



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

“Dearly beloved...”

So begins the marriage rite in the Episcopal Church. According to our Christian faith, in marriage, each individual—both separately and together—transforms and matures in God’s presence and image. A wedding, then, is a sacred ritual that acknowledges and celebrates your desire to enter a lifelong relationship. Your marriage is a sacrament—an outward and visible sign of God’s grace bringing you together and nurturing your love.

Bethesda-by-the-Sea’s historic setting and the beauty of the Episcopal Church’s liturgy make it a special and sacred place for your wedding. Your wedding day is one that you will never forget and we are eager to help make the experience both meaningful and unique.

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 coordination for many participants and must be scheduled at least six months in advance. Accordingly, we have developed Wedding Guidelines to help ensure that your plans and expectations are consistent with the parish’s ministry and customs. These outline who is eligible to be married at Bethesda and the accompanying fees. Please note that weddings are not generally performed during the season of Lent (the 40 days before Easter).

Once you have read through and familiarized yourself with the church’s Wedding Guidelines, the next step is to contact Ayana Piñeiro-Ilnicki in the Parish Office to set up a meeting with a member of the clergy. She can be reached at [ayana@bbts.org](mailto:ayana@bbts.org) or by phone at 561-655-4554.

May God bless you at this exciting time in your life!

Faithfully yours,

The Rev. Tim Schenck, Rector



## General Wedding Information

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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. Many couples choose to have Holy Eucharist, or communion, as part of the liturgy.

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 30 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 60 minutes before the service is scheduled to begin.**

The wedding rehearsal is scheduled the day before the wedding. The wedding license will be signed by the couple and witnesses immediately before the rehearsal. The officiating priest will sign the license following the wedding.

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, and enrolling as members of Bethesda, making a promise to attend the next inquirers' series at the church, and make a financial pledge of record to the parish. 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.

The Episcopal Church is open to the remarriage of divorce persons, but it does require requesting permission from the Bishop of Southeast Florida.



# 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 14 aisle candles installed by the church staff. 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. We ask wedding participants to be cautious about consuming any intoxicant on the wedding day before the service. Anyone found to be inebriated will not be allowed in the wedding.

## ANIMALS IN WEDDINGS

Bethesda-by-the-Sea does not permit animals/pets in a wedding, unless needed as a guide-dog for those who are physically challenged

## 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 two 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

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## WEDDING FEE

**\$10,000**

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

*A reduced fee may be offered at the sole discretion of the Rector .*

*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 church's ministry.*

## ADDITIONAL FEES

Wedding after 4:00 p.m.      \$1,500

Garden Chapel Fee              \$3,000

Videography                      \$500

Aisle candles                      \$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 December 13, 2022. 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 at Bethesda.
- Because a wedding is a service of worship, opportunities for photographs are 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.
- 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. This means black and dark, subdued colors, appropriate footwear, no logos or words showing, and not overly-casual.
- 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 only be 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.
- 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. At least three months before 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

### CHOIR AND INSTRUMENTALISTS

You are encouraged to include members of the Bethesda Choir to help lead the spoken and sung parts of the service; please speak with Dr. Forster about this option or if you are interested in additional musicians, such as instrumentalists or vocal soloists. All invitations to outside musicians must come from the Associate for Music and Liturgy, who will contract professional musicians. Due to the emotional nature of the service, friends and family members wishing to offer music should be encouraged to do so at the reception following.

We have a large building which requires the skills of professionally-trained singers. There is no amplification available to singers. If the couple would like to include a soloist, Dr. Forster will contract 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.

**ADDITIONAL FEES** When vocal or instrumental musicians are included, additional rehearsal time will be scheduled by Dr. Forster. There is a fee for the guest musician as well as an additional organist’s fee for each rehearsal.





# Acknowledgement of Understanding

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Last Updated December 13, 2022

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: \_\_\_\_\_