



## Guidelines for a Wedding & Wedding Agreement

101 West Gale Street  
Edenton, NC 27932  
[www.stpedenton.org](http://www.stpedenton.org)  
252-482-3522

# The Wedding Customary

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Congratulations!

It is a pleasure to begin preparing with you for your new life together in marriage. To that end, I look forward to spending time with you talking about the meanings and dimensions of the marriage relationship. During these conversations, we will talk about the strengths and weaknesses which you bring with you to this commitment and about the needs and expectations you have of each other. We will talk about ways God and God's Church can support you to have the open, growing relationship, which He intends for you to have.

There are probably a thousand questions running through your mind about things to do and decisions to be made concerning your wedding. This booklet is prepared to help you through spiritual and liturgical aspects of planning the wedding ceremony. The suggestions here represent some of the options open to you. They are not intended to limit your freedom of choice where such is provided by the canons and customs of the Episcopal Church.

I hope you will find these suggestions helpful and I want you to know how much I am looking forward to sharing this experience with you.

The Rev. Melody Perdue

Rector of St. Paul's

## Episcopal Church Requirements for Marriage

### To be married at St. Paul's:

1. One person must be a baptized Christian.
2. The Rector of St. Paul's must approve all marriages.
  - a. *The Canon Law of the Episcopal Church gives the priest the right to solemnize or decline to solemnize any marriage. (The Canons of the General Convention [2006]. Title 1, Canon 18, Section 4.)*
3. All marriages must have two witnesses present.
4. For couples who have been divorced, the couple must meet with the Clergy to decide if re-marriage is advisable. If the decision is made to proceed with the marriage, the Clergy must seek permission from the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina. The priest submits forms, including information from the couple. The procedure for seeking permission for re-marriage takes 60 days, and the wedding should not be announced until the permission has been received. In discussing marriage with any couple, whether re-marriage is involved or not, the priest may advise the couple against marriage and may decline to officiate at the wedding.
5. St. Paul's requires at least six-month's advance notice of the proposed date to the Rector. This allows time for marriage preparation sessions and proper planning.
6. The Rector will preside over any wedding celebrated at St. Paul's. Other ordained persons may preside and assist in the wedding celebration, when invited by the Rector to do so. Couples who wish such an arrangement need to discuss their desires with the Rector before making further plans.
7. The couple will meet for pre-marital counseling with the Rector (or the priest performing the ceremony). This counseling allows the couple to consider and discuss both practical and spiritual aspects of marriage and to build a foundation for the promises they will make (and is required by the Canons). Planning the wedding ceremony is also included. Ordinarily, a minimum of 4-5 sessions is required.
8. ***Weddings are not scheduled during the Lenten season, the church's season of penitence and self-denial (or the first Sunday immediately after these periods), Holy Week, and Holiday weekends. Weddings requested during the season of Advent (December) will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Rector and Director of Music.***
9. Please note that in the event that more than one request is received for the same date, scheduling priority will be given in the order of their request.
10. ***The couple will be responsible for securing a North Carolina marriage license.*** A marriage license is valid for sixty days. It is necessary for the Rector to be in possession of the license at least 48 hours before the ceremony. The couple is also responsible for filing the license with the county clerk after the wedding.

**Before making a request for marriage, couples are asked:**

- ◆ To be active communicants of St. Paul's, by showing financial support of the parish, involvement in spiritual formation and fellowship activities, and when appropriate requesting a Letter of Transfer to St. Paul's.
- ◆ To have been worshipping at St. Paul's for at least three months together. Couples should be attending services at least twice a month. For couples who are not yet members of St. Paul's, this period gives the couple a chance to get to know the church and determine if this would be a suitable spiritual home for them before and after marriage.

**If the couple is living out of the area, and are children of members of St. Paul's they should:**

- ◆ Be regularly worshipping at a church in their community, or actively seeking a church to join at which they can find spiritual support and nurture.
- ◆ Must provide a letter from their pastor/priest asking St. Paul's to celebrate the marriage on behalf of the couple's regular worship community.
- ◆ Be in direct conversation with the Rector to begin marriage preparations.
- ◆ Contact the pastor/priest of their local church and arrange marriage counseling (if they are not able to travel to Edenton).
- ◆ Provide communication from the pastor/priest providing the marriage counseling that the couple is ready for marriage.

**Once eligibility is established, the couple should:**

1. Complete the St. Paul's Wedding Information Sheet (Included)
  - a. Please note that the couple alone (not parents, relatives, or bridal party members) are responsible for seeking permission to be married at St. Paul's. The initial application will then be reviewed by the Rector.*
2. The couple will then be notified of the decision of the Rector.
3. After approval from the Rector, the date of the wedding should be arranged with the Rector and Parish Administrator, well in advance. This should be done before confirming any date for a reception location.
4. Once the wedding date is scheduled, the Rector will meet with the couple to determine dates for the counseling.

**CONTACT PERSONS**

The Rector and Parish Administrator will be your main contacts in planning your wedding. Planning a wedding involves the coordination of many people, and the Parish Administrator will give you the names and telephone numbers of the assisting altar guild member, Director

of Music and Organist, Florist, as well as assisting you with any questions or concerns you may have.

### **THE REHEARSAL**

- ◆ The Rector will conduct the wedding rehearsal assisted by an altar guild member and the Director of Music/Organist.
- ◆ The wedding rehearsal usually takes place the evening before the wedding at a time agreed upon with the Rector.
- ◆ The rehearsal time should be confirmed at least three months in advance of the wedding.
- ◆ All members of the wedding party are expected to attend.
- ◆ The rehearsal usually lasts for at least one hour. Punctuality is expected as rehearsals are often followed by other events in the church and other engagements by the priest and staff.

### **THE CEREMONY**

The Rector will arrange the details of the service with the couple. St. Paul's uses *Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage* as found in the *Book of Common Prayer* (1979) or Marriage Rites approved by the Diocese of East Carolina. Wedding ceremonies at St. Paul's follow these services. You should read through them carefully as you begin to think about your wedding. Many parts of the ceremony, including the vows, are specified by the Prayer Book or Marriage Rites. ***You may not write your own vows.*** If the bride and groom would like to speak, they may do so in lieu of a homily. Other aspects are variable, including Scripture lessons and customs such as giving away the bride.

The Parish Administrator will work with the couple, Rector, and Director of Music and Organist to produce the approved service bulletin. The content must be delivered to the office one month prior to the wedding. The bulletin is a worship leaflet and, while it makes a nice memento of the occasion, its purpose is to help your guests participate in the service. The bride and groom are responsible for providing the information for the program, such as the names of the bridal party, as well as proofing it. Finished copies of the order of service will be available at the time of the rehearsal. Family and/or friends are encouraged to participate by reading one of the scripture lessons or a psalm (there will be a small fee for printing more than 100 bulletins).

The Holy Eucharist ***may*** be part of the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage. Whenever the Holy Eucharist is celebrated, all baptized persons who customarily receive Communion in their own church are invited to receive Communion as well.

If the couple opts to have the bulletin prepared by a professional printer, ***the content must be approved by the Rector.***

**There are two choices for procession:**

◆ If desiring a crucifer for the service (required if there is communion) then the order for entry into the sanctuary would be as follows: Acolyte, clergy, groom, best man, followed by groomsmen. They would then be followed by the bridesmaids, Maid of Honor (flower girl/ring bearer if selected) and bride.

**OR**

◆ If no crucifer, then the wedding procession will be as follows: Clergy first; best man groom's men and then groom enter. They would then be followed by the bridesmaids, Maid of Honor (flower girl/ring bearer if selected) and bride.

**USHERS**

Groomsmen may serve as ushers to assist with seating family members. St. Paul's will provide two ushers to assist with handing out bulletins. If communion is desired other members of St. Paul's may be requested to assist.

**MUSIC SELECTION**

- ◆ An appointment with the St. Paul's organist must be made at least three months prior to the date of the wedding.
- ◆ The Organist will assist the couple with music choices, under authority delegated by the Rector (see music selection below)
- ◆ Any guest musicians must be approved by the Organist.
- ◆ There is an extra fee when additional music rehearsals are needed, or when additional musicians must practice with the organist (See donation schedule).
- ◆ Recorded music is subject to Rector approval.

**WEDDING DECORATIONS**

- ◆ Consult the Rector to question what is allowed for decorating of the church for the ceremony.
- ◆ The two office candles behind the altar will be lit. If the couple chooses to receive communion, the two standing altar candles will be also be used. Two vases for flowers behind the altar are available.
- ◆ Altar hangings will be white.
- ◆ Pews for the parents of the couple will be marked with church-owned white brocade to match the altar hangings.
- ◆ For safety reasons, aisle runners may not be used.

◆ Rice, birdseed, confetti, sparklers, Bubbles, or flower petals cannot be thrown, either inside or on church grounds. Silk flower petals may be used.

***If the family obtains a wedding consultant, the consultant must be advised that the Rector and the Organist will direct all activity that takes place within the church during the liturgy.***

## **FLOWERS**

- ◆ The couple is responsible for obtaining flowers for the vases in front of the church. Contact the Parish Administrator for assistance.
- ◆ Two brass containers are used on the main altar. No other flowers are permitted inside except those carried or worn by members of the wedding party or guests. However, bows and flowers may be used to mark the ends of the pews.
- ◆ Any outdoor flower arrangements may be kept through Sunday service, but must be removed by the provider in a timely manner.
- ◆ It is requested that floral arrangements from Saturday weddings remain on the altar for Sunday services.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Photographs and videos provide meaningful keepsakes of your wedding day. However, the wedding experience can be irreparably diminished by photographers or videographers who are obtrusive and intrusive. To avoid this problem, St. Paul's has strict rules about wedding photography and videography. It is your responsibility to inform your photographer or videographer of the following protocols:

- ◆ Photos and video of the ceremony must be done by a professional photographer, or designated person who agrees to abide by church policies.
- ◆ After the processional, the photographer or videographer may move to the balcony, but may not obstruct the view of the organist or stand near the organ.
- ◆ No lights or flashes are permitted during the service.
- ◆ The photographer should not wander or be in view of the congregation.
- ◆ The church will be open to the wedding party one hour and 30 minutes before the appointed time of the service and an hour following the service. Group pictures may be taken at this time. Typically, the prelude begins 30 minutes prior to the service. No photography should take place inside the church during the prelude.
- ◆ Guests should be advised of the prohibition against using flash cameras during the service.
- ◆ No church property may be moved by the photographer/videographer.
- ◆ The bridal party and guests must complete all post-wedding photographs, greetings, etc., no later than 1 hour after the conclusion of the ceremony.

The reason for the time limit is because both the Altar Guild and staff are limited by time in preparing for the Sunday services which follow on the next day. It should be remembered that the Altar Guild consists of volunteers and every effort should be made to avoid keeping them waiting an inordinate amount of time.

### **THE WEDDING REHEARSAL**

A wedding rehearsal is essential. Participants in the ceremony need preparation for the various roles they must carry out. A rehearsal helps make the participants more comfortable and ensures that the ceremony will proceed smoothly and with dignity. The rehearsal normally takes place at 5 p.m. the evening before the wedding. Every effort should be made to have all the participants arrive on time for the rehearsal and remain until dismissed by the priest.

### **USE OF THE PARISH HALL**

The church's parish hall and kitchen may be reserved for the wedding reception for a charge of \$450. This is to cover the cost of utilities and extra cleaning by the sexton. Anyone using the kitchen is expected to leave the space clean and in order. Beer, wine, or champagne may be served at receptions providing an alternative non-alcoholic beverage is also offered. Hard liquor is strictly prohibited in the parish hall. It is expected that all North Carolina ABC laws will be observed.

There are several rooms in the parish hall where the bridal party may dress. There is no fee charged for this, but the parish office should be notified so that arrangements can be made to have the hall open.

### **AFTER THE CEREMONY**

*Will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?  
We will.*

— The Book of Common Prayer, page 425

The Christian community promises to support you in your marriage. We hope that your relationship to St. Paul's Episcopal Church will continue and that you will find spiritual growth and sustenance within this parish family. Please remember that the Rector is available for "post-marital" counseling as well, to help you live out the vows that you make on your wedding day.

## WEDDING MUSIC AT SAINT PAUL'S

The following list are suggestions for the Processional and Recessional. Other pieces may be used if approved by the Director of Music and Priest.

1. Air (from Suite No. 3 in D) Johann Sebastian Bach
2. Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring Johann Sebastian Bach
3. Ave Maria Johann Sebastian Bach/Charles Gounod
4. Ode to Joy Ludwig van Beethoven
5. Prélude (from Te Deum) Marc-Antoine Charpentier
6. Prince of Denmark's March (Trumpet Voluntary) Jeremiah Clarke
7. Panis Angelicus Cesar Franck
8. Air (from Water Music) Georg Frideric Handel
9. Hornpipe (from Water Music) Georg Frideric Handel
10. Minuet (from Berenice) Georg Frideric Handel
11. Aria (from Concerto Grosso No. 12) Georg Frideric Handel
12. Wedding March (from A Midsummer Night's Dream) Felix Mendelssohn
13. Rondeau in D major Jean-Joseph Mouret
14. Canon in D Johann Pachelbel
15. Trumpet Tune Henry Purcell
16. Ave Maria Franz Schubert
17. Trumpet Tune John Stanley
18. Rhosymedre Ralph Vaughan Williams

Bridesmaids Procession:

---

Bridal Procession:

---

Recessional:

---

Other (optional):

---

Hymns - It is not necessary to have a hymn at a wedding service; in fact, it is more common not to have them. If you desire a hymn, it must come from *The 1982 Hymnal*, and be approved by the Priest and Organist. A hymn is generally sung between the lessons.

Appropriate Hymns for a Wedding Service:

376 Joyful, joyful we adore thee

390 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

- 397 Now thank we all our God  
400 All creatures of our God and King  
657 Love divine, all loves excelling

### **Time Line for Wedding Arrangements at St. Paul's Episcopal Church**

Up to one year before the wedding

- ◆ Initial meeting with clergy
- ◆ Reserve the date with down payment

At least 6 months before wedding

- ◆ Schedule times for premarital counseling
- ◆ Set times for rehearsal and wedding
- ◆ Book the dates with the musicians

No less than 3 months before wedding

- ◆ Contact and discuss arrangements with the Parish Administrator regarding flowers, ushers, and communion.
- ◆ Meet with the Director of Music about the wedding music.
- ◆ Finalize focused spiritual preparation led by the clergy or counselor

One month before wedding

- ◆ Pay balance due: musician, flower, sexton, and all other fees.

Three weeks before wedding

- ◆ Prepare service leaflet for clergy to edit before taking to the printer.
- ◆ Arrange final meeting with clergy to proof bulletin

Week of the wedding

- ◆ Take marriage license to the church office.

Day before the wedding

- ◆ Be certain that marriage license is at the church.
- ◆ Rehearsal with all members of the wedding party present
- ◆ Have copies of program for priest, organist, and wedding guild members.

## Wedding Day

- ◆ Two hours before wedding (and no more than three): Bride and bridesmaids arrive to dress and to have photographs made.
- ◆ One hour before wedding: Groom and groomsmen arrive dressed for wedding.
- ◆ One-half hour before wedding: Music begins; ushering begins.
- ◆ Be certain that the photographer understands the church's guidelines for photographing the wedding.

## After the Wedding

- ◆ Limit photography to 60 minutes following the service.
- ◆ Clean up areas the bridal party used.

### **Suggested Honorariums and fees**

**(All honorariums must be cash/check and made out to St. Paul's.  
No gift cards accepted)**

St. Paul's does not "charge" for weddings, but staff, musicians, and additional facility use require minimal fees. If other musicians are included, they also must be compensated.

- ◆ **Clergy**                      **your discretion (suggested: \$400)**
- ◆ **Organist**                    **\$350**
- ◆ **Sexton Fee**                 **\$150**
- ◆ **Altar Guild**                **\$150**
- ◆ **Crucifer**                    **\$ 25 (If applicable)**
- ◆ **Parish Hall use**          **\$450 (if applicable)**

### **Additional honorariums (if selected)**

Add Additional soloist or instrumentalist to rehearsal \$ 200.00

Additional soloist or instrumentalist fee \$ 200.00

Additional rehearsals \$50/hour

**St. Paul's Episcopal Episcopal Church  
Wedding Agreement**

A 50% deposit is due before your wedding date is secured on the church calendar. Payment in full is due one month before the ceremony.

**No wedding rehearsal may take place until all fees have been paid.**

Bride/Groom Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Bride/Groom Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Wedding date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal date: \_\_\_\_\_ Rehearsal Time: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Saint Paul's wedding policies and agree to the terms and rules provided.

I acknowledge the fees/honorariums and agree to pay them by their respective due dates.

I agree to inform my photographer/videographer concerning the rules for taking photos and videos during the wedding ceremony.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Partner/Groom

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Partner/Bride

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date