



Marriage at Saint Peter's

Congratulations on your engagement! We would be delighted to assist and support you in your marriage, and hope that you will choose to be married at St. Peter's Church. We share this information so that you might have a brief but realistic idea about the possibility of having your wedding at St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia. This information is merely a guideline. Always speak with the Rector or Assistant Rector before making any plans with regard to your wedding ceremony or reception.

First Marriage for Both Persons

The primary requirement for a wedding ceremony in any Episcopal Church, and most other mainline churches, is that the couple has attended at least three formal sessions of premarital counseling by a clergy person or qualified counselor over the course of 12 weeks or more prior to the wedding. We affirm that marriage is intended to be a life-long covenant. To officiate at your wedding we need to know that you share this expectation so we ask each of you to sign the Declaration of Intent.

We further expect that at least one of you is a baptized Christian and we hope that you are actively involved in a Church community. It is not required that you are members of St. Peter's or that you are attending an Episcopal Church. We understand that there may be some exceptions to the rule, but we hope that if you have invited the Church to be part of your wedding day, you intend to make Christ and the Church part of your life. We invite you during the months leading up to your wedding to worship with us on Sunday mornings, to participate in our "Church Foundations" classes, and consider joining as members.

If there is no problem meeting the two expectations above, we ask that you follow and complete a copy of our REQUEST FORM and APPLICATIONS. You may now arrange the date and time of your wedding ceremony by phone or e-mail with one of our priests.

Second Marriage (or more) for Either or Both Persons

Requirements are the same as for a first time marriage as stated above. A prior marriage and divorce is not an impediment to marriage. We recognize that sometimes the healthiest option in a relationship involves ending that relationship. Because marriage is intended as a life-long covenant, factors

contributing to the dissolution of the previous marriage(s), steps taken to resolve differences, appropriate care for children and former spouses, etc., shall be discussed in the premarital sessions. The canons of the church require the priest to receive written permission from the bishop in order to officiate. Generally, this is all fairly straightforward, but additional time must be allowed for the wedding preparations.

Special Situations

If you feel that you do not (or cannot) fit into the St. Peter's "norms" for marriage or remarriage, you may wish to talk personally to one of our clergy. We may have some creative suggestions that could make a wedding celebration possible. We will try to respond pastorally on a case by case basis.

Wedding Planning

St. Peter's clergy work with you to plan the religious service. We do not have the means to schedule the "non liturgical" events associated with your wedding. Arranging a reception, photographers, hotels, hairdressers, transport, etc. are well beyond our sphere. Likewise, when the service is outside the church proper, we can take no responsibility for arranging for musicians. We are, however, often able to refer you to independent professionals who may be helpful. Our wedding coordinator will work with you and the clergy, to ensure your wedding ceremony runs as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

The Celebration and Blessing of Marriage

We begin with the Book of Common Prayer (1979) and the 1982 Hymnal as the primary texts for the liturgies we celebrate. Within the traditional framework of the Episcopal wedding service there is almost always some creative flexibility possible as long as it is theologically appropriate and in good taste. There are, in fact, many opportunities for family and guests in the wedding party to be involved especially as readers of Holy Scripture and in the prayers.

Financial Costs and Other Policies

The parish gladly makes its clergy available to serve the broader community, but we ask that you share in the significant expenses of supporting our parish ministry and church facilities -- a fee which includes the use of the church, the services of the clergy, the wedding coordinator, and the sexton's fee. Payment is due no less than thirty days before the wedding ceremony. See below for music costs

Wedding Music

Music at St. Peter's Church is led by the husband/wife team of Peter Hopkins, Choirmaster and Paula Romanoux, Organist, who share wedding organist responsibilities. Either of them will be happy to perform for your wedding service and assist you in planning your wedding music. Consultations for planning wedding music usually take place immediately after the Sunday 11:00 service, but can be arranged for other times as well. For those living outside Philadelphia, emails and phone calls can substitute for an in-person meeting.

At your meeting, Paula or Peter will help you choose music for your service, offering suggestions both traditional and less-known. Because the wedding is a Christian worship service, some secular/pop/Broadway songs are not appropriate, but there is a wide variety of music available to help your ceremony have the dignity, festivity, and joy that you deserve. You are welcome to bring your specific music ideas to the meeting, but do not feel you need to figure this out on your own; we are here to help you!

Peter or Paula will also help you procure additional musicians, if you so desire. Vocal soloists, trumpeters, string quartets, or other instrumentalists of great skill are readily available in Philadelphia. For a very special touch, members of the St. Peter's Boy and Girl Choirs are often available to sing at weddings.

If you have friends or relatives whom you would like to use as vocal or instrumental soloists, they are welcome to participate, provided they have sufficient musical ability to perform with the organist and do not have to be taught the music they are to perform. Sometimes brides and grooms feel pressured to include a relative or friend as a musician even if they have reservations as to their competence; your great aunt does not have to sing at your wedding just because she did at your cousin's service!

The musicians of St. Peter's have the right of first refusal to perform for all weddings at the church. If you wish to have a different organist perform, permission must be granted by the St. Peter's musicians and you will still pay the organist's fee to the St. Peter's musicians. The organist's fee for the wedding and consultation is \$400.00. The organist does not normally attend the wedding rehearsal; if you desire their attendance, an additional fee of \$100.00 will be charged. All payments for St. Peter's musicians are due no later than 30 days prior to the wedding.

Wedding Coordinator

St. Peter's wedding coordinator works with couples to ensure all aspects of the ceremony run smoothly from start to finish. The coordinator runs the

wedding rehearsal along with the clergy, and serves as “major domo” on the day of the wedding. Couples should plan to meet the coordinator in advance of the wedding date to discuss any questions they may have regarding wedding day logistics. Where possible, it is advisable to combine the meeting of the wedding coordinator with that of the organist after the Sunday 11:00 service, but can be arranged for other times as well. For those living outside Philadelphia, emails and phone calls can substitute for an in-person meeting.

Note: Outside wedding consultants have no jurisdiction in the planning or execution of the rehearsal and ceremony at St. Peter’s, but will be consulted to be certain our activities blend seamlessly with your overall wedding celebration plans.

Decorations

We ask that two substantial flower arrangements remain for the following Sunday’s service in honor of your marriage. Carpets or aisle “runners”, scattering of flower petals as well as extra candles, etc. are not permitted at St. Peter’s due to safety concerns. It is strongly advised that floral designers visit St. Peter’s before the wedding service; it is the responsibility of the floral designers to arrange a mutually convenient time for the delivery of flowers, bouquets etc.

The Unity Candle ceremony is rarely used in the Episcopal Church and it is difficult to perform this ceremony with elegance and in safety at St. Peter’s. It is strongly discouraged.

Renewal of Marriage Vows

With the obvious exception of premarital counseling, the same planning, preparation and donations to the church will be expected for a Renewal of Marriage Vows celebration.

We hope this answers some of your initial questions. We trust that you will let us know if you would like more information. And if you are now making serious plans to have your wedding at St. Peter’s, please fill in the WEDDING APPLICATION FORMS and return them to us as soon as possible.

Weddings Fees

All fees should be paid no later than 30 days before the wedding, unless otherwise noted. The organist’s attendance at the rehearsal, childcare, playing of the church bells and optional services all represent additional special fees. The church fee is waived for the weddings of parishioners (e.g., persons who have

formally joined as members of St. Peter's and made a pledge of financial support for at least the previous twelve months).

What	Amount	Comments
Booking fee	\$100.00	Non-refundable, paid when the date is booked.
Church fee	\$1,500.00	Payment is included with completed Applications and Declaration of Intent
Clergy fee (counseling & ceremony)	\$500.00	This fee goes to the clergy discretionary account, usually to assist those in need.
Clergy fee – counseling only	\$375.00	When ceremony is conducted elsewhere.
Clergy fee – ceremony only	\$200.00	When counseling is conducted elsewhere.
Organist fee (wedding)	\$400.00	This fee is also requested when a visiting organist is permitted to play.
Organist fee (rehearsal)	\$100.00	Additional compensation will be required for contracting/rehearsing with other musicians for the service.
Other musicians	variable	While procurement is ultimately the responsibility of the bridal party, Peter and Paula will be happy to provide suggestions and contact information for singers and instrumentalists to supplement the organ.
Coordinator fee	\$250.00	Due 30 days in advance of wedding
Sexton fee	\$100.00	Due 30 days in advance of wedding

To Be Married at St. Peter's

- One of you must be a baptized Christian.
- Membership of the church is not required but it is hoped that the process of preparation will lead you to a church home in Philadelphia or elsewhere.
- There is a minimum of three conversations prior to your wedding.
- In the case of divorce, application must be made for the Bishop's permission at least sixty (60) days prior to the wedding.

Preparing for the Wedding

- Reading and prayers will be discussed with the clergy; non-Biblical readings may be considered.
- Music will be discussed with Paula Romanaux, the Organist or Peter Hopkins, the Choirmaster. Additional musicians (brass, singers, etc.) are an additional expense. Please carefully read the guidelines on the website about choice of music and additional musicians.
- Flowers will be provided by the wedding couple; two substantial flower arrangements to be left in the sanctuary after the wedding. Please carefully read the relevant guidelines on the church's website.
- Wedding day logistics should be discussed with the Wedding Coordinator.
- Guidelines for photography should be discussed with the Wedding Coordinator - there is an attempt to meet the demands for permanent record of this special day but also to preserve the profound dignity of the unique occasion. No flash photography is permitted.

Preparing for the Marriage

Pre-marital conversations provide an opportunity for the couple and clergy to get to know one another, explore family issues and concerns, discuss the meaning of marriage, and plan the ceremony.

- Preparation for a wedding (with its myriad of details) provides many opportunities to recognize tensions and conflicts that may occur in the marriage many years after the wedding. These details are discussed and reflection is encouraged.
- Pre-marital conversations provide a good opportunity for friendship to develop between celebrant and wedding couple. The awareness of this friendship has a remarkable impact upon the ceremony and the wedding guests.
- Depending upon the interest of the couple and the priest, there will be discussion of families of origin and family systems, or of personality types and characteristics and the way in which they complement each other...or not! Couples may be asked to prepare a "genogram" (like a family tree) or respond to a questionnaire about personalities and attitudes.

- The Episcopal ceremony for weddings is one of the most beautiful and eloquent services available, written originally during the Elizabethan period of Shakespeare. Time will be given in study of the service so that it is familiar to the couple; study of the service also provides ample opportunity for discussion of the Christian view of committed relationships.

Contact

Clergy

The Reverend Ledlie Laughlin
The Reverend Claire Nevin-Field
laughlin@stpetersphila.org
nevin-field@stpetersphila.org

Parish Administrator

Ms. Kate Randall
randall@stpetersphila.org

St. Peter's Musicians

Mr. Peter Hopkins, Choirmaster
Ms. Paula Romanoux, Organist
hopkins@stpetersphila.org
paulakromanoux@comcast.net

Wedding Coordinator

Ms. Katherine Fanelli
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