

*Weddings at
Visitors Chapel A.M.E.
Church*

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Welcome

We welcome you to Visitors Chapel AME Church. Our ministers, staff and wedding guild members are eager to assist you in making your wedding day special and your marriage strong. As you might know the first steps toward a joyful wedding need to be taken long before the processional notes sound. We hope this booklet will help you in that planning.

What is a Wedding?

Marriage is a “gift God has given all human kind for the well-being of the entire human family. For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God”. The wedding is a worship service: God calls a man and a woman together in holy marriage. Marriage is instituted of God, regulated by His commandments, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and is meant to be held in honor among people.

A church wedding, therefore, is first and foremost a worship service. Christ, not the bridal couple, is the focus of the service. In orienting ourselves to God, it is our hope to ensure that each wedding is not only happy and joyful, but one of deep spiritual meaning, one that sets the foundation for a lasting marriage.

Preparing for Marriage Planning a Wedding

Our hope for you is more than a nice wedding. Our hope is for a strong marriage that brings joy to you and those you love and honors God Almighty. To assist in this, all couples must meet with the minister for premarital counseling. Couples will ordinarily meet twice with the pastor, with the first meeting occurring at least ninety days prior to the wedding. The marriage of any couple is left to the discretion of the pastor.

Of course, it is hard to plan a wedding without a date! All weddings at Visitors Chapel AME Church are scheduled and arranged through the pastor. After contacting the church office, the church secretary and director of music will work with the pastor in order to set the date for the service. Weddings may be held any day of the week, but are subject to the availability of the sanctuary and other scheduled events. No weddings are scheduled between Christmas and New Year's Day or during Holy Week. Couples requesting a service within ninety days will meet with the pastor before setting a date for the ceremony.

The pastor is in charge of and will lead all weddings and rehearsals along with the bride and wedding planner. If you wish to invite others to assist in the ceremony, make your desires known to the pastor who, in turn, will extend the invitation to the guest.

A marriage license needs to be obtained by the wedding couple and provided to the church office one week prior to the service.

Planning the Wedding

Soon after meeting the pastor, you should contact the director of music. He will guide you in selecting music for the wedding. Special care is made to assure that music in the service is suitable. The pastor, has final approval of all music played or sung. If another musician is desired, the invitation must be extended through the pastor and director of music. Guest musicians, vocalists and instrumentalists shall be guided by the policies of Visitors Chapel AME Church and are expected to work amiably with our church staff.

Every wedding at Visitors Chapel AME Church will include readings of scripture, pastoral reflections, an exchange of vows, and prayer. By your second meeting, you and the pastor will have settled on elements of the service. The pastor will provide options for you to consider in regards to vows and scripture.

After the bride has met with the minister and confirmed a date for the wedding ceremony, the secretary will contact her to begin the process of planning some of the details of the service.

It is the bride or wedding planner responsibility to provide information on the wedding service, to determine placement of the wedding party, to clarify policies for sanctuary adornments, and to assist the bride with the wedding program. When considering children as part of the wedding party, please consult with the pastor and/or the wedding planner. Young children over the age of four years are better attendants.

Preparation of the Sanctuary

Visitors Chapel AME Church sanctuary has a seating capacity of 275.

Fresh flowers may be placed on either side of the front of the chancel to the left and right of the lectern and pulpit, respectively. A low arrangement may also be placed on the flower stand behind the communion table. Bows or small bouquets of flowers, attached with chenille stems, may be used on the pew ends to indicate the reserved sections for family members of the wedding couple.

It is the responsibility of the bridal party to provide their own Candelabras, Chase Candles, and Brass Candlesticks. Only drip-less candles are permitted in the sanctuary.

Should you choose to light a unity candle during the ceremony, the bridal party is responsible shall provide the table and candlesticks. You will need to provide drip-less candles.

If other adornments are desired, you will need to consult with the pastor before making the arrangements with the florist.

If you desire to leave flowers in the sanctuary for the following Sunday morning worship service, an appropriate announcement will be placed in the church bulletin honoring the wedding couple. The church secretary needs to be informed one week prior to the wedding, so the announcement is in Sunday's bulletin following the day of the wedding.

The Day of the Wedding

The church is opened two and a half hours prior to the wedding. Groomsmen and ushers are expected to arrive one hour before the service, dressed in the attire for the day.

Instruct your florist to deliver your bouquet, the bouquets for your attendants, and the boutonnieres for the groomsmen to the Lynn Chancellor Fellowship Hall. It is the bridal party responsibility to have someone pin boutonnieres onto the left lapels of the groomsmen as they arrive for the ceremony.

In order to provide a respectful and timely service, our church staff will assist you in keeping track of the time. Grandmothers of the wedding couple will be seated at 10 minutes before the hour. Mothers will be seated at 5 minutes before the hour.

Use of other facilities

Use of the facilities for the reception should be discussed with the minister.

Symbols of departure are prohibited from being cast upon the wedding couple inside Visitors Chapel AME Church. Bird seed is a good item of choice for outside celebrations.

Please have the bridal party meet with the church secretary prior to the wedding so policies governing the use of the facilities are understood by everyone.

Other items

Photography

Photographs and use of video cameras by guests attending the wedding is prohibited during the service. The wedding couple should ensure that guests, family members and others in attendance are informed of this policy. Professional photographs will be performed in a professional manner. Photographers may take flash pictures in the church before the processional, during the wedding, during the recessional, and after the service. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make sure Flash pictures do not interfere with Videotaping. Videotaping is allowed. Please share this information with your photographer.

Alcohol

It has been an established policy of Visitors Chapel AME Church that food and beverages are prohibited from being served and consumed in the church. Use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in church buildings and on church grounds.

Cleaning up

It is your responsibility to clear the church of your property, personal items of your wedding party and guests as well as appointments and flowers. Personal property and sanctuary adornments must be cleared before leaving the church property that day.

Schedule of Fees and Honoraria

Visitors Chapel AME Church has adopted the following schedule of fees and honoraria for wedding ceremonies. Payment needs to be made to Visitors AME Church three weeks prior to the ceremony.

Church Fees

Visitors Chapel AME Church provides a lovely setting for couples who are not members of our congregation and wish to be married in our sanctuary. Requests to reserve the church by a wedding couple who are non-members of the church may be made at any time, however, such requests cannot be confirmed on the church calendar until six months prior to the date of the wedding.

Wedding fee for members.....50.00
For wedding and reception \$100.00

Wedding fee for non-members \$200.00
For wedding and reception \$250.00

Honoraria

The fee for the Director of Music shall be determined when the director meets with the wedding couple.

Pastor Honorarium fee for members.....100.00

Pastor Honorarium fee for non-members
\$200.00

Wedding Programs

If desired, the church will prepare and print a wedding program for a fee of \$30.00 per 100. Programs will be printed on ecru paper, and will follow a standard format. To see an example, contact the church secretary or Women Missionary President Brenda Waters.

Church Directory

Church Office

Location	518 N. Estrella St El Paso, Texas 79903
Mailing Address	Post Office Box 3042 El Paso, Texas 79923
Telephone	(915) 565-2370
FAX	(915) 852-0674
E-mail	visitorschapelame.com

Staff

Senior Pastor	Jack D. Fields Sr.
Associate Pastor	Kelvin Alexander
Director of Music	Daniel Bentler
Youth Director	
Financial Administrator	Davalyn Alexander
Church Secretary	Billie Duncan
Steward-Pro Tem	David Wiggins Sr
