



**WEDDINGS AT
THE PARISH OF ST. PAUL'S
ON THE GREEN**

Printed & Revised April 2014

**God is love, and those who abide in love
abide in God, and God abides in them.
1 John 4:16**

Weddings at the Parish of St. Paul's on the Green

The marriage and blessing of two people is a holy union; a lifelong, spiritual commitment. It begins with your desire to form a lasting, life-long partnership with another in God's love, and continues throughout your lives as a process of intentional living and growing together. In this holy union, each of you as an individual, and together as a couple, gradually transform and mature in God's presence and image.

Weddings are rites of passage, a sacred ritual that celebrates your desire to enter into a life-long relationship. It symbolizes the ending of former ways of life and other future possibilities, and establishes a particular pathway into the future – one that you promise to travel together.

By uniting within the context of a faith community, you recognize that God is active in the love you feel for one another, and you place your relationship in God's care. Your individual stories – and your story as a couple are celebrated in the context of the story of God and God's ways with the human community, as understood within a particular community of faith.

Within the faith community, your personal stories are seen in the light of God's action in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ's unfolding pattern in our lives is one of dying to self and rising to Christ, of transformation, and of self-offering. A Christian relationship is the living out of a self-giving way of being in a community with one another, in the larger context of the Christian community.

Through this sacramental rite, you as a couple enter into a life-long commitment. You make your vows before God and the gathered community of family, friends and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help you fulfill your vows. The exchange of your vows and holy union is a sacrament – an outward and visible expression of God's grace in bringing you together and nurturing your love.

About St. Paul's and the Episcopal Church

St. Paul's Episcopal Church is a wonderfully diverse community of people from all walks of life. We offer God's Radical Love and Hospitality. Our message to anyone who comes to our church is that whoever you are, and wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome here. And that welcome extends "from the Steps to the Table." People at every stage of their spiritual journey find themselves at home at St. Paul's.

We like to describe our style of worship as "smells, bells...and sneakers." We strive for excellence – not perfection – in our worship.

The historic parish of St. Paul's, Norwalk, was founded in 1737 by a priest missionary sent out to the colonies from London. The present church building is the fifth erected on this site. The second structure was destroyed by fire on July 11, 1779, at the command of General Tyron Who, at the same time, ordered the burning of the town of Norwalk.

Following the burning of the church in the Revolution, a temporary church was built in 1780, followed by the erection of the third church in 1785 on the foundation of the former building. It was consecrated by the first bishop of the American Episcopal Church, Samuel Seabury.

Before the Revolutionary War, the faith now known as Episcopalian was the Anglican Church, owing allegiance to the British Crown. In 1785, the first General Convention established the Episcopal Church within America. George Washington was an Anglican, and the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. is part of the Episcopal Church. A pew from which George Washington worshipped can still be seen in St. Paul's Church in New York City.

The Episcopal Church in the United States of America is affiliated with the worldwide Anglican Communion, which grew out of the unique historical circumstances of the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England. The second-largest church body in the world with some 70 million members, the Anglican Church is a church of tremendous theological breadth.

Grounded in the convergence between scripture, tradition and reason, the Episcopal Church views the mind as a gift of God that allows us to respond more fully to God's desire for the human community. The Episcopal Church takes seriously the idea of the community of faith as a context within which people from different backgrounds

and varying perspectives can openly share their experiences of God, can attend to one another in a spirit of love, and can thereby gain insights that may help every member of the community to move closer to God's truth.

St. Paul's is home to a vibrant faith community with an active and diverse congregation. As preparations proceed for your ceremony, anxiety and tension inevitably mount. By choosing to have your union in this church, you are supported by the ongoing prayers and support of this community. We are honored and delighted that you are considering – or have already chosen – our Church as the setting for one of your life's most significant events.

Weddings and Blessings in the Episcopal Church

A wedding in the Episcopal Church is governed by The Book of Common Prayer, other approved liturgical resources, Canon Law and the laws of the State. *The Book of Common Prayer* is the foundation for all Episcopal worship services – referred to as liturgies in the Episcopal Church – and provides the liturgical framework by which a wedding is celebrated. While the Episcopal Church has not yet developed a liturgy for same-sex marriages/blessings, it has and continues to develop authorized rites for use. Likewise, the Church recognizes that in many of its dioceses, such celebrations are a usual part of the life of the community. For these liturgies, St. Paul's uses an adaptation of the Office of the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage found in The Book of Common Prayer. Depending upon your situation, the appropriate rite will be provided for you as you plan your service.

To be united in the Episcopal Church, it is required that:

- at least one of the couple be a baptized Christian,
- the ceremony be attested to by at least two witnesses, and
- the marriage must conform to the laws of the State and the Canons of the Church.

The Laws of the State of Connecticut

Couples being married in Connecticut need to obtain a State Marriage License. This license can be obtained either in the town that both people presently reside or in the town that they grew up in.

1. Please bring your license, the duplicate copy and the mailing envelope to the parish office at least seven days before the rehearsal during normal parish office hours

(Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.) It is the legal authorization to perform the marriage.

2. We will mail the signed license to the appropriate county office after the service for you.

Prior Marriage

Please inform the Clergy you meet with in the event that either member of the couple has previously been married. In such instances, the officiating priest must meet with you *at least 90 days prior to the wedding date* to discuss the previous relationship. Canon law requires written consent of the Bishop of the Diocese for a new marriage to be made. In making such decisions, the Bishop will consider:

- the depth of understanding of the individual as to why the previous relationship did not endure,
- the continuing care of and consideration for the former spouse or partner and for any children involved in the relationship, and
- faithfulness to the dissolution of the previous marriage: evidence that the prior marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a final judgment or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction

Scheduling and Expectations

The date for your ceremony will be chosen after your initial meeting with the officiating priest and once you have signed the acknowledgement that you have read, and will conform to the policy of St. Paul's regarding weddings and blessings. These liturgies are scheduled on weekdays, Saturdays, or on Sundays but are not customarily scheduled during Lent or Holy Week. In addition, they are not scheduled on any major holyday, such as Christmas and Easter.

Scheduling your ceremony date at least six months in advance is advisable. This allows plenty of time to plan for your liturgy, and complete three counseling sessions with the officiating priest during the course of your preparation and – if you are not already a member – become familiar with the St. Paul's community. We ask that you worship regularly with us at St. Paul's. We believe that your union is not just a ceremony in our building; it is part of the community of seekers and believers here. Your individual spiritual journeys and your journey as a couple will be enriched by your participation. Many opportunities exist for involvement, expression, reflection and growth.

While St. Paul's does not require that you become part of our community before your ceremony, we do hope that you will carefully consider us as a potential church home during the time that you prepare for your ceremony.

Planning the Service

- The clergy look forward to working with you to shape the service. We find that the time spent in planning is a wonderful way to keep a focus on the heart of the service.
- The service will follow the “The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage” from *The Book of Common Prayer* with the appropriate language changes for same-sex couples. Although the service will follow this content and format, there is room to put a personal touch on the service. We will work with you to strike a balance that reflects both your relationship and our tradition. The Episcopal Church does require the use of the traditional wedding vows in **The Book of Common Prayer**.
- Give some thought to the Biblical readings suggested for the service. We encourage the participation of friends and family members in the reading of lessons and offering of prayers.
- A celebration of the Eucharist is a wonderful way to start your life together and to celebrate the blessing of your relationship. Our custom is to include all persons, of whatever denominational background, in the invitation to receive Holy Communion and to be very clear about our radical welcome to everyone.
- Clergy of other parishes or traditions are welcome to assist in the service, but the invitation comes from, and after consultation with, the Rector.
- There are no fixed traditions on such matters as the style of the wedding procession (or even whether there must be one) or the composition of the wedding party. We want to hear your preferences, and our clergy will offer clear guidance on these matters, based on what we have discovered works best in our Church building.

Wedding Ministers of Hospitality

Distinct from the role of a secular planner, St. Paul’s Wedding Minister is responsible for our church’s wedding ministry as part of the sacramental life of the Church. The wedding minister is present at the rehearsal and service to assist both parties and their families, and to help with the logistics of the ceremony itself.

Music

The Director of Music will work with you to discuss options and to begin planning. Once you and the officiating priest have agreed to go forward with the ceremony, we will ask you to schedule this appointment by calling Vince Edwards, the Director of

Music (203-847-2806). You will be provided with expert assistance to ensure that music is appropriately planned and fitting for you as a couple.

Please note that only sacred music suitable for St. Paul's worship services may be played. Music with secular or commercial associations, whether textual or musical, is not appropriate. Secular or commercial music is more appropriate and will be better appreciated during the reception following your ceremony. The music of the service is ultimately at the discretion of the officiating priest (in consultation with the rector, if the rector is not the officiant).

St. Paul's Director of Music must be consulted and give consent if other musicians are to be invited to participate.

Flowers and Other Decorations

To facilitate deep engagement with the worship service itself, only simple, primary symbols pertaining to the liturgy are positioned on the flower stands in the chancel of the church for Sunday worship. As a result, placement of flowers is reserved to the same locations for your ceremony.

In the chancel, two large flower arrangements will be placed on the flower stands to the right and left, behind the altar railing. In addition, a floral arrangement may be centered between the choir stalls.

The Flower Ministry of St. Paul's Church will prepare these arrangements for you. We have a photo portfolio of arrangements from prior ceremonies to aide with planning. We will work within your budget to design floral arrangements based on your color and flower choices.

The two chancel flower arrangements remain in the church in thanksgiving for your union. An acknowledgement of your ceremony (and your gift of the flowers) is acknowledged in the Sunday's service leaflet.

All plans for flowers must be reviewed by the Clergy and the Flower Ministry Chair one month prior to the ceremony.

Your personal flowers, such as bouquets and corsages, should be ordered from the florist of your choice. We can assist you with choosing an appropriate florist if so needed.

Anything attached to a pew, door, or column must be removed at the conclusion of the ceremony. The use of nails, tacks, pushpins, tape or any other means of securing decorations that might result in damage is not allowed.

Runners

Runners are not permitted at St. Paul's because of the stone floors in the church and the issue of personal safety.

Candles

Altar candles may be lit for your ceremony if your liturgy includes a celebration of the Eucharist. Additional candles, including Unity candles and candelabras, are not part of Episcopal wedding/blessing liturgies.

Pew Candles are available for a fee.

Your Service Leaflet

Because of the participative nature of the celebration of wedding in the Episcopal Church, your service leaflet is a very important part of your preparation process. The service leaflet contains information that guides those in attendance at your ceremony through your marriage liturgy, and helps them actively participate as a community supporting and witnessing your vows.

A draft working form of the appropriate liturgy will be provided to you during the planning process. Production of the final leaflet, the accuracy of which is paramount to a smooth-flowing service and fully-engaged congregation, will be handled by St. Paul's office for a nominal charge.

Still Photography

Photos by Professionals

- Professional photos are usually taken starting one hour before the service begins.
- Because it is important that photos are completed prior to the arrival of guests, photo shoots must be completed and equipment removed at least 30 minutes before the service.
- NO FLASH photographs may be taken once the service begins, that is to say after the processional.
- A flash may be used for the procession, provided that the equipment and the photographer remain behind the congregation at the end of the church.

- Available light (no flash) photography, with quiet shutter, is permitted during the service provided that the photographer uses the gallery or remains behind the congregation in the west end of the nave.
- Videotaping is permitted during the service, with available light only, with the videographer adhering to the same restrictions as above.

Photos by Guests

Please inform your guests that no flash photography is allowed during your ceremony. To that end, the liturgical portion of your service leaflet will include the following:

Because your wedding is a holy service of worship and we want you to be fully present with us and to God during this time, we ask that you refrain from taking photos or shooting video during the worship service. Also, please remember to turn off all cell phones and audible pagers. Thank you.

Facilities/Guild Room

St. Paul's has a lovely space called the Guild Room which is available for your use (as a gathering space for groomsmen, etc.), especially in the event of bad weather on the day of your ceremony. There is no extra charge for the use of this space. The Chittim-Howell House (adjacent to the church) is available for the use of the bridal party as well, for preparation and dressing.

At the Rehearsal

The purpose of the rehearsal is to help make you and your party – the people you have honored with an important role in your service – more comfortable with their roles in your liturgy.

- Please remember that rehearsals usually take place on the day before the ceremony, in any case, beginning no later than 5:00 p.m. We request that you take responsibility for seeing that both rehearsal and ceremony start times are adhered to.

On the Day of the Ceremony

1. Have ushers in place 45 minutes before the service. A good rule of thumb is at least one usher per 50 people in attendance. Some of the ushers should be persons other than those in the wedding procession, to help seat latecomers and help with miscellaneous small crises.

2. Because there are so many things coming together on the day of your ceremony, we have found that it helps to have one person from the wedding/blessing party helping to coordinate and communicate directions. Often the “Best Man” or “Maid/Matron of Honor” assumes this role.

Your Wedding Minister will be on hand to assist the ushers et al with these and other tasks.

Receptions

Your clergy are very appreciative of your thoughtfulness in extending an invitation to your wedding/blessing reception. These festive occasions often occur at a time when clergy are finalizing preparations for Sunday or other worship, or are engaged in other activities related to parish ministry. We ask your understanding if clergy are not able to be present with you at the reception, but know that they are with you in spirit and will do everything to make the your ceremony a memorable one for you both. It is difficult for clergy to accept one invitation and not all, so your understanding about this is much appreciated.

The Offering and Fees

Christianity, at its best, confronts the great questions of life with candor and love. But you only need look around to realize what a hard time our culture has with such issues as sex, love, death, and money. In fact, it may be that *money* is the last taboo. The truth is that when most of us plan our wedding, we make careful lists of the costs: reception site, food, and drinks; florists and photographers; clothing and limousines. Where is the church on that list? What value do you put on this item?

St. Paul’s gives in abundance, to its members, to those who come here to use and enjoy this sacred space, to the poor who are helped through our ministries, to the city which benefits from this holy presence in its midst. We ask that you do the same, recognizing that your wedding gift is an expression of thanksgiving to God for the abundance of your love and life together and helps St. Paul’s to be here for other couples like you, and to help them celebrate their day.

During your wedding/blessing preparation, you will be asked to sign an agreement of the fees for your ceremony. Approximately 30 days before your ceremony, you will receive an invoice listing the fees which are applicable to your service. (See schedule below)

Wedding Fees at St. Paul's

Gift to the church	Weddings in the Church Proper – Members of St. Paul's - \$500* Non-Members - \$1,500* Weddings in the Chapel Members* - \$250 Non-members- \$500 (20 people or less attending)
Organist	\$350 (includes one consultation and the playing at the service; add \$50 for the rehearsal and for each extra consultation)
Instrumentalists and Soloists**	\$150 each
Sexton Fee***	\$50 per hour
Pew Candles**	\$50
Clergy Honorarium	\$500 (which includes pre-wedding counseling)
Wedding Minister of Hospitality	\$150

*Membership refers to those who have been actively participating in the life of the parish (ie. Regular attendance) and pledging to the support of its ministry at the minimum suggested level (\$50 per week) for at least six months prior to setting the date for the wedding. Conversation with the clergy is encouraged around this suggested level of commitment.

**Optional

***Total fee depends on how much time the sexton's presence is required for prep, cleaning up, and opening and closing church.

A deposit of 50% of the Gift to the Church is payable at the time the wedding is scheduled. It is refundable up to sixty days prior to the wedding if the wedding is cancelled.

Now that You've Read this Material...

Let us also say that if after reading this material and thinking about it you decide that this is not the right community to serve as hosts for your ceremony, we will understand. Perhaps you'll find that you need to worship with us for a while, and sample the active spiritual and social life of St. Paul's as you search. After reading this booklet you may sense that St. Paul's is not the best setting for your ceremony. If that is the case, please accept our best wishes as you continue the search for the proper

setting for your ceremony. We are open at any time to begin or resume a conversation with you.

St. Paul's on the Green Contacts



Office **203-847-2806**
Fax **203-847-5818**
Email admin@stpaulsnorwalk.org
Website www.stpaulsnorwalk.org

Rector	The Rev'd Nicholas Lang	stpaulmail@aol.com
Director of Music	Vince Edwards	edwards@stpaulsnorwalk.org
Assistant for Member Incorporation	Anne Watkins	watkins@stpaulsnorwalk.org
Property Manager	Steve McCay	mccay@stpaulsnorwalk.org
Wedding Minister & Flower Ministry	Lynden Magnoli	lyndenlm@sbcglobal.net

St. Paul's on the Green

Established 1737



We have read “An Introduction to Weddings at St. Paul’s on the Green” and are able to comply with the policies of the church regarding the Celebration of Marriage, including the required fees.

We would like to schedule our wedding for:

Date:

Time:

Signatures: _____

Date Signed: _____

I have scheduled this wedding on the date requested and posted it on Meeting Room Manager.

Rector

Clergyperson assigned to this Wedding:

The Rev. Nicholas G. Lang, Rector

60 East Avenue
203-847-2806 (Phone)
stpaulmail@aol.com

Vincent Edwards, Director of Music Ministries

Norwalk, CT 06851
203-847-5818 (Fax)