



SAINT MARK
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Wedding Policy Guidelines

WHO CAN BE MARRIED AT SAINT MARK?

- Membership at Saint Mark United Methodist Church is not required in order to hold your wedding at Saint Mark.

CAN A NON-SAINT MARK MINISTER OFFICIATE AT MY WEDDING?

Yes, visiting ministers are welcome to participate, but *a Saint Mark minister IS REQUIRED to officiate at your wedding.*

PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

Pre-marital counseling is recommended for all couples getting married at Saint Mark. If a pastor from Saint Mark is officiating, it is your responsibility to contact the pastor at least 2 months prior to the service to schedule the counseling sessions. In some circumstances, arrangements can be made for counseling with another pastor. Additional fees for premarital counseling are at the discretion of the pastor performing the wedding and are not included with the fees listed below.

FEES

Fees include:

- The use of the facility (sanctuary/chapel and dressing rooms) for both the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony,
- Fees for the pastor, the organist, audio services if in the Sanctuary, the wedding directors, and
- Arrangements for available clean up on the day of your wedding.
- A deposit of \$500 is required for all weddings. All fees are due 4 weeks prior to the wedding. More detailed information on fees is included on the reservation form.

Both the sanctuary and the chapel are available for weddings.

SEATING

SANCTUARY

- The sanctuary seats 500 people

CHAPEL

- The chapel seats approximately 50 people.

RESERVING THE CHURCH

- Contact the church office (e-mail office@stmarkumc.org) to confirm that

your date, time, and the availability of a Saint Mark pastor is available.

- Your date cannot be confirmed on the church calendar until the church receives your completed reservation form and deposit.
- Weddings at Saint Mark are typically held on Saturdays anytime between noon and 7 p.m.
- Wedding rehearsals take place on the Friday evening before the ceremony.
- Weddings are typically not scheduled on holiday weekends, during Holy Week or during the month of December.
- Exceptions (involving higher fees) may be made on a case by case basis with regard to scheduling your wedding over a holiday weekend or on a date other than a Saturday.
- When you have made the decision to hold your wedding at Saint Mark, you will be asked to sign our reservation form agreeing to the rules and regulations as described in this policy summary. \
- By signing, you are also agreeing to pay for any damages to church property that may result from your use of the facilities.
- After your wedding has been scheduled on the church calendar, you will be put in touch with one of our wedding directors so that you can discuss the details of your rehearsal and ceremony.

PLANNING THE WEDDING

Saint Mark Wedding Directors and Their Role in Your Wedding

The goal of the Saint Mark wedding directors is not only to coordinate the many details of your ceremony, but most importantly to minimize the stress of what is a joyful, spiritual event.

- All arrangements for the wedding, other than the securing of a time on the church calendar must be made with the wedding directors.
- It is mandatory that the Saint Mark wedding directors supervise all weddings and rehearsals. Our directors are trained, experienced, and thoroughly knowledgeable in all areas involving church and social etiquette, and they will officiate along with the pastor in the management of the rehearsals and weddings. They are charged with the responsibility of assisting the pastor in all the mechanical arrangements for the ceremony.
- *Any outside wedding consultants you may choose to employ will have no responsibilities at the church during the rehearsal or on your wedding day.*

You will receive the following assistance from the wedding directors:

INITIAL MEETING

When you initially meet with the Saint Mark wedding director, please be prepared to provide the following information:

- Who will light the Unity Candle during the service (if applicable)
- Who will seat the grandmothers, mothers, and other family members?
- In what order would you prefer that the attendants process and recess?

- Do you wish to have a lay person be involved in any readings during your wedding?

REHEARSAL

At the rehearsal they will:

- Organize the procession and arrangement of the wedding party
- Coordinate the seating of honored guests and parents
- Inform the ushers of their specific duties

WEDDING DAY

On the day of the wedding, they will:

- Greet the wedding party and show them to the dressing rooms
- Take printed programs to the narthex
- Synchronize time with the pastor and organist
- Seat the honored guests in the proper order, at the proper time, and make sure that the processional begins on time.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

- It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make the arrangements with the selected photographer (and when applicable, the videographer) and to inform them of Saint Mark's guidelines and requirements.
- When the photographer and/or videographer arrive at the church on the day of the wedding, a wedding director will be available to answer any questions.
- The photographer and/or videographer are urged to review with the wedding director any special requests and questions relative to photos or recordings. Since it is a worship service, they are asked to hold in reverence the ceremony and its location.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Absolutely no flash photography is permitted during the service. Your photographer may only use flash photography during the processional. He or she may take time exposure (without flash) from the balcony during the wedding service.
- The use of personal cameras by guests is strictly prohibited.
- Photos may be taken 2 hours before the ceremony.
- A 30-minute window is also permitted after the ceremony for pictures.
- The photographer may only work from the back of the chapel or sanctuary and/or the balcony of the sanctuary during the wedding ceremony.
- Photos in and of the chapel or sanctuary should be made before the arrival of guests; therefore, they *must be completed* 1 hour before the services.

VIDEOGRAPHY (SANCTUARY)

Contact Saint Mark's Chair of Communications and Multimedia, Johnny

Sims, for information about recording the wedding ceremony. If the wedding will be recorded, the camera is best located in the back balcony. A remote camera may also be positioned in the bay to the right of the choir loft at the front of the sanctuary, but not on the chancel.

MUSIC

- Because our sanctuary pipe organ, an Aeolian Skinner, demands an approved organist who is well-qualified, Saint Mark will provide an organist for the wedding.
- As the atmosphere of the ceremony is established by the music, all music should be part of the worship experience. The organist will assist you in the selection of appropriate music for your service.
- Because this will be a service of worship, secular music (such as movie themes, popular rock songs, and ballads) is typically not appropriate during the wedding and should be reserved for the reception.
- Approximately one month prior to the wedding, the couple should schedule a consultation with the organist for the selection of the music to be used during the ceremony.
- Any guest musicians must be approved by the wedding committee and organist.
- Soloists are often friends or relatives of the couple and should be advised of the Saint Mark guidelines for music. They should be prepared to practice with the organist one hour before the wedding.
- The organist would be happy to recommend any church soloists and/or instrumentalists upon request.
- An additional fee of \$30 per musician will be added to the ceremony. This is intended to compensate the organist for any practice time
- All soloists are expected to provide the organist with accompaniment copies of the music and in the key in which they will be performed. Transpositions are the responsibility of the soloist.

FLOWERS & DECORATIONS

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make the arrangements with a florist for decorations and to inform the florist of Saint Mark's guidelines and requirements.

- The church does not order flowers but can suggest a florist if desired. Minimal decorations are necessary in the sanctuary and narthex.
- Drop cloths must be used under all candles to protect furniture, carpet and flooring. With the exception of the use of wax candles in the Unity candle, only the use of mechanical candles will be permitted.
- Candles are not furnished by the church but can be rented from most florists.
- The Communion table and pulpit will not be moved. The other chancel furniture will not be moved unless deemed necessary by the director.
- Seasonal decorations, banners, etc. (Easter, Christmas, Lent, Pentecost,

etc.) already in place in the sanctuary will not be changed or removed for ceremonies.

- No tacks, nails, or tape can be used in the church.
- The doors to the church cannot be decorated; however, decorations on the exterior stair railings are permitted.
- Flower petals are permitted inside the sanctuary during the processional but cannot be permitted inside the chapel due to the potential safety hazard they may cause on the travertine floor.
- *(Carpet) runners are prohibited.*
- All decorations and flowers, unless donated to the church by previous agreement, must be removed immediately following the service.

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

- The wedding rehearsal is an integral part of the service and should proceed in a manner respectful of the bride and groom and the place of worship.
- Rehearsals should be conducted in a prompt and timely fashion.
- The rehearsal should be held no later than 6 pm on the day before the wedding and should be completed within one hour.
- An additional fee will be charged if more time is required. Overages in time for either the rehearsal or the service itself, including starting more than 30 minutes late or going 30 minutes or longer than the reserved time, will result in an additional fee of \$50/half hour for each person involved.
- The officiating minister will conduct the rehearsal with the assistance of the Saint Mark wedding directors.
- *Outside wedding consultants do not direct the rehearsal.*
- Please ask the members of the wedding party to be punctual. Remind them that traffic on Peachtree Street can be heavy on Friday evenings!
- Only the front doors to the church will be open on the evening of the rehearsal and the day of the wedding. (These doors otherwise normally remained locked during the week.)
- Please bring several copies of your wedding program to the rehearsal.
- Decisions regarding the number of attendants participating in the service are determined by the bride and groom; however, please keep in mind that the size and configuration of the chancel of Saint Mark does not make it possible to accommodate large numbers of attendants. You are encouraged to limit your attendants to 7 men and 7 women.
- All children included in the ceremony must be 6 years of age or older. Younger children may be included in the pictures but not in the ceremony.

The rehearsal generally follows this pattern:

- Welcome by the wedding directors
- Introduction of the wedding directors
- One of the directors will make a few brief comments about the history of the church and review guidelines for the day of the wedding

- Arrangement of the wedding party at the chancel steps
- An overview of the service by the pastor
- Rehearsal of processional, vows, and partial recessional

THE SERVICE

- The Saint Mark wedding directors facilitate all activities at the church on the day of the ceremony.
- *Outside wedding consultants are not permitted to direct services at Saint Mark.*
- The church facility will be available for you and your party 2 hours prior to and 30 minutes following the ceremony.
- Saint Mark encourages the use of the United Methodist Order of Service for all weddings. If you would prefer to write your own vows, they must be approved in advance by the officiating pastor.
- Please remember that your wedding is a service of worship and the attire of the bride and her attendants should be appropriate.
- The church will provide rooms (including the parlor) for the bride and groom and their attendants to use for dressing. Both rooms must be cleared of all belongings immediately after the wedding. Saint Mark cannot assume responsibility for returning garments and belongings.

WEDDING LICENSE

Please bring your wedding license to your service and give it to one of the wedding directors. The wedding director will make sure it is signed by the minister following the ceremony and mailed on the first business day following your service. Weddings cannot proceed without your license.

AFTER THE SERVICE

- Receiving lines following your wedding are not permitted and should be reserved for your reception.
- Please instruct your car, carriage, or limousine service to park on the concrete pad directly in front of the church following the wedding.
- *Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church property at any time on the day of your wedding.*

PARKING & SECURITY

- Parking is available directly behind the church in our parking deck at 121 Fifth Street. This deck is under “The Hadley” apartment complex. The entrance faces the back of the sanctuary. It has 150 parking spaces.
- If you feel more parking will be needed, we can provide you with contact information for a representative of a parking company who manages nearby parking lots in Midtown.
- If the reception site is near the church (for example, at the Fox Theatre, Biltmore or Georgian Terrace), if at all possible, you are strongly encouraged to direct your guests to park at the reception site and walk to

the church for the wedding.

- Saint Mark cannot assume the safety of personal items brought to the church (or left in plain sight in guests' cars). However, every reasonable effort will be made to assist the wedding party in protecting such property. It is suggested that a friend of the wedding party be asked to be responsible for these valuables during the service and/or the reception.

GENERAL RULES

- *Smoking is not allowed anywhere in the church facility at any time.*
- *Alcoholic beverages are not allowed anywhere in the church facility at any time.*
- Anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave the premises. In no case may such a person be permitted to participate in a rehearsal or wedding. This is strictly enforced.
- It is a Georgia state law that guests are not permitted to throw rice. However, birdseed may be thrown outside.

IN SUMMARY

- After reviewing the information included in these guidelines, if you have questions regarding any details of your ceremony, please contact the church administrative assistant in the church office at Office@stmarkumc.org or speak with one of the wedding directors.
- These regulations have been put into place for your benefit. Our weddings run smoothly and focus on the important sacrament of marriage. If you would like to speak to a couple who were married at Saint Mark, please let us know; and we will be happy to put you in touch with them.

*On behalf of the Saint Mark family, thank you for your interest in our church.
Blessings and Congratulations!*



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