

# *Weddings at St. Paul's*



*Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church*

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## **MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH**

In the earliest days of the church, all marriages were civil ceremonies only. In later centuries, it became common for Christians who had been married in civil ceremonies to come, subsequently, to the church for their marriage to be blessed. In the medieval tradition it was customary for the clergy of the church not only to bless existing marriages, but also to officiate at the marriage ceremony itself, a custom which is often continued today. A church wedding is a public witness to the Christian understanding of what marriage is all about. By choosing to be married in the church, the couple says, "We recognize marriage to be a gift from God, and we implore God's blessings and continued support to sustain that gift."

Those who are married at St. Paul's are therefore expected to continue worshiping at St. Paul's or at another Christian congregation on a regular basis.



### **Who may be married in St. Paul's Church?**

Those who intend to enter into a Christian marriage may be married in St. Paul's Church. Both parties should have been baptized. Normally, at least one of the parties will be a member of the parish or, if not a member, regularly worshipping here. A couple will be expected to be at worship weekly in the six weeks preceding their first premarital meeting with a pastor, and will be expected to establish a regular discipline of attendance during the entire period of preparation prior to their marriage.

### **How do we begin?**

If you believe you want to be married at St. Paul's, begin participating in worship regularly. (If you live away from Newark, begin to worship regularly where you are.) Then, call the church office ((302) 368-0064) and make an appointment to see a pastor. At that initial meeting the premarital conference time will be set, further information about the wedding will be provided, and dates for the rehearsal and wedding may be set.

**No dates are set before a pastor meets with both parties to a marriage!**

### **Premarital conferences**

You will be asked to schedule several sessions with one of the pastors. These sessions are designed to assist you in clarifying the similarities and differences in your individual value systems, and in helping you understand the implications for your life together. This is an opportunity for you to share your hopes and dreams for your wedding and discuss the details concerning the service itself.

### **Who officiates?**

The wedding ceremony and the rehearsal are normally conducted by one of the pastors of St. Paul's Church. Ministers of other churches may participate and assist should the couple so request.

**How soon before the wedding are the arrangements made?**

Six or eight months before the wedding is not too soon to see the pastor and to begin premarital counseling. Weddings are not scheduled during Lent or Holy Week, both of which precede Easter.

**What about music?**

Music is a joyful component of most wedding ceremonies. Schedule permitting, the organist at St. Paul's will serve as the organist and music coordinator at your wedding. The organist will help you to select music that is appropriate for a worship service and will approve and supervise the work of any soloists that you may wish to use.

**About Holy Communion**

Holy Communion enriches any Christian wedding service. The Bible describes how Jesus enlivened the wedding feast at Cana by turning water into wine. In the same manner, the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of Holy Communion enlivens the celebration of a Christian marriage. The pastor will speak to you about your desire and the appropriateness of celebrating Holy Communion at your wedding. If communion is included, all baptized Christians will be invited to commune. It is fitting that the bride and groom furnish the gifts of bread and wine for use in their marriage service.

**What about flowers and decorations in the church?**

Flowers may be ordered from any area florist. You will need to make arrangements well ahead of time for them to be delivered to the church. Please contact the church office ((302) 368-0064) during office hours in order to make arrangements.

The Flower Guild at St. Paul's Church is available to provide flowers placed in the church. Please contact Karen Saylor ((302) 834-4074) if you have any questions about this option. If you wish to leave your flowers for a future worship service, please contact Karen Saylor ((302) 834-4074).

### ***Other items:***

Pew bows and pew candles, if desired, must be obtained from a florist and secured with elastic only (no plastic or metal clips). They must be removed immediately following the wedding service.

The ring is the symbol of unity in a marriage. The use of a “unity candle” detracts from the importance of the ring and adds extraneous elements to the worship service. The pastors therefore strongly discourage the use of a “unity candle” during the wedding service and will place restrictions on such a candle’s use should a couple insist on having one.

For safety reasons, aisle runners are never permitted.

St. Paul’s permits those attending the wedding to give the bride and groom a fun “sendoff” by blowing bubbles at the couple or by throwing flower petals on the driveway (but not in the church or on the sidewalk). Because they are difficult to clean up, rice, confetti, and bird-seed may not be used.

### **Photography during the wedding service**

As the wedding service is a time of worship, flash photographs may not be taken during the ceremony. This applies to wedding guests as well as to professional photographers. Photographers who consult with the pastor before the ceremony may be allowed to take flash photos during the procession and recession. Likewise, videotaping of the service may be allowed provided that a stationary camera is set up in one of the side aisles or in the rear of the sanctuary.

### **Worship Folders**

Weddings are a worship service of the church. The pastor and staff will work with you in planning the wedding service and see to it that worship folders/bulletins are provided. Special bulletin covers are your responsibility to provide.

## **What are the costs for a wedding at St. Paul's?**

***The Marriage Tithe:*** As a sign of gratitude to God for your love for one another you are encouraged to make a thank offering to St Paul's and its mission to the wider community. Consider offering a tithe (10%) of the total cost of the wedding.

***Music:*** The standard fee to the organist is \$250 and is \$300 if the organist required at the rehearsal. When vocal soloists or other musicians are involved additional fees will be requested.

***Flowers:*** The fee per one large stand of flowers arranged by Saint Paul's Flower Guild is \$75. Other decorations may be arranged for an appropriate fee.

***Worship Folders/Bulletins:*** Currently the Music Director (organist) produces the bulletins. Cost is \$50.

***Caretaker:*** The Caretaker will see to it that the building is opened for the wedding, turn on lights, turn on and adjust heat/AC, generally check the facilities, be available to the wedding party to assist in facility-related matters and then close up the facilities after the wedding. Cost is \$50.

***Pastoral services:*** A fee for pastoral services may be requested. The pastor will speak to the couple.

Individual checks are requested for the Organist, Marriage Tithe, Caretaker and Flower Guild (if used). Fees should be delivered no later than the Monday preceding the wedding.

**Please note:** In case of financial hardship, all fees are negotiable. Speak to a pastor well in advance if you are unable to pay the fees described in this booklet. No one should be discouraged from planning a wedding at Saint Paul's for financial reasons.

**What about the marriage license?**

The State of Delaware marriage license must be obtained from the Office of the Clerk of the Peace ((302) 395-7780) in the City and County Building, 8th and French Streets, Wilmington. Delaware statutes require that the wedding license be obtained not more than 30 days nor less than 4 days (out-of-state residents) or 1 day (both parties residents of Delaware) before the ceremony. The pastor who handles your wedding may ask to have the license delivered to the church office the week before the wedding or may request that you bring all copies of the license to the wedding rehearsal.

**Bible readings for your wedding—**

In consultation with a pastor, you will be asked to pick scriptures to be read at your wedding. For your reference, a list of suggested readings is provided on the following page.

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**Couples-- Pick one from each category except for the Gospel-- the Pastor will pick that one.**

### **OLD TESTAMENT**

Genesis 1:26-28 *Woman and man created in the image of God*

Genesis 2:18-24 *Companionship rather than loneliness*

Proverbs 3:3-6 *Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart*

Song of Solomon 2:10-13 *The voice of the beloved*

Song of Solomon 8:6-7 *Many waters cannot quench love*

Isaiah 63:7-9 *God's steadfast love lifts up the people*

Jeremiah 31:31-34 *The new covenant of the people of God*

### **PSALM**

67 *May God be merciful to us and bless us*

100 *We are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture*

117 *The steadfast love of the Lord*

121 *The Lord keeps watch over you*

127 *Unless the Lord builds the house*

128 *Blessed are those who walk in the Lord's ways*

150 *Let everything that breathes praise the Lord*

### **NEW TESTAMENT**

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39 *If God is for us, who is against us*

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 *A living sacrifice and genuine love*

1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13 *The greatest gift is love*

Ephesians 3:14-19 *The breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love*

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33 *Walk in love, as Christ loved us*

Philippians 4:4-9 *Rejoice in the Lord always*

Colossians 3:12-17 *Clothed in compassion, kindness, meekness and patience*

1 John 3:18-24 *Let us love in truth and action*

1 John 4:7-16 *Let us love one another for love is of God*

### **GOSPEL**

Matthew 5:1-10 *The beatitudes*

Matthew 5:14-16 *You are the light, let your light shine*

Matthew 7:21, 24-29 *A wise person builds upon the rock*

Matthew 19:3-6 *What God has united must not be divided*

Matthew 22:35-40 *Love, the greatest commandment*

Mark 10:6-9 *They are no longer two but one*

John 2:1-11 *The wedding at Cana*

John 15:9-17 *Love one another as I have loved you*