

Customary For Marriage

St. Paul's, Episcopal Church
Put In Bay, Ohio



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Marriage at St. Paul's, Episcopal Church
Put In Bay, Ohio

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The Customary For Marriage

at St. Paul's, Episcopal Church on Put In Bay, Ohio

Introduction

We're delighted you've found your life partner and wish to publicly declare your commitment to each other! This information is designed to assist you in preparing for the celebration and blessing of your marriage in the Church. It is the Church's hope these guidelines will offer couples who present themselves to the clergy at St Paul's for marriage an initial understanding of what a marriage ceremony in a Church represents. All of the marriage liturgies will be taken from the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and authorized supplements. The following paragraphs describe the procedures for marriage in St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio.

What is customary at St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay?

- All inquiries regarding St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay weddings are made to the priest. No wedding dates will be placed on St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay calendar prior to the initial visit with the priest at St. Paul's (which may be by phone or zoom/messenger/etc.), and until the necessary paperwork is completed.
- Normally, at least one of the candidates for Marriage must be a communicant in good standing in an Episcopal Church for at least six months prior to application. A communicant in good standing is described as a member who is regular in attendance, gives financially to further Christ's work in this parish, and is active in ministry. Immediate family members of communicants in good standing, anyone who was baptized or confirmed at St Paul's, and our members are invited to discuss their intention to marry with our priest. Others may be married at St Paul's at the discretion of our priest.
 - Marriages are not scheduled during Christmas week, Holy Week and normally not solemnized during the season of Lent (from Ash Wednesday until after Easter Day). Marriages are not scheduled for the following days: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.
 - Weddings normally take place between 10am and 5pm on Saturdays.
- At the initial meeting, the parish priest will discuss the information contained in our marriage customary in detail, and if a decision to celebrate that wedding in the church occurs, additional meetings will be planned.

- The primary role of the Clergy is focused on premarital counseling, the rehearsal, and the wedding ceremony. Clergy participation in rehearsal parties and receptions are possible only if parish and pastoral duties allow.
- Couples who choose to use a “wedding planner” or “wedding consultant,” should advise the individual the clergy will not utilize their services during the rehearsal or to orchestrate the celebration of marriage in the church. They are welcome to observe the rehearsal, but all coordination at the rehearsal will be guided by the priest. Any requests or suggestions from the consultant should be brought to the final marriage counseling session with the priest. (Consultants/planners and future in-laws do not attend any of the marriage counseling sessions.)

What makes a marriage Christian?

When a couple comes to the church to get married, they are making a *faith statement* to God in front of their families and their friends. At the altar of God, the couple is inviting Jesus to become a living and active partner in their relationship. At this time, you may want to ask yourself, “*Is this our understanding of marriage?*”

In the Episcopal Church, Marriage is considered a sacrament just as reverent and just as mysterious as Baptism, Confession, Confirmation, or the Ordination of clergy. In order to make an appropriate beginning of the formal Marriage, Christian couples come to the church to ask for God’s blessings; for the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit; and for the prayers of the Christian community to help them sustain the sacramental vows they make.

Who may be married at St. Paul’s, Episcopal Church on Put-in-Bay?

We welcome inquiries of opposite-sex and same-sex couples to celebrate their marriage with us at St. Paul’s.

St. Paul’s clergy will be the officiant at all weddings in St. Paul’s church. Ordained Christian clergy from other churches may be invited to assist by St. Paul’s priest. This invitation will only be offered by St. Paul’s clergy after the couple has met with St. Paul’s priest.

The service called "Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage"

- The Episcopal Church treats the marriage liturgy as any liturgy of the church, as praise to God from the Book of Common Prayer. Therefore, the service has the look and feel of the other worship services of the church. All marriages at St. Paul's must follow the *Book of Common Prayer* and authorized supplements of The Episcopal Church.
- We generally do not include 'unity' candles, "sand ceremonies" or other activities popularized on television, nor do we use secular readings. If the couple desires a special prayer not in the Prayer Book, it must be approved by the priest.
- The liturgy used by the priest officiating at the wedding embodies the Christian nature of the ceremony. To give time for thoughtful consideration of the liturgy, the wedding bulletin containing the details of the service will be discussed as part of marriage preparation and the final format will be approved by St. Paul's clergy no less than two weeks prior to the wedding. St. Paul's provides a simple bulletin. If the couple desires to print their own, the contents will still be approved by St. Paul's clergy.

Canonical Requirements

(What St. Paul's and its clergy are obligated to do by our national church laws)

Canon 18: Of the Celebration and Blessing of Marriage

Sec. 1. Every Member of the Clergy of this Church shall conform to the laws of the State governing the creation of the civil status of marriage, and also these canons concerning the solemnization of marriage. Members of the Clergy may solemnize a marriage using any of the liturgical forms authorized by this Church.

Sec. 2. The couple shall notify the Member of the Clergy of their intent to marry at least thirty days prior to the solemnization; *provided* that if one of the parties is a member of the Congregation of the Member of the Clergy, or both parties can furnish satisfactory evidence of the need for shortening the time, this requirement can be waived for weighty cause; in which case the Member of the Clergy shall immediately report this action in writing to the Bishop.

Sec. 3. Prior to the solemnization, the Member of the Clergy shall determine:

a. that both parties have the right to marry according to the laws of the State and consent to do so freely, without fraud, coercion, mistake as to the identity of either, or mental reservation; and

b. that at least one of the parties is baptized; and

c. that both parties have been instructed by the Member of the Clergy, or a person known by the Member of the Clergy to be competent and responsible, in the nature, purpose, and meaning, as well as the rights, duties and responsibilities of marriage.

Sec. 4. Prior to the solemnization, the parties shall sign the following Declaration of Intention:

We understand the teaching of the church that God's purpose for our marriage is for our mutual joy, for the help and comfort we will give to each other in prosperity and adversity, and, when it is God's will, for the gift and heritage of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God. We also understand that our marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong; and we engage to make the utmost effort to accept these gifts and fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community.

Sec. 5. At least two witnesses shall be present at the solemnization, and together with the Member of the Clergy and the parties, sign the record of the solemnization in the proper register; which record shall include the date and place of the solemnization, the names of the witnesses, the parties and their parents, the age of the parties, Church status, and residence(s).

Sec. 6. A bishop or priest may pronounce a blessing upon a civil marriage using any of the liturgical forms authorized by this Church.

Sec. 7. It shall be within the discretion of any Member of the Clergy of this Church to decline to solemnize or bless any marriage.

Canon 19: Of Regulations Respecting Holy Matrimony: Concerning Preservation of Marriage, Dissolution of Marriage, and Remarriage

Sec. 1. When marital unity is imperiled by dissension, it shall be the duty, if possible, of either or both parties, before taking legal action, to lay the matter before a Member of the Clergy; it shall be the duty of such Member of the Clergy to act first to protect and promote the physical and emotional safety of those involved and only then, if it be possible, to labor that the parties may be reconciled.

Sec. 2

Any member of this Church whose marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a civil court may apply to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which such person is legally or canonically resident for a judgment as to his or her marital status in the eyes of the Church. Such judgment may be a recognition of the nullity, or of the termination of the said marriage; *provided* that no such judgment shall be construed as affecting in any way the legitimacy of children or the civil validity of the former relationship.

Every judgment rendered under this Section shall be in writing and shall be made a matter of permanent record in the records of the Diocese.

Sec. 3. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall solemnize the marriage of any person who has been the husband or wife of any other person then living, nor shall any member of this Church enter into a marriage when either of the contracting parties has been the husband or the wife of any other person then living, except as hereinafter provided:

The Member of the Clergy shall be satisfied by appropriate evidence that the prior marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a final judgment or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction.

The Member of the Clergy shall have instructed the parties that continuing concern must be shown for the well-being of the former spouse, and of any children of the prior marriage.

The Member of the Clergy shall consult with and obtain the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese wherein the Member of the Clergy is canonically resident or the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Member of the Clergy is licensed to officiate prior to, and shall report to that Bishop, the solemnization of any marriage under this Section.

If the proposed marriage is to be solemnized in a jurisdiction other than the one in which the consent has been given, the consent shall be affirmed by the Bishop of that jurisdiction.

Sec. 4. All provisions of [Canon I.18](#) shall, in all cases, apply.

Additional Requirements.

Wedding Consultants. St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay understands some couples choose to use a wedding consultant. The consultant may assist with activities outside the wedding ceremony and rehearsal which will be led by the priest. An outside consultant may assist with preparations within the context of the marriage guidelines provided to the couple.

Music for the wedding will be worked out early on between the couple and the officiating priest. The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is a sacramental rite of the Church and the music should reflect this. As in other rites of the Church, the canon law and rubrics (rules) of the Book of Common Prayer govern the choices.

Because the music is an integral part of all worship services, it is under the direction of the priest. The couple may engage our own organist or pianist (if available), may engage their own musician(s), or may omit music altogether. In keeping with the dignity of the sacrament of Holy Matrimony, all music must be approved by the clergy as part of finalizing the bulletin. The singing of secular love songs is normally not appropriate at any worship service to include weddings. It is important for The Lord's Prayer to be spoken by the couple and congregation as part of the service, and will not be performed by a soloist. Other music is best used at the reception.

The regular accompanist of the Church normally plays for all weddings (if available), unless other arrangements have been made with the accompanist and the priest.

All musical participants need to be approved before inviting them to participate.

The Rehearsal

- A wedding is a service of the Church taking place in the Church building. The rehearsal for this service is therefore always under the direction of the officiating priest. Under no circumstances is it appropriate to turn the rehearsal of this Church service over to anyone else, including professional facilitators or family members. Only the wedding party and immediate members of the family need to be present at the rehearsal. A normal rehearsal should last 45 minutes to an hour.
- The rehearsal is usually held in the afternoon or early in the evening prior to the wedding and is under the direction of the officiating priest. The purpose of the rehearsal is to welcome members of the immediate family and the wedding party to St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay. At the rehearsal, those involved will walk through the movement of the wedding service so that all involved will be confident and prepared to participate.
- Rehearsals start on time and promptness is important. All persons who will participate in the wedding party should be at the church at least 10 minutes before the rehearsal is scheduled to begin. Absolutely no alcoholic beverages are permitted at or before the rehearsal. Members of the wedding party must not arrive at St Paul's Episcopal Church for the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs.
- If participants are not fully prepared to participate in the rehearsal at the planned time the rehearsal and, if necessary, the wedding will be rescheduled for another date.
- The wedding is the culmination of much preparation and makes an enduring transition in a variety of relationships. Thus it is the occasion for heightened feeling and sensitivity. The clergy and staff are aware of this and available in a variety of ways. The officiating priest is in charge of the wedding. Several areas of practical concern are on the following pages. They include:
 - Photography
 - Decorations
 - Receptions (if held in the church)
 - Liability
 - Timeliness

Concerning Photography

In order to preserve the dignity of the service, photographs will not be taken by persons attending the worship service during the wedding. Because the wedding is a worship service of the Church, no member of the congregation is permitted to take pictures during the service. Ushers should make this clear as they seat guests with cameras.

One wedding photographer may take pictures with natural light of the processional and recessional from the rear of the church. Other pictures, including videotaping, require consultation and permission of the officiating priest.

- Still photography of the wedding must be unobtrusive. The photographer will be allowed one hour before the ceremony for still photography whether inside or outside the Church.
- Photography of the wedding party must end 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the marriage service. The final 30 minutes before the service, the church will be a place of prayer and preparation for worship.
- Once the procession has begun, the photographer may not take pictures with a flash.
- At the conclusion of the service, as the bride and groom walk down the aisle to depart, the photographer may begin using the flash again.
- Once the bride has started down the aisle she and her escort will not turn and face the photographer for photographs.
- During the ceremony, no flash pictures will be taken. The photographer must stay in the rear of the church until the music for the recessional has begun.
- The use of a video camera during the wedding ceremony is discouraged. If approved by the priest, it will be a stationary camera located behind the congregation and/or in the loft. No additional camera lighting may be used. This will only be done if arrangements are made at least one week previously with the priest.
- Pictures may be taken from the rear of the church as the wedding party processes out of the church.
- If pictures of the couple at the altar are wanted, they may be posed after the ceremony. Out of consideration for the wedding guests attending a reception, posing ought to be brief.

Decorations

- It is recommended that excessive decoration be avoided. All decoration must be cleared with the parish priest at least two weeks before the ceremony. A member of the Altar Guild must place the altar flowers at the altar. Altar flowers from the wedding become a memorial to the glory of God once they are placed at the altar and they may not be removed for use elsewhere.
- All other flowers, candelabra decorations, plants on steps or down the aisle, standing basket arrangements and personal corsages and bouquets are placed in the church under the supervision of the altar guild. They are to be removed by someone designated by the couple. These should be taken immediately following the service and no later than 8am Sunday morning..
- Candles are always lit behind the altar. Additional candles may be used either in the chancel. Only white candles may be used.
- Runners, floral arches and candles on pews are strictly prohibited. No decoration will be affixed to the building or furniture in the church.

- Throwing rice, confetti, birdseed, and the use of bubbles in St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay or on its grounds is strictly forbidden.
- Dressing rooms are provided for the bride's party (in the lower level). Men may gather in the church office prior to the ceremony. Members of the wedding party should be present no earlier than one hour before the wedding and dressed at least 20 minutes before the service. Absolutely no alcoholic beverages are permitted in the dressing rooms or on St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay premises prior to the wedding.

A Reception at the Church

- The parish hall may be available for very simple wedding receptions if the schedule and staffing permit. All inquiries for this use are to be directed first to St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay priest who will make the determination as to the availability of the space. If that determination is in the affirmative then the couple will be referred to a parishioner whose ministry is to assist with such receptions. The church will provide the couple with a schedule, which covers the costs of receptions and the options available. Receptions held on St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay premises are limited to three hours and must conclude by 6:00pm on Saturdays.
- The kitchen is available at an additional use fee, but having the reception catered is the recommended method if a meal will be served at the church.
- You are responsible for leaving the kitchen clean (or for hiring outside assistance to do this for you.) Keep in mind, there is no dishwasher in the kitchen.
- Use of wine, champagne, or punch may be allowed for toasts at the reception if a variety of non-alcoholic refreshments in equal quantity are also offered.

Liability

Any damage to the Church premises, furniture, or furnishings by a florist, photographer, videographer, caterer, wedding party, family or guests shall be repaired at the expense of the couple, their families or the wedding party. The repairs will be made at the discretion of the priest and to the satisfaction of the Senior Warden of the church.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church is not responsible for loss of, or damage to any personal items brought to the church. The couple and their families agree to indemnify St Paul's Episcopal Church for any such loss or damage for which St Paul's may be found liable.

Timeliness

It may be a truism or mere Hollywood exaggeration, but it is not unknown for brides (or occasionally grooms) to arrive late for their own wedding. Please note that after 30 minutes, unless it is a true emergency (i.e., someone is bleeding out), the service will be cancelled, both the priest and accompanist will exit the ceremony, everyone will be asked to leave, and the church will be closed. In such cases no refunds will be given.

After the Wedding comes the Marriage

- The wedding begins to unfold the experience of loving and working out life together. Given the inherent differences that exist between any two people and the pressures that work against enduring marriages, the active practice of faith becomes important. This practice strengthens the relationship of married persons to God and thus to one another. It includes participation in the worship, education, and networks of friends found in most Christian congregations.
- We encourage the newly married couple to include exploration and decision about a Church home as an important first step in marriage. Since your wedding was celebrated and blessed at St. Paul's, Put-in-Bay, we anticipate that you will give membership in the congregation serious consideration if you are resident on the island. Couples married here should also consider long term financial support to maintain this place for others in the future. Finally, given the relationship that developed with the officiating priest during pre-marital conversations, we encourage you to draw upon that special relationship as yet another source of support for a lifelong commitment.
- We encourage you to consider returning to St. Paul's on the anniversary of your wedding. You may wish to request a service of thanksgiving on these occasions. Contact our priest for additional information.

Appendix 1: Initial meeting with the Clergy

If you have read all of this customary and would like to discuss marriage plans with St Paul's priest please be prepared to provide the following information. Bear in mind, a customary is not a hard and fast rule book. This information is intended to provide a starting place for our conversations. In many cases there is some latitude for adjustment if the couple is able to describe why the adjustment should be made in their case.

Information we will ask before setting up an initial meeting with our priest:

Have you read the material in this guideline? _____ Do you have any questions? _____

If so, what are they? _____ (continue on back)

Groom's full Name: _____

Bride's full Name: _____

Is this the first marriage for both persons? _____

If not,
what was the date of the divorce(s) _____

Or what was the date of your spouse's death _____

What is your current faith tradition (denomination) _____

Where do you currently worship? _____

Why are you asking to be married at St. Paul's? _____

When do you hope to be married? _____

If this date is less than six months from now (9 months for 2nd marriages) are there extenuating circumstances for trying to compress the marriage preparation observed by the church?

What questions would you like to discuss at our first meeting? _____

Appendix 2: Current Fees for Weddings at St. Paul's

Approved by the Vestry of St. Paul's January 2024:

Active Members of the Parish and Immediate Family - \$400, includes one musician, sexton, administration. The clergy's counseling fees will be waived.

Island Residents, not members of St. Paul's - \$800, includes as above, but counseling fees will be paid out to the clergy.

Visitors (not the above): \$2500 flat fee, includes all payouts to clergy, one musician, sexton. The service performed by the parish clergy. The clergy to provide the required counseling or ensure it was done.

Church Engagement - \$5000.

- The couple provides their own clergy and musicians and provides all set-up and cleanup.
- All alterations to the church interior (e.g., moving a piece of furniture, etc.) must be approved in advance.
- The service must be in writing, demonstrably Christian, and must be approved by the parish clergy beforehand.
- The clergy must have opportunity to ensure that appropriate pre-marital counseling has been accomplished at least 30 days before the ceremony. Generally, this is done by speaking directly with the officiating clergy person.
- The officiant must be licensed in the State of Ohio to perform the wedding, and the license must be presented to the St. Paul's clergy on request but no later than 30 days prior to the ceremony. St. Paul's clergy will not sign marriage licenses without performing the ceremony.
- The parish clergy reserve the right to attend the rehearsal and the ceremony and to intervene at the clergy member's discretion, up to and including stopping the ceremony.
- All other guidelines as noted in this Customary will apply.

The undercroft and office are included in the church fees for all services as dressing spaces for the wedding party.

If the undercroft is also desired for a reception, the fee is one-half the regular wedding fee.

Payments:

Deposit: One half of the total fee no later than 60 days prior to the ceremony. **Note: the service is not confirmed until the deposit is received.**

Remainder: due no later than 14 days prior to the ceremony.

No refunds of deposits will normally be given. If any fee is late, the service may canceled at the sole discretion of the clergy.