

WEDDING POLICY & PROCEDURE



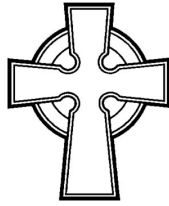
ST. STEPHEN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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WEDDING POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. Call the church office and speak to the administrative staff about wedding policies, dates and forms.
2. Schedule a time for a first meeting with the pastor.
3. Complete a Wedding Information Form (attached) and give it to the administrative staff with payment of half of all wedding fees.
4. Schedule a time to meet with the Minister of Music.
5. The wedding date will be secure and placed on the church calendar when:
 - The pastor approves the wedding and the date of the wedding.
 - When half the wedding fees plus the deposit have been paid.
 - The Wedding Information Form has been completed and returned to the office.
6. All fees must be paid in full according to the following schedule:
 - 50% down plus refundable deposit to secure date.
 - Letter to Pastor requesting permission to use our facilities.
 - Balance due after permission is granted and no later than two months prior to the wedding.
 - The administrative staff will send copies of the completed Wedding Information Form to the appropriate staff personnel and the Wedding Coordinator.
7. Rehearsal time shall be scheduled for no later than 6:00 p.m. on the day set (typically Friday).
Wedding time shall be scheduled for no later than 7:00 p.m. on the day it is set (typically Saturday).
8. Regarding the service itself and the use of the facilities:
 - A. Flowers, decorations, candles – no decorations are allowed in the Chancel other than the single floral arrangement permitted, i.e. no arches, bows on candelabras, or anything obscuring the view of existing Christian faith symbols.
 - B. The Sanctuary is a non-smoking facility including the bridal rooms. No smoking is permitted anywhere in the Sanctuary building or the Education building.
 - C. Cloth runners may not be used down any of the aisles.
 - D. Flower girl(s) may not throw petals of any kind or facsimiles thereof, down the center aisle or anywhere else in the Sanctuary building or Chapel.
 - E. Photographs – pictures and videos taken before the service must be completed at least one hour prior to the beginning of the ceremony. During the service, pictures and videos may be taken without flash or additional lighting from the gallery area in the choir loft only (this applies to professional photographers and wedding guests). Stationary, concealed cameras or video equipment are permitted with prior approval of the Wedding Coordinator, Pastor or Minister of Music.
 - F. Two podiums are furnished for a guest book (s). No other tables permitted.
 - G. No birdseed, rice, petals, etc. may be used inside the Sanctuary, Parish Hall or on church grounds.
 - H. Gifts need to be removed from the sanctuary or Parish Hall immediately following the service.
 - I. All personal belongings must be moved to the Education Building immediately after the wedding pictures are taken.
 - J. No furniture in or outside the Sanctuary may be moved.



THE CHRISTIAN WEDDING

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians, marriage is a covenant in which a woman and a man live out their lives of discipleship together before God. In a Christian marriage service a commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

The Session of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church has prepared this statement of policy for persons planning marriage in this parish church. No exceptions of the policies delineated herein will be made for any person or persons.

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

In preparation for the marriage service, the pastor shall counsel with the couple. If the pastor is unavailable for counseling, the couple may counsel with staff at the Brite Divinity School's Pastoral Care Center, Texas Christian University, regarding:

- the nature of their Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian.
- the legal requirements of the state.
- the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage.
- the nature and form of the marriage service.
- the vows and commitments they will be asked to make.
- the relationship of these commitments to their lives of discipleship.
- the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.

Counseling is required. It is equally important whether a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse or when one or both parties are divorced.

After counseling the couple, if the pastor feels that the commitment, responsibility, maturity or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise, the pastor shall assure the couple of the church's continuing concern for them but will not conduct the ceremony. In making this decision, the pastor may seek the counsel of the Session. Should this be necessary, the utmost confidentiality shall be maintained at all times by all parties.

THE ROLE OF THE MINISTER

Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the pastor and the supervision of the Session. In the event that a pastor other than a pastor of St. Stephen Presbyterian is desired to perform the wedding ceremony, permission must first be obtained from the pastor of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church. The other minister's fee is not included in its fees or paid by St. Stephen Presbyterian Church; separate arrangements must be made. The pastor, or a pastor's appointee of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church must also be present and participate in the wedding ceremony to ensure that all policies outlined in this statement are followed.

TIME AND PLACE OF THE SERVICE

The marriage ordinarily takes place in a special worship service that focuses upon marriage as a gift of God and an expression of the Christian life. The Sanctuary (seating 1,400) and the Chapel of the Holy Trinity (seating 68) are both available for weddings.

The Parish Hall or the Eastminster Room may be used for a reception following the wedding. It is essential that reservations for the exact times of both the wedding and the rehearsal be made as early as possible with the church secretary.

A rehearsal time should be selected when all members of the wedding party can be present. The bride-to-be will take part in the rehearsal; stand-ins are not permitted. Rehearsals shall begin no later than 6:00 p.m.

Ushers should be present and ready to perform their duties one hour before the ceremony.

If the reception is held at the church, a designated representative of the wedding party shall make complete arrangements for decorations, refreshments and service including basic clean up of the Parish Hall/Eastminster Room and kitchen.

NOTE: Rooms are made available for the wedding party to dress at the church if desired. All clothing and belongings must be removed from the Sanctuary/Chapel and rooms after the wedding so that the spaces can be cleaned.

The order of worship that shall be used for the marriage at St. Stephen Presbyterian Church is found in the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*.

No announcements will be made about the time and place of the reception before, during or after the service in the Sanctuary or Chapel of The Holy Trinity because the wedding is a service of worship.

MUSIC AND APPOINTMENTS

It is both the custom and tradition of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church that the music used during worship services be consistent in text and musical score with the Christian faith as it is understood within the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church.

Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. Only music that may be used for a Service for the Lord's Day may be used in a wedding ceremony at St. Stephen Presbyterian Church. This applies to all music, whether instrumental, vocal, or choral, used before, during or after the service. This specifically prohibits the use of the "Bridal Chorus" from Wagner's tragic opera, *Lohengrin*, the "Wedding March" from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as popular secular music or songs. The singing of appropriate hymns by the assembled congregation is encouraged as an expression of faith and is an effective way to involve those present in an active manner in this corporate worship service. The use of a vocal soloist is not encouraged. The minister of music or designated assistant will play for all weddings at St. Stephen Presbyterian Church. It is the responsibility of the minister of music to carry out the Session's policy on weddings relative to music. A conference with the minister of music must be arranged at the earliest possible convenience to select music appropriate for the Christian wedding service. The minister of music maintains a large selection of acceptable music from which to make choices.

- WEDDING INFORMATION FORM -

Wedding date: _____ M T W T F S S **Wedding time:** _____
Rehearsal date: _____ M T W T F S S **Rehearsal time:** _____

Bride: _____
Work Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____
Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____
Communicant of St. Stephen? YES NO E-mail Address: _____

Groom: _____
Work Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____
Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____
Communicant of St. Stephen? YES NO E-mail Address: _____

Wedding to be in SANCTUARY CHAPEL Pastor: _____
Conference with Pastor scheduled for (date): _____ Time: _____
Conference with Organist scheduled for (date): _____ Time: _____
Photographer: _____ Phone: _____
Photographer has been informed of church policy concerning wedding photography? YES NO
Total Number of Attendants: _____ Female: _____ Male: _____
Ring bearer: _____ Flower girl: _____ Number invited to wedding: _____
Wedding party to dress at church? YES NO Number of Ushers: _____
Reception to be held at church? YES NO If yes: PARISH HALL EASTMINSTER ROOM
If no, location: _____
Caterer: _____ Phone: _____
Florist: _____ Phone: _____
Designated Representative/Consultant: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____
Printed order of worship? YES NO Number desired: _____ Printer: _____
Estimated printing charges: _____ Signature: _____
Do you wish a cassette recording of the service (\$10 each)? YES NO Number desired: _____

Fees Due For:

ORGANIST SEXTON/WEDDING SEXTON/RECEPTION SANCTUARY
CHAPEL PARISH HALL EASTMINSTER ROOM OTHER: _____

Amount Due: \$ _____ Date Received (confirming reservation): _____

**Note: Amount due does not include printing and/or recording costs

Today's date: _____ Signature: _____

St. Stephen Staff Person's Signature: _____

Please Complete Front and Back and Return to the Church Office

CENTER AISLE ESCORTS:

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Bride: _____

Groom: _____

Names of parent/guardian (s) and/or grandparent (s) to be escorted down the center aisle:

Bride's Side:	Ushers:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
Groom's Side:	Ushers:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Refunds are based on a sliding scale as follows:

6 – 9 months – Full refund less \$100. Administrative fee

90 days – 6 months – 75% deposit

60 days – 89 days – 50% deposit

30 days – 59 days – 25% deposit

29 days or less – no refund

Sign and date here _____
(Bride)

Sign and date here _____
(Groom)

Please contact the Church office to check calendar for your preferred date.

The schedule of fees can be mailed or emailed upon request.
