



THE CHRISTIAN WEDDING

Marriage is a gift that God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. This sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the Church and the wider community. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures should be completed in order.

1. Call or email St. Stephen's Wedding Coordinator to discuss wedding policies, procedures, dates and forms. The Wedding Coordinator will be the principal point of contact for the wedding party. The Sanctuary and Chapel are shown by appointment only.

The Wedding Coordinator may be contacted by phone or email:

Anne Barrett

817.927.8411

admin@ststephenpresbyterian.com

2. Submit a letter or email the Pastor requesting permission to use the church for your wedding; and/or requesting permission for your family pastor to perform the ceremony at St. Stephen. The Pastor will contact you to schedule a time for a first meeting.

- a. If you wish for an alternate pastor to perform the ceremony, they should contact St. Stephen's Pastor for permission to perform the ceremony and premarital counseling as required.

The Pastor may be contacted by phone or email:

Rev. Dr. Fritz Ritsch

817.927.8411

revfritz@ststephenpresbyterian.com

3. Complete the Wedding Information Form and return to the Wedding Coordinator with payment of a deposit equal to 50% of all wedding fees. The deposit will secure the date.
4. Contact and schedule an appointment to meet with the Organist & Director of Music Ministries to discuss wedding music to be performed at the ceremony.

POLICIES

- The rehearsal time shall be scheduled no later than 6:00 pm on the agreed-upon day (typically a Friday). The time of the wedding ceremony shall be scheduled no later than 7:00 pm on the agreed-upon day (typically a Saturday).
- If St. Stephen's Pastor is performing the wedding, the order of worship that shall be used for the marriage at St. Stephen is found in the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*. The Wedding Coordinator can provide a template of the order of worship which should be followed when preparing your wedding bulletin/program. The wedding bulletin/program should be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator for approval. Once approved, you are responsible for printing and providing enough copies for your guests. The wedding bulletin/program should include the names of the Pastor, any musicians, and St. Stephen Presbyterian Church.
- No decorations are allowed in the Chancel of the Sanctuary or in the Chapel except a single floral arrangement in the Chancel. Any additional floral arrangements placed in the Sanctuary or Chapel must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator in advance.
- No cloth runners may be used down the aisles. No arches, bows on pews, or anything obscuring the view of existing Christian faith symbols. No flowers or petals (real or artificial) may be strewn down the center aisle or anywhere else in the Sanctuary or Chapel. No birdseed, rice, petals, etc. may be used or thrown inside the Sanctuary, Chapel, Education Building or on church grounds.
- Photos and videos taken inside the church must be completed one hour before the wedding ceremony or may be taken following the ceremony. Wedding guests should refrain from taking photos or videos in the Sanctuary or Chapel until the ceremony is completed. For more information, see the Photography & Videography Policy Agreement which is included in this packet.
- One podium is available for a guest book.
- No furniture in or outside the Sanctuary or Chapel may be moved.
- St. Stephen Presbyterian Church is not responsible for any personal property brought or left on the premises. All gifts, clothing, and personal belongings must be removed from the Sanctuary following the ceremony.
- St. Stephen is a non-smoking facility. No smoking is permitted anywhere in the Sanctuary, Chapel, Parish Hall, or Education Building.
- Alcohol (wine/champagne) may be consumed only at the rehearsal dinner and/or reception if held at St. Stephen. Wine, including champagne, may be served at such events. It may not be served to minors.
- The church opens 2 hours prior to the ceremony and closes 1 hour following.
- All attendants should dress before coming to the church due to limited space.

PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

St. Stephen Presbyterian Church requires pre-marital counseling for all couples to be married in its Sanctuary, Chapel, or grounds. It is equally important whether a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse, or when one or both parties are divorced. This counseling shall ordinarily be performed by St. Stephen's Pastor or by the pastor whom the couple asked to officiate the wedding. It is acceptable for a couple to seek counseling from an outside therapist, another pastor or religious leader, or by attending a pre-marital workshop. Should the couple pursue one of these counseling alternatives, the counselor shall mail or email the following to St. Stephen's Pastor:

I am a certified counselor, religious leader, or pre-marital workshop leader and I verify that (names of the couple) have received pre-marital counseling or training and are prepared to enter into the covenant of marriage. Signed, name and credentials.

After successful counseling, the Pastor will approve the marriage. The wedding may not be approved if the Pastor feels that the commitment, responsibility, maturity, or Christian understanding are so lacking that the marriage is unwise. 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.

ROLE OF THE PASTOR

Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. As a service of Christian worship, the marriage ceremony is under the direction of the Pastor and the supervision of the Session. In the event that a pastor, other than that of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church, is desired to perform the wedding ceremony, permission must first be obtained from the Pastor of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church.

The visiting pastor's fee is not included in the fees paid to the church, nor shall they be paid by St. Stephen Presbyterian Church; i.e., you must make separate arrangements to compensate the visiting pastor conducting the wedding ceremony.

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 1,000) and the Chapel of the Holy Trinity (seating 68) are available for weddings.
- The Parish Hall or the Eastminster Room may be rented for a rehearsal dinner prior to or a reception following the wedding for an additional fee. Wine, including champagne, may be served at such events. It may not be served to minors.
- It is essential that reservations for the exact times of both the wedding and the rehearsal be made as early as possible with the Wedding Coordinator. A rehearsal time should be selected when all members of the wedding party can be present. The betrothed must take part in the rehearsal, i.e., stand-ins are not permitted. Rehearsals shall begin no later than 6:00 pm.
- Ushers should be instructed to be present and ready to escort guests one hour before the wedding 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 cleanup of the Parish Hall/Eastminster Room and kitchen. The custodian of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church, or appointee, must be present to ensure that all policies herein are followed. Additional fees are applicable if the building is not left in an acceptable manner following the ceremony and/or reception.
- A designated person should ensure that all clothing and belongings of the wedding party are removed from the Sanctuary/Chapel following the wedding ceremony.
- Because the wedding ceremony is a worship service, no announcements will be made about the time and place of the reception before, during or after the service in the Sanctuary or Chapel. Any announcements you wish to relay to guests should be printed in your wedding bulletin/program. Pastors and/or guests should not shout announcements at any point before, during or after the ceremony, including while music is being performed.

MUSIC FOR THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The wedding ceremony is a service of worship, and music for the service must be appropriate in expressing gratitude and praise to God for the gift of marriage. Secular or popular songs of special meaning to you should be reserved for the wedding reception. Music for the service is under the direction and supervision of the Organist & Director of Music Ministries, who is expected to play all weddings. After your initial meeting with the Pastor, plan to make an appointment with the Organist & Director of Music Ministries to discuss the music for the service. Pre-recorded music is not allowed.

ALTERNATE ORGANIST

If the Organist & Director of Music Ministries is not available to play for the wedding, he will arrange for a substitute. If our organist is available, but you desire a guest organist or other musicians, we follow the policy of the American Guild of Organists. A guest organist or other musicians must make an appointment and meet with the Organist & Director of Music Ministries who will assess the musicians' competence and experience and provide an overview of the Sanctuary Organ. If approved for the ceremony, it will be your responsibility to arrange for and pay the musicians' fees, as well as our Organist & Director of Music Ministries standard fee, which is included in the wedding fee package.

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLES AND VOCAL SOLOISTS

Instrumental ensembles and vocal soloists are encouraged and can add great beauty to a wedding ceremony. The Organist & Director of Music Ministries coordinates the contracting of any additional musicians and will be happy to be in contact with you about these musical possibilities. A variety of instruments (the most common being string quartet, brass quintet, trumpet, harp, and bagpipes) are effective in our church setting and are also popular choices among couples. All musicians will perform in the Gallery unless accompanied by the piano. If you wish to have a friend or family member sing or play and instrument at the service, arrangements must be made with the Organist & Director of Music Ministries.

The Organist & Director of Music Ministries may be contacted by phone or email:

Jordan Smith

817.927.8411

jordan@ststephenpresbyterian.com

WEDDING INFORMATION FORM

Complete this form and return to the Wedding Coordinator with payment of a deposit equal to 50% of all wedding fees to secure the wedding date.

Rehearsal date and time: _____

Wedding date and time: _____

Bride: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Groom: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Wedding to be held in (circle one): SANCTUARY CHAPEL

Do you wish your reception to be held at St. Stephen? YES NO

If yes: PARISH HALL EASTMINSTER

Wedding Consultant: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Has the Wedding Consultant been informed of St. Stephen's Wedding Policies? YES NO

Photographer: _____

Phone: _____

Has the Photographer signed the Acknowledgment of Church policy concerning photography and videography? YES NO

Videographer: _____

Phone: _____

Has the Videographer signed the Acknowledgment of Church policy concerning photography and videography? YES NO

Florist: _____

Phone: _____

Has the Florist been informed of St. Stephen's policy concerning décor? YES NO

ATTENDANTS

Number of bridesmaids: _____
Number of groomsmen: _____
Number of ring bearers: _____
Number of flower girls: _____
Number of ushers: _____
Number of guests invited to the wedding: _____

Complete the following if pastor requested is not a member of the St. Stephen staff.

Pastor's Name: _____
Denomination: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Has the St. Stephen Wedding Policy been provided to the guest pastor? YES NO

FEES

Sanctuary Wedding: \$2,900
Includes all services of church personnel

Chapel Wedding: \$1,200
Includes all services of church personnel

Use of Sanctuary Pew Torches: \$500

Parish Hall and/or Eastminster room for rehearsal dinner and/or reception: Pricing on Request

TOTAL FEES FOR YOUR WEDDING: \$ _____

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency contact for bride: _____

Phone: _____

Relationship to bride: _____

Emergency contact for groom: _____

Phone: _____

Relationship to groom: _____

CANCELLATION POLICY

Refund of your deposit is based on the following sliding scale:

- 180 days or more before the wedding date: 100% refund
- 90-180 days before the wedding date: 75% refund
- 60-90 days before the wedding date: 50% refund
- 30-60 days before the wedding date: 25% refund
- 30 days or less before the wedding date: no refund

SIGNATURE OF BRIDE OR GROOM

By signing below, you acknowledge and agree to the contents of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church's Wedding Policy and Procedures and agree that any damages to St. Stephen's property and/or deviation from the clearly stated policies and procedures could result in additional fees following the wedding ceremony.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY POLICY AND AGREEMENT

- Photos and videos taken inside the church must be completed one hour before the wedding ceremony or may take place immediately after the ceremony.
- No flash or additional lighting by photographer/videographer is permitted during the ceremony.
- Photos/video may only be taken from the Gallery (choir loft) or designated areas in the East and West Transepts.
- No movement of photographers/videographers is permitted during the ceremony.
- During the wedding ceremony, the designated wedding photographer and/or videographer may take photos and videos without flash or additional lighting from the Gallery and other specified areas of the Sanctuary or Chapel that have been pre-approved by the Wedding Coordinator.

I, the undersigned, have been designated to serve as the photographer and/or videographer at a wedding occurring at St. Stephen Presbyterian Church. I have received a copy of St. Stephen Presbyterian Church's Wedding Policy and Procedures, which sets forth the church's photography and videography policies and procedures. I have read and understand the church's photography and videography policies and procedures contained in its Wedding Policy and Procedures and hereby agree that I will comply with such policies and procedures. Further, I have been informed and understand that my failure to comply with the church's photography and videography policies and procedures contained in its Wedding Policy and Procedure will result in St. Stephen Presbyterian Church denying me the opportunity to serve as the photographer and/or videographer at future weddings occurring at St. Stephen Presbyterian Church.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Company Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Return signed agreement by email, US mail, or hand deliver 30 days prior to the wedding.

Anne Barrett, Wedding Coordinator
St. Stephen Presbyterian Church
2700 McPherson Avenue
Fort Worth, TX 76109
817.927.8411

admin@ststephenpresbyterian.com