



Wedding Customary

Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church

6221 Main Street, Houston, TX 77030/palmerchurch.org

Introduction

Whether your wedding is large or small, it requires preparation and attention to detail. This wedding customary will answer most of your questions about having your wedding at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church.

We require two months' notice before the proposed wedding date. The couple also is required to participate in premarital counseling with the clergy regarding "the nature, meaning, and purpose of Holy Matrimony." The clergy can answer some questions about the wedding ceremony itself, but the counseling sessions primarily discuss marriage. Normally, this takes three or more sessions.

If either person has been divorced, the bishop's approval is required for the officiating clergy to perform the marriage ceremony. This requires consultation with the clergy, and an additional 30 days may be necessary for the bishop to consider the request.

Because the church vows to support every couple in their married life together, it expects them to participate in the regular life and worship of this Episcopal parish, or the couple must have a pastoral connection to Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church. Per the canons of the Episcopal Church, at least one member of the couple to be married must be a baptized Christian.

A Palmer Church priest officiates at all weddings. Other members of the clergy, either of the Episcopal Church or of other denominations, may be invited by our Rector to assist in the ceremony.

Weddings are not scheduled during the seasons of Advent, Lent, the first Saturday after Easter, or on Sundays.

Weddings at Palmer Church are celebrated according to the rites in the Book of Common Prayer and other rites approved for use in The Episcopal Church. The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is a classic of Christian liturgy, expressing the joy, solemnity, and meaning of this state of life. Although personally composed vows are not permitted, options for readings and prayers enable you to express the uniqueness of your relationship within our tradition.

The main church (nave) seats 350 people.

Flowers and Decorations

Palmer is a beautiful church; we recommend simplicity when decorating it.

1. Speak to the wedding coordinator before selecting your florist. Decorations, including the altar flowers, must be completed by a time agreed upon by the wedding coordinator and the florist.
2. In the nave, no flowers are allowed on the altar itself. Flowers must be delivered in containers that are ready to be placed on the reredos on each side of the cross. The church has no flower containers available for weddings. For the flowers to fit on the reredos, they MUST sit on a base no larger than 7 inches. Each arrangement's height may not exceed 48 inches.

Once placed on the reredos, flowers may not be removed; they will be used in worship the next Sunday. The florist may retrieve its containers the next Tuesday; check with the church's front office.

Greenery is allowed in the nave—on the handrails leading to the chancel area, on the chancel rail and on the pews. Arrangements also may be placed on the marble ledges at the base of the stairs: a maximum of 48 inches tall, including the container.

3. In St. Bede's Chapel, flower arrangements may be placed on two pedestals, provided by Palmer Church.
4. No artificial flowers or greenery (i.e. plastic or silk) are permitted in either the nave or St. Bede's Chapel. Aisle runners also are not allowed.
5. Our service does not allow for the use of a unity candle.
6. Pew markers, made of ribbons, greenery, or small flower arrangements are allowed in the nave and chapel. Attach them so they do not damage pews or chairs.
7. Aisle candles are not allowed in the Nave.
8. Floral wreaths may be hung on the front doors of the nave. Permanent hooks on the doors make this easy. Remove the wreaths immediately after the ceremony.
9. The florist must be on hand, immediately after the wedding, to remove all decorations—except for the altar flowers, as previously mentioned.
10. Rice or confetti may not be tossed on church property.

Wedding Music

Weddings at Palmer are accompanied by music that reflects the traditional ethos and customs found in the parish's weekly worship services. The music for a wedding ceremony at Palmer, whether held in the historic nave (sanctuary) or St. Bede's Chapel, is informed by guidelines found in the Episcopal Church's *Book of Common Prayer*. Remaining within the Palmer community's traditions and customs, the Director of Music and the Organist will assist you in choosing appropriate music for the wedding ceremony. The music chosen will be celebratory, while also solemn and dignified in nature, and well-suited for traditional Episcopal (Anglican) worship. Secular music is not appropriate or allowed.

Our organist consults and performs at all Palmer weddings. Parish staff singers, and/or contracted professional instrumentalists, may be arranged through the Director of Music. Please do not retain any musicians, singers, choirs, or instrumentalists without first consulting the Director of Music.

Policy guidelines are derived from statements on page 14 in the Book of Common Prayer.

Approved Music for Weddings at Palmer

Prelude Music

The organist will provide music (classical, traditional organ repertoire) for approximately 25 minutes prior to the appointed hour of the wedding. If desired, the organist can recommend other instrumentalists or soloists to perform at this time.

The wedding party and the bride may enter to different music selections or to the same music. In either case, a fanfare may be used to announce the bride's entrance.

Bridal Party Processional

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring, *Bach*

Canon in D, *Pachelbel*

Trumpet Tune, *Purcell*

Trumpet Voluntary, *Stanley*

Rondeau, *Mourret*

Bride's Entrance

The Prince of Denmark's March, *Clarke*

Trumpet Voluntary, *Clarke*

Trumpet Voluntary, *Stanley*

Prelude in D, *Charpentier*

Overture to the Music for the Royal Fireworks, *Handel*

Exit (Recessional)

The trumpet pieces listed above are appropriate here, as well. In addition, the following are popular:

Allegro maestoso from the Water Music Suite, *Handel*

Rigaudon, *Campra*

Wedding March, *Mendelssohn*

Hymn to Joy (from Symphony 9), *Beethoven*

Service Music

There are several places during the service where a hymn or other musical selection (solo, organ, other instrument) is appropriate:

- Following the Declaration of Consent
- Between readings

If there is to be Communion:

- at the Offertory
- as the altar is prepared
- during Communion
- after Communion
- as the altar is cleared.

The following hymns from The Hymnal 1982 are familiar and especially appropriate:

376 Joyful, joyful, we adore thee (the sung version of no. 13 above)
390 Praise to the Lord! the Almighty, the King of creation
397 Now thank we all our God
410 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven
516 Come down, O Love divine
518 Christ is made the sure foundation
645/6 The King of love my shepherd is
657 Love divine, all loves excelling

Nuptial Eucharist

Many people are returning to the custom of having a Nuptial Eucharist, in which the marriage ceremony includes a celebration of Holy Communion. Generally, this increases the service length by approximately 15 to 20 minutes. As with every celebration of the Holy Eucharist at Palmer Church, all baptized Christians are invited to participate.



Confer with the clergy during your marriage consultation and decide if you wish to include the Eucharist at least a month prior to your wedding. To view options for readings, please visit lectionarypage.net/YearABC/SpecServ/Marriage.html or scan the QR code to the left.

Rehearsal

Wedding rehearsals are directed by the officiating priest and the wedding coordinator. Rehearsals normally require about an hour, and the entire wedding party should attend.

Photography, Video Recordings and Live Streaming

1. A flash photo upon entrance to the nave, coming down the aisle, and one of the couple leaving the nave are permitted, but no flash pictures are allowed during the ceremony. Time exposures may be taken from the balcony; do not take them during prayers.
2. It is imperative for the photographer to consult the wedding coordinator before the ceremony. Photographs may be taken of the couple and their attendants in the Family Room, and the area outside it, before the ceremony. A limited number of photographs may be taken of the wedding party after the ceremony. Please limit this photo session to 15 minutes and include only the wedding party and the immediate family. Candles are extinguished at the conclusion of the ceremony.
3. Upon request, Palmer will livestream the wedding. Guests will be able to view the stream at palmerchurch.org/live. Video recordings by an outside vendor are allowed, but the videographer must meet with the wedding coordinator beforehand to discuss where taping is permitted.

Clergy Honorarium

It is customary for the couple to offer the officiating clergy an honorarium for his/her services. For further information, please see "Pricing Information", page 8.

Fees

Fees are set according to church policy. See "Pricing Information" for details on wedding service fees. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to discuss them with the clergy.

Marriage License

Arrange for the marriage license with the County Clerk well before the ceremony. Law requires that a marriage license may not be executed within 72 hours of its issuance. Give the license to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal. After the wedding, the clergy person will sign the license and return it to the couple. It is the couple's responsibility to deliver the signed marriage license to the county either by hand delivery or by mail.

Dressing Areas

If you wish, the couple and their attendants may dress at the church. Please discuss this with the wedding coordinator. Palmer's Family Room is designed for this purpose, and the coordinator often can arrange for a second large dressing/waiting area.

Receptions

The parish hall and the courtyard may be reserved for receptions; a deposit is required to secure the date. Please consult the fee page for rates. On Saturday evenings, the parish hall and the courtyard are available for two hours after the ceremony. This time limit is necessary for us to prepare the building for Sunday programs.

The parish-hall reservation includes the room, set-up of tables and chairs, as well as the placement of white tablecloths. It does not include use of the Palmer kitchen; however, you may reserve and use the kitchen for an additional fee. The fee includes full use of the kitchen, glassware, serving dishes and utensils, as well as extra custodial support for clean-up. You also may hire the church sextons (custodians) to assist with your reception (services include: removing dishes, cleaning dishes and glassware, clearing tables, sweeping and mopping after the conclusion of the reception, and assistance with removing any decorations you may have brought in). If you wish to play recorded music, a slide show or other audio or audiovisual program, you may reserve set-up services from Palmer's audiovisual technician. (Please note that the technician does not remain on site for the entire reception.)

For more specific information, please contact Palmer's lead wedding coordinator:

Ragna Case *revised 07/14/25*
713.818-9772
ragna.case@gmail.com

Title I

Canon 18

The Member of the Clergy shall have required that the parties sign the following declaration:

“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.

Signature of one Member of the Couple

Signature of one Member of the Couple

Date:

Date:

Title I

Canon 19

When marital unity is imperiled by dissension, it shall be the duty, if possible, of either or both parties, before taking legal action, to lay the matter before a Member of the Clergy; it shall be the duty of such Member of the Clergy to act first to protect and promote the physical and emotional safety of those involved and only then, if it be possible, to labor that the parties may be reconciled.

Signature of one Member of the Couple

Signature of one Member of the Couple

Date:

Date:

Wedding Disclaimer

We have read the wedding customary for Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church and agree to adhere strictly to its regulations as we prepare to celebrate our wedding.

At *no time* may alcohol be consumed on church property before the wedding by the wedding party or their guests.

It is our responsibility to communicate these guidelines to our caterer, florist, and photographer—and to any other persons helping us prepare for our wedding at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church.

Must be signed by both parties.

Name – *printed*

Name - *Printed*

Signature

Signature

Date

Wedding Information

Since church records will be made from this information, please use full names only, not initials.

Couple Information

Full Name _____

Address _____

Cell Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Email _____

Age _____

Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Baptized ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, what denomination? _____

Confirmed? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, what denomination? _____

Church Membership (current)

First marriage? ☐ yes ☐ no

Divorced? ☐ yes ☐ no

Widower? ☐ yes ☐ no

**If divorced, see Remarriage Petition*

Parent Information

Parent's Full Name

Parent's Address

Parent's Phone

Parent's Full Name

Parent's Address

Parent's Phone

Couple Information

Full Name _____

Address _____

Cell Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Email _____

Age _____

Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Baptized ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, what denomination? _____

Confirmed? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, what denomination? _____

Church Membership (current)

First marriage? ☐ yes ☐ no

Divorced? ☐ yes ☐ no

Widower? ☐ yes ☐ no

**If divorced, see Remarriage Petition*

Parent Information

Parent's Full Name

Parent's Address

Parent's Phone

Parent's Full Name

Parent's Address

Parent's Phone

Remarriage Petition Information

Since church records will be made from this information, *please use full names only; do not use initials.*

Return the completed form to: Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church • 6221 Main Street • Houston, Texas 77030

Member of the Couple

Name(s) of former spouse(s):

Date of final divorce decree(s):

For a second marriage, a waiting period of one year from the date of the final decree normally is required. If a lengthy separation (beyond two years) has occurred, a six-month waiting period may be granted.

NOTE: If clergy has seen a copy of the divorce decree(s), it is not necessary to include a copy of the decree with this petition. In the event of a third marriage by either party, the parties to the proposed marriage must consult with a licensed marriage therapist as to their readiness for marriage. The therapist's written opinion must be conveyed to the petitioning priest and included with the petition to the Bishop.

Insofar as fourth marriages by either party are concerned, no petitions will be considered—except under very unusual circumstances.

If any of the children of the divorced spouse(s) are minors, state the court-ordered financial arrangements for their support and whether all such payments are current.

Member of the Couple

Name(s) of former spouse(s):

Date of final divorce decree(s):

For a second marriage, a waiting period of one year from the date of the final decree is normally required. If a lengthy separation (in excess of 2 years) has occurred, a 6-month waiting period may be granted.

NOTE: If clergy has seen a copy of the divorce decree(s), it is not necessary to include a copy of the decree with this petition. In the event of a third marriage by either party, the parties to the proposed marriage must consult with a licensed marriage therapist as to their readiness for marriage. The written opinion of the therapist must be conveyed to the petitioning priest and included with the petition to the Bishop.

Insofar as fourth marriages by either party are concerned, no petitions will be considered except under very unusual circumstances.

If any of the children of the divorced spouse(s) are minors, state the court-ordered financial arrangements for their support and whether or not all payments are current.

icing Information

Wedding Services

Couple's Name

Wedding Date

Item Description	Quantity	Price Per
Basic Services for the Nave ⁽¹⁾	1	\$1,600.00
Basic Services for St. Bede's Chapel ⁽¹⁾	1	\$850.00
OPTIONAL SERVICES		
Parish Hall Rental for Reception ⁽²⁾	1	\$1,500.00
Patio Rental for Reception ⁽²⁾	1	\$750.00
Bells	1	\$150.00
Wedding Leaflets	1	\$1.00
Security Officer Overtime Fees	1	\$25/hour
City of Houston Street Parking Permit ⁽³⁾	1	\$60
Off-Duty HPD Officer required by COH for Permit ⁽³⁾	4 hrs	\$40/hour
Custodial Overtime Fees	1	\$100/each
Kitchen Use ⁽⁴⁾	1	\$1000.00
AV Tech for Reception Set-up ⁽⁵⁾	1	\$50.00

Less Deposit Paid		
		Subtotal
		Tax - 0%
Fees due at or before rehearsal. Please remit to wedding coordinator.		TOTAL

Item Description	Quantity	Price Per
Suggested Clergy Honorarium <i>(Please make a separate check payable to the Clergy person officiating wedding and give it directly to the Priest on your wedding day or at rehearsal.)</i>	1	\$300.00
		TOTAL

- (1) Basic Services of the Church Office includes (i) Palmer Clergy and two Wedding Coordinators; (ii) arrangement conference and any follow-up visits; (iii) coordination of service; (iv) clerical assistance with various forms and permits associated with service; (v) organist; (vi) overhead including administration, 2 security guards for a wedding in the Nave and one for a wedding in the Chapel, equipment and facility expenses up to 4 hours of reserved time on campus.
- (2) Reception rentals include use of room, tables & chairs with white table cloths. It does not include kitchen use, church dishes, or AV assistance.
- (3) Fee is dictated by the City of Houston Office of Mayor Special Events Department as of October 01, 2018.
- (4) Kitchen rental includes full use of Palmer's parish hall kitchen, glassware and serving dishes if needed, and extra custodial support for clean-up.
- (5) AV Tech will communicate with couple via phone or email prior to wedding to get an understanding of what the needs are and will arrive at parish hall or patio prior to start of reception to make sure all equipment is set and ready to go. Tech will not stay on campus for duration of event but may stay for up to 1 hour, including set up time, to ensure that all is running smoothly.

Note: Soloist fees or fees for extra musicians are to be contracted by the couple and paid separately directly to the musicians. If a member of the Palmer Choir is requested, the fee is \$250 paid directly to the soloist.