



The  
Church of  
Bethesda-by-the-Sea  
*Love and Serve*

Dear Engaged Couple,

Thank you for considering Bethesda-by-the-Sea for the celebration of your wedding. We are delighted that you have done so.

We believe that your marriage will be one of the most significant turning points in your lives bringing opportunities for individual and shared reflection as well as deep understanding of God's loving presence for you both in the years ahead.

In deciding on a wedding at Bethesda-by-the-Sea, you will be sharing in and embracing our long-standing liturgy, customs, and practices. These guide us in our communal worship in regular services and on special occasions such as weddings.

Weddings here require significant planning and the coordination of many participants. Accordingly, we have developed Wedding Guidelines to help ensure that your plans and expectations are consistent with the parish's ministry and customs.

The General Wedding Information on pages 1-2 should be considered carefully as you make your decision.

So that we are all "on the same page," we require that each of you (and any other person underwriting the costs of the wedding) read the entire Wedding Guidelines and sign the Acknowledgement of Understanding on page 6. Then your officiating priest and our staff will work closely with you.

May God bless you as you plan for your Holy Matrimony.



# General Wedding Information

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**A BETHESDA WEDDING** The liturgy and ceremonial for a wedding at Bethesda are set following *The Book of Common Prayer*, other authorized liturgies, and this parish's customs. We believe that the proper place to begin a wedding feast is at the Lord's Table with Holy Eucharist, or Communion. As a result, this is almost always an integral part of a Bethesda wedding.

As part of building a strong relationship with the couple, the clergy have a responsibility to discuss with them thoughtfully and prayerfully whether or not to have Communion at their wedding. Although not compulsory, Communion is almost always an integral part of a Bethesda wedding.

A concern that some couples raise is that having Communion will offend non-Episcopalians or non-Christians, however, very few people will come to a Christian church and then are offended the service is Christian. Bethesda's clergy make the celebration of Communion welcoming and inclusive, and they regularly hear from wedding guests how welcome guests feel at the service.

Bethesda weddings take place at an altar of the church. The nave seats up to 500 people. Small weddings, up to 25 people, can still take place at the high altar with the congregation sitting in the chancel (choir). The Garden Chapel can accommodate up to 125 people. Only one wedding will take place on any particular day, so weddings in the Garden Chapel have a beautiful indoor alternative ready in case of inclement weather. Please note that because of the extra work involved in setting up the Garden Chapel, an additional fee is required for weddings there.

One of the clergy of Bethesda-by-the-Sea will officiate at the wedding. If the couple wishes to have the participation of other clergy, the couple should discuss with the Rector who will extend any invitation to other clergy at his discretion.

Weddings are normally on Saturdays and must begin between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. They typically last between 45 minutes and an hour. In order to provide adequate staffing to prepare for Sunday morning, *any wedding beginning later than 4:00 p.m. requires an additional fee.* **The day of the wedding, the entire wedding party must arrive 45 minutes before the service is scheduled to begin.**

The wedding rehearsal is scheduled the day before the wedding, starting promptly at 4:00 p.m.

A Bethesda staff member will schedule the couple's first meeting with a priest. The majority of questions, choices, and decisions thereafter can be resolved by this staff person in direct contact with the couple. Bethesda strongly desires a relationship with the couple to be married; therefore, *all* communications will be with the couple, not parents or wedding planners (see *Wedding Coordinators* on page 2).

## REQUIREMENTS

Usually one member of the couple, or at least one of their parents, is a communicant-member of this parish. Other couples who live locally will be asked to begin participating in the life and worship of this parish as part of their preparation, with the expectation that this will become their church home. Bethesda will consider weddings for couples residing outside of Palm Beach County or who do not meet the above requirements and will require a substantial additional charge. The final decision about every wedding request rests with the Rector.



# General Wedding Information

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## DECORATIONS

Bethesda is blessed with such beautiful worship spaces that we take a less-is-more approach to wedding decorations. Our staff coordinator will notify the Flower Guild once a wedding is scheduled. The wedding fee includes two floral arrangements for the high altar, an arrangement in the Niche, and one in the Narthex. These flowers will adorn worship on the Sunday following, and the Sunday leaflet will note that they were given in celebration of the couple's marriage. In addition, six pew markers may be selected if desired. For an additional fee, the couple may have up to 14 aisle candles and/or an aisle runner, all of which are subject to the church's guidelines. No additional flowers, decorations, candles, or runners are permitted, nor are rice, bubbles, flower petals, butterflies, etc. For weddings in the Garden Chapel, simple arrangements for that altar are included in the Garden Chapel fee.

## MUSIC

Please see page 5 of the Wedding Guidelines.

## FOOD & DRINK

No food or drink may be brought onto the premises for the wedding or the rehearsal. Anyone found to have been consuming any intoxicant—legal or illegal—on the wedding day before the service will not participate in the wedding.

## PARKING & POLICE

The Town of Palm Beach Police are very cooperative when it comes to parking for large functions. Parking is never permitted in front of the church on South County Road; however, on the day of the wedding, Bethesda's staff will request that Barton Avenue be converted to a one-way access road (as we do for Sunday services), allowing for parking on both sides of the street—facing west.

It is important to notify the church of plans to hire a valet or transportation service for guests' convenience so that Bethesda's staff can make the appropriate preparations.

If attendance is expected to exceed 200 guests, we are required to hire two policemen to direct traffic. The cost will be added onto the wedding fee. At present this fee is \$420 for two officers.

## WEDDING LEAFLETS

The church prepares and prints a leaflet for the wedding to enable everyone to participate fully in the liturgy. The contents and design of this leaflet follow Bethesda's customary format. The couple may choose between white or cream color paper. It does not include photos or special artwork. In advance, the couple will receive an electronic form which must be filled out 2 weeks prior to the wedding. On the form, the couple will indicate which color paper they wish to have and list their entire wedding party. Please note the names of those in the wedding party will be printed as provided by the couple—without titles. Full names may be used, space permitting. Prior to being printed, the couple will proof the entire leaflet for accuracy.

## WEDDING COORDINATORS

Independent wedding coordinators or planners are not permitted to have any part in planning the service and are not permitted to attend the rehearsal. They may assist the couple's preparation in the Guild Room and may attend the wedding as guests at the family's invitation.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

Please see page 7 of the Wedding Guidelines.



# Wedding Fees

## WEDDING FEE

**\$5,000**

The above includes all church fees: Altar Guild assistance, flowers, organist, service leaflets, sextons, and the officiating priest.

*A discounted fee may be offered at the sole discretion of the Rector in gratitude for the service and support of members. The Rector will offer this only when one of the couple or at least one of their parents is, at the time of initial inquiry about the wedding, a baptized communicant of this parish who has a history over at least the most recent two years of regular attendance at worship and of meaningful, ongoing financial support of Bethesda. It will not be offered under any other circumstances. Please note that neither a distant, historical connection with Bethesda, nor occasional financial contributions will be sufficient cause to be offered this discount.*

*The clergy do not accept honoraria for members' weddings. A contribution will be made to the officiating priest's discretionary fund or another parish fund to which the priest may direct it to support the priest's ministry.*

## ADDITIONAL FEES

Wedding after 4:00 p.m.	\$1,350
Garden Chapel Fee	\$3,000
Videography	\$500
Aisle candles	\$300
Aisle runner	\$300
Police (if over 200 guests)	\$420 (or, actual cost on date of wedding)
Additional music fees	(if any, to be determined by Dr. Forster)

For those exceptional circumstances for a couple who are not currently or becoming members or do not have a family connection with Bethesda, as approved by the Rector, a very substantial additional donation is required to support the ongoing life of the parish.

*The above fees are effective as of June 2, 2016, please note, however that they are subject to occasional change, and the fees applicable will be those in effect on the date of the wedding.*



# Photography and Videography Guidelines

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- All contractors will strictly follow these guidelines and any and all verbal instructions given by Bethesda's staff.
- All couples receive these instructions and agree to these guidelines as part of deciding to have their wedding here. Because of so many issues with photographers, these guidelines are necessarily detailed and restrictive.
- Because a wedding is a service of worship, opportunities for photographs are quite limited.
- Pre-wedding photography will end exactly 20 minutes before the scheduled time of the service. There are no exceptions to this guideline, even if members of the wedding party arrive late. Photographers will not be granted time, even just "one more minute."
- All contractors working at Bethesda represent the church, whether hired by the church or by the couple. Their conduct and demeanor reflect on the parish and must not bring dishonor upon either the parish or the couple. All contractors will dress appropriately for a worship service and in a manner that does not draw attention. This means black and dark, subdued colors, appropriate footwear, no logos or words showing, and not overly-casual. Any contractor deemed to be inappropriately dressed or to be behaving in a disrespectful or irreverent manner by any Bethesda staff person will not be permitted in the church and may be dismissed from the premises.
- Photographers may not direct Bethesda's staff in any way. They may request that staff members move or stand in a certain place, but the staff's work and pastoral presence take precedence over the needs of the photographer.
- Only one photographer will be permitted in the church before and during the service. Any other contracted personnel will remain outside the church until the service is over and the congregation has departed.
- Once the opening procession has begun, photographers are not permitted in the Narthex (the lobby immediately to the west of the church).
- Equipment, bags, and cases will be stored outside of the church or under the pews against the west wall only. Bethesda staff members have been directed to remove any equipment that they deem unsightly or that poses a safety hazard.
- As soon as the prelude music has begun—and during the processional and entire service—there is **no flash photography**.
- Photographers are not permitted to occupy any space in the center aisle, including all the way back to the main door, until the entire procession has walked up the aisle and the processional music has concluded. Any photographer who impedes the congregation's view of the opening procession will be immediately dismissed from the service.
- Because of camera noise, photographers may be only at the back of the church: in the back aisle between the pews and the west wall.
- Photographers may not stand, lean, or perch on any furnishing or fixture, nor may they move *any* item in the church.
- At the conclusion of the service, the couple must go immediately to the office to sign the license and register. Photographers must not stop or delay them but may accompany them if pictures of the signing are desired.
- After the service—when the wedding party has returned to the church for photographs—the photographic session is strictly limited to one-half hour. If clergy are expected to participate in the photographic session, they should be requested to do so prior to the service and be photographed at the beginning of the session.
- VIDEOGRAPHERS may direct the use of the church's video production system (it must be operated by Bethesda volunteers or staff) with six high-definition cameras throughout the church. Videographers may not be in the church and may not place any equipment in the church.
- The clergy, organist, Altar Guild assistants (blue robe), sextons (black robe), and other Bethesda staff are all aware of these rules and have the authority to offer further instructions and to dismiss from the premises any photographer/videographer not following these guidelines.



## Music Guidelines

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**GENERAL INFORMATION** Wedding music is planned by the couple in consultation with Dr. Stuart Forster, Associate for Music and Liturgy, who serves as organist for all weddings at Bethesda-by-the-Sea. If he is unavailable for your wedding, he will secure the services of another qualified organist. Well in advance of the wedding date, the couple should meet with Dr. Forster to choose music for the service. Please contact Ayana Pineiro at (561) 655-4554 to set up an appointment. It is the responsibility of the couple to set up this face-to-face meeting. The couple may come with requests and/or ideas about specific music, but they should certainly feel no obligation to do so, Dr. Forster is prepared to offer suggestions of music suitable for the service. A wedding is a service of the church, and, as such, the music needs to be appropriate for the occasion. Bethesda-by-the-Sea does not permit so-called “Contemporary Christian” or “Praise” music or pre-recorded music (CDs, etc.). Our rule of thumb is this: if a particular piece is appropriate for our Sunday morning worship services, it is appropriate for your wedding; the reverse also holds true.

**PROCESSIONALS** It is not necessary that the music for a wedding processional (entrance of the wedding party) be in march tempo; it is enough that it have a feeling of movement and mood of dignity and joy. Trumpet tunes work very well since they are majestic and easy to conclude when the entire wedding party is in place. One piece of music will be selected for the processional. Music for the Recessional (at the end of the service) should generally be rather fast and joyful. The so-called “traditional” wedding marches are not traditional Church music at all, but rather two pieces popularized by Hollywood. Wagner’s *Lohengrin* march is played after a doomed wedding, and Mendelssohn’s march from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is the music played for the clowning of Puck. Neither the Wagner nor the Mendelssohn is used at Bethesda-by-the-Sea.

**SOLOISTS** We have a large building which requires the skills of a professionally-trained singer. There is no amplification available to singers. If the couple desire to use a soloist, the best solution is to have Dr. Forster arrange for one of the Bethesda Choir soloists to sing. Secular love songs, music from movies, and pop music are not sung in a sacred service and are best shared at the reception, if desired.

**INSTRUMENTALISTS** Instrumentalists may occasionally be desired. If so, ask Dr. Forster to secure the services of professional musicians. *Please do not hire any instrumentalists until you have spoken to Dr. Forster.*

**ADDITIONAL FEES** When a soloist (vocal or instrumental) is used, there is a fee for the soloist as well as an additional organist’s fee for each rehearsal with the soloist(s).

Last Updated September 22, 2020



## Acknowledgement of Understanding

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We have received the wedding guidelines from the Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea, including the photography and music guidelines. We understand, acknowledge, and accept these guidelines.

Further, we accept responsibility for communicating with our other wedding contractors about these guidelines and the limitations and responsibilities of their work at Bethesda.

We understand that, if we hire a wedding planner or wedding coordinator, he/she will not be permitted to be in the church or Garden Chapel for the rehearsal or the wedding (except as a guest).

We understand that, because our wedding is first and foremost a worship service, photography during the service will be extremely limited, and we understand that Bethesda staff will monitor and direct the work of photographers to ensure that they do not detract from the spirit of worship and joy of the occasion.

We understand that the officiating priest has the authority to prevent anyone from participating in the service if they have not attended the rehearsal, if they are found to be intoxicated, or if their presence may be in any way a distraction or disruption to the festivities.

We understand that, for the sake of our guests, the service will start on time, even if everyone is not present. If one or both members of the couple is not present at the start time, we understand that the officiating priest has the authority to cancel the service immediately. We further understand that because holding a wedding at Bethesda requires the service of many people, including some volunteers, the possibility of delaying the start time is severely limited.

We agree that should any of our guests or contractors violate these guidelines or cause a disruption or cancellation of the service, we release and hold harmless the Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea, its clergy, staff, contractors, and volunteers from any and all liability, and we agree that we will not be entitled to any refund of fees.

Most importantly, we commit to entering into a relationship of trust and goodwill with our officiating priest so that, together, we can lead our family and loved ones in an uplifting and joyful celebration of God's love for us in our marriage.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## *Acknowledgement of Understanding for Photography and Videography Guidelines*

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I have read and understand the Guidelines for Photographers and Videographers at the Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea. I agree to abide by these guidelines and to conduct myself in a reverent and respectful manner at all times.

I further understand that violating these guidelines or behaving in any way that may bring discredit upon the church, or that may be a distraction to congregants, will result in my immediate dismissal from the premises.

I further understand that claiming not to have known or not to have understood these guidelines will not change the decision of staff to dismiss me if I have violated these guidelines.

Finally, I also understand that the Rector reserves the right to prohibit me or my company from working at Bethesda in the future, should my conduct cause any problem.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_