



Wedding Customary

We are glad you are considering being married at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Marriage is a sacrament of the church; your engagement is a holy moment and a time of prayer. We will keep you in our prayers, so when things seem hectic or even out of control know that we are remembering you.

The primary purpose of this customary is to aid you in planning your wedding. In addition, it includes the requirements of the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Texas, and this parish regarding the conduct of weddings in the Church and the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. Any marriage performed in this church must be in accord with the laws of the State of Texas, the requirements of the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Texas, and this parish.

Starting the process

Please read this document carefully. It will answer most of your questions. The next step is to submit the Request to be Married form to the Director of Operations, who will share your request with the clergy.

Couples who wish to be married must meet or speak with a St. Mark's priest before the church can officially place a date on the parish calendar. Only the clergy of St. Mark's may schedule a wedding. At that meeting, the officiating priest will discuss the couple's request to be married, answer questions, set out the preparation process.

Who may be married at St. Mark's?

The Canons of the Episcopal Church require that at least one of the two persons to be married must be a baptized Christian. Weddings at St. Mark's are normally for active communicants of our parish or their family members. In some cases, the Rector of St. Mark's may approve a service for persons who are not members.

To allow for scheduling and marriage preparation meetings, the church requires at least three months' notice between the marriage request and the wedding date.

If either party has been divorced, they must obtain permission to remarry from the Bishop of Texas. In such cases, the party must provide a copy of the divorce decree to the officiating priest, who will submit the application to the bishop. No wedding date may be set until the Bishop has granted permission.

Timeline

Weddings may be scheduled at any time of the year except during Lent. Only one wedding may be scheduled at St Mark's on any one day.

St. Mark's requires a minimum of 90 days' notice before a wedding can be solemnized. This allows time for all necessary meetings and arrangements. This requirement may be shortened at the discretion of the clergy for weighty cause provided that the couple can provide satisfactory evidence of need.

Allow at least 60 days for processing a remarriage petition to the Bishop, if required.

State law requires that each couple obtain a marriage license from the State of Texas. You may obtain this license from the Travis County Courthouse (512-854-9188 or www.traviscountyclerk.org), or from other Counties within the State of Texas. Priests of this Church may not legally perform a wedding without this license. The wedding license must be presented to St. Mark's clergy at the wedding rehearsal. Once the license is issued, the wedding service cannot take place within the first 72 hours, but must be performed within 30 days.

Meeting with the Clergy

At the first meeting with a couple, the priest will help complete the necessary marriage forms and review all the information in detail. At this meeting, which typically lasts about an hour and takes place during regular office hours, the couple will sign a form for the time and date of the wedding. The couple will then schedule two or more additional meetings with the officiating clergy to complete required preparation for marriage.

Marriage preparation meetings facilitate discussion of Christian marriage as a sacrament of the church. It is important for couples planning to be married within the church to understand that Christian marriage involves a belief that God, through Jesus Christ, will play a role in the marital relationship. Together, the couple and the officiating clergy will discuss the nature, purpose, and meaning, as well as the rights, duties, and responsibilities of marriage. They will also review the marriage liturgy and plan their own ceremony.

Prior to the solemnization of the marriage, and typically during the preparation meetings with the officiating clergy, the couple will sign the following Declaration of Intent as required by the Episcopal Church:

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.

The Ceremony

Wedding Officiants

At the discretion of St. Mark's Rector, other Episcopal clergy and ministers of other denominations may officiate or assist in the service. In any case, we require that all weddings at St. Mark's follow the standards set forth in this document.

Facilities

St. Mark's has three spaces available for the ceremony: our main worship space, a small indoor chapel, and an outdoor chapel on our greenbelt trail. Each space has different capacities for guests and participants, which you may want to consider when making your decision. We have rooms available for dressing before the ceremony (the conference room) and for the wedding party to gather (Grace Chapel and the Parish Hall), as well as host a reception (the Parish Hall). If you choose to have your reception at St. Mark's you must follow our policies for third-party events.

Members of the wedding party may come to the church up to two hours before the wedding to dress and prepare. The exception is Fridays, when our campus is in use by our day school; on Fridays you may come to the church from Noon on.

Liturgy

At St. Mark's, weddings conform to the liturgy of The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage found on page 423 of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, and other authorized marriage liturgies of the Episcopal Church.

If you use wedding programs (printed orders of service), please have the officiant approve them first.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal, usually conducted the day before the ceremony, is an opportunity to review the logistics of the marriage service. The officiating priest is in charge of the rehearsal, and all members of the wedding party should attend, including the couple, their attendants, ushers, readers, family members who will be seated, etc. It is important that everyone be present and on time.

If you work with an outside wedding coordinator, please understand that while they are welcome to attend and assist if asked, the wedding rehearsal is conducted by the officiating priest.

The couple must bring their marriage license, wedding programs, and final payment to the rehearsal.

Music

The couple should contact the parish organist/music director for an appointment as soon as possible in advance of the wedding date to make musical selections for the ceremony. The couple may choose a musician from outside the parish with the approval of the Rector. The music director can recommend vocalists and instrumentalists upon request.

It is important that wedding music reflect a Christian understanding of marriage. You may choose anything from The Hymnal 1982 and other approved Episcopal hymnals. The music director can help with other music selections that are appropriate.

Flowers, decorations, and fixtures in the church

The church will be vested in white liturgical hangings. Flowers on the altar are your gift to the church and remain for Sunday services. The Sunday bulletin will include a notation that the flowers are given in celebration of your marriage, and you will be remembered in the Prayers of the People. Following Sunday services, the altar flowers are taken to members of the congregation who are ill or living in nursing homes here in Austin. This practice of taking the altar flowers to others brings the joy of your wedding to many people who are not able to attend.

We require that Ben White Florist, our preferred florist, be used for altar flowers. They know the specifics of our space, are familiar with what will work best on the altar, and will work with your colors.

You may use floral markers to designate family pews, but you may not attach them by tape or any other sticky substance. You or your florist are responsible for removing pew markers and any vases/containers brought to St. Mark's. Please direct any questions to our Director of Operations.

The Church does not permit the throwing of birdseed, rice, paper hearts, flowers, flower petals, or any other material in or around the building or lawn after the wedding or reception. These materials are hazardous and disfiguring to the property and difficult to clean up.

Photography and Videography

A wedding is a worship service and must be treated with due reverence. It is the responsibility of the couple to share St. Mark's guidelines with their photographer and videographer in advance, so that the officiant and our Parish Administrator may address any concerns before the wedding day. Our guidelines are:

1. You may take photographs prior to or following the service. Pre-ceremony photographs must be completed 30 minutes before the service is to begin. Post-ceremony photographs must be completed no more than 30 minutes following the service.
2. Wedding photographs may not be posed inside the altar rail.
3. Photography and videotaping may be taken during the service from the loft.
4. Flash photography is allowed during the procession and recession only. No flash photography is permitted during the wedding service. You may use silent equipment in a single location (either time-exposure and/or videotape) with the approval of the officiant. Photographers must contact the Director of Operations within two weeks of the ceremony to confirm their understanding of the guidelines and ask any questions.
5. Videographers should use silent, stationary equipment in an unobtrusive approved location with the permission of the officiating clergy. All equipment must be set up 30 minutes before the service begins. You may not use lights or headsets. Videographers must contact the Director of Operations within two weeks of the ceremony to confirm their understanding of the guidelines and ask any questions.
6. Photographers and videographers may not move any furniture in the church.

FEE SCHEDULE

		For active members of St. Mark's	For inactive or non-members of St. Mark's
Fees payable to St. Mark's:	Facility and staff, includes cleaning	\$100	\$250
	Additional musicians	\$75 each	\$75 each
	Reception	\$250	\$350
Fees paid separately:	Organist (check payable to organist)	\$200	\$350
	Clergy honorarium (check payable to officiating clergy)	Appropriate but not required	\$350
	Altar flowers (pay florist directly)	\$150	\$150

REQUEST TO BE MARRIED AT ST. MARK'S CHURCH

Congratulations! To facilitate planning during this exciting time, please complete this form and return it to the Director of Operations by mail (address below) or e-mail (office@stmarksaustin.org). Your request will be given to your requested clergy person. Only the clergy of St. Mark's may schedule a wedding.

Name: _____ Today's date: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Name of your fiancé(e): _____

Are you or your fiancé(e) members of St. Mark's Episcopal Church? YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, for how long? _____

If NO, please list any family members who are members of St. Mark's Episcopal Church. If no family are church members, please let us know why you have selected St. Mark's:

Has either of you been previously married? YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, please provide name(s) of former spouse(s) and dates and marriage of divorce:

We require that at least one member of the couple be a baptized Christian who has been an active, attending, pledging member of St. Mark's for at least six (6) months prior to submitting a request.

Active, attending, pledging members of other Episcopal churches may be considered upon written request from the Rector of their parish to the Rector of St. Mark's. In these cases, we will assess an additional non-member fee.

Desired date to be married if request is approved: _____

I am requesting use of:

The Main Church (seats 200) ☐

Grace Chapel (seats 65) ☐

Outdoor Chapel (seats 25-30) ☐

Requested St. Mark's Priest: _____

If you wish to have an Episcopal priest not on staff at St. Mark's preside at your wedding, he or she must contact our Rector in writing (address below) to personally request the use of the church. Requests may be mailed to the attention of the Rev. Zac Koons. Requests should refer to your desired wedding date and the name of the priest who is providing preparation for the marriage, and must be submitted at least 90 days prior to the wedding.