



Planning a Wedding

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ROCK CREEK PARISH

ST. PAUL'S
ROCK
CREEK

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ENGAGEMENT!

This brochure will give you an overview about planning a wedding at St. Paul's and provide helpful advice. Our clergy will be happy to discuss any of your more complex questions, and help you design a wedding that fits who you are as a couple.

MARRIAGE AND MEMBERSHIP AT ST. PAUL'S

Although weddings at St. Paul's Church are primarily performed for members of the parish, nonmembers from the surrounding community are welcomed to be married at St. Paul's if at least one of the couple is in the process of becoming a member and will join and faithfully attend church services at St. Paul's for six months prior to the scheduling of their wedding.

St. Paul's should be the congregation that you consider "home" because the Blessing of a Marriage is a community celebration. In marriage, two people make a commitment to each other and before God and the church community makes a commitment to uphold these two people in their life together. To ask the congregation of St. Paul's to make that commitment for you in good faith means we need to be in relationship with you.

It is also true that there are as many life circumstances as there are people, and St. Paul's clergy is happy to discuss your particular situation with you. Exceptions can be made.



First Things First

Contact the Church and talk to the clergy about your desire to be married as soon as you are engaged. Before you select a date, you will need to allow time to schedule counseling and you will need the Rector's permission.

HOW FAR IN ADVANCE SHOULD WE PLAN?

The Episcopal Church requires at least 30 days notice, but that is rarely sufficient. Couples should plan their wedding for no less than six months from the time they first speak with St. Paul's clergy. The calendar often fills months in advance, and you must allow sufficient time for counseling.

WHEN DO WE APPLY FOR THE MARRIAGE LICENSE?

A DC marriage license is valid for 30 days and is required for a wedding at St. Paul's because the Church must conform to DC law. A valid marriage license must be presented to

the officiating clergy either during business hours two days before the wedding is to take place, or at the rehearsal if one is scheduled. No ceremony will take place unless all pertinent documents have been provided in advance.

It's the couple's responsibility to obtain a license from the Marriage Bureau of DC Superior Court at 500 Indiana Ave, NW, Room 4485. You'll find instructions at www.dccourts.gov.

IS PREMARITAL COUNSELING REQUIRED?

Yes, premarital counseling is required by church canon (law). You should have an initial conversation with the clergy at St. Paul's. It is our preference that subsequent counseling be completed with a licensed professional counselor or therapist as you discuss issues surrounding family of origin, finances, sexuality, children, and gender roles, among other things. If you don't already have

a relationship with a counselor, St. Paul's clergy can give you some suggestions; the cost is the couple's responsibility.

WHAT IF ONE OR BOTH OF US HAS BEEN DIVORCED?

Divorce does not exclude you from being married again in the Episcopal Church and the clergy of St. Paul's Church will consider blessing a second marriage provided the Bishop gives consent. In the case of divorce, additional counseling may be required, along with assurance that commitments to children from the previous marriage are fulfilled, the minimum time after legal divorce is met, etc. The Bishop must also be convinced that the couple intends for the Episcopal Church to be a part of their marriage. If you have been divorced, please be sure to inform St. Paul's clergy immediately.



Planning the Service

The Episcopal Church is blessed with a beautiful marriage service in our Book of Common Prayer. You may use this or create a service more tailored to you as a couple. To craft a service that is meaningful for you, you will meet with St. Paul's clergy for at least two sessions. In between these sessions, you will complete some "homework" to help us get to know you better and to help clarify your thinking about what marriage means to you.

HOW LONG SHOULD WE PLAN THE SERVICE TO LAST?

This answer depends on several things, one of which is whether you would like to have the Eucharist (Sacrament of Bread and Wine) as a part of your wedding, as well as music selections and the number of readings. A service with the Eucharist might take 40 to 60 minutes; without the Eucharist, 20 to 40 minutes.

MAY OTHER CLERGY PARTICIPATE IN THE SERVICE?

St. Paul's clergy are in charge of all weddings at our Church, but are happy to work with you in having other clergy assist. This includes other Episcopal clergy, or clergy from other denominations and religious traditions. The Liturgy, however, will always be from the Book of Common Prayer. Any other participants must be invited by St. Paul's clergy, so please consult with your priest before extending even an informal invitation.

WHAT SHOULD WE TELL OUR PHOTOGRAPHER?

When you choose your photographer, please explain that a primary concern is to preserve the atmosphere of worship. Because the wedding ceremony is a religious ceremony, no flash photography or videos are permitted during the ceremony, and a photographer may not stand around the Altar.

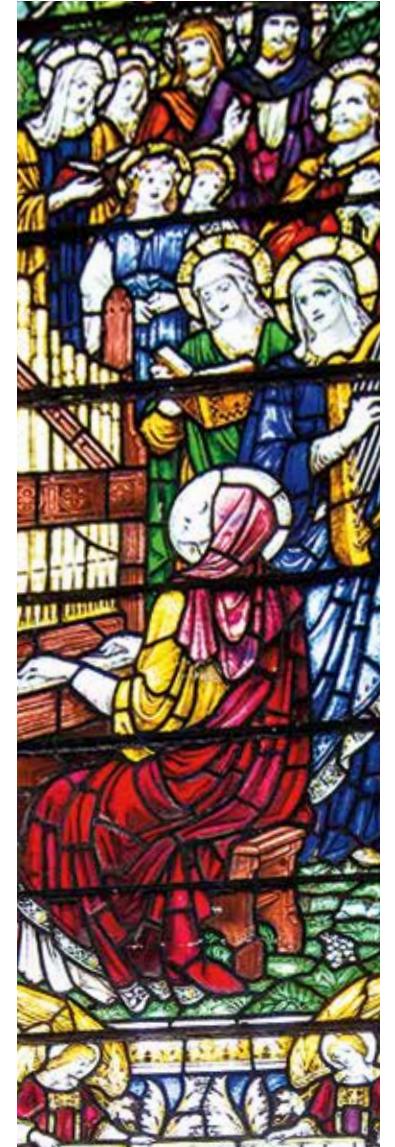
Arrangements can be made with the officiant for pictures to be taken before or after the service. We suggest that you place a time limit on those following the ceremony as a courtesy to your guests waiting at the reception.

WHAT SHOULD I TELL THE FLORIST?

An outside florist may be used with the following guidelines:

- No flower arrangements are to be placed on the altar.
- Flowers may be placed in the chancel on the pedestal or on the steps, but the aisle must remain free.

- Artificial or silk flowers may not be used.
- Flowers may be attached to the pews, but only in a way that does not mar the wood.
- Nothing may be used on the walls. There are permanently installed hooks at window level, which can be used for hanging a floral garland, but only string should be used to attach to the hooks.
- All flowers must be removed at the end of the service if they are not being left for Sunday's services.



WHAT ABOUT DECORATIONS?

The Altar Guild coordinates all weddings at St. Paul's Church. The Clergy and the Altar Guild will direct both rehearsal and wedding. They will make sure you are where you need to be. Bridal consultants are not needed, though you are welcome to have them assist you in dressing.

HOW DO WE SELECT MUSIC?

The Episcopal Church has standards regarding music that is allowed in wedding worship services. Music should mark this festive occasion with grace, dignity, and joy. Because a church wedding is a sacramental rite, music used in connection with the wedding must be suitable for a church service; secular songs may not be sung during the ceremony. The Rector is the final judge as to the appropriateness of all music selections.

Very few people start wedding planning knowing everything that they want musically. The Director of Music will help you

select appropriate music for the occasion. A minimalist approach to planning wedding music consists of the prelude, the processional, and the postlude. The inclusion of Holy Eucharist gives you more musical options as well.

If you would like to include friends, relatives, or outside professionals in instrumentals or song, please discuss your desires with and obtain approval from the Rector or Director of Music. The Director of Music fee will still be required.

MAY WE THROW RICE AFTER THE SERVICE?

No. Birdseed, rice, confetti and rose petals may not be used in the church, outside of the church or on the church grounds.

SHOULD I HAVE A REHEARSAL?

A rehearsal is a good idea. It will take about 40 minutes after all participants arrive. Please invite all those who will be part of your ceremony in any way. You can schedule the rehearsal when you schedule your wedding.



Fees for Use of the Church

Church. Because weddings are additions to our regular schedule of worship services, they create additional duties on church staff and use the church's resources (e.g., utilities, cleaning, readying and use of required equipment, cleanup, restocking restroom supplies, etc.). The following fee schedule is used to help recover these additional costs and should be paid in full before or at the rehearsal. Checks should be made payable to St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Clergy. The Celebration and Blessing of the Marriage for members is a normal part of the duty of St. Paul's clergy and no fee is charged. However, it is customary that the groom makes an offering to the Priest, either in the form of a cash gift or a check made out to the Priest. The amount should be consistent with other professional fees, bearing in mind the amount of the Priest's time devoted to the counseling sessions, rehearsal, and wedding.

Normal offerings range from \$250-\$400. If the costs present a financial hardship, however, the groom is welcome to discuss any need with the priest who will perform the wedding. No one will be denied the Sacrament of Marriage because of an inability to pay.

Director of Music. Please contact the Director of Music no more than six months and no less than six weeks before your wedding. You should pay the Director of Music directly at the rehearsal; the fee covers a 20-minute prelude, music for the duration of the wedding itself, and one meeting to plan the music for the wedding.

The fee does not cover the wedding rehearsal or any additional rehearsals with other musicians or vocalists.

	Member*	Non-Member
Clergy	None; see above	\$400
Director of Music	\$250	\$250
Sexton	None	None
Church	\$400	\$750
St. Paul's Center	Please inquire	Please inquire

*For the propose of these fees, a "member" is someone who has been attending St. Paul's Church, Rock Creek Parish regularly for at least 12 months prior to the request for a rental date (unless prevented because of health issues); or has been visited regularly by the priest of the parish; and contributes financially to the support of the parish. Others are invited to have their events at St. Paul's Church, with the understanding that they are expected to pay expenses beyond those asked of active parishioners.

We Look Forward to Your Celebration

Your upcoming wedding is one of the happiest events in your life as a couple. Our hope at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Rock Creek Parish is that your wedding will show both your own personality and the timelessness of God's grace working through our community to bless your marriage.

Please call us at 202.726.2080 to schedule an initial conversation with our clergy.

**AGAIN,
CONGRATULATIONS
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**ST. PAUL'S
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ROCK CREEK PARISH**

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