

A Guide to Planning a Wedding in Sewanee

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 one of its chapels. In preparing this Wedding Guideline we hope to help you plan this special day.

Weddings in All Saints' Chapel and St. Augustine's Chapel must conform to the laws of the state, the canons of the Episcopal Church, and the policies of the University of the South. In addition, there are policies specific to the Chapels. The policies contained herein are firm.

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

For those of you interested in marrying elsewhere on the Domain, information, and guidelines are provided under the section labeled "Alternative Wedding Sites."

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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 actually 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 both a joyful and 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, or
- the direct offspring (i.e., son or daughter) of one of the above, or
- a graduate with a degree from either the College or the School of Theology.

In addition, there are these criteria:

- At least one of the persons 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 30 days' notice to the clergy preceding the wedding date.
 - In the event that either 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.

Please note: No date will be set until the three letters have been received in our office and the University Chaplain has approved your request.

When approval is granted, you will receive an acceptance letter and may then call to set the wedding date and have it entered on the calendar. Wedding dates can only be set 18 months in advance.

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.

If you are from out-of-state you may get your license at the Franklin County Court House:

Franklin County Clerk: Phillip Custer

1 South Jefferson St.

Winchester, TN 37398

Phone: 931.967.2541

The office is located on the main floor and is open Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. The cost of the 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 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 person must present a valid driver's license or birth certificate and a social security card. 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.

Premarital instruction

The Episcopal Church requires premarital counseling 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 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 the wedding.

Dates and times for the wedding

A wedding may be held at any time in the course of the year in All Saints' or St. Augustine's Chapel 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. Because of the heavy scheduling of All Saints' Chapel and St. Augustine's Chapel for regular services and other University events, our policy can permit no more than one wedding per day. Saturday weddings in our Chapels will be scheduled no earlier than 9 a.m. and no later than 7 p.m.

The wedding rehearsal is normally held on the day before the wedding between the hours of 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. 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 one hour. The officiating priest, with the help of an All Saints' wedding hostess and sacristan, will conduct the rehearsal. Private wedding consultants have no authority once inside the doors of the Chapel.

Photography and videography

Chapel policy does not allow flash photography of any kind during the wedding ceremony itself. The use of flash, artificial lights destroys 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; less formal pictures 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—sewane.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 All Saints' Chapel are worship services; consequently the music selected for such should 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, to request a CD of appropriate music and to set up a time to plan the service music. The normal pattern of musical pieces 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, which are 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.

Carillon

All Saints' Chapel is blessed with a lovely set of bells located in Shapard Tower. If you would like to have the bells played following your wedding ceremony (see the Fee Schedule for the additional charge), contact the University Carillonneur, and complete the online form sewanee.edu/carillon. The Carillonneur will help in the selection of music.

As a safety precaution, the carillon will not be played in the event of rain and/or lightening. If the Carillonneur is unable to play due to bad weather you will be refunded 50 percent of the fee paid and the Carillonneur will be paid 50 percent for his preparation time and commitment to play. Please note: The bells can be played only when they do not conflict with University classes or previously scheduled University events.

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 flower arrangements in the University chapels.

For the required fee of \$300, three floral arrangements will be provided for your ceremony: one on the high altar behind the cross, and two either in the high altar niches or on both sides of the nave altar platform. **These arrangements are to remain in the Chapel after your ceremony for Sunday's worship service.**

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

If a wedding is held the first weekend following the annual Festival of Lessons and Carols or the first weekend following Easter Day, and the Chapel is already adorned, such flowers and greenery are to remain in place for the wedding.

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

Candles

Included in the Chapel's wedding fee is the provision for (A) two tall candles for the high altar and candles for the two seven-branch candelabras on either side of the reredos; or (B) four pavement candles and two lectern candles for the nave altar. Please note that the two tall candles at the high altar and the four pavement candles at the nave altar are Eucharistic candles; these will only be lit if the ceremony includes a Eucharist. An additional fee is required for the use of all other candles (i.e. choir and nave pillar candles). Requests for these candles should be made on the Wedding Information Form.

The use of what is commonly referred to in other denominations as a "Unity Candle" is not a part of the Episcopal ceremonial rite for weddings. If the wedding party should desire to make use of such a practice, it is best reserved for the wedding reception.

Rice, birdseed, and rose petals

The use of rice is forbidden at All Saints' 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 likewise permitted. If you so choose, please indicate this on the Wedding Information Form so that special arrangements can be made for clean-up following the service.

Party dressing arrangements

One party may use the Trudy Cunningham Room, located next to the Chapel in the lower level of Carnegie, to dress for the wedding. This room is equipped with a full-length three-way mirror, comfortable seating, tables, a counter for makeup application, and a private bathroom. The other party may use the Guild Room, located in the back hallway of All Saints' Chapel

Please inform your Wedding Hostess 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, the Trudy Cunningham Room and Guild Room will be locked once the wedding party has left 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 will 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 six weeks before the date of your wedding. Print Services 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 may request to see a sample bulletin, 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 bulletin instead, it is critical to work with the officiant to ensure that the bulletin contains all of the necessary information of those attending the liturgy.

Our Associate Chaplain 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 the 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 either the nave platform or the high altar.

Seating

All Saints' Chapel is normally set to seat approximately 480 guests, with 250 in the front section, and 110 in the back section, and 130 along both sides. For an additional fee, more chairs may be added. Full seating capacity for St. Augustine's Chapel is approximately 40 chairs. If the service is being conducted at the high altar, the chancel seats approximately 125 guests.

About the nave altar and nave altar platform

The Chapel has a handsome, massive, free-standing altar platform, which is stationed in front of the chancel steps at the nave crossing. The platform with its four pavement candles cannot be moved under any circumstance. Ceremonies conducted at the high altar involving a full formal procession from the back of the church will process around the platform. Under no circumstances may anyone cross over the platform. If a wedding takes place at the high altar, the nave altar only (not the platform) may be moved, and only members of the University Physical Plant crew may do this. A full month's notice is required, along with an additional fee to cover the cost of overtime, moving expenses, and storage.

All Saints' wedding staff

Elizabeth Koella serves as our wedding administrator. Her job is to work closely with you throughout the planning process. With our Wedding Guideline in hand, you can begin to make the necessary and proper arrangements to ensure not only that your wedding day flows beautifully and smoothly, but that the customs and traditions of the Episcopal Church are honored and upheld. Closer to the time of the wedding, Elizabeth will assign one of our wedding hostesses to assist you on your wedding day as well as at the rehearsal. Each of these hostesses has been trained in the area of wedding etiquette and has had experience in coordinating Chapel weddings. A sacristan will assist the clergy at the rehearsal and the wedding. You should schedule at least one meeting with Elizabeth early in your planning process and one meeting with your assigned wedding hostess before your rehearsal.

Wedding procedure checklist, required forms, and fees

After the couple confirms that they meet the criteria to be married in one of the University Chapels, sends the appropriate letters (applicants, pastor/minister/priest), and the consent form, the University Chaplain 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 Wedding Coordinator to set your wedding date. Wedding dates can only be set 18 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 emailed to All Saints' Chapel.

Fees, which can be found at sewanee.edu/media/student-life/believe/WeddingFees.pdf, are required 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

All Saints' Chapel makes available, as a courtesy, a list of local vendors, but all arrangements are the responsibility of the couple.