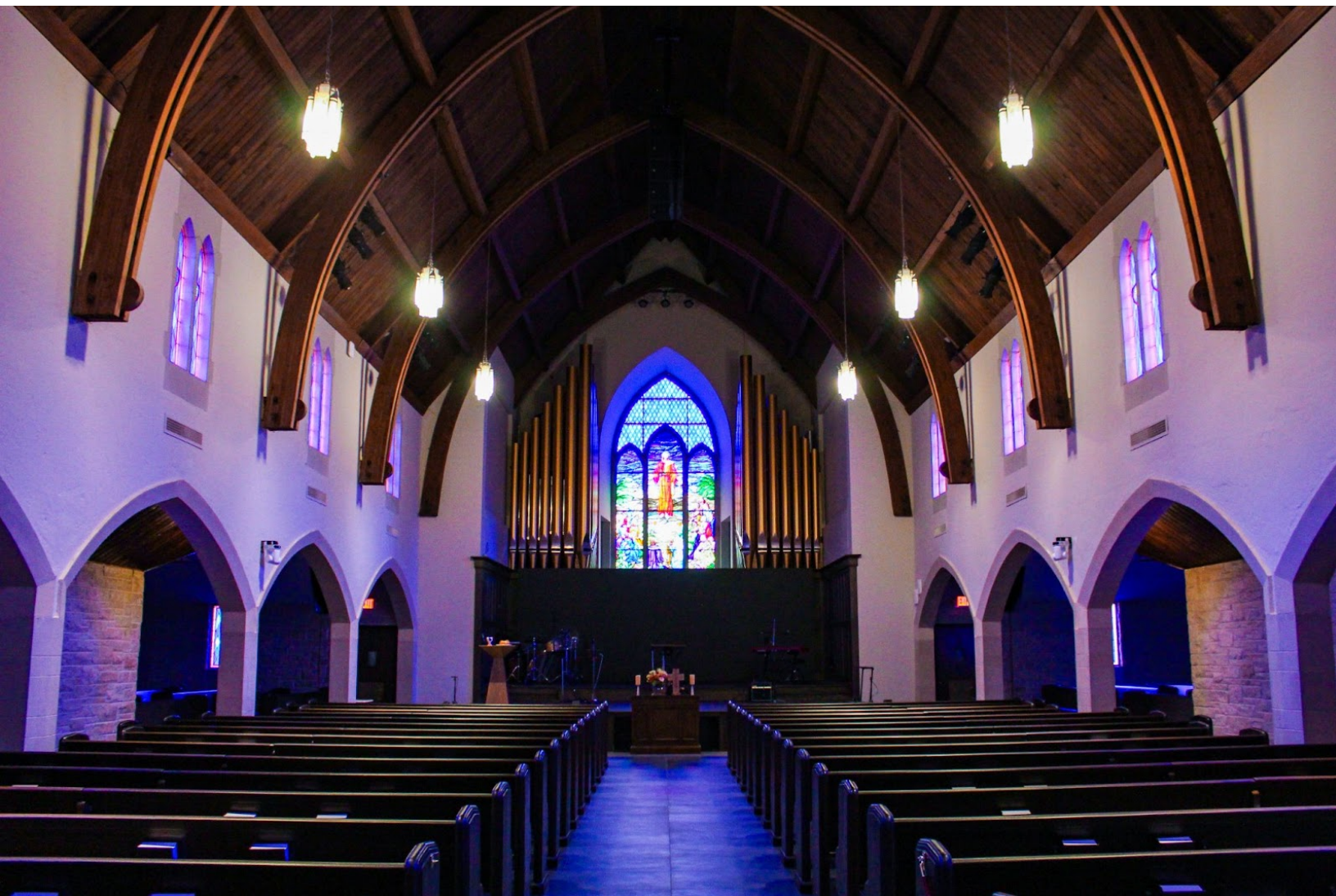




Weddings

at The Story Church

3223 Westheimer Rd.
Houston, TX

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Marriage Requirements

I. Beliefs

We affirm that Christian marriage and sexual intimacy are good gifts from God. In keeping with the teachings of Scripture historically and throughout the Church universal, we believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union. We believe that God intends faithfulness in marriage and celibacy in singleness.

It is our desire that couples approach marriage according to Biblical standards and in a way that is pleasing to God. In this regard, we ask that you accept an “engagement covenant” that includes the following three aspects:

A Covenant of Belief – We require that both bride and groom be professing Christians and that their commitment to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be evident by the fruits of their lives (ex: their Christian character, Church involvement, generosity and service toward the poor and less fortunate, etc.). -We also require that both individuals have been baptized in a legitimate Christian Church. If you have not been baptized, please let our team know so we can help you prepare for this important next step.

A Covenant of Purity – Because we believe that God designed sexual intimacy and intended it to be exclusively for marriage, we ask that you agree to abstain from sexual intimacy until after the wedding.

A Covenant of Faithfulness – Believing that the Church is God’s greenhouse to grow strong marriages, we ask that you find a place of involvement in His Church, the Body of Christ, and pursue a lifestyle of faithfulness to your church family. (Hebrews 10:19-25)

Our pastors and leadership reserve the right to decline a wedding application. We will consult with you and follow up with any questions before a decision is made. Please consult the Connections Director with any questions you may have on this matter.

II. Partnership Requirement

Weddings in the sanctuary are only available to Partners of The Story Church and their children or grandchildren. To request a wedding ceremony at The Story Church, the bride or groom, or the bride or groom’s parents or grandparents, must be Partners in good standing of The Story Church for a minimum of six months prior to requesting a date for the ceremony. To inquire regarding Partnership at The Story, please email knesmith@thestory.church

Premarital Counseling Requirement

The Story Church offers a premarital course for all couples requesting to be married in our church through the Merge Premarital Class. The class is an 8 week commitment, open to all engaged couples in our congregation. The class is offered every spring and fall season and completion of the class satisfies this requirement.

If you are unable to attend a Merge class due to certain circumstances (i.e. one person living out of town, work schedules outside of your control) we will accept a marriage counseling certificate of completion from an approved Christian marriage counselor. A list of referrals is available.

III. Officiants

Weddings at The Story Church are typically officiated by ordained ministers within our church or [The Foundry Network](#). If you would like to have an officiant from outside our church or Network, please include their ministry credentials and contact information on your application form for approval.

Scheduling Your Wedding

I. Application Process

An application (included at the end of this document) must be submitted and approved by the wedding team before any next steps are taken. All applications **MUST** be received no later than 6 months prior to the requested wedding date for regular ceremonies, or 90 days for informal wedding ceremonies (see page 12).

II. Fees & Deadlines

Once an application has been reviewed and approved by the wedding team, a 50% deposit will be required to hold your date and begin preparations. The deposit will count towards the total fees for your wedding ceremony, as outlined below. The remainder of the fee will be due no later than one month (30 days) prior to your wedding date.

Refunds will be offered up to 45 days prior to the wedding date. Refunds for any amount will not be available within 45 days of your wedding date.

The facility fee for hosting a wedding ceremony at The Story Church is \$1,500. This amount includes sound and media technicians and a music director fee. The fee does not include additional musicians or the officiant. If you wish to have additional musicians perform during your wedding, we will put you in touch with our music director so you can discuss your needs directly.

The cost of informal weddings is \$750 and that includes a music director fee.

The Story's Connections Director will provide more information regarding officiant fees for our clergy once a wedding is approved and scheduled.

III. Availability of Services

Weddings can be scheduled year-round, with the *exception* of the following:

- All Sundays
- New Year's Eve & New Year's Day
- Ash Wednesday
- The week before Easter
- Easter weekend
- The week of Thanksgiving, including the weekend following Thanksgiving Day
- The weeks before and after Christmas Day

Only one wedding ceremony will be scheduled on any given day. If your first choice for a wedding date is already booked, we will accommodate your second choice to the best of our ability. In the event that both your first and second choice have already been scheduled, the wedding team will communicate with you for any other available options.

All applications must be submitted in person at the church office (please print and fill out the last pages of this document) or through our online form found [here](#). Once your application has been approved, we will reference the church calendar to see if your dates are available.

A member of the wedding team will be present at both the rehearsal and wedding ceremony to coordinate details and arrangements with your wedding coordinator. Other staffing may be available based on the options you select for your wedding package (see Fees & Deadline section above).

IV. Marriage License

A valid Marriage License is required for marriage. A wedding at The Story Church cannot take place without a marriage license, and the couple should provide this license before or at the rehearsal. The officiating pastor is the only person who signs the license following the marriage ceremony. The wedding team/church staff is responsible for returning the signed license to the County Clerk's office. The original wedding license will be returned to you in 4 to 6 weeks.

Texas Marriage licenses are valid for 90 days from the date of issue, with a 72 hour (3 day) waiting period before the marriage may take place. Please plan accordingly. For information about obtaining a marriage license in Harris County, please contact the Harris County Clerk's office by calling 713.755.6411 or view their website: www.cclerk.hctx.net.

Ceremony Order

The Story pastors follow a set order for every ceremony, including the processional, an opening prayer, scripture readings from the Old Testament and New Testament, reading of wedding vows, exchanging of rings, a blessing, and announcement of the bride and groom.

The wedding team will work together with you to plan the specifics of your ceremony, including any additional items you'd like to include in your wedding, whether the singing of hymns or familial traditions.

I. Entrance

Wedding parties can enter via the side wing entrances or the center aisle. Please let the wedding team know your preference before the rehearsal.

II. Scripture Selections

Please review the following scripture options below and communicate your selections with the wedding team prior to your rehearsal. If you'd like to use a different passage, please submit it for pre-approval at least a month in advance.

Old Testament:

- Genesis 1:26-28
- Genesis 2:4-9, 15-25
- Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7

New Testament

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- Ephesians 3:14-19
- Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33
- Colossians 3:12-17
- 1 John 4:7-16
- Matthew 5:1-10
- Matthew 5:13-16
- Matthew 7:21, 24-29
- Mark 10:6-9, 13-16
- John 15:9-12

III. Vows

Vows will be read from the Wesleyan tradition by the officiating minister, with participation from the bride and groom. Personally composed vows will not be allowed for weddings at The Story Church. Examples of Wesleyan (Methodist tradition) vows are included below:

In the name of God,
I, *Name*, take you, *Name*, to be my wife/husband,
to have and to hold
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
until we are parted by death.
This is my solemn vow.

I take you, *Name*, to be my wife/husband,
and I promise before God and all who are present here
to be your loving and faithful husband/wife
as long as we both shall live.
I will serve you with tenderness and respect,
and encourage you to develop God's gifts in you.

Name, in the name of God,
I take you to be my husband/wife from this time onward,
to join with you and to share all that is to come,
to give and to receive,
to speak and to listen,
to inspire and to respond,
and in all our life together
to be loyal to you with my whole being,
as long as we both shall live.

Rules & Regulations

I. Space Usage

All weddings take place in our Sanctuary. Guests should be reminded that this is a worship service; we kindly ask that all members of the wedding party and wedding guests be respectful of the church grounds by following the rules and regulations outlined in this guide.

II. Programs

The Story Church does not provide printed programs for weddings; programs may be brought in and distributed by the wedding party. If you wish to print programs for your ceremony, we ask that you include the following language in your program:

- Please be respectful of the space and remember that this is a worship service.
- Please silence or turn off cell phones for the duration of the ceremony.
- *Please refrain from taking photographs or videos during the ceremony.*

III. Capacity

The capacity for all wedding services is 500 people. All guests must be in the sanctuary for the duration of the ceremony. Guests may linger in the Family Room prior to the ceremony, and be seated 10 minutes before the start of the processional.

IV. Outside Decorations

All outside decorations must be brought in on the day of the ceremony, at a predetermined time by your wedding party and The Story's wedding team. If you need to drop off florals or other decorations the day before, prior arrangements can be made.

Extensive and elaborate decorative displays are discouraged. Our wedding team can help make selections and provide input based on our space requirements. All decorations must be removed within 90 minutes of the ceremony ending.

The following decorations are allowed, within good taste:

- Florals, used in the Family Room, entrances, and altar. Floral arrangements on the altar must be pre-approved by the wedding team, due to space limitations on the altar.
- Simple pew markers may be used, such as florals or bows. Pew markers must not have any permanent or potentially damaging fixtures.
- Candles can only be used on the altar and may not be placed in any areas where guests are walking.
- Guest books may be set up in the entrance or Family Room on a provided table.
- No decorations can interfere with walkways or fire exits.
- All decorations must be free of potentially damaging materials, such as staining liquids, non-temporary adhesives, hazardous chemicals and irritants, or small particles such as glitter, rice, or confetti.
- Flower petals may be used for the processional, but must be cleaned up within 90 minutes of the ceremony ending.

V. Recorded Music

Any music that you would like to be played prior to the ceremony in the sanctuary, as well as recorded processional music, must be shared 30 days prior to the wedding date. Our team will load pre-recorded music into our equipment to be played through the speakers by our Audio Technician. Music can be shared via a USB drive in the desired order, or via a Spotify playlist in the desired order. All music will be pre-approved by the wedding team.

VI. Live Musicians

If you decide to have live musicians as part of your ceremony, such as a soloist or quartet, they must provide all necessary equipment for their instruments, such as music stands or stools. The Story Church will provide mics if needed to increase their sound levels in the sanctuary. All requests for additional microphones must be submitted and approved 30 days prior to your wedding ceremony.

You are solely responsible for making sure your hired musicians know which songs to play and at what time, including for the processional. Our team will work with you to

make sure the timing of elements is set between all parties. Please provide a list of songs the live musicians will play to the wedding team for pre-approval. Hymns and classical music is encouraged; covers of secular music will be considered and deemed appropriate by the wedding team.

Musicians may arrive up to 60 minutes before the ceremony begins to set up their equipment and tune. Musicians must have all their equipment removed within 90 minutes of the ceremony ending.

VII. Photography & Videography

Outside professional photographers and videographers are allowed for all wedding ceremonies. All outside photographers and videographers (referenced from this point on merely as 'Photographers') are asked to adhere to the following expectations for the dignity and respect of all present:

- Photographers may not stand on furniture in order to capture photos.
- Photographers may not move furniture or anything within the sanctuary for posing or capturing the ceremony.
- Photographers are reminded that this is a worship service and should be respectful of ministers and guests.
- Flash photography is permitted throughout the facility, but discouraged during the ceremony out of respect for the ministers leading the ceremony.
- Photographers are allowed in the bridal suite to capture the bride and party getting ready.
- Photographers are not allowed to enter the stage or capture images/video from behind the minister. All photographers must stay in the middle aisle or side aisles in the sanctuary.
- Photographers may be held responsible for any damage caused to the building due to negligence of these rules and policies.
- Photographers are asked to remain as silent as possible during the ceremony out of reverence for the wedding party and guests.

VIII. Children

Childcare is not provided by The Story Church for weddings. Nursery rooms that are used on Sunday and during the week for church activities are not available to wedding events. All children that are guests of your wedding must remain with their parents for the duration of the ceremony, as well as when inside the Family Room and entrance areas.

Children who are part of your processional (such as flower girls or ring bearers) may be separated from their parents before the ceremony to stand with the wedding party. Once they have completed the processional, children are asked to join their parents and remain seated with them for the rest of the ceremony.

Childcare is not provided for rehearsals. All wedding party members are required to make arrangements for off-site babysitting to participate in rehearsals.

IX. Wedding Exits

No items or materials may be tossed or used for wedding exits, including but not limited to confetti, rice, seeds, or sparklers. The release of items such as balloons, birds, or animals is strictly prohibited.

The use of flower petals (must be real and not artificial) and bubbles will be allowed outside of the church with permission. Please request this prior to your wedding ceremony. The use of materials is up to the discretion of the wedding team, and in the case of inclement weather such as high winds and rain, may not be allowed the day of your wedding.

X. Parking and Valet

The attached parking lot is available for all guests and vendors of your wedding. Vendors may use the covered parking entrance to make deliveries but must remove their vehicles 90 minutes prior to the start of your ceremony.

An attached side lot is available for the bride and groom to use, as well as immediate family members. The side entrance may also be used by vendors, as per requested.

Outside valet services are allowed and must be coordinated by you. If you decide to use a valet service for the convenience of your guests, please let us know 30 days prior to your wedding date. Valet will be allowed to use the covered entrance for their stand and key storage. A waiver will need to be signed to release the church from any liabilities related to valet parking services. The Story Church is not responsible for damages and loss caused by valet services to personal vehicles.

XI. Food, Drink, and Smoking

No alcoholic beverages are permitted on the church campus. Please remind all members of your wedding party of this policy. Food and non-alcoholic beverages may be brought into the Family Room and getting ready room for the bridal party.

No food or drinks are permitted in the sanctuary.

Smoking is prohibited on The Story Church's premises, including parking areas and the courtyard.

Final Steps

I. Rehearsal

All weddings at The Story Church require a full rehearsal the day before the wedding. Other dates can be accommodated up to a week in advance of the ceremony, but must be pre-approved by the wedding team and minister.

The entire wedding party, including parents of the bride and groom, will be required to attend the rehearsal. Your wedding party may include groomsmen, bridesmaids, flower girls, ring bearers, or other participants.

The rehearsal will be set at a time determined by you and the wedding team. If you need to change your rehearsal time, notice must be given at least two weeks in advance to reschedule.

Rehearsal time allowed is no more than 60 minutes, please ensure that your wedding party arrives on time to allow enough time for your wedding rehearsal. Please come ready to rehearse the full ceremony with all elements, including rings, vows, music (can be simulated if using live musicians), entrances, and readings.

Please bring your Marriage License to your rehearsal. This ensures that our team has it on hand for your ceremony and is not forgotten on the day of your wedding.

For rehearsals the day or evening before your ceremony: you may drop off and leave any materials overnight that can stay on the church premises, such as printed programs, decorations, or clothing to be worn by the bride or bridesmaids.

A staff member of The Story Church will be present during the rehearsal, however, we require that an additional wedding coordinator/planner (hired by the wedding party) be present to conduct the rehearsal in a timely manner.

II. Wedding Day

All participants must be at The Story Church at least one hour prior to the ceremony. If you are taking group photos on site, please arrive two hours before the ceremony. This must be communicated with your photography team.

All male participants and family members, outside of the bride and bridesmaids, must arrive in full dress. Only the bride and her bridal party are allowed to get ready on church premises. Bridal party should arrive with hair and makeup completed, due to space availability and constraints on site.

All personal items must be removed from the dressing areas within 90 minutes of the end of the ceremony. **The Story Church is not responsible for any lost items.**

Do not leave purses, jewelry, cameras or valuables unattended in the dressing areas or in parked cars in the church parking lot. **The Story Church does not assume responsibility for lost or stolen items.**

Please advise the wedding team of any special transportation arrangements from the wedding by limousine or bus, so that the appropriate measures can be taken to ensure that street traffic is not disrupted.

Informal Weddings

An Informal Wedding is a private ceremony, conducted by a Story pastor, and does not utilize the full services of a formal wedding as described above. The following policies and restrictions apply to informal weddings:

1. Informal Weddings are only available to Partners of The Story Church, or direct family members of Story Partners.
2. Those in attendance must be no more than 25 people, including the bride and groom.
3. Applications must be submitted at least 90 days prior to the date of the requested wedding date. The same restrictions apply for availability (outlined on page 5).
4. The total fee for an informal wedding is \$750 (deposit is \$375).

5. The only space accessible to the wedding party and guests is the Family Room and the Sanctuary. Rooms will not be available for getting ready on site.
6. No outside decorations are permitted for informal weddings, including but not limited to flower arrangements, candles, signage, guest books, or added furniture.
7. Audio and video recording is not available for informal weddings. However outside photography is allowed. Photographers may arrive up to 30 minutes before the ceremony and must be finished with their shooting 30 minutes after the ceremony ends.
8. The max amount of time for informal weddings, from arrival to departure, is 90 minutes.
9. There is NO rehearsal for Informal Weddings.
10. Please deliver your marriage license to the church the day before the wedding, or immediately upon arrival. Church staff is not responsible for picking up your license from an outside location.
11. No food, drink, alcohol, or smoking is allowed on the church premises.
12. Individuals requesting an informal wedding may be required to attend Merge premarital counseling, at the discretion of Story Pastors.

To Submit Your Wedding Application:

A 50% deposit (\$750 for regular ceremonies or \$375 for informal weddings) is required to reserve your wedding date and formalize your requested details. Final payments will be due 30 days prior to your confirmed date. If paying with cash or check, please submit payment along with the completed next two pages.

Printed applications can be dropped off at the church directly or mailed to:

The Story Church
ATTN: Wedding Coordinator
3223 Westheimer Rd.
Houston, TX 77098

To pay by credit card or other method of digital payment, [please use our online registration form](#) to apply in lieu of a printed application.

Application

Please complete both sides of this application and submit it directly to the Connections Director to begin the process of hosting a wedding at The Story Church. Our team will reach out to schedule an initial meeting to discuss your needs, answer any facility questions you may have, and lock in a date and time for both your wedding and rehearsal. **Application is due 6 months before the requested ceremony date. Informal ceremonies require an application to be submitted 90 days prior to the requested date.**

Bride

Full Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

First marriage for bride? _____ Yes _____ No

Active Partner of The Story Church? _____ Yes _____ No

If not a partner of The Story Church, please list an immediate family member who is a partner in good standing of the church: _____

Team/Group Involvement: _____

Groom

Full Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

First marriage for groom? _____ Yes _____ No

Active Partner of The Story Church? _____ Yes _____ No

If not a partner of The Story Church, please list an immediate family member who is a partner in good standing of the church: _____

Team/Group Involvement: _____

Wedding Details

Date 1st Choice: _____ 2nd Choice: _____

Time 1st Choice: _____ 2nd Choice: _____

Estimated # of guests: _____

Reception Location (if undecided, list top selections):

Requested Pastor: _____

2nd Choice: _____

*Our wedding team will be in touch with more information regarding officiant fees. If you'd like to use an outside minister, please provide their information below. Our team will approve them after consultation with the wedding team and Story pastors.

Full name: _____

Affiliation/Credentials: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Wedding Coordinator Contact Information

Full name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I acknowledge that I have read the Wedding Manual in full and will adhere to the guidelines and regulations set forth by The Story Church.

Signature

Today's Date