

The Checklist

In addition to a lot of love, trust, talking to each other, prayer, laughter, and tears, be sure to include these steps:

- Initial Conference with the Pastor
- Initial Conference with the Organist-Pianist
- Wedding & rehearsal scheduled with church office.
- Wedding participants selected and contacted
- Arrangements for reception, flowers, musicians, photos, rehearsal party, honeymoon, etc.
- Consultations with Pastor, including designing the ceremony
- Invitations sent
- License obtained (within 60 days of wedding, at least 24 hours before the service)
- Fees paid—One week prior to the wedding, at rehearsal at the latest
- Rehearsal—bring license and this booklet.

Good night's sleep

God's Grace and Peace be with you!



A Guide to the Service of Christian Marriage at St. Paul's United Methodist Church

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Welcome

We are pleased that you are planning to be married at St. Paul's UMC. We will do all that we can to help you make this a memorable time of worship, celebration, and commitment.

There are a number of things you will need to consider as you plan. Remember that the ceremony is a service of worship. What follows are some matters of policy and information that will be helpful to you.

Getting Started

1. First of all, call the church and schedule an appointment for both of you with the Pastor.
2. After meeting with the pastor, schedule your wedding date and time in accordance with the availability of the church building.
3. Read through this booklet and note the checklist in the back that will assist you with your planning.
4. Meet with the Organist if you wish to use their services.

The Ceremony

A Service of Christian Marriage is a holy service of worship. It is a time to offer praise and worship to God as you commit yourselves to one another before God and the gathered congregation. Hopefully, it sets the stage for your continued growth in Christian love and discipleship as well as being the public announcement of your lifelong commitment to each other.

Because a marriage ceremony is Christian worship, all of its elements must be planned so as to be appropriate for worship. The service is not merely personal but also a matter of the church. The pastor and other staff persons of the church will work with you to make your wedding a sacred and joyous celebration before God.

The text of the ceremony may be altered and edited slightly according to personal preference. Additions can be made such as a candle lighting ceremony, greeting parents with gifts or flowers, and reciting vows from note or memory. Pray-

Fees at the Church

The church and its staff, by intention, remain one of the smaller expenses of your wedding day. These are trained professionals, however, and this is an expensive buildings to maintain in the city; therefore certain fees are required.

- Sanctuary for Wedding \$600 (waived for members)
- Sanctuary for Rehearsal \$100
- Pastor: \$300
- Organist: \$150
- Wedding Coordinator \$100
- Custodial Fee for Sanctuary only \$50
- Dressing Rooms \$100
- Candelabra candles (optional) \$25
- *\$25 of the sanctuary fee is donated to equal rights advocacy within the United Methodist denomination. St. Paul's is very active in marriage equality and advocates for equal marriage rights within the United Methodist Church. We believe marriage is a holy covenant that should be available to all persons, regardless of their sexual identity.*
- ***A deposit of \$100 is required for non-members upon confirmation of the wedding date.***

These costs are for a typical wedding. If you are planning a wedding on a limited budget, talk with the Pastor about it, so that adjustments can be made. If your wedding is elaborate, with unusual time for music rehearsal and so forth, this will be individually considered also.

All fees for the wedding should be paid in full to St. Paul's UMC by the wedding rehearsal date.

MOST IMPORTANTLY:

We try very hard to make weddings accessible to all. We do not want anyone to be excluded from having their wedding at St. Paul's United Methodist Church for financial reasons. Please talk with the Pastor if you are concerned.

ers may be substituted, changed, and edited. At least two readings from the Bible may be chosen by you.

Holy Communion may be a part of this ceremony as it is in any worship occasion. If you choose Holy Communion, please be advised that all present, wedding party and guests, will be invited to receive the sacrament. The pastor will gladly discuss this possibility with you.

Meeting with the Pastor

All planning for your service of marriage begins with your first consultation with the pastor. You may make an appointment by calling the Church office Monday-Thursday, between the hours of 9:00 am and Noon. A date for the ceremony can be discussed with the Building Coordinator, but will be firmly reserved after your time with the pastor.

Under normal circumstances, the pastor of this church officiates at all weddings in the building. If you have other clergy who you would like to have participate, they are sincerely welcomed. Please make these arrangements with the pastor.

Pastoral consultations focus as much on the vows you will make before God as the technicalities of the ceremony. At your initial meeting with the pastor, the pastor will discuss meeting a few more times to talk about this wonderful and awesome commitment you both are entering on your wedding day. There are no restrictions against the marriage of divorced persons; the gospel of Jesus Christ is primarily about forgiveness and new beginnings.

Please note that according to the *Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church, "the decision to perform the [wedding] ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor." Also note, that not only are you entering into a sacred covenant (promise), you are also entering into a legal and binding contract. **This must be done with a clear mind, please refrain from alcoholic beverages before the rehearsal and wedding service. The pastor cannot perform the ceremony if either of the couple or the bridal party are under the influence. Please note our facility is alcohol-free and smoke-free.**

Meeting with the Organist-Pianist

The Organist-Pianist is in charge of all musical accompaniment for weddings at St. Paul's UMC, and is the organist for the services. Requests for additional musicians, singers, special musical selections, and so forth, should be discussed with the pastor and Organist, and may include our Choral & Ensemble Director if appropriate. Final decisions about the feasibility and appropriateness of such requests will be made together.

Music to be discussed with the Organist includes the Processional and the Recessional. Other music may include prelude and postlude selections (before and after the ceremony), a soloist or small ensemble piece, music during a candle or sand ceremony (optional), or other music that is meaningful for you and appropriate for the service.

If you have friends who are musicians, the Organist-Pianist will be happy to meet them. Please carefully consider all the ramifications of rehearsals, expertise, and flexibility, and discuss it with the Organist before you go to them; their feelings are important.

Some Details to Consider

As you plan for this immensely significant day in your life, we urge you to consider carefully each detail and expense. Most often, the pieces of our wedding day that we remember were the "priceless" ones, not the expensive customs we felt expected to follow. Here are some details you will need to consider:

- Aisle runners are prohibited. Our insurance will not cover any accidents caused by this tripping hazard.
- You may bring your own flowers or utilize a florist. Whoever delivers the flowers must arrange with the church for the time and location. Candles are provided by the church, except the Unity candles for a Candle Ceremony (optional).
- A friend or professional may take photographs. Digital or video cameras must be discreet and respectful. Flash photography is not permitted during the service. After the ceremony, you may make use of flash photography in the sanctuary.
- The Pastor will direct the rehearsal and wedding within the church building.
- It is necessary to compensate church professionals who will carry out the wedding ceremony, but if money is an issue please discuss it with the pastor.

The Rehearsal & Wedding Day

The wedding rehearsal will be scheduled with the Pastor. It will usually be early in the evening the day before the wedding, so that you may plan other activities to follow. The rehearsal normally takes about 45 minutes once everyone arrives, plus extra time required by music, children, and so forth.

The entire wedding party should be present at the beginning of the rehearsal. Parents and family of the bride and groom are invited to attend also. Musicians and photographers should also be present.

The rehearsal will be directed by the Pastor according to the arrangements agreed upon with the couple. Suggestions are welcome, as well as any last minute thoughts or small changes.

Please bring the marriage license and any unpaid fees for the ceremony to the rehearsal. (The marriage license must be acquired at least 24 hours, but not more than 60 days prior to the ceremony.)

On your wedding day, ushers/groomsmen should be at the church 1 hour before the wedding. The groom and best man should arrive 20 minutes before the ceremony. The bride and her party should come just before the ceremony.

Arrangements can be made for dressing at the church. The facilities are limited, however.

Due to the cost of clean up and the potential harm to wildlife, we ask that you only use birdseed, bubbles, or small bells as part of your church exit celebration. Rice, confetti, silly string, and releasing animals are messy and are often harmful to creation.

The Wedding Coordinator

- Our Wedding Coordinator will act as a guide for you, your wedding party, and your guests. The Coordinator is available to consult with you and assist with any arrangements that you make prior to your rehearsal date.
 - The Coordinator will assign any dressing rooms requested and monitor the use of the facilities, including access options for disabled persons entering and exiting the building.
 - The Coordinator will receive the flowers from the florist and distribute them to the wedding participants.
- The Coordinator will be at the church one hour before the ceremony on your wedding day, and will attend the rehearsal.