



4333 Cole Avenue

Dallas, Texas 75205

214-521-6062

www.TheChapeloftheCross.com



Wedding Policies and Application

Congratulations! You are interested in a wedding at The Chapel of the Cross, and that is wonderful! God is interested in you and in the family you are forming. A Church Wedding is an excellent beginning to your marriage. We wish you much joy and happiness in your upcoming marriage and trust your preparations for the wedding will not divert you from preparing for marriage! Secular culture will soon weary you with its massive focus on the wedding, rather than on the marriage into which the wedding ushers you. The Church is a holy Mother to us, and we are happy to offer you her assistance for both the wedding and for your marriage. We would be overjoyed to help bring you into marriage, and begin your family life at God's Altar.

We understand why you would wish to be married in a beautiful, traditional church building. It is important, however, that couples applying to be married in church become aware of the obligations they are undertaking in making this life-long commitment. Wedding ceremonies are important, but fleeting occasions. Marriage is for a lifetime, and those who put God first will be blessed by Him. We look forward to helping you enjoy this day, and enter into a productive and happy marriage.

Below are commonly asked questions, several instructions as how to proceed, and the application form you will need. May you enjoy God's blessing on your path to marriage.

*O God, who hast so consecrated the state of Matrimony that in it is represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church; Look mercifully upon these thy servants, that they may love, honour, and cherish each other, and so live together in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and of peace; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. **Amen.***

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What is the Service like?

A Christian wedding is primarily a worship service in which God Himself blesses the union an unmarried man and an unmarried woman make in His presence, and in front of His Church. He Himself instructs all on the nature of what marriage is, why it exists and what its duties, responsibilities, and privileges entail. He hears the vows made to Him and to each other, and then Himself makes you, the couple, husband and wife— picturing the union between Jesus Christ and His Bride, the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

Thus, a Christian wedding ceremony is governed more by the teachings and traditions of the Church, than by passing fashions. Your wedding should not only be a special event for you, it should witness to the gospel of Christ. The service is reverent, beautiful, and glorious.

Do you offer pre-marital Counseling?

Yes. Because Holy Matrimony is “an holy estate,” our concern is that both parties to a marriage understand the magnitude of their impending vows, and the consequent need to base their relationship on a serious commitment to Jesus Christ. Ideally, couples have sought counseling before choosing to engage. These classes are to prepare for marriage itself.

The idea of a couple appearing at a church for their wedding on a given day and then never returning until the next family wedding, or baptism, or funeral is foreign to us, and one we believe we cannot in good conscience support. It is with this concern that we insist that couples accede to pre-marital counseling, and to church membership, as determined by the Rector. If you do not belong to a Church or have not made this commitment, our Rector will help you begin this important step, so crucial to begin your marriage well. Committing to church membership and worship will make you a much stronger family, and full of life.

The curriculum is informative, enjoyable, and productive. You will be better prepared for marriage, and will also end with a stronger relationship, useful tools, and a more committed love. When your wedding day finally comes and you are standing up front, you will understand much more clearly what you are saying, what you are doing, and what you are promising as you enter into Christian Marriage during your Church wedding ceremony.

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Who may be married at The Chapel of the Cross?

All are invited into Christian Marriage, but Christian Marriage requires life in the Church. Life in the Church is foundational because Christian Marriage is a sacramental vocation, engaged in by disciples of Christ who wish to go on following Him. Marriage is also theological; it participates in the life of God as holy Trinity. Indeed, it is in their marriage and sexuality that our first parents, Adam and Eve, as husband and wife, became the picture, or image, of God. Weddings will be performed for those who are either already committed or who are willing to commit to weekly worship, full participation, and membership within this Church or another faithful Christian Church. The Rector and the Vestry of this Parish reserve the right to decline any application for a wedding, without explanation.

What about Divorce or Cohabitation?

Marriage is a lifelong sacramental union between a man and a woman who have made vows to each other before God and the Church, have consummated this union in their bodies, and who are prepared to fulfill these vows over the remainder of their lifetimes. The Blessing of Marriage can only be given where, and upon whom, God's Word, the Bible, allows.

Secularism has upset God's order to life, encouraging people to enter into a "union" without having taken the vows of marriage. It has also encouraged divorce as a common, ordinary, and "faultless" end to a marriage. Both are wrong, untrue, unfair, and have caused deep grief to many; for everyone, changes need to be made in our lives before we can receive God's blessing in marriage. The good news is that the Church is happy to help where it can, and to begin working with willing people—wherever they find themselves for a starting point. We are committed to building strong marriages with all who truly desire and long for it.

The Reformed Episcopal Church will consider the remarriage of divorced persons under its Canon 34. The first requirement of the Canon is that the Rector must submit a statement in writing to the Ordinary of the Diocese as to the circumstances of a divorced person(s) desiring remarriage (if the former spouse is still living), and receive his permission to perform the marriage. The following provisions also apply:

1. That one calendar year will have passed since the civil decree of divorcement.
2. That documentation will attend the application.
3. That evidence of responsible behavior toward former spouse and any children of the marriage will be presented.
4. That the reasons for the marriage's failure have been understood and rectified.

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Cohabiting couples will either 1) secure a civil marriage, to be blessed (with the wedding ceremony) in the Church, or 2) live separately until marriage, in chaste preparation.

All couples will vow sexual chastity as they prepare for marriage.

How do I apply for and schedule my wedding?

1. Initial contact should be made with the Parish Office. The Secretary will mail you a Wedding Application Packet if you are unable to print or download this one, and will schedule a meeting with the Rector or another priest of the parish.
2. Meet with the priest, who will introduce the service and the meaning of marriage. Prior marriages and/or co-habitation should be disclosed. All persons marrying in the cure of this parish give their promise to prepare for marriage in chaste Christian discipleship.
3. All applications must receive the Rector's approval before proceeding.
4. Complete the Application Form, with the necessary signatures, returning them to the Parish Office within fourteen (14) days with a \$100 non-refundable deposit (if accepted). Secure your desired date.
5. Meet the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator, who will confirm the rehearsal, wedding, and reception dates and times with the secretary, and others involved. *Note that weddings are ordinarily requested no fewer than six months in advance, and that weddings are not performed on Sundays or during Advent or Lent.* Also, time of day must be scheduled so as not to interfere with other church activities. All rehearsals, ceremonies, and receptions are expected to begin and end at the mutually agreed upon times.
6. Once the date and time are scheduled, the Bride and Groom will continue planning directly with the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator. Banns of marriage will be published in parish announcements. Candidates for marriage will be in catechesis or membership classes either in this parish, or in another Christian Church. Counseling obtained in another church must be documented, and should be completed early in the planning period.
7. All fees are due and payable two weeks prior to the wedding.
8. Consult with the Choirmaster and/or Organist to select your music and to arrange for instrumentalists or other special musical needs. All music must be approved by the Rector.
9. Obtain Marriage License and rings.
10. Bring Rings and Marriage License to the Church for the rehearsal.

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11. Wedding Day!

Who will marry us? May my own Pastor or Priest help?

The Priest-in-Charge of the parish is the Officiant and Celebrant at all Chapel services, unless another clergyman has been arranged, with his approval. Other clergy from other churches may assist (not officiate) at the sole discretion of the Rector, and should make arrangements directly with the Rector, whose approval must be secured before other clergy are invited.

What is the Church's capacity?

The nave and chancel can hold a maximum of 320 persons (overflow available). For a comfortable service, however, plan on a maximum of 250 guests.

Which Service or Rite may we use?

The Chapel of the Cross is wholly dedicated to the traditional Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1662 or 1928), and its rite for the "Solemnization of Matrimony" will be used, without additions or substitutions. Supplemental material, such as poetry, especially composed vows or other similar material not found in the Prayer Book, are not used. (*This service can be read in its entirety at <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1928/Marriage.htm>*)

May we use flowers?

Wedding flowers are limited to two arrangements at the altar in the church-owned vases. The florist should pick up the vase liners from the church several days before the wedding. Arrangements for the altar should be no higher than 22 inches from the top of the liner and 18 inches wide from tip to tip.

The flowers are a gift from the bride to the church, and later they will be taken to any ill and shut-in members. You may designate such a recipient, but Saturday wedding flowers are not removed until the following Sunday service.

What about Music and Musicians?

Naturally, the music must fit the service; all music and other musicians must be approved by the Rector and Music Director. The Church's Director of Music or his

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appointed Organist will serve at all weddings. A said service is also possible, for those not desiring music. A repertoire of religious and classical music suitable for weddings has been prepared from which the Bride and Groom may make selections, in discussion with the Organist.

Note that to preserve the dignity of this day and ceremony, much contemporary “popular music” will not be suitable. Solos or instrumental music may be played prior to the beginning of the service, but must not intrude upon the flow or solemnity of the ritual.

May we decorate the Sanctuary?

Only regular church candles are allowed, and are furnished by the Altar Guild, which has exclusive control over all wedding decorations. Extra candles (including “unity” candles) and aisle cloth are not used at The Chapel. The Altar Guild can mark family pews with ribbons or bouquets tied or clamped on, never taped or nailed. Glory is best reflected with simple dignity.

What about pictures and video recordings?

We believe that the marriage service is so important, that there should be no distractions to any—especially to the couple themselves. Recording this special day is permitted, but only with the following restrictions:

1) Flash photography is distracting, and not permitted inside the church building before or during the wedding, including the procession out of the church — either by professional photographers or friends and family of the wedding party. 2) Location: coordinate with the Altar Guild Wedding Coordinator, who will direct photographers to a fixed location in the rear of the church, and give direction. Similarly, video recordings may be unobtrusively taken from this place. 3) Under no circumstance will a photographer or video recorder be allowed to enter the chancel before or during the wedding or to position himself/herself in such a fashion as to try to get facial photographs of the wedding party while they are facing the altar.

******Please explain these regulations to your photographer and guests in advance of the wedding.
Photographers should arrive at least one hour before the wedding.******

What about a Bride’s Room, setup and cleanup?

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A lovely Bridal Parlor, with a full restroom, is available. Arrangements will be made to make other rooms in the church building available to the wedding party on request. Dress and other deliveries can be received during Parish Office hours (8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday).

One or more members of the Altar Guild will be present one hour and thirty minutes before the wedding to assist the wedding party.

The bride (or someone selected by the bride) will be responsible for having all personal belongings removed from the church rooms immediately after the wedding (or the reception, if it is at the church). Please give the Parish Secretary the name and telephone number of a person to notify about any forgotten articles.

Alcohol

While it is recognized that at the time of a wedding a certain amount of exuberant celebration will take place, the Bride and Groom accept that there will be no consumption of alcoholic beverages the day of the wedding, prior to the reception. Any sign of intoxication from any of the wedding party will be deemed sufficient reason to delay or cancel the ceremony. ***Please ensure that all the members of the wedding party are aware of this admonition.*** You must receive written permission to serve alcoholic beverages on parish property for your reception. We have only one way to enforce this rule: ***the entire wedding will be cancelled without apology or warning and without rescheduling.*** The Bride and Groom are responsible for communicating this to the wedding party. Enjoy wisely!

Rehearsal

The rehearsal is under the complete direction of the Rector, or at his discretion, another officiating minister. An Altar Guild member will be present to assist him. ***Wedding consultants may participate in the wedding rehearsal through the clergy or the Altar Guild.***

It is extremely important for all participants in the wedding to be present at the rehearsal and to be on time. The bride must assume her place in the rehearsal. The proper time for the rehearsal is one hour and thirty minutes before the beginning of the rehearsal dinner.

The Altar Guild and minister will schedule only the normal amount of time for your rehearsal, which means you are responsible for having your wedding party at the rehearsal on time. A shortened rehearsal occasioned by being late for the rehearsal will

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affect the beauty of your wedding.

At the Wedding

1. We suggest the wedding ring(s) be given to the Altar Guild representative prior to the wedding, and placed on the altar before the service. This is a dignified resting place for the ring(s), and the chance of dropping or misplacing them is eliminated.
2. Ushers and the groomsmen should be at the Cole Avenue entrance to the church one hour before the wedding time.
3. The gospel (left) side of the church is the bride's side; the epistle (right) side of the church is the groom's side. If, however, either the bride or the groom is from out of town, instruct the ushers to seat guests (but not the family) discriminately. The usher offers his left arm to the lady whom he is seating in the pew. Ushers should be appointed to escort the mothers and grandmothers into the church and also out of the church if they have neither husband nor chosen person to escort them.
4. The groom, best man, and groomsmen will be in the care of the minister, who will guide them.
5. The groom's mother is escorted into the church two minutes before the appointed hour by an usher, and she is followed by her husband. The bride's mother is the last person seated, one minute before the wedding time. She is escorted by the head usher or someone else after the usher returns from seating the mother of the groom.
6. The wedding party (except groom, best man, and groomsmen) will assemble at the Cole Avenue entrance to the church a few minutes before the mothers are seated and will line up in the rehearsed order as follows:
 - a. Bridesmaids
 - b. Maid or Matron of Honor
 - c. Flower Girl or Ring Bearer (or both). (NOTE: The Flower Girl may carry a nosegay or an arrangement of flowers, but she may not throw anything such as flowers petals.)
7. An Altar Guild member will be present to start the procession at the appointed time. As the wedding party proceeds into the church, the bride is on her father's left arm and takes her place at the door.

Miscellaneous

An Acolyte will carry the processional cross into and out of the church ahead of the wedding party. For the sake of beauty and order, we strongly suggest that only trained and confirmed Acolytes be used. If the Acolyte of your choosing is not a member of The Chapel of the Cross, the Rector must approve your selection before the rehearsal, and will provide a brief training.

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Please understand that your wedding, despite immeasurable plans and arrangements, cannot and will not be performed unless the pre-marital counseling has been completed, you have taken steps to live the Christian Faith in the Church, and your marriage license has been given into the hands of the Parish Secretary. For your benefit, The Chapel of the Cross ***requires that your marriage license be filed with the parish office a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours before the wedding.***

Do you have room for a reception?

The Parish Hall is available for wedding receptions with the following considerations:

1. Receptions are generally limited to two hours in length and do not extend past 10:00 pm.
2. Written permission to serve alcohol is mandatory; any degree of intoxication whatsoever will not be tolerated.

Rice, Seeds, and Petals

None of these are permitted inside the building. If they are used outside, plan carefully! Rice or bird seed can become slippery and cause serious falls amongst your guests.

Modesty

The presentation of the Bride to the Groom is a sacramental picture of the Church to Christ. Since the Bride pictures this purified Church, the attire of the Bride and her attendants — whether simple or elaborate — **MUST** reflect Christian dignity and modesty. This is only appropriate. Please keep this in mind in the selection of the Bride's and attendant's dresses.

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Agreement Page

We, the undersigned, having read all of The Chapel of the Cross Wedding Policies and Guidelines, herewith acknowledge our willingness to abide by these policies by means of our signatures below.

Bride

Groom

Mother of the Bride

Father of the Bride

Dated this _____ day of _____, _____.

This agreement is to be returned within fourteen (14) days in order to reserve the date of your wedding. After the Rector has approved the wedding, in writing, a \$300.00 non-refundable deposit, should accompany this agreement, securing the date.

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Declaration of Intent to be Married

We, _____
(Name – please print or type)

and _____
(Name – please print or type)

desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the Form of Solemnization of Holy Matrimony in the 1928/1662 Book of Common Prayer. We believe marriage should be entered into reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God, duly considering the causes for which Matrimony was ordained: 1) for the procreation of children, 2) as a remedy against sin and fornication, and 3) for the mutual fellowship, encouragement, and understanding that one ought to have from another. We pursue marriage as a vocation for the good of society, and the growth of Christ's Kingdom, embracing marriage as a sacramental image of the triune God of the Bible, and now committing ourselves in good faith.

(Signature)

(Date)

(Signature)

(Date)

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Schedule of Fees & Honoraria

Facility Fees (due two weeks prior):

- Sanctuary (*includes Bride's Parlor*) \$400.00
- Parish Hall (*for receptions*) \$400.00
- *Fees provide for utilities and cleaning; they are not required from active parish communicants.*

Liturgy:

- Flowers: variable
- Organist: \$300.00*
- Choir: *an offering to the Music Fund and/or honorarium to the Choirmaster*
- Officiant: as desired **
- Coordinator: as desired **

- Others serving (*soloists, sextons, acolytes, etc.*) as desired **

Giving is part of coming into God's presence, and are offered as the "vows" and "Thank Offerings" mentioned in Holy Scripture.

* *Musicians are contracted independently, and may adjust charges accordingly for selection difficulty, or for attendance at rehearsal.*

** *Honoraria are celebratory gifts acknowledging the investment of others. While not required they will be appreciated by those who have given significant effort to make this a happy, well-planned and executed wedding day. It is customary for them to be issued as cash or gift cards (in envelopes), and may be given them to the Coordinator for distribution.*

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Wedding Information

Bride _____ Groom _____

Address _____ Address _____

Home Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-Mail _____ E-Mail _____

First Marriage? _____ First Marriage? _____

Is a former spouse still living? _____ Is a former spouse still living? _____

Age _____ Date of Birth _____ Age _____ Date of Birth _____

City and State of Birth _____ City and State of Birth _____

Baptized _____ Confirmed _____ Baptized _____ Confirmed _____

Denomination _____ Denomination _____

Your Parish Church _____ Your Parish Church _____

Father's Full Name _____ Father's Full Name _____

Mother's Full Name (*including Maiden*) _____ Mother's Full Name (*including Maiden*) _____

Wedding Date & Time _____ Rehearsal Date & Time _____

Reception at Chapel? Y/N _____ Approximate # of Guests _____

Married Residence _____

Size of Wedding Party (*circle all that apply*) Bride, Father, Honor Attendant, Groom, Best

Man

of Bridesmaids _____ # of Groomsmen _____

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Wedding Information (continued)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Altar Guild Coordinator _____

Priest in Charge _____

Communion Y / N If Yes, who is to receive? _____

Counseling Date & Time _____

Counseling Completed by _____ Certificate on File _____

Sexton Confirmed _____ Organ/Music Confirmed _____

License & Fees Received (Date and Name) _____

Additional Clergy or Servers _____

Acolyte(s) _____

All reminded two weeks and four weeks in advance _____

Wedding completed _____

Parish Registry and License completed ____

Follow up dates scheduled (quarterly)

