

ST. DAVID'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Procedures Regarding Witnessing & Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant



Dear Friends,

We welcome you to St. David's Church. It is with particular joy that we welcome those who feel called to have their union blessed at St. David's. This customary is designed to answer questions and to articulate our policies and procedures.

It is our hope that your planning and preparation are filled with joy. We wish to make your celebration a confirmation and strengthening of your love, and to prepare you for your life together.

It is our expectation that at least one member of the couple be an active member of St. David's, through regular attendance, involvement in Christian formation, and an annual pledge of financial support.

Please know that you will be held in the prayers of St. David's parish at the time of your union blessing.

May God's richest blessings be upon you now and always.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie L. Wright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Reverend Katie L. Wright
Associate Rector, *Locum Tenens*

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Beginning the Process

Those desiring to have their same-sex union blessed **must meet with one of the clergy of St. David's before a date can be placed on the parish calendar.** At this meeting, the officiating priest will answer any questions, set out the preparation process, and clarify the position of the Church regarding same-sex union blessings.

If either member of the couple has been previously divorced, specific requirements of the Church must be met before an Episcopal priest may perform the Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant. This includes the submission of a petition to the Bishop, a minimum of 60 days prior to the blessing. There is a questionnaire which must be completed by the couple and submitted by the officiating priest. The blessing date is not confirmed until the Bishop's response is received.

Union blessings may be scheduled at any time of the year except Lent. Only one union blessing may be scheduled at St David's on any one day.

The couple must meet with one of St. David's clergy to discuss their intention to have their union blessed at least ninety days in advance of their intended blessing date. The blessing date cannot be considered confirmed until it is on the priest's schedule and the church master calendar.

Evening blessings may begin no later than 6:00 p.m.

Parish Membership

For a Lifelong Union to be blessed at St David's one of the following conditions must be met.

1. One member of the couple is a baptized Christian who has been an active, attending, and pledging member of St. David's for at least six (6) months, and is in on-going Christian formation.
2. One member of the couple grew up attending St David's, and is an active, attending, and pledging member of another Episcopal parish outside of Austin.* (Couples living in Austin must be members of St. David's.)
3. Couples living outside of Austin who are active, attending, and pledging members of another Episcopal parish will be considered upon written request from the Rector of their parish to the Associate Rector of St. David's. *

** In these situations, there is an additional \$1,000 fee.*

Under certain circumstances, some exceptions to this policy may be made. Such exceptions may be considered after being discussed with the Associate Rector.

The Liturgy for Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant

At St. David's all union blessings conform to the liturgy from the Standing Committee on Liturgy and Music, which was approved at the 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church. The report provided by the Standing Committee and the approved liturgy can be found in the document called *I Will Bless You, and You Will Be a Blessing*, which are resources for same-sex union blessings. This document can be found on the St. David's web site (www.stdave.org) under Life Events and Union Blessings.

Two or more presenters, at least one of whom is baptized, who may be friends, parents, family members, or drawn from the parish, may present the couple to the officiant/presider and those at the service.

Parish Coordinator

St. David's has a Coordinator to assist the couple with the plans and details of their union blessing from the day the blessing is put on the church calendar to the day of the event. She will advise the couple about altar flowers, photography allowed (during, before, and after the service), suitable music for the service, use of the parking garage, and parish personnel fees. The Coordinator works closely with the couple and officiating priest and will be present at both the rehearsal and union blessing.

Union Blessing Service Bulletin

Your service bulletin must be reviewed and approved by the priest who will officiate or preside at the service prior to the printing of the bulletins. Please allow some extra time in your schedule for this to take place.

Union Blessing Service Music

The music you select for your union blessing must reflect a Christian understanding of the lifelong commitment being made as stated in the "I Will Bless You, and You Will Be a Blessing" document. The director of music, organist, or officiating priest can help guide you in this matter. For your convenience, the music staff has prepared a recording and an accompanying list of titles of music, which is appropriate for union blessings. Digital files are available from the Parish Coordinator. See Appendix A for a list of music from which you can select, or you may choose anything from *The Hymnal 1982*.

When the organ is to be used in a union blessing service, St. David's coordinator will arrange for an organist for a fee. See Appendix B for amount. Other musicians may be employed for additional fees and prior approval.

Union Blessing Service Flowers

Flowers and other decorations must be kept in their appropriate liturgical place. We want the flowers to help make the union blessing service a beautiful experience for you and to compliment the worship space appropriately.

In the Historic Church, the altar will be vested in white hangings. Flowers on the altar are your gift to the church, and remain on the Historic or Bethell altar for Sunday services, depending upon the space in which your union is blessed. The Sunday bulletin will include a notation that the flowers are given in celebration of the blessing of your union, and you will be remembered in the Prayers of the People. Following the Sunday services, the Flower Guild will take the flowers to members of the congregation who are ill or living in nursing homes here in Austin. This practice of taking the Altar flowers to “shut-ins” brings the joy of your union blessing service to many people who are not able to attend Church.

We require that Westbank Flower Market, our preferred florist, be used. They know the specifics of the vases and space used, and they are familiar with what will work best in the space. They are located at 5320 Bee Caves Road, Austin, TX 78746 and can be contacted at 512-327-3374.

If your budget for flowers is limited, please do not hesitate to talk to the Coordinator. Parishioners often want to give flowers for the Sunday morning following your union blessing, and we will try to have their arrangements match any colors you prefer. We want your service to be beautiful, so please be candid with us concerning your situation, since artificial or silk flowers cannot be used.

Union Blessing Service Photos

A union blessing is a liturgical service and must be treated with due reverence. Our guidelines are as follows:

1. Photographs can be taken **prior to the service** and/or **following the service**. They must be completed **thirty minutes** before the service is to begin. No more than **thirty minutes** will be allowed for photographs following the service.
2. Photographs may not be posed inside the altar rail.
3. During the procession, recession, and service the photographer must stand behind the last pew of the center section to take all photographs. Flash photography may be used during the procession and recession. **No flash photography** is permitted during the union blessing service.

4. Silent equipment may be used in one location (either time-exposure and/or videotape) with the approval of the officiant and the coordinator.
5. No furniture in the church may be moved.
6. If the photographer has any questions, they should contact the Coordinator.

Union Blessing Service Video

Again, a union blessing is a liturgical service and must be treated with due reverence. The guidelines at St. David's Episcopal Church are as follows:

1. Silent equipment may be used in **ONE** location, which has been approved by the officiant. Permission for any additional video equipment must be approved by the officiant prior to the day of the service.
2. All equipment must be set up thirty minutes before the service is to begin
3. No lights or headsets may be used
4. No furniture in the church may be moved
5. If the videographer has any questions, he or she is to contact the officiant.
6. If the videographer has not worked at St. David's before, he or she **must** talk to the Coordinator prior to the day of the Blessing to discuss these guidelines.

Union Blessing Service Rehearsal

The rehearsal is a preparation for the union blessing service and is normally held the day before the service itself. One of St. David's parish priests will be in charge of the rehearsal. The priest may ask the couple to arrange a walk-through prior to the rehearsal. Presenters and all others that are part of the service are asked to attend the Union Blessing Service Rehearsal.

The couple is expected to bring their blessing programs and final payment to the rehearsal.

Generally, rehearsals begin between 5:00 and 6:00 PM to allow time to complete the rehearsal, if there is to be a dinner afterward.

Rehearsal Dinner and Reception

If you are interested in having your rehearsal dinner or reception at St. David's please contact our Director of Special Events as early as possible. The Director of Special Events can advise you about the table service and furnishings available.

Special Points

In the union blessing service bulletin, we will ask that all pagers and cell phones be turned to “silent” mode or turned off, and we will ask that all guests refrain from flash photography.

We ask that all participants and guests wait until after the service to consume any alcoholic beverages they may have brought with them for celebration.

No rice, confetti, bird seed, flower petals, or other materials may be thrown in the Church or on the Church grounds.

Parking is always free to visitors and members of St David’s. Please speak to the coordinator about whether vouchers will be needed for the guests.

Appendix A – Union Blessing Service Music

Music Title	Composer	Hymns – from the 1982 Hymnal	
1. Trumpet Voluntary in D	Jeremiah Clarke	1. Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee	376
2. Trumpet Tune in D	Henry Purcell	2. All Creatures of Our God and King	400
3. <i>Rondeau</i> from Premiere Suite	Jean Mouret	3. Love Divine, All Loves	657
4. March	Henry Purcell	4. Holy, Holy, Holy	362
5. Hornpipe from <u>Water Music</u>	G. F. Handel	5. When in Our Music	420
6. <i>Allegro vivace</i> , Suite in D, 1st Movt.	G. F. Handel	6. Praise My Soul the King	410
7. <i>Allegro vivace</i> , Suite in D, 2nd Movt.	G. F. Handel		
8. March I, Suite in D	G. F. Handel		
9. March II, Suite in D	G. F. Handel		
10. <i>Maestoso</i> from Heroic Music	Georg Telemann		
11. <i>Con bravura</i> from Heroic Music	Georg Telemann		
12. Trumpet March	J. B. Lully		
13. Trumpet Aria	Henry Purcell		
14. Trumpet Voluntary	John Stanley		
15. Sinfonia	Henry Purcell		
16. March	J. S. Bach		
17. <i>Finale</i> from Royal Fireworks Suite	G. F. Handel		
18. Psalm 19	B. Marcello		
19. <i>La Marche</i>	G. F. Handel		
20. Prelude to <i>Te Deum</i>	M. Charpentier		
21. <i>Rigaudon</i>	André Campré		
22. The Emperor's Fanfare	Antonio Soler		
23. Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	J. S. Bach		
24. Crown Imperial March	William Walton		
ORGAN SELECTIONS:			
1. <i>Toccata</i> from Fifth Organ Symphony	Charles Widor		
2. Prelude in Classic Style	Gordon Young		
3. Prelude No. 1 in C Major	J. S. Bach		
4. <i>Berceuse</i>	Louis Vierne		
5. Now Thank We All Our God	S. Karg-Elert		
6. Sheep May Safely Graze	J. S. Bach		
7. <i>Allegro</i> from Organ Concerto No. 8	G. F. Handel		
8. <i>Sinfonia</i>	G. F. Handel		

Appendix B – Fee Schedule

Historic Church Wedding Fees

Facility & Staff	\$ 850
Wedding Coordinator	\$ 500
Altar Flowers	\$ 150
Total	\$1500

Bethell Hall Wedding Fees

Facility & Staff	\$ 850
Wedding Coordinator	\$ 500
Altar Flowers	\$ 90
Total	\$1440

Additional Fees

Organist	\$ 400 <i>(Includes Ceremony & Rehearsal)</i>
Additional musicians	TBD
Additional flowers	TBD

Please Note:

- The use of additional musicians and/or flowers will change the fee structure. Please consult the Wedding Coordinator with questions.
- The clergy are not included in the fee for having your union blessed at St David's. It is customary to offer an honorarium to them. Please ask the coordinator if you have any questions regarding this honorarium.
- All payments must be received no later than the rehearsal.