

A Guide to Planning a Wedding in the Chapel of the Apostles

Congratulations on your forthcoming wedding! This will be one of the most memorable events in your life, and we are pleased that you are considering celebrating it here and beginning your married life together in Sewanee.

As you can imagine, the University receives many requests each year from people who want to be married in its chapels. In preparing this Wedding Guideline we hope to be of help as you plan this special day.

Weddings in the Chapel of the Apostles must conform to the laws of the state, the canons of the Episcopal Church, and the policies of the University. In addition, there are policies specific to the Chapel.

The policies contained herein are firm. We send them to you now so that you may be aware of them as you begin making plans and in order to avoid any disappointments or confusion later.

To that end, we ask that you read this Wedding Guideline carefully. We hope that the next months will be filled with much joy and anticipation as you begin to prepare for your life together.

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Should we be married in a Church?

At this point, the above may sound like a silly question. However, it is one you should consider.

A wedding is, in part, a legal occasion, in that all weddings must conform to the laws of the state in which they are performed. It might also be a social occasion when family and friends gather together and, borrowing from a rich array of customs and traditions, join in celebrating the union of two persons. All that is necessary for the legal and social requirements for a wedding to be fulfilled is an appropriate place for the ceremony (such as a house or garden) and a properly licensed official (such as a judge). If neither party in the marriage is a committed Christian, this kind of arrangement would be entirely proper; there would be no need for a church, and indeed a church would be inappropriate.

If either of the persons being married is a committed Christian, though, a third dimension is added to the legal and social aspects. By choosing to be married inside the church, the couple sets their marriage in the context of God's gracious action in salvation history.

Therefore, a Christian wedding is far more than a legal and/or social event. It is a sacramental rite, whereby the grace and love of God are given and made known through the words and actions of the couple.

As such, it is a solemn occasion whereby a person declares before God and God's people one's intention to share a whole life with another person and to ask God's blessing upon that union. The promises of marriage cannot be maintained by human love alone, so the vital element in a Christian marriage is the invocation of the blessing of God, whose grace and love alone can sustain a Christian marriage.

University Wedding Policy

Who May Be Married in a Chapel of the University of the South?

All Saints' Chapel, St. Augustine's Chapel, and the Chapel of the Apostles are available for marriage ceremonies when one of the persons to be married is:

- a student currently enrolled full time in the University, or
- a current member of the staff or faculty, or one of the University's governing boards, or
- a year-round resident of the Sewanee community, who has lived in Sewanee for at least one full year, or
- the direct offspring (i.e. son or daughter) of one of the above, or
- a graduate with a degree from either the College, the School of Theology, or the School of Letters.

In addition, there are these criteria:

- At least one of person must be tied to a Christian worshipping community and provide the following:
- A letter from your pastor/minister/priest attesting to this relationship, and
- Separate letters (from both applicants) describing your reasons for wanting to be married in All Saints' Chapel, St. Augustine's Chapel, or the Chapel of the Apostles.
- One of you must be a baptized Christian.
- The canons of the Episcopal Church require a minimum of thirty days' notice to the clergy preceding the wedding date.
- In the event that either one of you has previously been married and has had that union annulled or dissolved by a civil court, the officiating priest must request from his or her own bishop permission to solemnize the marriage.

The University reserves the rights to decline consent on any request made if the rationale behind being married here is contrary to our understanding of the sacrament of marriage.

Form of Service To Be Used

All wedding services held in University chapels must conform to the worship tradition of the Episcopal Church as found in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and its authorized trial rites ["The Witnessing and Blessing of a Marriage" and "The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage (2)"].

Rites for Same-Sex Marriages

"The Witnessing and Blessing of a Marriage" and "The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage (2)," authorized for trial use by The Episcopal Church for same-sex and opposite-sex couples,

may be used in All Saints' Chapel, St. Augustine's Chapel, and the Chapel of the Apostles. The priest who presides acts under the direction and with the permission of his or her own bishop. The Chaplain or Dean will need written evidence from the presiding priest that he or she has permission to use these rites.

Who May Solemnize Your Wedding?

All services are to be conducted by an Episcopal priest. (Ministers from other traditions may be invited to participate in the service but cannot be responsible for conducting the Episcopal rite.) The priest who is to solemnize the marriage must request permission in writing to preside. For weddings to be held in All Saints' Chapel or St. Augustine's Chapel, permission is sought from the University Chaplain. For weddings to be held in the Chapel of the Apostles, permission is sought from the Dean of the School of Theology. It is not necessary for that priest to write to the Bishop of the Diocese of Tennessee or the Chancellor of the University for permission to officiate.

Marriage License

Persons being married in a university chapel are required to obtain a marriage license from the state of Tennessee; this can be obtained at any courthouse across the state.

Premarital Instruction

The Episcopal Church requires premarital instruction for the couple prior to the actual wedding. This instruction is to be done by the priest who will officiate or by “persons known by the Member of the Clergy to be competent and responsible.” This is canon law and as such cannot be waived. The person providing the instruction (if different from the officiant) should correspond in writing with the officiant, attesting to the course and satisfactory completion of the several sessions. In the case of one or more of the parties being previously married and divorced, copies of the divorce decree(s) and letters of intention must be given to the priest who will officiate. The priest performing the ceremony must apply for her or his bishop’s consent to solemnize this wedding.

Dates and Times for the Wedding

A wedding may be held at any time in the course of the year at the Chapel of the Apostles with the exception of the season of Lent, Holy Week, Commencement weekend, or other times when the scheduling of University (and/or Chapel) events prohibits. Saturday weddings in the Chapel will be scheduled no earlier than 9:00 a.m. and no later than 7:00 p.m.

The wedding rehearsal is normally held on the day before the wedding. During term-time, the rehearsal must be scheduled around the regular worship schedule of the Chapel. All members of the wedding party must be in attendance and on time, because the rehearsal involves the time of many people. If there is to be a dinner or party, it should always be scheduled after the rehearsal. A rehearsal usually lasts about one hour. The officiating priest, with the help of a Chapel sacristan, will conduct the rehearsal. Private consultants hired by the couple or their families have no authority once inside the doors of the Chapel.

If you have questions, please consult with the Office of the Dean of the School of Theology.

Photography and Videography

Chapel policy does not allow flash photography of any kind during the wedding ceremony itself. The use of flash and artificial lights disrupts the sanctity of worship and the flow of the ceremony. At the end of the service it is permissible for the photographer to stand in the narthex and take flash photos of the couple as they leave the church. The officiant has the final authority on all matters concerning photography and videography.

We understand, however, the importance that most married couples place upon the preservation of their wedding day in photographs, and will provide opportunities for pictures to be taken before and/or after the ceremony. If group photographs of the wedding party in front of the altar are desired, they may be made in the Chapel after the congregation has left. If any photographs are to include the officiating priest and/or sacristans, it will be greatly appreciated if they could be in the first photograph(s). We might also suggest that posed pictures of the

wedding party be taken prior to the service.

All pre-wedding photographs taken inside the Chapel must be concluded no less than 45 minutes prior to the beginning of the service. All photographs made in the Chapel must be of a sacred nature only; photographs of the groom removing the bride's garter, for example, should be reserved for the reception.

Video recording of the service may be done provided the camera is stationary, capable of running without a camera operator, and does not require the use of distracting lights. No portable microphone may be used. Please discuss with your officiant, prior to the service, on where the videographer should set up.

Please provide your photographer and/or videographer with a copy of the Wedding Photography and Videography Policy form –<http://www.sewanee.edu/media/student-life/believe/PhotoPolicy.pdf>. After they have read and agreed to the policy, please have them sign and return it to the Wedding Administrator. This will ensure that there are no misunderstandings regarding our photography policy. Ushers will also be asked to inform family and guests that pictures may not be taken once the bridal procession has begun.

Music

All weddings in the Chapel of the Apostles are worship services; consequently, the music selected needs to be of an appropriate nature. Working in collaboration with the Assistant University Organist, the music you choose will add beauty, grace, and spiritual depth to the service.

Texts of hymns and other music must be from the Hymnal 1982, the Book of Common Prayer, or directly from Holy Scripture. Texts of a secular source are not permitted, nor are texts from semi-religious songs. Music of a light, romantic nature or from Broadway shows, film scores, and other popular sources is better suited for the reception following the service.

It will be your responsibility to contact the Assistant University Organist, Parks Greene (parks.greene@sewanee.edu) to request a CD of appropriate music and to set up a time to plan the service music. He can be reached through the Music Department office at 931.598.1205. A typical pattern of music is as follows: a 20-30 minute prelude-recital before the wedding, a hymn (or instrumental piece) for the procession in, hymns and other service music as needed during the liturgy, and a hymn or instrumental piece for the procession out. (Note: The secular "traditional" wedding music of Mendelssohn and Wagner is not used; there are alternatives far more suitable for Episcopal weddings.) It is the norm that the organist be present for one hour of the wedding rehearsal. Please plan to rehearse all parts of the ceremony that involve music (processional, recessional, etc.) during the first hour of the rehearsal. The use of soloists and instrumentalists can be a lovely addition to the service, but the Assistant University Organist must approve all these at the time of your music consultation. An additional fee is required if the soloist must rehearse with the organist. Again, all music played or sung by soloists must be

of a sacred nature and conform to the criteria listed above. Soloists are responsible for providing their own music.

Should the Assistant University Organist be unavailable for your wedding, he will make arrangements for a qualified substitute.

The use of non---staff organists will be considered on an individual basis and is solely at the discretion of the Assistant University Organist. An offset fee is requested if you would like to book an organist outside of the University staff. This organist must contact the Assistant University Organist for approval, and for information about the University organ and its policies.

Decorations

Flowers and the Florist

If you would like to have flowers in the chapel, please contact Sewanee florist Ken Taylor at 931.598.5893. Mr. Taylor has been designated as the sole provider of all floral arrangements in the university chapels.

Another florist may be used for the bridal bouquet, attendants' bouquets, corsages and boutonnieres, if desired. Please see the Local Vendors list for options.

Plastic or artificial flowers, feathers, and plumes are not permitted.

Candles

Altar candles are used for weddings that take place in the context of the Eucharist.

The use of what is commonly referred to in other denominations as a "Unity Candle" is not a part of the Episcopal liturgy. If it is desired, it may be used at the wedding reception, but not as part of the liturgy in the chapel.

Rice, Bird Seed, and Rose Petals

The use of rice is forbidden at the Chapel because it poses a serious hazard to birds. The use of birdseed is permissible, but should be thrown only outdoors. The scattering of rose petals down the center aisle is permitted; please indicate this on the Wedding Information Form so that special arrangements can be made for clean-up following the service.

Party Dressing Arrangements

Because the Chapel of the Apostles is a seminary chapel, it does not have an adequate space for the wedding party to dress. It is best to dress before arriving at the Chapel, but if necessary the sacristan can unlock a classroom in Hamilton Hall. Please inform the sacristan of your planned arrival time at the Chapel on the day of your wedding and she will make sure the doors to these rooms are unlocked. All personal belongings must be removed before you leave the premises for the reception. For security reasons, Hamilton Hall is typically locked outside of class hours and cannot be reopened until the next working day.

Please note: The use of alcoholic beverages on the chapel premises is strictly forbidden.

Bulletins

Programs for a wedding ceremony are not required, but can be most helpful. University Print Services can print these and can advise you on the cost. Please fill out the Bulletin Information Form and email it to printservices@sewanee.edu. Bulletins must be ordered at least six weeks before the date of your wedding. Print service may charge an additional rush fee for late bulletin information forms. You are responsible for picking up the bulletins from Print Services, and payment (cash or check only) is due at that time.

For reference, you will also find a sample bulletin on our website which shows the typical design, layout, and order of information. (Please note: The sample bulletin is the sole property of The University of the South. As such, any printing firm other than University Print Services may not reproduce the border shown.)

If you wish to print your own bulletins instead, it is critical to work with the officiant to ensure that the bulletin contains all of the necessary information for those attending the liturgy.

The Office of the Dean must proof the bulletin before it goes to print. Our office reserves the right for final approval of the order of service.

Scripture Readings

Please refer to the Book of Common Prayer or the authorized trial liturgies for a list of appropriate scripture readings for a wedding ceremony. Your officiant should assist you in your choice of lessons. Please indicate chosen readings on the Wedding Information Form so that the Chapel staff can provide printed copies for both the rehearsal and the wedding. The Chapel normally uses the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible. Readers of lessons should prepare their readings in this translation.

The couple should choose readers. It is quite appropriate for members of the family, the wedding party, or guests to participate in this way. If you so choose, a member of the clergy may read all the lessons.

Kneeling Cushions

The Chapel provides kneeling cushions for the couple at the altar platform.

Seating

The Chapel of the Apostles is normally set to seat approximately 100 guests in the main seating area, unless additional seats behind the altar are used. There are about forty seats available behind the altar, in the choir area.

The seating in the Chapel of the Apostles is arranged “collegiate” style, with the congregation members facing each other across the center aisle. This is a traditional arrangement in college and seminary chapels, though it may seem unusual to some.

The Chapel chairs cannot be rearranged for weddings.

Marriage License

Persons being married in the Chapel are required to obtain a marriage license from the state of Tennessee. Such a license can be obtained at any courthouse across the state. If you are from out-of-state you may want get your license at the Franklin County Court House:

Franklin County Clerk: Phillip Custer
1 South Jefferson St.
Winchester, TN 37398
Phone:931.967.3394

The office is located on the main floor and is open Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., and Saturday 8:00 a.m. – noon. The cost of a Marriage License is \$100. However, if your premarital preparation conforms to certain requirements established by the state, and if you bring a completed Premarital Preparation Course Certificate of Completion (found at www.tn.gov/topics/forms) signed by your priest and notarized, the fee is reduced. No blood test is required; both parties must be 18 years of age or older and each must present a valid driver’s license or birth certificate and a social security number. The license may be picked up as late as the day before the wedding and is valid for 30 days from the date issued. The marriage license should be given to the officiant at the rehearsal.

Wedding Procedure Checklist, Required Forms, and Fees

After the couple confirms that they meet the criteria to be married in the Chapel, sends the appropriate letters (applicants, pastor/minister/priest), and the consent form, the Dean of the School of Theology will review the information and decide whether to approve your request. When approval is granted, you will receive an approval letter, and you may then call the Dean’s Office to set your wedding date. Wedding dates can only be set eighteen months in advance.

Six weeks prior to your wedding the following documents will be needed:

Information Regarding Your Wedding
Declaration of Intention Form
Holy Matrimony Form
Photography and Videography Policy Form (signed by the service provider)
Bulletin Information Form

The completed forms should be mailed or email to the Office of the Dean.

Fees, which can be found at <http://www.sewanee.edu/media/student-life/believe/WeddingFees.pdf>, must be received by the Office of the Dean no later than six weeks prior to your wedding. The Chapel reserves the right to cancel your reservation date, if your fees are not received in a timely manner.

Other Wedding Arrangements

The School of Theology makes available, as a courtesy, a list of local vendors, but all arrangements are the responsibility of the couple.

