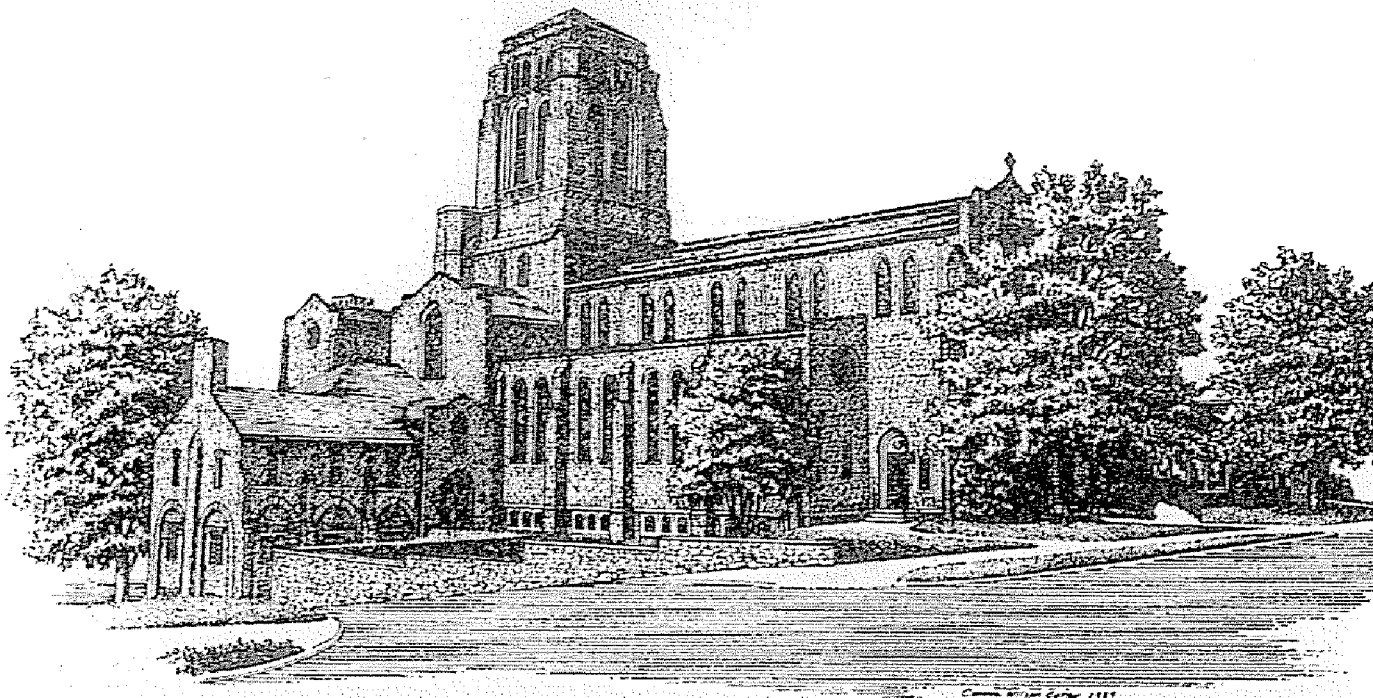


**Planning a Wedding at St. Paul's:
Guidelines for The Celebration & Blessing of a Marriage**

Updated July 10, 2023



**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
520 Summit Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27101-1195
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“Marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.”

Book of Common Prayer, 423

Congratulations on your decision to get married!

We are happy that you are considering St. Paul’s for your wedding. These guidelines are used to help couples understand what is appropriate for a Christian wedding liturgy at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. Please read through these policies carefully; we send them to you in advance to avoid any disappointment or confusion later in the planning process.

Our canons on marriage are fully inclusive of both same and different gender couples. We understand that all committed, lifelong relationships are outward and visible signs of an inward, spiritual, and God-given love. The occasion when couples approach the Church with the intention of being married, or seeking the blessing of their civil marriage, is an opportunity to invite them deeper into the life of Christ. In this context, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church seeks to support couples in their commitment to one another and to help make the love of God more visible for the whole community.

To be married at St Paul’s it is expected that one or both of the couple (or at least one of their parents) be an active member of St. Paul’s. Those who come to the church seeking God’s blessing on their relationship should do so with a clear intention of maintaining an active participation in the life of our community of faith. Normally the wedding takes place at St. Paul’s in the nave or the chapel. Any special requests for marriage need to be approved by the rector.

The Episcopal Church requires that both parties have the right to marry according to the laws of the State and consent to do so freely; that at least one of the parties is a baptized Christian; that the marriage conforms to the laws of the state of North Carolina and the canons of the Church; that both parties have been instructed in the nature, purpose, rights, duties and responsibilities of marriage; and that at least two witnesses shall be present at the solemnization.

Couples will be required to sign this Declaration of Intention:

We understand the teaching of the church that God’s purpose for our marriage is for our mutual joy, for the help and comfort we will give to each other in prosperity and adversity, and when it is God’s will, for the gift and heritage of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God. We also understand that our marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong; and we engage to make the utmost effort to accept these gifts and fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community.

When one or both persons have been divorced, the clergy must consult with and obtain consent of the Bishop of North Carolina in order to officiate at the liturgy. The clergy will advise the couple of the extra time needed for this process, generally at least 90 days.

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Telephone Numbers

Wedding Information:	Betsy Reiners – 336-723-4391, ext. 1219
Clergy:	336-723-4391 The Rev. Dr. D. Dixon Kinser The Rev. Sara C. Ardrey-Graves The Rev. Lucy B. Strandlund The Rev. Nick M. VanHorn
Parish Wedding Directors:	Anne Dunn – 336-725-9037 Shannon Faircloth – 336-722-2580
Director of Music & Organist:	Dr. John Cummins – 336-723-4394
Flower Guild Chairpersons:	Susan Gordon— 336-414-9070 Melissa Rogan— 336-391-9381

General Information

- 1) All wedding requests will be referred to the Rev. Lucy Strandlund, Associate Rector for Liturgy & Pastoral Care, who coordinates weddings.
- 2) Wedding dates are not put on the church calendar until the officiating clergy has been in contact with the couple and ascertained that they understand the required expectations. The officiating clergy will confirm the date on the church calendar with the couple after the first meeting.
- 3) No public announcement of your marriage should be made until arrangements with the church and officiating clergy have been finalized.
- 4) Weddings are conducted by St. Paul's clergy using approved liturgies of the Episcopal Church. Other clergy who have a special relationship with the couple may be invited by one of our clergy to assist in the liturgy.
- 5) Weddings are not scheduled during the Season of Lent, during the period between December 15 and 25, and are not typically scheduled on Sundays. Any special requests need to be approved by the Rector. Weddings scheduled between December 26 and January 6 and during other seasons of the year, will be held in the church with the seasonal decorations intact if still available. If other flowers are needed, they will be arranged in consultation with the wedding director and the flower guild.
- 6) No more than two weddings per day will be scheduled in the church, with a minimum of three hours between weddings. Weddings will not be scheduled after 6:00 p.m.
- 7) The clergy of St. Paul's will conduct all wedding rehearsals, assisted only by one of the parish wedding directors. Our wedding directors receive a fee, and outside wedding directors are not used.
- 8) No alcoholic drinks or illegal substances are allowed at any time in any part of the church or on the grounds during the rehearsal or the wedding. Violation of this policy may result in cancellation of the wedding ceremony and/or expulsion from the campus.
- 9) The marriage license should be taken to the church office a minimum of one week before the wedding so the staff assistant for weddings can enter the information in the parish register/certificates. After the wedding the staff assistant will mail the signed license back to the state.

Pre-Marital Counseling

The Canons of the Episcopal Church provide that the parties of the marriage shall be *“instructed as to the nature, purpose, meaning, as well as the rights, duties and responsibilities of marriage.”* This is usually done within the context of pre-marital counseling.

There are typically four to six pre-marital counseling sessions. At least two are to be done by the officiating clergy; two to four may be done with a licensed counselor, approved by the officiating clergy. In the case of couples who live outside Winston Salem, the officiating clergy will help arrange counseling in the city where the couple resides. The couple should ask the licensed counselor to provide a letter to the officiating clergy when the counseling is finished. The couple is responsible for the cost of any outside counseling.

Liturgy & Music

- A member of the St. Paul's clergy will officiate the wedding using one of the approved liturgies of the Episcopal Church. It is appropriate, but not required, to include a celebration of the Holy Eucharist as part of the liturgy.
 - [The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage 2](#) is intended for use by all couples and is a gender-neutral adaptation of the marriage rite in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer.
 - [The Witnessing and Blessing of a Marriage](#) is an approved liturgy intended for use by all couples.
 - The 1979 [Book of Common Prayer](#) "The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage," along with "the Blessing of a Civil Marriage" and "An Order for Marriage" remain liturgies for use with different gender couples.
- The officiating clergy will meet with the couple to plan the liturgy and music and has final authority over all liturgy and music.
- The St. Paul's Organist will play or arrange for a substitute. The couple is responsible for contacting the Organist as soon as possible after the liturgy has been planned with the officiating clergy for a meeting to discuss music. All music for the wedding should be coordinated with the organist/choirmaster. Additional musicians will also be contracted through the organist/choirmaster. Outside choirs are not permitted. The couple may request one of the parish choirs, subject to availability. This should be done no less than 3 months before the wedding.
- St. Paul's will provide a template (either with communion or without) for the wedding liturgy. The church can print these leaflets – costs are noted in Fee section.
- All leaflets must meet final approval from the officiating clergy prior to printing.
- There are generally no receiving lines in the Narthex or outside the church doors.
- All processions will begin in the back of the church and will be led by a St. Paul's acolyte carrying the processional cross, followed by the clergy, and the wedding party.

Decorations

- Any decorations are to be planned in consultation with the parish wedding director. The use of rice, birdseed, rose petals, etc., on church premises is not permitted.
- Altar flowers are purchased and arranged by the Flower Guild, using fresh flowers and greenery. The couple may request colors and types of flowers, unless there are two weddings on the same day. When two weddings are scheduled on the same day the flowers will be white. All flowers at the altar remain there for the Sunday liturgies and may be used for distribution to the sick and homebound. They may be given by the couple in memory of family, and memorials can be noted in the Sunday leaflet. The wedding director will coordinate with the couple on wording. The high altar and the side altar are the only places in the nave where flowers can be placed.
- All candles will be white and provided by the church. Pew standards (torches) are available and may be used if desired. These will be set up by the St. Paul's staff. No ribbons or greenery may be attached to the torches.
- No furniture in the church is to be moved.

Photographs & Videos

St. Paul's reserves the right to approve the choice of photographer. The Parish Wedding Director will be responsible for working with the photographer before, during, and after the liturgy.

It is permissible to take non-flash photographs and videotape the service unobtrusively from the balcony. Photographs after the liturgy are limited to a time frame of thirty minutes.

Photographs may be taken as follows:

- Outside
- In the Emma Gribbin Room – with wedding party getting ready, family, etc.
- In the Narthex (entrance to the church) as the wedding party is lined up for Procession.
- Processing down the center aisle after the liturgy is over.
- In front of the Altar following the liturgy (for 30 minutes).
- Posed photographs in the church Nave will be taken only after the liturgy.

Wedding Rehearsal

- Wedding rehearsals are entirely under the direction of the officiating clergy, assisted by the parish wedding director.
- All members of the wedding party are encouraged to arrive on time and to be present at the rehearsal. All other persons who might be present are subject to the direction of the officiating clergy in order that the rehearsal may proceed in an orderly fashion.
- The Organist will be present at the rehearsal.

- The Parish Register and state license will normally be signed by the couple to be married and two witnesses either before or after the rehearsal, then by the officiating clergy following the wedding liturgy.
- No alcoholic drinks are allowed at any time in any part of the church or on the grounds during the wedding rehearsal.

Receptions

Due to staffing requirements, St. Paul's is currently unable to host rehearsal dinners or wedding receptions on our campus.

Fees

An invoice will be mailed to the person responsible for the bill up to six weeks prior to the wedding. If adjustments need to be made, a subsequent bill will be sent. All fees, except those for musicians from outside the church, must be paid at least one week before the wedding.

Breakdown of Individual Fees

<input type="checkbox"/> Facility/Set-up/Clean-up/Security	500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Parish Wedding Director	200.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Altar Flowers	500.00
<i>Prices of flowers are subject to change based on market costs.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organist (paid directly to the organist)	300.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Leaflet set-up fee	150.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of the Chapel (instead of the nave)	300.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Chapel flowers	200.00

Optional

<input type="checkbox"/> Choir (20 people)	1000.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Leaflet printing in-house- \$1.00 per leaflet	
<input type="checkbox"/> Soloist and Instrumentalist(s) paid directly; amount decided between couple and musician.	

It is customary to give an honorarium directly to the officiating clergy (suggested \$300-\$500). In addition, a donation may be made to St Paul's and designated to the officiating clergy's discretionary fund.

Offsite Weddings

If the couple requests a wedding at a location other than St Paul's, the officiating clergy will discuss the request with the couple. The above guidelines will apply except when they are specific to the spaces at St Paul's. The couple is responsible for getting the marriage license to the church office one week prior to the wedding so that the staff assistant for weddings can enter the information in the parish register/certificates. After the wedding the staff assistant will mail the signed license back to the state.

The officiating clergy will plan the liturgy with the couple and then the couple can choose music and musicians in consultation with clergy. The rehearsal at the location will be entirely

under the direction of the officiating clergy. Outside wedding directors will not be involved. St Paul's will provide the template for the leaflet and can print them as well. All leaflets must have the approval of the officiating clergy before going to print.

The following fees will apply:

Leaflets – set-up fee	150.00
Leaflets – printing at St Paul's - \$1.00 per leaflet	
Miscellaneous (if having communion)	50.00

An honorarium of \$500.00 for the officiating clergy should be given directly to them.

**Guidelines for Re-Marriage
The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina**

The consultation with the Bishop required under Title I, Canon 19, needs to be in writing, normally no sooner than one year after separation in the previous marriage. Applications in a shorter period should state reasons for the shorter time.

The application for consent of the Bishop shall be made by the member of the clergy who will officiate at the proposed wedding. When the officiating minister is not canonically resident holding a pastoral cure, the application must be accompanied by the endorsement of such a minister who certifies that these guidelines have been met.

Each application for consent of the Bishop shall consist of a letter from the minister, which will include the following:

1. A statement that he or she has met with both parties to the proposed marriage, or, if not, a description of the alternative to such a meeting, and that the Declaration of Intention has been signed;
2. A statement that the final divorce decree has been seen personally and the date of the final decree;
3. A statement that the minister is satisfied that adequate “continuing concern” is demonstrated for former spouse(s) and for any children. (See Title I, Canon 19);
4. The date and place of the proposed ceremony;
5. A statement that all other requirements of Title I, Canon 18 and Title I, Canon 19 not already mentioned have been met;
6. A statement that no other minister of this Church has declined to solemnize the proposed marriage; or, if a minister of this Church has so declined to solemnize, a statement that the applying minister has consulted with that minister, including reasons for application in light of that consultation.
7. In case where either party has had a second divorce, the application for the Bishop’s consent shall not be made (a) unless one year has passed since the final divorce decree, (b) unless both parties to the proposed marriage have sought and received professional marriage counseling, and (c) until the counselor has reported to the minister the belief that the two persons asking for permission to marry are in the opinion of the counselor adequately prepared for a lifelong union.

When consent has been given in another jurisdiction for a marriage in the Diocese of North Carolina, the Bishop of North Carolina will affirm the consent, provided these guidelines have been followed, or that exceptions to them have his or her approval.

The solemnization of any marriage under Title I, Canon 19 shall be reported to the Bishop within 30 days after the wedding.