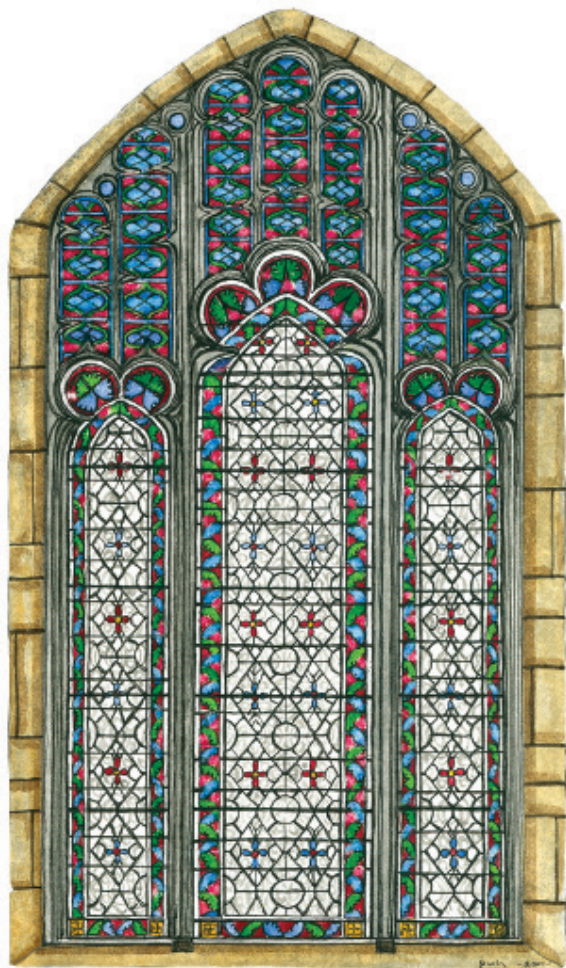


# *SCAPC Wedding Policy Manual*



adopted by the Session of  
**St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church**



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## INTRODUCTION

*Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.*

- Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (USA), W-4.9001

Surely there are few experiences in life to compare to the joy and significance of Christian marriage. The commitment of one to another in marriage is both unique and sacred, and deserves the utmost thought, care, and planning.

The *Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA)* states that “as a service of Christian worship, the marriage service is under the direction of the minister and the supervision of the session.” (W-4.9003). Accordingly, the Session of St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church (SCAPC) has established the following policies to direct couples as they prepare for marriage in this church.

# PREPARATORY STEPS

## 1) Notifying the Church of a Wedding Request

Persons interested in scheduling a wedding at SCAPC should contact the Wedding Coordinator, Sara Warren, at (504) 884-1954 or sarawarren1@yahoo.com. Members of the church should call as soon as they know the date. Non-members may make this call not more than eight months before the date of the wedding.

Weddings are not held on the following occasions: the Saturday before Palm Sunday, Holy Week, the Saturday before the fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day.

After speaking to the Wedding Coordinator as to the availability of the desired date, a Wedding Application will be mailed to the couple.

## 2) Wedding Application

The wedding application must be completed and returned with the *non-refundable* deposit to the Wedding Coordinator within seven days of its receipt.

Please mail to:

*Wedding Coordinator  
St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church  
1545 State Street  
New Orleans, LA 70118*

The wedding date will be confirmed only when:

- a. The wedding application has been returned to the church with the required non-refundable deposit.
- b. The Pastor, after having met with the couple, has agreed to conduct the wedding service.

*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) Meeting with the Pastor**

After the wedding application and non-refundable deposit have been mailed to the Wedding Coordinator, the couple should make an appointment with the Pastor. Please contact the Pastor's Assistant, Bonnie Shoemaker, at (504) 897-0101 ext. 112 or [bonnie@scapc.org](mailto:bonnie@scapc.org) to schedule this appointment. The purpose of this meeting is for the Pastor to become acquainted with the couple. No wedding will receive final approval without a Pastor's consent.

### **4) Pre-marital Counseling**

Pre-marital counseling is a requirement and is ordinarily offered by the Pastor. The couple needs to initiate the counseling by contacting the Pastor's Assistant, Bonnie Shoemaker.

### **5) Meeting with the Wedding Coordinator**

The SCAPC Wedding Coordinator will direct the wedding, including the rehearsal. In the event that an outside wedding planner is contracted by the couple, this planner must coordinate his or her work with the SCAPC Wedding Coordinator.

### **6) Meeting with the Director of Music/Organist**

The couple must meet with the Director of Music/Organist, Steven Blackmon, (504) 897-0101 ext. 125 or [steven@scapc.org](mailto:steven@scapc.org) to plan the music as soon as the wedding application is approved (please see page 10 for details regarding music). The Director of Music/Organist will be playing for you and selecting any soloists that may be requested.

# 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 the initial meeting.

## **Guest Pastors**

A Pastor from the staff of SCAPC will conduct all weddings at the church. Should a bride/groom request a guest pastor/priest to assist, this must be cleared with the SCAPC Pastor before the guest is invited. As a matter of protocol, the SCAPC Pastor will formally invite the guest clergy to assist.

## **Fee Schedule**

The SCAPC Wedding Coordinator will provide the current Fee Schedule.

## **Receptions**

Church facilities are **not** available for wedding receptions of any kind.



# REHEARSAL

## **Duration**

The rehearsal will take approximately one hour in the sanctuary or one-half hour in the chapel. Plan accordingly when making any rehearsal dinner arrangements.

## **Start Time**

Rehearsals start promptly at the agreed-upon time. It is the responsibility of the Bride and Groom to have the Wedding Party present and on time for the rehearsal and wedding. Therefore, it is suggested that all participants arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled time in order to begin promptly. Being punctual will ensure that there is enough time to prepare the participants for their wedding duties. It is important that all members of the wedding party, including parents, readers and ushers, attend the rehearsal.

## **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 a wedding should not stand in the front of the church during the ceremony.

## **Dressing Rooms**

There is no designated "Bride's Room."

## **Marriage License**

The marriage license must be given to the Wedding Coordinator at the time of the rehearsal in order that the bride, groom and witnesses can sign it, or it shall be brought into the office 48 hours before the wedding if no rehearsal is necessary. Marriage licenses may be obtained from 1450 Poydras Street, Benson Tower, Suite 407 in downtown New Orleans.

# MUSIC

*All music in worship should serve the purpose of worship and should represent the best we have to offer God. Such music as accompanies the marriage ceremony should direct attention to God, who sanctifies marriage, and special care should be taken to assure that it is suitable and reverent.*

- Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (USA)

## **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 music for the ceremony.

## **Soloists\***

The use of vocal soloists greatly enhances the quality of worship at church weddings. SCAPC employs a number of professional soloists, any of whom may be available to sing for a particular wedding. Arrangements to employ the services of one or more of these individuals should be made through the Director of Music/Organist.

## **Instrumentalists\***

As with vocal soloists, the use of other instruments can add greatly to the dimension and variety of a musical offering. There exists a wealth of good music for organ or harpsichord in combination with other instruments such as flute, oboe, violin, trumpet, cello, or harp. The Director of Music/Organist will be happy to contact professional instrumentalists to provide music for your wedding.

*\*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, and then only through audition or supplied recording. There will be no use of microphones to amplify singers.*

## **Fees**

Fees for singers/instrumentalists should be brought to the rehearsal. All payments should be made directly to the individual.

## **Traditional Worship/Traditional Music**

Worship services at SCAPC are traditional in nature, and make use of music appropriate for use in a traditional setting. The worship spaces at SCAPC are not set up for “contemporary Christian” music. We do not mic singers, nor do we amplify instruments. Music chosen for use in the context of a wedding service must meet these requirements, and must be approved by the Director of Music/Organist. Pop music or contemporary music that the Director of Music/Organist deems inappropriate will not be used.

## **Prelude Music**

Music prior to the wedding ceremony 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 allowed (see statement on Traditional Worship above). The Director of Music/Organist will be glad to make suggestions for appropriate vocal and/or instrumental music (see below).

Vocal solos with texts that are appropriate to the worship of God may be used, either in the pre-service music or at appropriate places within the ceremony. For instance, they may follow the reading of the Scripture, Declaration of Intent, the Vows, the Creed, the Presentation of the Wedding Party, or the Prayers. The Director of Music/Organist will be happy to play sample selections to assist the couple as they make their choices. Listed below are suggestions of the type of music that might be utilized:

“My Heart Ever Faithful” - Bach  
 “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” - Bach  
 “Jesus, Shepherd, Be Thou Near Me” - Bach  
 “O Love That Casts Out Fear” - Bach  
 “O Perfect Love” - Barnby  
 “Eternal Source of Light Divine” - Händel  
 “The Gift of Love” - Hopson  
 “Biblical Songs” - Dvorak  
 “Five Mystical Songs” - Vaughan Williams (baritone only)  
 “Alleluia” from Exsultate, Jubilate - Mozart

*Note: The use of musical settings of “The Lord’s Prayer” is discouraged since it is included in the order of worship as a congregational prayer. Since weddings performed at this church reflect Reformed Presbyterian traditions, the use of any setting of “Ave Maria” as any part of the service is not allowed.*

## Processions

There exist many good pieces of dignified, joyous music that 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 which have no place in a service of divine worship. The former is performed in the opera surrounding the doomed marriage of Elsa and Lohengrin, while the latter accompanies the clowning of the characters Bottom and Flute in a work based on supernatural fantasy. For these reasons, the use of these particular pieces is not permitted. The following is a partial listing of pieces that are suitable:

“Rigaudon” - Campra  
 “Crown Imperial” - Walton  
 “Allegro Maestoso” from Water Music - Händel  
 “Prelude” from Te Deum - Charpentier  
 “Three Trumpet Tunes” - Johnson  
 “Trumpet Voluntary” - Clarke\*  
 “Trumpet Voluntary” - Stanley\*  
 “Trumpet Tune” - Purcell\*

“Psalm XIX” - Marcello

“A Mighty Fortress” - Walcha

“Rondeau” - Mouret\*

“Toccata” from Symphony V - Widor

“Final” from Symphony III - Vierne

“Rondo” - Bull

“This Day Full of Gladness” - Dupré

*\*solo trumpet may be used*

### **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 processions, as hymns of praise, or following particularly significant events in the ceremony. Following is a list of suggested titles:

“All Creatures of Our God and King”

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

“Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above”

“Come, Christians, Join to Sing”

“Be Thou My Vision”

“O Perfect Love”

“The Grace of Life is Theirs”

When the wedding occurs in a particular season of the church year, hymns appropriate to the season may be used.

# FLOWERS, DECORATIONS, AND CANDLES

*Flowers, decorations, and other appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshippers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life.*

- Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (USA)

A beautiful sanctuary such as the one here at SCAPC does not require lavish or elaborate decorations. In all activities surrounding the wedding ceremony, excessive expense and ostentation should be avoided. The bride should work with her florist to accomplish her desires in good taste and make her florist aware of the rules of the church regarding decorations and candles.

## **Church Hours**

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

## **Flower Urns**

The church owns two sets of flower urns that may be used for weddings:  
*2 - Antique urns: 13" deep, 11" wide at top rim, 8" wide inside*

## **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.

## **Multiple Weddings**

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

## **Aisle Candles**

If candles are to be used in the aisles, hurricane globes must be used and must be secured to the pews. (The church has two sections of 22 rows of pews.). 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 or hurricane globes. We recommend at least 12" no-drip tapers, with a 3/4" - 1" base. Please do not order metal candles with spring-loaded wax inserts.

## **Aisle Runners**

Aisle runners are not allowed because they are dangerous and frequently unmanageable.

## **Communion Table**

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

## **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.

\* No nails or screws may be used when decorating the church.

# PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

## **Flash Equipment**

The wedding is a service of worship; therefore, the use of flash equipment is not allowed in any area of the sanctuary, choir loft, or balcony during the ceremony. 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 ceremony.

## **Photographer's Instruction Sheet**

It is the responsibility of the couple to see that the photographer is given a copy of the photographer's instruction sheet.

## **Video Equipment**

Video equipment is allowed in the church sanctuary, without artificial lighting equipment. Recording of the wedding service is allowed from the rear balcony of the sanctuary and the video equipment must remain stationary during the ceremony. Recording is also allowed from the front choir loft if the equipment remains stationary and unmanned during the service. Video personnel should dress formally in attire appropriate for a service of worship. Use of video images for commercial purposes whether by news organizations or otherwise will require written approval by the Pastor.



## OTHER INFORMATION

### **Payment**

Payment in full is due one month prior to the wedding.

### **Seating Capacity**

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

### **Food and Beverages**

No beverages or food shall be allowed in the sanctuary or the chapel. No smoking is allowed in the building. No alcohol is allowed on the premises at any time.

### **Procession Following Ceremony**

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

### **Outside Vendors**

All outside vendors (i.e. florists, caterers) 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 approval.

### **Childcare**

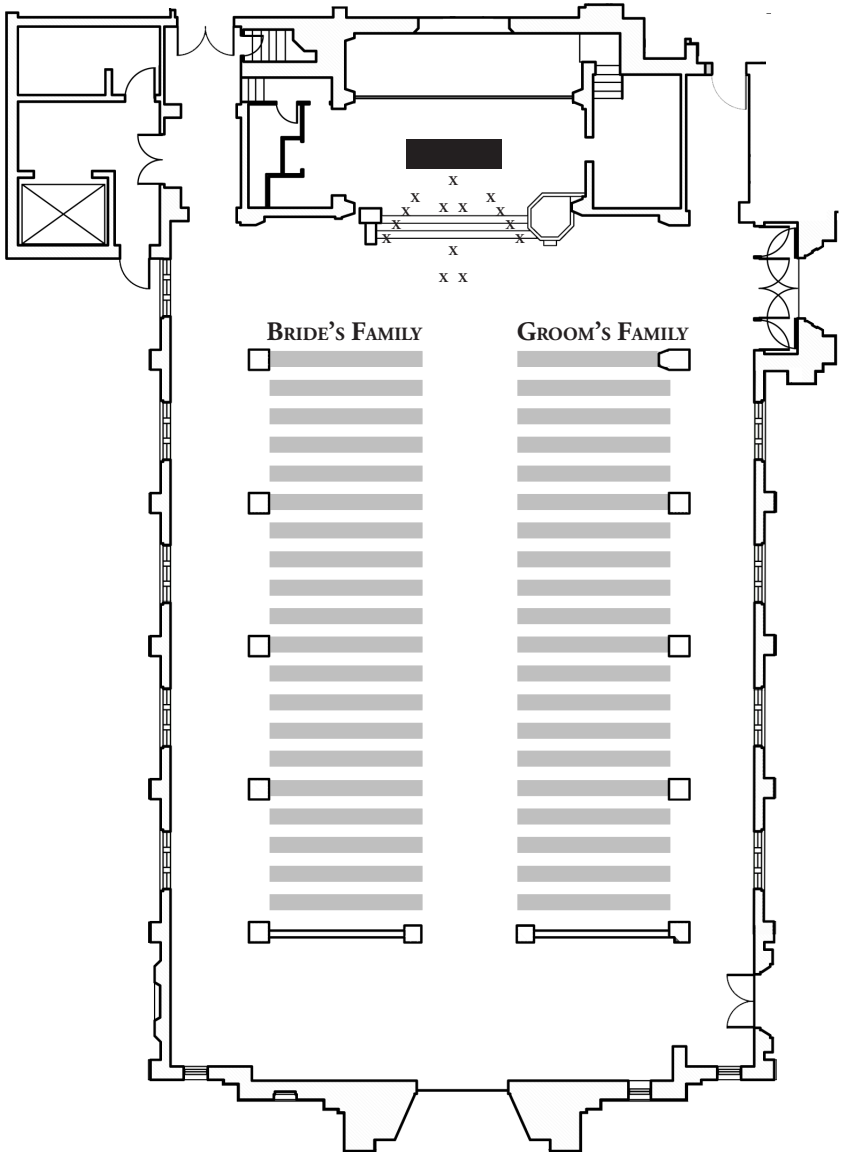
Childcare is not provided during the wedding ceremony.

### **Personal Items**

Every possible effort will be made to protect personal items. However, as our buildings are open to the public, SCAPC cannot 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 the Wedding Coordinator whenever questions occur or for clarification of policies.

# DIAGRAM OF THE SANCTUARY





**St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church**

1545 State Street

New Orleans, Louisiana 70118

(504) 897-0101 • [www.scapc.org](http://www.scapc.org)