



485 Appleton St.
Holyoke, MA 01040
(413) 532-5060

Weddings at St. Paul's Episcopal Church

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413-532-5060 | office@stpaulsholyoke.org | www.stpaulsholyoke.org

Introduction

One of the great joys of church life is to share in the profound moment when a couple is united in marriage. A wedding is an unforgettable moment in a person's life, and we are eager to help make the experience of your wedding as meaningful as possible.

Requirements for Marriage in the Episcopal Church

For marriage at St. Paul's Church at least one of those being married must be a baptized Christian (of any denomination) and the wedding ceremony must be attested to by at least two witnesses.

The Bride and Groom must sign the Declaration of Intention which is included in this packet.

A minimum of three pre-marital counseling sessions with the priest is required before the wedding day. These sessions allow time for the priest to get to know the couple and vice versa. They also set aside time to discuss the Church's understanding of marriage, to explore the nature of life as a married couple, and to plan the service. In some cases, the priest may suggest the couple seek other counseling.

If either party is divorced, a copy of the writ of divorce with the word "Final" must be on file. The couple, in consultation with the priest, must discuss, as necessary, continuing concern for the well-being of the former spouse and of any children. The couple must each write a letter to the Bishop that explains their understanding of why the previous marriage did not work out and explain how they will attempt to strengthen this new marriage based on what they have learned. The priest writes a letter and applies to the Bishop for his permission to perform the remarriage ceremony. The Bishop of Western Massachusetts must then give written consent to the proposed solemnization of marriage.

Marriage License

An Intention of Marriage can be applied for at any city hall or town clerk's office in Massachusetts. Both parties must be present, and a fee is due at that time. Your license will be issued to you in three days, and it will remain in effect for sixty days. If you are living out of

state and will not be present to apply for the license, you must obtain a court waiver. Since the wedding cannot be celebrated without a license in hand, please bring it to the rehearsal.

Scheduling a Wedding Date

The date must first be cleared with the priest. Don't book the hall or make arrangements for a wedding without first clearing the date with the priest. The custom is for weddings to take place on Saturdays, though there is flexibility and weddings may be performed any time, including

during the main Sunday services. Weddings are not scheduled during the season of Lent, due to the penitential nature of the season. Lent's dates depend upon Easter. It usually begins sometime in February and lasts until late March or mid-April.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are scheduled for the afternoon or evening before the wedding. They generally take 30 minutes to one hour, depending on the nature and size of the wedding. It is essential that all members of the wedding party attend and arrive on time for the rehearsal.

Planning the Service

The clergy at St. Paul's will work with you to shape the specifics of the service. Please read the marriage service in the Prayer Book (Page 423). You should be clear that this is the service you want before deciding to be married at St. Paul's.

The readings during the service will be from Holy Scripture, chosen in consultation with the priest. We encourage the participation of friends and family members to read.

A celebration of the Holy Eucharist is a wonderful way to start your life together and to celebrate the blessing of a marriage, and we encourage every wedding to include the Holy Communion. In the Episcopal marriage rite, communion is optional, however, so it is not necessary. At St. Paul's, our custom is to welcome all baptized Christians, regardless of age or denomination, to receive communion.

Service Bulletins

St. Paul's will prepare and print the bulletins for the service.

Music

Once the couple and the priest have met and agreed to go forward with the ceremony, we ask the couple to contact the church's musicians to discuss musical options. The Organist, or the Hispanic Musician, plays for all weddings. Please contact the organist Curtis Mercier at Harlakenden@gmail.com Or Sergio D' Orsini Hispanic Musician at sergiodorsini@gmail.com.

There are a range of possibilities for music at a wedding- from solo organ or guitar to organ or guitar accompanying hymns, to having other instruments and having soloists. Whatever the music is, it will need to be consistent with the musical traditions of the Church.

The donations for musicians to play at a wedding begin at \$200 and increase if there are other instruments or soloists. If the couple getting married would like to bring in someone to play their wedding, the Church musician is to be compensated at the fee of \$200 for the service.

Money should not be an obstacle to any sacramental experience at St Paul's, so please talk with the priest about any financial concerns you might have.

Wedding music should never be a distraction from the meaning of this sacred event nor should it serve as a showcase for the musician or singer. Music before the service should set the atmosphere for the occasion. Music should be live and not recorded.

Flowers and Other Adornments

The Church prepares one or two arrangements for the altar and may be consulted to discuss floral options. Additional flowers, boutonnieres, and bouquets may be brought in by a florist.

We do not allow “unity candles” for the service, and please refrain from the use of rice, birdseed, or any type of confetti thrown after the service.

Aisle Carpet Runner

The use of a white aisle carpet runner is optional. If you wish to have one, be mindful that those supplied by florists are cheap tend to slide when rolled out, and are easily punctured by heels.

Respect for the Church

The wedding party is expected to treat the Church with respect. The Church is a place of prayer, and an atmosphere of reverence for the presence of God is customary. Food and drink are not allowed in the Church or in the sacristy.

Photography

There should be no flash pictures or lights for photographs or videos taken during the wedding ceremony. Photographers and videographers may use a flash to capture the wedding party entering and leaving the church. Under no circumstances may the photographer or videographer come down the aisle or be in the front of the church during the service

The best way to photograph a wedding party is either before or after the service.

Seating Capacity The Seating capacity of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church is over 400 people.

Other Clergy and Wedding Coordinators

St. Paul’s clergy will officiate at all weddings held at St. Paul’s Church unless otherwise arranged with the Rector, who must invite any other clergy that the couple may wish to have participated. Outside wedding consultants may not be used for any component of the wedding ceremony.

On the Day of the Wedding

The wedding party should plan to arrive forty-five minutes to one hour before the wedding.

Fees

There are no fees for the sacraments of the Church - Donations are made to cover the costs of the event, including the utilities, cleaning, and the musician’s time.

There is a difference in the cost between active members and non-members (or non-active members). We take into consideration those who support St. Paul’s spiritually and financially through a pledge.

Everything must be paid at the time of the wedding rehearsal.

List of Fees

To cover costs related to weddings at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, please note the following four fees:

Church Building Use \$250 (active members)

\$400 (non-members & non-active members)

Clergy An honorarium at the couple's discretion for active members; \$200 for non-members and non-active members. This is for the priest's time in premarital counseling, rehearsal, and officiating.

Musician \$250

Sexton \$100



WEDDING INFORMATION

PARTY A

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____ (Mobile) _____ (Other) _____

Date of Birth _____ Birthplace (City/State) _____

Are you a Member of St. Paul's? YES NO

Member of another church? YES NO

If there is another church, what is the church's name and location?

Baptized: YES NO If so, denomination: _____

Previously married? YES NO Date of Dissolution: _____

Children? _____ If so, how many? _____

PARTY B

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____ (Mobile) _____ (Other) _____

Date of Birth _____ Birthplace (City/State) _____

Are you a Member of St. Paul's? YES NO

Member of another church? YES NO

If there is another church, what is the church's name and location?

Baptized: YES NO If so, denomination: _____

Previously married? YES NO Date of Dissolution: _____

Children? _____ If so, how many? _____

CEREMONY:

Date of Ceremony: _____ **Time:** _____

Name of Witnesses:

Witness #1: _____

Witness #2: _____

Permanent address after marriage:

Declaration of Intent

We, _____ and _____

Desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union between two people as it is set forth in the liturgical forms authorized by this Church. We believe it is for the purpose of mutual fellowship, encouragement, and understanding, for the procreation (if it may be) of children, and their physical and spiritual nurture, and of the safeguarding and benefit of society, and we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto.

Signed

_____ and _____

Party A

Party B

Clergy

Date