is given — a minimum of six months is recommended. Nonetheless, the St. Paul's Choir may not be available for the requested date due to scheduling conflicts. In addition to the organ, other instruments — such as strings, trumpet, harp — can be included with the prior approval of the Organist/Choirmaster. Musicians do not attend wedding rehearsals.
- Payment for St. Paul's staff musicians is made through the church; payment for other instrumentalists is made according to arrangements made with them.

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Weddings - Policies

from www.stpaulshouston.org

Policies for Wedding Photographers and Videographers

updated July 2, 2009

St. Paul's welcomes photography/videography by professionals or amateurs provided it does not distract attention from worship. These policies are designed to support that goal.

The bride and groom are responsible for ensuring that family, friends, and professional photographers/videographers observe these policies in detail. During the wedding, ushers are responsible for informing guests of these policies.

St. Paul's reserves the right to deny access — present or future — to anyone who violates any of these policies.

Photography or Videography

Noise and movement must be kept to an absolute minimum. St. Paul's live acoustic makes any noise distracting.

Photography or videography sessions held inside the sanctuary or chapel before the service must end 30 minutes before the service is set to begin. Similar sessions may follow the wedding. However, all equipment, members of the wedding party, and guests must be out of and away from the sanctuary building 90 minutes after the beginning of the ceremony. (Example: For a 3 p.m. wedding, vacate the premises by 4:30 p.m.)

Anything moved during any type of picture session must be returned to its original position.

Before the wedding party enters the sanctuary or chapel, a photographer may take flash pictures from outside the doorway.

Flash pictures also may be taken as they leave the sanctuary or chapel at the end of the ceremony.

During the service, only available light may be used. Also during the service, no cameras may be used in the main seating area of the sanctuary or chapel; they only may be used from the sanctuary balcony or outside the chapel door.

The balcony vantage point provides a beautiful view of the entire sanctuary and all participants in the worship service.

Videography Specific

Videotaping in the sanctuary is permitted only from the balcony and only using available light.

Videotaping in the chapel is permitted only from the back corner opposite the organ or from outside the doors, and only using available light.

TIP

The wedding party has use of the church for two hours prior to the beginning of the wedding and for 90 minutes after it begins. To effectively use this time, it is recommended that as many photographs as possible of the wedding party be taken before the wedding begins.

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Policies for Wedding Florists

Updated August 4, 2009

The policies for florists apply whether the family chooses to use the services of a professional florist or those of a non-professional friend or relative. It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that anyone ordering or handling floral or other decorations is supplied with a copy of these policies.

It is the responsibility of the florist to keep a current copy of these policies on file and to comply with them. The Weddings section of the St. Paul's website (www.stpaulshouston.org) will have the most recent copy of them.

Any florist failing to follow these policies will not be permitted to return to work at St. Paul's. The florist also will be responsible for any damages incurred.

Decor and Decorum

St. Paul's sanctuary is itself an offering of praise to God. Its soaring English Gothic arches, beautiful stained-glass windows, and majestic organ are designed to draw worshippers' thoughts upward to the divine.

The richness of this classic architectural style requires little enhancement; therefore, wedding decorations should be kept as simple as possible.

Set-up and Removal

Florists may begin decorating the sanctuary or chapel no more than two hours before the service is to begin. St. Paul's regrets that we are unable to make exceptions to this policy.

Florists must clean up any debris from the installation and removal of arrangements

and must bring the brooms, dustpans, towels or other equipment necessary for so doing.

All decorations must be removed immediately after the ceremony. Items not removed by the florist or family may be discarded by church staff or volunteers to allow preparation for other worship services.

The wedding flowers are, of course, yours to keep; however, if you wish to donate your flowers to the church for use in the next day's Sunday services, contact the senior minister's assistant at 713-528-0527.

Candles and Candleholders

St. Paul's candlesticks and/or candelabra may be used upon request. Four types of candleholders are available:

- Floor candelabra
- Single candlesticks
- Tabletop candelabra
- Unity candlestick

Candles are furnished by the church for a small charge.

In the sanctuary, the floor candelabra may be placed at either of two pair of locations in the chancel, marked "FC" in the diagram on the next page. Also in the sanctuary, either the single candlesticks or the tabletop candelabra, but not both, may be placed on the altar ("C" in the diagram), on either side of the altar cross.

Florists also may supply floor candelabra (dripleless candles only — the florist is responsible for any damage) for placement in the same locations. Only candleholders provided by the church may be used on the altar.

Similar arrangements are used in the chapel.

Use of candles is restricted to the altar area. No other candles or lights of any kind are permitted in either the sanctuary or the chapel.

No greenery, bows, or decorations may be placed on any of St. Paul's candleholders.

Flowers and Greenery

Sanctuary or Chapel

- * Small arrangements of flowers and/or greenery may be attached at the ends of the pews using ribbon only. To allow the wedding party to pass down the narrow center aisle, such arrangements must not extend more than 6" into the aisle, and no other objects may be placed in the aisles.
- No greenery, bows, or decorations of any kind may be placed anywhere in the chancel or other areas, i.e., altar railings, paneling, walls.

Sanctuary Specific

In the sanctuary, floral arrangements should be placed in two urns ("U" in the diagram). These urns should be filled before any other floral decorations are used. Urn arrangements may not impede access to any part of the chancel area; florists will be asked to reduce oversized arrangements. All urn arrangements must be in papier-mache containers. (Western brand 4-1/2J is a good fit.)

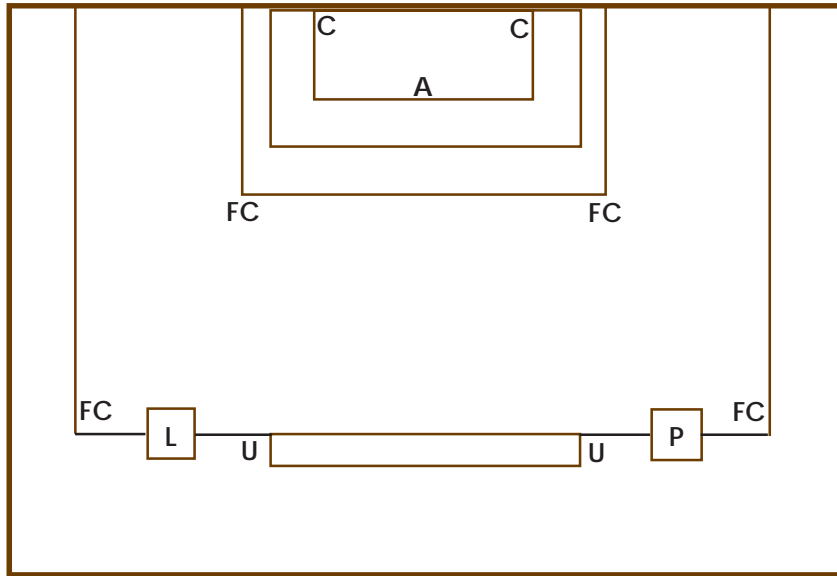
Chapel Specific

In the chapel, floral arrangements may be placed on two 13"x13" tables or on two 7" (d) x 16" (w) wall brackets. All chapel arrangements must be in leak-proof containers supplied by the florist.

Other Information

- Use only ribbon to fasten decorations to the pews. Tape, pins, nails, tacks, or glue may not be used anywhere in the building, including on the furnishings.
- Rice, bird seed, flower petals (real or artificial), or anything of this nature may not be thrown anywhere on church property, including in the parking lot. These are safety hazards.
- Aisle cloths are not permitted.
- Nothing may be placed on the chancel railings.
- Flowers may not be placed on the altar table.
- Church furniture, paraments (cloths), and other furnishings are part of the worship setting and may not be removed or altered.
- Arches, gazebos, vases, screens, columns, or other such free-standing decorations are not permitted.

Diagram of St. Paul's sanctuary altar
to indicate possible locations for candlesticks or candelabra during weddings



Key

A = Altar

C = Single candlesticks or tabletop candelabra

FC = Floor candelabra

L = Lectern

P = Pulpit

U = Urn

Not drawn to scale