

## *Your Wedding at St. Paul's*



*Thank you for considering St. Paul's Church for your wedding. We celebrate the love and commitment which bring you together, and we're happy to offer our facilities as a setting where your wedding can be Christ-centered and special. We offer this set of guidelines to reflect our Christian beliefs and to give you some practical tips for planning your wedding here. We hope you'll find them helpful.*

## Ministerial Arrangements



At St. Paul's, it is expected that one of our pastors will officiate at all church weddings after appropriate counsel with the couple. This counseling typically involves five to eight one-hour sessions and requires the couple to read a book to help them prepare for life together.

If you wish for another minister to participate in the wedding, you should inform our pastor at the first counseling session. Our pastor, at his discretion, will then extend an invitation to the guest minister you have requested. In no case will anyone make arrangements for a wedding in the church without the consent of one of our pastors.

Unfortunately, because of growing schedule demands, our pastors cannot always accept weddings for persons who do not attend St. Paul's Church.

## Wedding Music

A wedding is a worship service in which we honor God, the giver and author of love, and ask God's blessing on your life together. Nothing in the ceremony should detract from this central purpose.

That's why the things we do and the music we use in a Christian wedding need to reflect God's love and not merely human love. Certainly, many popular songs beautifully celebrate human love, but they may not reflect our need for God's perfect love and involvement in our relationships. Without God's perfect love, we can never hope to love others, even our mates, with the kind of respect they deserve.

Because of this and because the wedding is a service of worship for a holy God, your music choices should reflect God's holiness and God's love. So at St. Paul's we feel strongly that the music you choose should be approved by our pastor or our church organist. They have the experience and spiritual insight to help you make music choices that will honor God and your love for each other.

**Make sure you finalize your music selections with the pastor or organist at least two months before your wedding.**

## Wedding Times

Wedding music traditionally begins on the hour. The procession and ceremony begin on the half hour. Be sure as you order your invitations that this is clear to your guests. In the past, when guests were invited to a 4:30 wedding, for instance, they knew that the music started at 4:00. So if your printer talks you into saying that your 4:30 wedding begins at 4:00, you will likely have some guests arriving at 3:30!



## Choosing Your Attendants

As you select those special people who will stand beside you at your wedding, please keep two things in mind. First, because of the limited space at the front of our sanctuary, **you should have no**

**more than four or five attendants on each side.** Otherwise, it will look awkward and crowded. Second, **ring bearers and flower girls shall be no younger than five years old. No exceptions. Don't ask.** The sweetest of toddlers can ruin an otherwise beautiful wedding. (It's also a good idea to have an "exit strategy" for young children if they begin to misbehave.)



Under no circumstances is the piano to be moved. Because of the sloping floor, it must stay where it is in order to remain level. In addition, moving it could put it out of tune for your wedding and our worship services.

## Candles, Flowers, and Aisle Runner



Candles and candlelight are beautiful anytime, but especially at a wedding. During your wedding, our two **altar candles** will be lit as a sign of the light of Christ in our lives. If you choose to use additional candlelight, we have a pair of brass **candelabra** and four pairs of **pew lanterns** which you may use. (Or if you wish, you may rent them from a florist or other supplier.)

In order to eliminate wax spills on our carpet, however, **the church provides white dripless candles** for these candelabra and pew lanterns at a small fee.

On the other hand, if you wish to light a **Unity Candle** during your wedding, please buy one of your own choosing, along with the bride and groom candles you'll use to light it. Although the church has very simple candle holders for these three candles, you may want to purchase your own.

You and your florist are free to decorate pretty much as you wish. We have two small, moveable dark oak stands for arrangements if you need them. It is also appropriate at St. Paul's to put an arrangement on the altar. Sometimes this incorporates the Unity Candle. When ordering/designing flowers for the communion table/altar, let the florist know that a cross and two altar candles will be on the back third of the table. These should stay in place to remind us that the wedding is Christ-centered and that we depend on the light of Christ in our lives and our worship. Floral centerpieces, unity candles, etc., can use the rest of the altar surface.

In addition, bows, vines, or other floral effects are often added to the candelabra and pew lanterns. (Also, when you order flowers, you don't need to order a boutonniere for the pastor; he'll be wearing a clergy robe.)

Our church is carpeted, and there is no need for you to rent or buy an aisle runner for the bride. However, if you choose to use a runner, you will want to know that our center aisle is 50 feet long.

## Photography



Obviously, we want you to have many happy memories of your special day here at St. Paul's. But we ask that your photographer and guests keep in mind that the wedding is a worship service. **No flash photographs may be taken during the wedding ceremony** because they are distracting to worship. Photographers and video camera operators should be discreet. They will not be permitted to roam freely around the front of the church during the worship service. Our pastors can advise you more fully.

## Use of the Sanctuary and Other Church Property

The people of St. Paul's are delighted to make our building available for your wedding. You may also wish to use our church basement for a simple reception. We do ask that you respect and reverence this place as sacred space where people come to meet with God. With this in mind, ***smoking and use of alcoholic beverages in any form are at all times forbidden on church property, including the rest rooms and grounds.*** Also, if you wish to have any furniture moved, please get permission from the pastor and the custodian.

### Seating Limits

When planning your wedding, you'll want to know that the maximum seating capacity of our sanctuary is 300. For receptions in our Fellowship Hall, the maximum capacity is 120. Receptions larger than that should unfortunately be held elsewhere.

### Rice and Birdseed



While some churches forbid throwing rice, St. Paul's does not. (The widespread rumor that rice kills songbirds is an urban legend!) The custom of throwing rice may have originally expressed a hope that many children would be born to the couple, but whatever it means to you, you're free to provide rice for your guests.

Other alternatives are birdseed, blowing bubbles, ringing small bells, or launching balloons. Whichever of these you choose, if any, we respectfully insist that no rice or birdseed be spilled or thrown inside the church.

### Rehearsal Arrangements

It's important that you and the pastor set a firm rehearsal time as soon as possible. You will also need to inform the organist of the arrangements you and the pastor have agreed upon. In choosing this time, it's helpful to consider how early your wedding party can arrive

(from work or from out of town) and how late you wish to be starting your rehearsal dinner. If the wedding party arrives on time, the rehearsal should take about an hour.

**Important: You must give your marriage license to the pastor and take care of all wedding fees one week before the wedding.**

## Personnel Requirements

Because our organ is a very sensitive instrument, we allow only one of our “in house” organists to play it. (If you desire someone else to play for your wedding, the grand piano is available.) The organist will be present for the rehearsal and the wedding, in addition to arranging and practicing the music you choose. It's very important that you talk with the organist about your musical wishes as early as possible. And remember, it is **essential** that you finalize your musical selections at least two months before your wedding.

Out of respect for our organists' busy schedules, we ask that you contact one of them just as soon as you first meet with the pastor. This will make it more likely that he or she can be available for your wedding.

It will be helpful to your guests if the sound system is used during your wedding. We require that one of our sound technicians operate the system. **Vocalists must rehearse with our sound technician** before the wedding. If you wish, your wedding can be taped from beginning to end. All you need to do is supply the audio tape.



We also require that our custodian (Charles May) be hired by you to take care of clean-up after the wedding, rehearsal, and/or rehearsal dinner, as well as moving any furniture which needs to be moved.

## Wedding Fees

Our pastors do not charge St. Paul's Church members for their services. However, they spend many hours with you in counseling and in preparing for your wedding ceremony, and a suitable honorarium is in order. For non-members, there is a fee of \$250.

Other fees are as follows:

Custodian – Wedding and rehearsal.....	\$150
Rehearsal Dinner.....	\$100
Reception.....	\$175
Organist.....	\$250
Sound Technician .....	\$ 65

Use of Sanctuary – free for members, \$150 for non-members  
Use of kitchen and Fellowship Hall – free for members, \$150 for non-members  
Use of candles, candelabra, and pew lanterns -- \$40 for members, \$65 for non-members

Fees for all of the above items **must** be paid **one week before the wedding**. Please contact the church office for information about how to write the checks.

**If we or any of our staff can be of assistance to you, please let us know. We truly want your wedding at St. Paul's to be memorable and meaningful. And we want your marriage to be strong and enduring with God's help.**



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