



Weddings and the Sacramental
Blessing of Life-Long Covenants

Saint Francis Episcopal Church
Palos Verdes Estates, California

Weddings at Saint Francis Church

Marriage plans at Saint Francis fall into two phases: First are your preparations as individuals and as a couple for your new life as married people.

When you plan to begin your marriage under the care of the Church, there will be a period of consulting and counseling with the priest. When it is clear that you are committed to enter into the covenant of Holy Matrimony as it is understood by the Episcopal Church, then plans for the details of the ceremony are begun.

The second phase of marriage preparation will begin with the placing of your chosen day on the official calendar at Saint Francis Church by the Clergy. The Parish Wedding Coordinator will assist in planning your celebration: The decorations, flowers, photography and other details can be developed in consultation with the Coordinator, while the planning of the music and liturgy is done in consultation with the priest.

Who can be married here?

In the Episcopal Church at least one of the persons being married must be a baptized Christian.

How do I set my wedding date?

Wedding dates will not be permanently reserved until after all forms are filled out at a meeting with the clergy. Before that meeting, dates may be penciled in on the church calendar for thirty days. Unless there is weighty reason for doing otherwise, weddings will be performed only on Saturdays between the hours of 10AM and 4PM. Only one wedding will be celebrated on any given Saturday. Weddings are not performed in this parish during the seasons of Lent (46 days before Easter) or Advent (4 weeks before Christmas).

Although the Canons state that the absolute minimum notice to conduct a wedding is thirty days, it would be very unusual for less than ninety days to be adequate. This is due primarily to the length of time needed to conduct adequate premarital counseling. *Please do not make public any date or plan until the clergy have given permission.*

Will premarital counseling be required?

Because it is felt that Christianity provides the soundest basis upon which to build the foundation of a marriage, any marriage celebrated at this parish will be preceded by a course of premarital counseling. This consists of an initial meeting between the couple and a member of the clergy staff at which the expectations of both the priest and the couple will be explored. This is followed at the same or another session by dealing with logistical questions (filling out forms, answering technical questions, etc.). Following this first session and preceding the second session, the couple will be required to take a premarital inventory called **PREPARE** which is administered online. There are then at least two follow-up sessions with the priest to explore issues raised in the inventory. Please be aware that on very rare occasions issues arise during premarital counseling that compel a couple to change their plans to marry or that affect the priest's willingness to officiate.

Can a minister other than the parish clergy perform our ceremony?

If the other minister is an Episcopal priest, the answer is yes, as long as that priest is willing to follow all of the procedures and practices of Saint Francis Church. If the other minister is not an Episcopalian, then the answer is unfortunately no. However, clergy of other denominations are welcome to assist the parish clergy with prior approval of the presiding clergy.

What does it cost to be married at St. Francis?

Although there is no fee for any sacrament of the Church, there are some costs associated with weddings at any parish, so some fees will necessarily be charged. TO ENSURE TIMELY PROCESSING, ALL FEES MUST BE PAID SEVEN DAYS PRIOR TO THE WEDDING REHEARSAL.

Premarital Counseling - For time considerations there will be occasions when couples who are not members of this parish will be referred to an outside counseling center for "Prepare/Enrich." In this case the cost of the inventory and the counselor's time are the responsibility of the couple.

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The following fees are to be paid to the Business Manager in the Church Office in one check at least seven days prior to the wedding rehearsal. An itemized invoice will be provided to the couple after meeting with the Wedding Coordinator and presiding clergy.

Cost for the use of the Church or Chapel - If the bride or groom (or their parents or grandparents) have been actively attending St. Francis Parish for two years (24 months) prior to the wedding date, and have had a fulfilled, signed financial pledge to the parish for that same time, there is no additional cost for the use of the church or chapel. Immediate family of active members (as defined above) also will not be assessed any additional cost. For all others, there will be a *basic cost* for the use of the church or chapel. Except with prior approval, the Church/Chapel will be available for two hours prior to the wedding, and one hour after the wedding.

Honorarium for the presiding priest - This is a monetary donation to the priest's Discretionary or Special Projects Fund (used for charitable and church related purposes, and not the priest's personal income). An honorarium for the officiating priest includes premarital counseling, ceremony planning, wedding rehearsal and the wedding ceremony.

Organist - The organist does not attend the rehearsal except in very unusual circumstances. Extra services (such as attendance at the rehearsal and rehearsals with a soloist other than the day of the ceremony) may increase the fee. It is the responsibility of the couple to contact the organist at least one month before the wedding date. Other instrumentalists may be employed in place of organ or piano, if desired, but a "bench fee" would be paid to our organist as per the guidelines of the Association of Anglican musicians and the ministry parameters of St. Francis Church.

Soloist - If there is to be a soloist provided by the parish or the organist, there will be a fee. Any outside soloist must contact the organist at least three weeks prior to the wedding in order to make appropriate arrangements.

Chalice Bearer - If there is to be Holy Communion, the services of one of our licensed lay persons will be required to administer the Chalice (the cup).

Special candles, etc. - The Altar Guild has a list of decorations that are appropriate for a wedding; corresponding charges will be added to the total cost.

Wedding Program – The Church Office at St. Francis will produce a program for the wedding unless otherwise requested by the couple. We print our wedding programs on high quality ivory linen paper. All costs associated with outside printing will be assumed by the couple. With outside printing, the presiding priest must approve the final text of the program, and the program must include all liturgical elements necessary for the conducting of the wedding ceremony.

Can I choose the music for the wedding?

The organist will be quite willing to work with you in the selection of music for the service. It is a general rule that only sacred music will be permitted. The organist must approve any selections you make and may provide suggestions from which you may choose processional music.

What about flowers?

You are responsible for ordering and purchasing all flowers. You must check with the Wedding Coordinator before ordering any flowers, and abide by all Altar Guild guidelines.

How many guests will the church or chapel hold?

The chapel will comfortably seat 125 guests, and the church 450.

What about pictures during the wedding?

The recording of an event in the church should never intrude or obscure the event itself. The wedding ceremony is first of all a service of Christian worship, and, therefore, nothing should be allowed to distract those involved from worshipping God. Under the guidelines of the clergy we do permit pictures during the wedding ceremony – either by the professional photographer or by the guests – but *the use of flash is prohibited during the wedding ceremony*, including the processional and the exit of the married couple from the church. Videotaping is permitted from certain unobtrusive stationary positions using available light. Professional photography is permitted after the service for posed pictures of the wedding party under restrictions available in detail from the Altar Guild. All photography inside the church must be concluded within thirty minutes following the service. Any pictures including the clergy are to be posed and taken first.

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May we hire a wedding consultant?

Yes, you may, but that person will have no input into the rehearsal or the service itself. The priest is solely responsible for all decisions concerning the conduct of the ceremony and the rehearsal. On the day of the wedding, the Wedding Coordinator will be present to give you all the assistance you need.

May we write our own vows?

All weddings will be performed according to the Canons of the Episcopal Church and will adhere to the text and rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1979). Any exceptions must be authorized by the Bishop of Los Angeles, and as a general rule, the Bishop does not authorize the writing of one's own wedding vows. The *Book of Common Prayer* (1979) is available through most quality bookstores. The Prayer Book offers choices that will let you personalize your wedding, and you will make these decisions in consultation with the clergy.

Are there rooms at the church where we can dress before the service?

We have suitable rooms which will serve members of the bride's party. There is a tall mirror, and restrooms are nearby. It is expected that the groom's party will arrive already dressed.

Are there rooms available for a dinner or reception?

We can make arrangements for rehearsal dinners and receptions, according to availability. This option is available only for active members of St. Francis Church or their immediate family.

What is your policy regarding alcohol use?

Alcohol use is not permitted on church property on the day of the rehearsal or before the wedding reception on the day of the wedding unless specifically requested and permitted by the clergy.

What about the marriage license?

A valid marriage license from any county in the State of California is required for legal marriages between a man and a woman. The license is to be brought to the rehearsal and must be in the priest's hands before the wedding can take place.

If you would like more information about weddings at Saint Francis Episcopal Church, or would like to make an appointment with the clergy or wedding coordinator, please call the church office (310-375-4617). We would be happy to assist you!

Clergy

Rev. Jason Shelby

(310) 375-4617

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Wedding Coordinators

Wendy Pratt

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St. Francis Episcopal Church

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