St. Paul

United Methodist Church

WEDDING POLICY

Updated March 2026

WELCOME:

We are happy you have chosen St. Paul United Methodist Church for your wedding.

The marriage ceremony is a worship service. It is a sacred rite, which the pastor performs under the authority of the church. It is the spiritual union of two people as they pledge their lives, one to another, in the presence of witnesses and in the sight of God.

This sacred and joyous occasion requires careful planning, both spiritually and temporally. These guidelines are designed to help you plan your wedding so that it is both beautiful and in accordance with the church's policies. The pastor and staff of this church wish to extend all possible assistance to you so that your wedding will be a memorable experience.

1. All weddings and rehearsals should be scheduled first with the pastor. As a general rule, weddings may not be scheduled on Sundays, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Maundy Thursday through Easter Sunday, All Saints Day, or National Holidays. Special case-by-case exceptions can only be made by the pastor. Also, no weddings may be scheduled after 3:00 pm on Saturdays.

2. In the hopes of giving your marriage a good beginning, a minimum of four premarital pastoral conversation sessions are required. These sessions will be at least 1 hour each and at least 1 week apart. Please plan enough in advance. There is a time-and-materials charge. The Pastor will determine how many sessions and when those sessions will be held.

3. The pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church officiates all weddings.

4. Weddings are held in the Sanctuary, Rowsey Chapel, or Prayer Room. There are rooms available for the wedding parties to use as dressing rooms. The building will be available for use three hours prior to and one hour after the ceremony, unless a reception is being held at the church, in which case this should be discussed with the pastor.

5. Music selection should be selected in keeping with the reverence of a worship service. Music should express faith and dedication to one another and to God. All music, including hymns, solos, or instrumental music, must be approved by the pastor. The pastor or St. Paul's Music Director can help in suggesting acceptable music for the ceremony. A complete list of music should be turned in to the pastor as soon as it is available, no later than 1 month before the ceremony. Love songs and secular music are not always acceptable in a worship service and should be cleared by the pastor before being selected.

6. The church musicians shall be the musicians used for weddings unless permission is granted by the pastor to another qualified musician. Church instruments will be used only by church musicians unless approved by the pastor.

7. The sound system will only be run by a church sound technician.

8. **Chancel-** All chancel furniture will remain in place and may not be moved. Nothing will be placed on the altar.

9. **Decorations-** Whether you are personally decorating the Sanctuary or using a florist/decorator, the following rules must be followed:

    a. A time for decorating must be scheduled one week in advance with the wedding coordinator.

b. Decorating must be completed one hour before the ceremony is to begin.
c. All candles should be properly set up to avoid wax dripping on the carpet or furniture; oil or battery-operated candles are strongly preferred. Only battery-operated candles may be used outside of the chancel area.
d. No tacks, nails, or glue may be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture or building.
e. Only wrapped wire or ribbon may be used that will not mar the furniture.
f. All decorations should be removed promptly after the service.
g. St. Paul UMC is not responsible for damaged or stolen property.
h. Flower girls must use artificial flower petals.

10. **Photography-** Should you desire the pastor to be included in pictures, you should schedule photography to be done before the ceremony. The Sanctuary or Rowsey Chapel may be used for photography up to 1 hour before the ceremony begins.
    a. It is the wedding party's responsibility to review photography procedures with the photographer.
    b. No flash photography is allowed during the ceremony, including while the bride is walking down the aisle. Remember that the ceremony is a worship service, and flash photography takes away from the reverence.
    c. Video photography is recommended to be done from a tripod in a non-conspicuous area. Either way, it should not distract from the service.
    d. Photographers who disregard the rules may be banned from doing wedding photography at this church.
    e. The use of cell phones for pictures by guests may be determined by the wedding party, but if allowed, the wedding party should clearly communicate to guests that these policies apply. Guests may not use flash photography and should not be standing, moving around, or in aisles to get pictures during the ceremony.

11. **The Rehearsal-** The pastor will be in charge of the rehearsal. Unless agreed upon, the rehearsal is held the night before the wedding. You should schedule 60 minutes for this. It is essential that every participant in the service be present for the rehearsal. You should make every effort to have all involved, including the bride, groom, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ring bearer, flower girl(s), ushers, et al., present during the rehearsal.

12. **Child Care-** child care may be available depending on the availability of approved St. Paul nursery attendants. The nursery may not be used by anyone who has not been previously approved by St. Paul. If requested and approved, childcare will be available beginning 30 minutes before the start of the service and ending 30 minutes after the end of the service. There is a maximum of five (5) children per nursery attendant. The wedding party must request the number of attendants they need with the pastor during the premarital conversations. The fees for nursery attendants are nonrefundable.

13. **Marriage License- You must show the marriage license to the Pastor before the ceremony begins. The pastor <u>cannot</u> and <u>will not</u> officiate at a wedding unless the marriage license is present and has been seen.**

14. The pastor has the authority and the right to officiate or not officiate a wedding and reserves the right not to officiate a wedding at any time for any reason.

A Few Other Thoughts

There is no smoking inside or within 50 feet of the church doors. Also, no alcohol is allowed anywhere on the church grounds, including the parking lot. There should be no food or beverages in the Sanctuary, Rowsey Chapel, or Prayer Room.

Rice is not to be thrown. Birdseed may be used for the couple's exit, but only outside the building.

All items not belonging to the church should be removed no later than one hour after the ceremony, unless other arrangements have been made in advance. The wedding party should take all precautions to secure valuables. No lost or misplaced items will be the responsibility of the church.

Any rooms requested and granted will be available to you three hours prior to the ceremony and one hour after the ceremony. If additional time is needed, you should clear it with the wedding coordinator. Rooms not specifically requested by you should not be used.

When selecting a venue, it's helpful to know that the Prayer Room will seat under 15 guests, the Rowsey Chapel will accommodate around 75, and the Sanctuary will comfortably seat around 500.

Member vs. Non-Member: For the purposes of this policy, those qualifying for a member wedding are current active professing members of St. Paul UMC. This means that either person in the wedding party is a current active member. An active member is someone who has been participating in the life of the church and fulfilling membership vows for at least 1 year prior to the wedding.

If there is a question about whether someone is an active member or not, the pastor may be consulted to make the final determination.

St. Paul UMC is committed to providing a Christian Marriage ceremony to all who meet the qualifications established by the State of Oklahoma and the United Methodist Church Discipline, and who desire to stand before God and commit their lives to one another. Therefore, if the cost of using St. Paul UMC for your wedding is going to hinder your ability to have your ceremony here, talk to the pastor. Special case-by-case exceptions can be made. Evidence of financial need may be required.

Finally, it is important to remember that the pastor has been entrusted and given authority to maintain reverence and decorum in the church. Any special exceptions to building use, fees, or ceremony procedure can only be cleared through the pastor. Communication is your best tool.

"**Stand-Up Wedding"**

A Stand-up wedding is for a couple who wish to have a brief wedding in the Prayer Chapel with no more than 10 guests. For this option, there is no music in the service. Nor is there a reception at the church. Premarital conversations with the pastor are still required, as is a marriage license. For a stand-up wedding, only the pastoral honorarium and room use fee apply.

Wedding Fees

Below you will find the fees for holding your wedding at St. Paul United Methodist Church. Some fees are determined by your needs. Please review the fees below and total them at the bottom. Some fees will be due sooner, but in general, all fees should be paid one month before the service date.

	Member	Non-Member	
Pastoral Honorarium			
Premarital and Ceremony (includes materials)	$ 90.00	$ 250	
Travel- if not at the church	$ 0.00	$ 0.75 per mile from church	
Building Use- Ceremony			
Prayer Chapel	$10	$20	
Rowsey Chapel	$ 25	$ 50	
Sanctuary	$ 50	$ 100	
Building Use- Reception			
Atrium	$ 25	$ 50	
Activity Center	$ 50	$100	
Personnel Honorariums			
Wedding Coordinator	$ 75	$ 100	
Organist/Pianist	$75	$ 100	
Soloist	$ 50	$ 75	
Custodian- no reception	$ 50	$ 75	
Custodian with reception	$ 100	$ 125	
Sound Technician	$ 50	$ 75	
Nursery Attendant- per person (5 kids per worker)	$50	$50	Per 2 hours (2-hour minimum)
Adjustments by pastoral approval			
Total:	Date Due:		

Wedding Policy
Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of St. Paul United Methodist Church's Wedding Policy and understand the importance of the matters set forth within. I agree to follow and abide by these policies.

Further, I understand that the Policy may be modified at any time, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by St. Paul United Methodist Church.

I also agree to pay the total fees indicated above by the date listed above. I acknowledge that failure to remit the agreed-upon fees by the indicated date, without written approval from the pastor, may result in the cancellation of my reservation.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as guidelines that are changed or deleted.

By signing this agreement, I hereby assume all liability and hold harmless St. Paul United Methodist Church, its officers, agents, and employees from any and all injuries, present and future, arising from my participation. I agree that I will be solely responsible for my own safety. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless all aforesaid parties from any claims, suits, or causes of action, including reasonable attorney's fees for the defense thereof, arising out of my participation in any activity at St. Paul United Methodist Church.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of this Wedding Policy.

_____	_____
Spouse Name (please print)	Spouse Name (please print)
_____	_____
Spouse Signature	Spouse Signature

Date: _____

[This page to be signed, and kept with the Policy manual for your records]

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_____	_____
Spouse Name (please print)	Spouse Name (please print)
_____	_____
Spouse Signature	Spouse Signature

Date: _____

[This page to be signed, detached, and delivered to St. Paul UMC Office along with the application and deposit]

Wedding Application
St. Paul United Methodist Church
2130 West Okmulgee, Muskogee, OK 74401

Date of application_____

Spouse One:

Full Name_____

Address_____ Phone_____

Spouse Two:

Full Name_____

Address_____ Phone_____

Is either spouse or their parents' members of St. Paul? If so, who? _____

Date of the wedding_____

Facility desired for ceremony: Prayer Room_____ Rowsey Chapel_____ Sanctuary_____

Will there be a reception at the church: Yes_____ No_____

Facility desired for reception: Atrium_____ Activity Center_____ Other_____

Photographer Name_____ Phone_____

Florist Name_____ Phone_____

Total Fees_____

Half of total due for securing reservation_____ Deposit paid on_____

Signature of Applicant_____ Date_____

Signature of Applicant_____ Date_____

Office Use Only:

Received Date_____ Person Receiving_____

Pastoral Approval_____ Date_____

Deposit Paid Date_____