

SCAPC Wedding Policy & Guidelines



adopted by the Session of
St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
How To Start.....	3
Preparatory Steps.....	4
Check List Prior to Wedding.....	6
Other Policies.....	7
Music.....	8
Flowers, Decorations and Candles.....	9
Photography / Videography.....	10
Other Information.....	12
Diagram of the Sanctuary.....	13
List of Contacts.....	14

ST. CHARLES AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Introduction

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

-Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (USA), W-4.0601

For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which two people are called to live out together, before God, their lives of discipleship. The marriage service is an act of worship, inspiring both the participants and the congregation.

St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church (SCAPC) is pleased you are considering being married at our church. Although being a member is not a requirement to be married at SCAPC, we hope you will consider joining the SCAPC community.

How To Start

- Read the **Wedding Policy and Guidelines** carefully
- Contact the church to inquire about the availability of the church on the desired date
- Complete and sign the Wedding Application
- Mail wedding application, non-refundable deposit and refundable damage deposit to the church

Preparatory Steps

1) **Schedule Wedding Request**

Contact Assistant to the Sr. Pastor (see “List of Contacts” on page 14) to schedule your wedding at SCAPC. Members of the church should call as soon as they know the date of the wedding. Non-members should call no more than eight months before the date of the wedding.

Weddings are not held on the following occasions:

Palm Sunday weekend, Holy Week, the fourth Sunday of Advent weekend, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day.

The Assistant to the Sr. Pastor will advise the couple of the fee schedule and direct them to the church’s website to get a copy of the wedding policies, guidelines and Wedding Application.

2) **Wedding Application**

To confirm the date of the wedding, the wedding application must be completed (*typed, not handwritten*) and returned to the church with the non-refundable deposit and refundable damage deposit to the attention of the Assistant to the Sr. Pastor.

Please mail application and fees to:

*St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church
1545 State Street
New Orleans, LA 70118
attn: Assistant to the Sr. Pastor*

The wedding date will be secured only when the wedding application has been received with the required deposits.

Note: SCAPC receives many requests for marriage services. If there are two weddings on the same day, there must be at least three hours scheduled between them.

3) **Pre-Marital Counseling**

The purpose of pre-marital counseling is for the Pastor to meet with the couple and help them prepare for marriage. The officiating Pastor usually has three meetings with the couple. The couple needs to initiate counseling by contacting the Assistant to the Sr. Pastor to schedule these appointments.

4) **Meet with a Wedding Coordinator**

A SCAPC Wedding Coordinator will be assigned to the couple and will contact the couple to set up a meeting to review the policies and guidelines. The Wedding Coordinator will assist the SCAPC Pastor in directing the rehearsal and the marriage service. SCAPC’s Wedding Coordinators are responsible to the Pastors for ensuring that the church’s policies and guidelines for the service, decorations, photography and videography are followed.

SCAPC's Wedding Coordinators are happy to work with the couple's contracted wedding planner/consultant, however, that person is required to abide by SCAPC's Wedding Policies and guidelines and must defer to the decisions and interpretation of policies of the SCAPC Wedding Coordinator.

5) Meet with the Director of Music/Organist

The Director of Music/Organist (see "[List of Contacts](#)" on page 14) plays for all weddings. The couple should make an appointment with the Director of Music/Organist, who will help the couple select the music for the marriage service. Please see page 8 for more details.

Check List Prior to Wedding

- 8 - 12 months Read all policies and guidelines thoroughly.

- 8 - 12 months Secure date of marriage service:
 - ① Complete wedding application, mail to church with non-refundable deposit and refundable damage deposit to request;
 - ② Once the request has been approved, the wedding and rehearsal dates will be confirmed.

- 6 - 8 months
 - ① Contact Pastor to set up pre-marital counseling sessions (as determined by the Pastor);
 - ② The Wedding Coordinator will contact couple to set up a meeting to discuss the church's policies and the details of marriage service.

- 3 months Contact Director of Music/Organist to make final music selections.

- 1 month
 - ① Outstanding balance is due.
 - ② Return signed guidelines from the florist and photographer/videographer.
 - ③ Confirm final details with Wedding Coordinator.

- 3 weeks Confirm program with Pastor.

- 2 weeks
 - ① Confirm arrival times with Wedding Coordinator and finalize marriage service details.
 - ② Notify the Wedding Coordinator if donating flowers decorating the sanctuary to the church.

OTHER POLICIES

ORDER OF WORSHIP

The marriage service is a service of worship; therefore, it will follow the order from the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship. The Pastor will provide the couple with a copy of the service during their initial meeting.

GUEST PASTORS

A Pastor from the staff of SCAPC conducts all marriage services at the church. If a couple requests a guest pastor/priest, the SCAPC Pastor must approve the guest pastor/priest before they are invited. As a matter of protocol, the SCAPC Pastor will formally invite the guest clergy to assist in the marriage service.

RECEPTIONS

The church facilities are not available for wedding receptions.

REHEARSAL

Rehearsals are scheduled the day before the marriage service. The purpose of the rehearsal is to familiarize the wedding party of the many details of the marriage service, including specific training of ushers, and, therefore, the entire wedding party, including all parents, must attend. **The couple is required to bring their wedding license to the church the day of the rehearsal. The minister cannot perform the wedding without a valid marriage license.**

1) Duration

The rehearsal will take approximately one hour in the sanctuary or a half hour in the chapel usually the day before the wedding.

2) Start Time

Rehearsals start promptly at the agreed-upon time. It is the responsibility of the couple to have the entire Wedding Party be present and on time. The church will be opened 15 minutes prior to the scheduled rehearsal time. **Those required to attend the rehearsal include the wedding party, all parents, readers, ushers, flower girl/ring bearer and anyone taking part in the processional and/or recessional.**

3) Children in the Wedding

It has been our experience that children under the age of 5 are often ill at ease at weddings. Children participating in the processional will walk down the aisle to their parents and sit with their parents during the marriage service.

4) Dressing Rooms

SCAPC does not have designated rooms for the wedding party to dress. The couple and their attendants should arrive at the church dressed for the marriage service.

5) Marriage License

The couple must bring both marriage licenses to the rehearsal and given to the SCAPC Wedding Coordinator. The couple and two witnesses will sign the licenses at the rehearsal and the pastor will sign the license after the marriage service. A marriage license must be obtained within thirty (30) days of the wedding because the license expires and becomes invalid at midnight thirty (30) days after the date of issuance. A marriage license may be obtained from 1450 Poydras Street, Benson Tower, Suite 407 in downtown New Orleans. The website is <https://ldh.la.gov/page/644>.

6) Marriage Service Programs

The church does not print marriage service programs. If programs are to be used for the marriage service, bring programs to the rehearsal.

MUSIC

The marriage service is considered a service of worship. The music for the marriage service should be appropriate for a service of worship and should serve to strengthen and deepen the meaning of the marriage service.

1) Director of Music/Organist

The Director of Music/Organist will play for all weddings at the church. Should he be unavailable for a particular wedding date, the Director of Music/Organist will designate a substitute organist* to provide the music for the service. The Director of Music/Organist will assist the couple to select their music for use during the prelude, procession, and marriage service.

2) Soloists & Instrumentalists *

The Director of Music/Organist will assist the couple with additional vocalists and/or instrumentalists, if desired.

** Use of non-professional singers/instrumentalists is prohibited. Exceptions will be made only at the discretion of the Director of Music/Organist through prior arrangement. The use of microphones to amplify singers is not allowed.*

3) Fees for Musicians

All fees for additional singers/instrumentalists are to be discussed with the Director of Music/Organist. These fees are paid directly to the individuals by the family. Fees for additional singers/instrumentalists should be brought to the rehearsal.

4) Traditional Worship/Traditional Music

A marriage service is considered a service of worship. All music chosen for use during the marriage service must reflect the sacred nature of the marriage service and be approved by the Director of Music/Organist. Popular favorites or songs of a sentimental character or secular connotation are not appropriate for the marriage service and are more properly reserved for the wedding reception. Pre-recorded music is not allowed.

5) Prelude Music

Music prior to the marriage service may be up to thirty minutes in length and may include selections for solo organ and, if applicable, vocal and other instrumental music. The organ music used during this time will be chosen from the Director of Music/Organist's repertoire. Specific appropriate selections may be requested but are subject to approval. The use of popular music or "show tunes" is not permitted. The Director of Music/Organist will make suggestions for appropriate vocal and/or instrumental music.

6) Processions

Dignified, joyous music may be used to accompany wedding processions. The "Bridal Chorus" from Wagner's Lohengrin and "The Wedding March" from Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream are pieces rooted in secular tradition and are not permitted.

7) Congregational Hymns

As in any service of worship, the singing of hymns is appropriate and provides an excellent means of congregational participation. Hymns may be used as processionals, as hymns of praise, or following particularly significant events in the marriage service.

FLOWERS, DECORATIONS, AND CANDLES

The architecture, furnishings, and appointments of the Sanctuary and Chapel form a beautiful setting of reverence and quiet elegance. The couple should work with their florist to accommodate SCAPC's guidelines for decorations and flowers.

The pulpit, communion table, baptismal font, and pulpit Bible are not to be removed, altered, or concealed by decorations.

The use of nails, tacks, pins, staples, screws, wire, glue and tape is strictly prohibited.

1) Guidelines for Wedding Florist

It is the responsibility of the couple to ensure the florist receives a copy of the Guidelines for Wedding Florist.

2) Church Hours

The church is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Saturday flower delivery must be arranged through the SCAPC Wedding Coordinator.

3) Flower Urns

In the Sanctuary, flowers may be placed in SCAPC's flower urns that are on pedestals on either side of the Chancel. The church has two sets of urns: ① 13" deep, 11" wide at top rim and 8" wide inside antique urns; and ② 7" deep, 6" wide silver urns.

4) Christmas Decorations

Christmas decorations and flowers will remain in the Church once in place during the Christmas season. These are to be used if a wedding is scheduled during Christmas.

5) Multiple Weddings

If there are two or more weddings in the Church on the same day, we suggest that the flowers be shared.

6) Aisle Candles

Candles may be used in the chancel loft (except under the horizontal trumpets). All candles must be of the no-drip variety. The church does not provide candles. SCAPC recommends at least 12" no-drip tapers, with a 3/4" - 1" base. Metal candles with spring-loaded wax inserts are not permitted.

7) Aisle Runners

Aisle runners are not permitted.

8) Communion Table

- a) The communion table may not be removed from the chancel area.
- b) No flower arrangements may be placed on the table.

9) Flowers and Decorations

All flowers, decorations, etc. must be removed immediately from the church after the marriage service.

10) Rice/Birdseeds

No rice, birdseeds, confetti, rose petals, potpourri, or anything else may be thrown either inside or outside the building.

11) Other

Candles or other candelabras must be obtained from a florist or other vendor. All candelabras used must be of heavy construction and must be sturdy enough to resist tipping over.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

All photographers/videographers must be approved by the pastor before the marriage service. Photographers and videographers must remain in the balcony and are not allowed to move around the sanctuary during the service.

1) Guidelines for the Wedding Photographer & Videographer

It is the responsibility of the couple to ensure the photographer and videographer receives a copy of the Guidelines for the Wedding Photographer & Videographer.

2) During the Service

Photographers and videographers are not allowed to move around the Sanctuary/Chapel during the service.

3) Photos/Video in the Sanctuary

Photographers and videographers are to follow the directives of the SCAPC Wedding Coordinator at all times, including where they may stand or move. The photographer and videographer should avoid being conspicuous and distracting. Non-flash pictures may be taken from the balcony during the service.

4) Flash Equipment

The use of flash equipment is not allowed in any area of the sanctuary, choir loft, or balcony during the marriage service. Flash equipment may be allowed only in the narthex (entry) prior to the processional and after the recessional. **Wedding guests are not permitted to take pictures during the marriage service.**

5) Video Equipment & Filming of the Marriage Service

The use of video equipment and filming of the marriage service will not be allowed if the Pastor has not approved its use **prior** to the wedding date. Video equipment must remain stationary and unmanned during the marriage service in the balcony of the sanctuary or behind the choir loft in the chancel area, without artificial lighting equipment.

6) Use of Photographic / Video Images

Use of photographic and video images for commercial purposes whether by news organizations or otherwise will require written approval by the Pastor.

7) Video Personnel

Video personnel should dress formally in attire appropriate for a service of worship.

OTHER INFORMATION

Payment

Payment in full is due one month prior to the marriage service.

The Sanctuary & Chapel

The Sanctuary will hold 546 people and the Chapel will hold 110.

Food and Beverages

Food and beverages are not allowed in the sanctuary or the chapel.

Smoking is not allowed in the building.

Alcohol is not allowed on the premises at any time.

Receptions

Church facilities are not available for wedding receptions.

Procession Following Marriage Service

The throwing of rice, confetti, flower petals, birdseed, etc. is not permitted in any area of the church or its property.

Guest Books / Registers

Guest books / registers should not be used at the church. They inhibit the seating of guests and are more appropriate at the reception.

Outside Vendors

All outside vendors (i.e., florists, photographers, videographers) will be held responsible for any damages incurred to the church property. If a company has not previously provided services at SCAPC, a representative must contact the Wedding Coordinator for the Pastor's approval.

Childcare

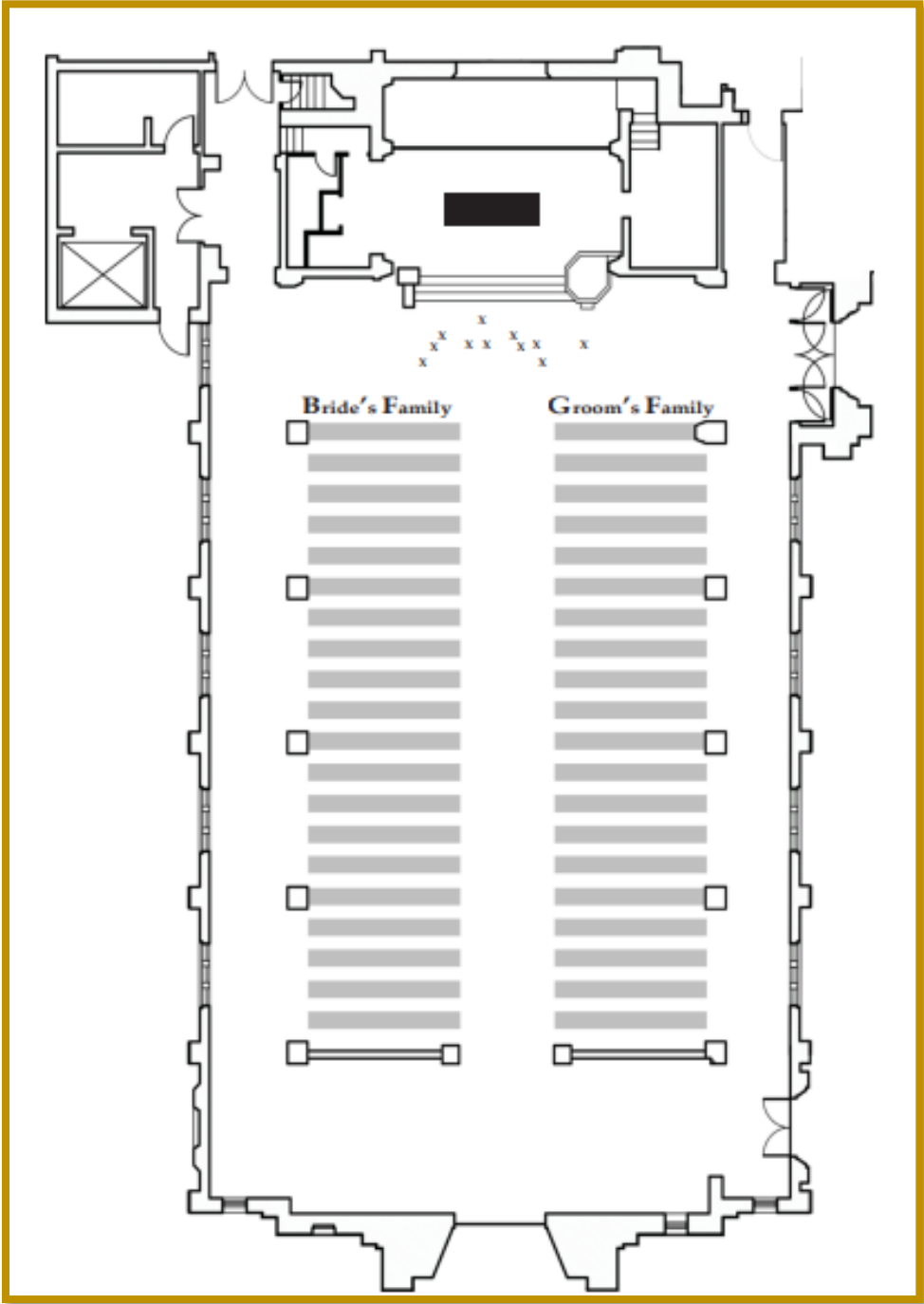
Childcare is not provided during the marriage service.

Personal Items

SCAPC will not be held responsible for items if lost, damaged or stolen.

We hope that we have anticipated some of the questions you will have concerning plans for your wedding. Please contact your Wedding Coordinator whenever questions occur or for clarification of policies.

DIAGRAM OF THE SANCTUARY



ST. CHARLES AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1545 State Street, New Orleans, LA 70118
(504) 897-0101
www.scapc.org

LIST OF CONTACTS

Senior Pastor

Rev. Dr. Chris Currie
Office: 504-897-0101 ext. 112

Associate Pastor

Rev. Sarah Chancellor-Watson
Office: 504-897-0101 ext. 117

Assistant to the Sr. Pastor

Pierce Young
Office: 504-897-0101 ext. 112
pierce@scapc.org

Director of Music/Organist

Steven Blackmon
Office: 504-897-0101 ext. 125

Wedding Coordinator

Amanda McGowan
apmcg1019@gmail.com

Marriage License

The Orleans Parish Marriage License Office
Benson Tower
1450 Poydras Street, Suite 407
New Orleans, LA 70112
<https://ldh.la.gov/page/644>

Office Hours

Monday through Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.