

St. Paul's Episcopal Church – Newnan, Georgia

Guidelines for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

Introduction

To be married at St. Paul's in accordance with the canons of the Episcopal Church, you or your fiancé must be a baptized Christian. It is expected that either of you (or at least one of your parents) be **active members** of St. Paul's. (If you would like to become a member, please fill out a membership form.)

Wedding Date and Time

Once you decide that you would like to be married at St. Paul's (or you wish to have your marriage celebrated and blessed by our Clergy), the first step is to meet with the Priest in Charge – even before you schedule the **date** and time of the service. St. Paul's requires a minimum of 90 days' notice for a wedding and allows scheduling up to one year in advance. This helps us avoid scheduling conflicts and will help you make your wedding day all that it can be. Any day is a good day for a marriage except those in the season of Lent, Easter Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. For more information about appropriate days, please ask the Clergy.

Marriage License

Your marriage must be in accordance with the laws of the state of Georgia. That means that a valid marriage license must be presented to the officiating Clergy at the wedding rehearsal.

Counseling

Every couple to be married at St. Paul's agrees to premarital counseling. You may meet with the Clergy for 3 – 5 sessions prior to the wedding or be engaged in other specialized counseling with another Episcopal priest or authorized counselor out of town.

If either of you has been divorced, the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese of Atlanta is required before the priest can agree to celebrate your marriage. As part of this process, you will be expected to submit some necessary documents to the Diocese and to await the bishop's permission for our priest to celebrate your wedding – *prior to finalizing and announcing the date of your wedding*.

(Please see the **Remarriage Petition** – available from the parish office and online at http://www.episcopalatlanta.org/images/customer-files/Remarriage_Petition.pdf.)

Liturgical Guidelines

You can find the liturgy for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage on page 422 of the Book of Common Prayer. You may also access an online version at: <http://www.bcponline.org/>. A gender neutral version and same-sex liturgies are available and can be viewed online [here](#) and [here](#).

You can find a list of Scripture lessons for a marriage service on page 426 of the Book of Common Prayer. The lessons from the Old Testament and the Epistles may be read by a lay person (a family

member, friend, or member of the wedding party). The Gospel is always read by the Clergy. Those who agree to read the lessons should prepare by using the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible and should attend the wedding rehearsal.

A printed service bulletin will provide additional guidance to those participating. The service bulletin will be provided by the Parish Administrator based on a standard format provided by the Clergy. Details of the participants and any additional inputs must be made with the Clergy and provided to the Parish Administrator 10 days prior to the ceremony.

Wedding Coordinator

The St. Paul's Wedding Coordinator will be notified as soon as the wedding date has been put on the church calendar. A meeting with the coordinator should be arranged at least two months before the date of the wedding to discuss the details of both the rehearsal and the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator will assist the Clergy in securing the services of the Altar Guild, Flower Guild, ushers and the opening and closing of the building.

Music

The Clergy and Organist/Choirmaster will help you plan the music for the service. We have provided a list of appropriate hymns in the attached appendix. We ask that you do not use secular music during the service. As soon as the date is set please contact the Organist/Choirmaster to schedule an appointment to select music. The Organist/Choirmaster has the right of first refusal for all services in our parish and if they are not able to assist with your wedding, they will give you guidance for other musicians. Musicians are paid for the services and it is appropriate that they be paid no later than the day of the rehearsal.

Flowers and Decorations

The St. Paul's Flower Guild handles flower arrangements for all weddings. No one other than this guild may arrange the flowers for the worship spaces, including but not limited to the altar, transepts, pews, aisle and narthex.

Flower Selection: The couple should contact the Flower Guild Coordinator to discuss floral selections at least two months in advance. The Flower Guild Coordinator can provide advice on flowers, placement and availability. The wedding flower fee only includes two large floral arrangements for the altar area and a large arrangement for the narthex. The altar flowers for worship at weddings are also used for worship on Sunday morning. An announcement will be made in that Sunday's bulletin that the flowers have been given in thanksgiving for your marriage.

Special liturgical holiday decorations (such as greenery during Advent, Christmas flowers during the Christmas season and red during Pentecost) will take precedence over weddings.

Additional Flower Arrangements: The St. Paul's Flower Guild can arrange additional flowers in the window embrasures, at the front doors and on the pews for an additional charge.

For questions regarding flowers please contact Louise Howard, 770 265 1685.

The Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is **mandatory**, it gives the wedding party the opportunity to become familiar with the service ahead of time, so they are comfortable during the actual ceremony.

Wedding rehearsals are normally held on the afternoon or early evening immediately before the wedding day. All members of the wedding party are expected to attend and should arrive at least fifteen minutes early.

The St. Paul's Wedding Coordinator assists the priest at the rehearsal and coordinates preparations prior to the ceremony on the wedding day. Because we have a knowledgeable and experienced wedding team, private wedding coordinators are not a part of the wedding service and rehearsal.

The Wedding Day

All members of the wedding party should arrive at the church at least two hours before the wedding. The library and lower level youth room will be available **three** hours before the wedding. These rooms should be vacated no later than **one** hour after the wedding.

St. Paul's Wedding Coordinator is responsible for assisting all members of the wedding party and the families in taking their places at the proper time. She will also give all other directions prior to the ceremony. Outside wedding coordinators may assist in the preparation rooms but may not give any directions related to the ceremony.

Arrangements should be made to remove all personal items immediately after the wedding and the library and youth room be left as they were found. All personal belongings of the wedding party must be removed from the church the same day as the wedding ceremony to facilitate timely clean-up of the church. Any items that are left will be disposed of accordingly. St. Paul's Episcopal church of Newnan does not assume liability or responsibility for any participant. St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Newnan does not make any express or implied warranty of the premises, the equipment, machinery, fixtures or furniture. St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Newnan facilities and all equipment will be at the risk of the participants.

Photography and Filming

Photographers must respect that your wedding is, above all else, a worship service. We invite you to take as many pictures before and after the service as time allows. These photos should be concluded 30 minutes before and 30 minutes following the service. Discreet flash photographs of the couple as they enter and leave the church will be permitted. We invite you to use an official photographer or videographer of the service, **this is done by means of a stationary camera in the choir loft, or rear of the transept.** The photographer must understand that the priest will **not** allow any distractions during the service from photographic equipment. This means that **no movement, flash photography or loud cameras will be allowed.**

Family and friends should be notified that cameras and cell phone cameras are not to be used during the ceremony.

Parish Hall

St. Paul's Parish Hall is available for small wedding receptions, subject to availability and with the consent of the clergy. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to arrange for set up of the tables and chairs and if moved, to return the tables to the way they were originally arranged. We suggest an outside linen service be used for tablecloths etc., and they be removed at the end of the event. St. Paul's kitchen equipment and supplies must not be used for private events. If a caterer is used please refer them to the Wedding Coordinator for guidelines on using the kitchen. **Responsible and moderate use of alcoholic beverages is allowed only in the Parish Hall.** The kitchen area must be left clean, with all countertops wiped down and trash removed to the outside dumpster. The Parish Hall is available for use until **9pm on any evening**. A cleaning/security deposit is required for use of the Parish Hall.

Cleaning Services

Immediately following the departure of the wedding party and guests, St. Paul's cleaning staff will begin cleaning the church and other areas used by the wedding party. Please ensure that all personal belongings have been removed and all trash deposited in trash receptacles. The cleaning charge is listed in the wedding fees. Due to the specialized decoration and floors in St. Paul's only St. Paul's cleaning service will undertake the cleaning.

Wedding Fees

At St. Paul's we do not conduct weddings for the income, and we don't rent out our facilities. Every marriage is unique, and the appropriate fees may vary, depending on the circumstances. The Clergy will discuss these with you. It is expected that any fees will be delivered with the marriage license at the rehearsal.

Organist – Service only \$375
an additional fee of \$50 may be required for rehearsals with other musicians, as well as fees for those other musicians.

Wedding Coordinator – Consultation/Rehearsal/Service \$250

Flowers – Consultation/Flowers/supplies \$300
other fees may apply based on consultation

Cleaning – Cleaning of the church and other areas \$100

Parish Hall – A cleaning/security deposit is required for the use of the Parish Hall \$500
please see guidelines for the use of the Parish Hall

Acolytes and clergy will appreciatively accept gifts of gratitude

FAQs

Do we have to have Holy Communion at our wedding? - You do not have to have Holy Eucharist as part of your wedding liturgy. But, celebrating Holy Eucharist in the context of your marriage is a reminder that your love should be grounded in Christ's love. If you choose to have communion, your first meal together as a married couple occurs at the Lord's table.

Small Weddings and Blessings – If you would prefer a very intimate wedding or blessing of a preexisting marriage with only close family in attendance, without communion, music or large flower arrangements we suggest the Chapel as a suitable choice.

Are we allowed to use aisle runners or flower petals? - Because of safety and insurance concerns, we cannot allow an aisle runner or flower petals to be used for weddings at St. Paul's.

Candles - Candles are part of our worship in the Episcopal Church. A “unity candle”, however, is not part of our liturgy and cannot be used in the service.

Nursery Services - For an additional fee, nursery services are available at your request. Please contact the office, three months prior to your wedding date for more information. Our nursery staff must be used to ensure that we are following Diocese regulations.

Confetti/rice/birdseed – For ecological reasons, we ask that only birdseed is thrown on the church property.

Sparklers etc. – If sparklers or similar items are used, we ask that they be used on the sidewalk outside of the church well away from the covered porch and everything associated with these items is removed and disposed of safely.

This is your copy. Attached is an agreement to these guidelines which must be signed by both of you and returned to the Church Administrator so that we may proceed with your wedding plans. Your signature on that agreement is the covenant that you have read and will abide by these guidelines.