BRIDGE STREET
AME CHURCH

WEDDING GUIDE

MAILING ADDRESS

277 STUYVESANT AVENUE | BROOKLYN, NY 11221
718.452.3936 VOICE 718.453.4134 FAX

EMAIL ADDRESS

INFO@BRIDGESTREETBROOKLYN.ORG

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday-Friday	8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m.
Saturday	8:00a.m. – 3:00p.m.
Sunday	8:00a.m. – 3:00p.m.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Rev. David B. Cousin, Sr., Pastor
Rev. Valerie E. Cousin, Executive Minister

BRIDGE STREET WEDDING GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Wedding Couple's Personal Information Form……... Page 3

Couple's Ceremony Information……..……Page 4

Bridge Street Wedding Guidelines……..……...Page 5-10

What Should I Do First……... Page 5
Securing the Wedding Date…….. Page 5
Pre-marital Counseling…… Page 5
Scheduling the Wedding Rehearsal(s)……. Page 6
Planning for the Rehearsal…… Page 6
Flowers & Decorations…… Page 6
Music and Musicians……... Page 7
Audio//Video Taping of Ceremony…… Page 7
Photographing Your Ceremony……. Page 7
Wedding Officiant…… Page 7
The Wedding License……. Page 7
The Sanctuary……..... Page 8
Preparing for the Ceremony…….. Page 8
The Ceremony……. Page 8
The Wedding Program…… Page 9
Sample Order of Service……. Page 9
Parking // Traffic Assistance…….. Page 9
Cancellation……..... Page 9
Wedding Fee Structure / Contract…….. Page 10

Payment Summary……Page 11

To reserve your special date,
Please Complete, Fax or Email:

The Wedding Couple's Personal Information Form
The Wedding Couple's Ceremony Information Form

718.453.4134 FAX | BRIDGESTREETCHURCH@GMAIL.COM

WEDDING COUPLE'S PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

BRIDE'S INFORMATION

_____

Last Name First Name Middle Name

Address: _____

Street Address Apt. #

_____

City State Zip Code

Phone: _(_____)_____(_____)_____(_____)_____

Home Work Cell

Email: _____

GROOM'S INFORMATION

_____

Last Name First Name Middle Name

Address: _____

Street Address Apt. #

_____

City State Zip Code

Phone: ___(_____)_____(_____)_____(_____)_____

Home Work Cell

Email: _____

POST WEDDING MAILING ADDRESS

Address: _____

Street Address Apt. #

_____

City State Zip Code

Member of Bridge Street: ❑Yes ❑No Date Joined:

WEDDING COUPLE'S CEREMONY INFORMATION FORM

Wedding Date:_____ **Wedding Time**: _____

1. Wedding Rehearsal(s): ❑Yes ❑No If Yes, how many rehearsals: ❑1 ❑2 ❑3

2. Rehearsal Dates: **#1**_____ **#2**_____ **#3**_____
   Day/Time Day/Time Day/Time

Please note that weekday wedding rehearsals must end by 8:45pm: NO EXCEPTIONS!

WEDDING PARTY

In wedding party_____Bridesmaids_____Groomsmen_____Flowergirls_____Ringbearers_____

CEREMONY

1. Will couple use a professional wedding planner: ❑Yes ❑No If yes, please list information below.

_____(_____)_____
Wedding Planner's Name Phone Number Email Address

2. Will flowers be placed in the sanctuary: ❑Yes ❑No (If yes, please list florist information below)

_____(_____)_____
Florist Name Phone Number Email Address

3. Will the sanctuary be decorated: ❑Yes ❑No
   Please do not put nails, pins, glue, tacks or staples in or on the walls, pews or the furniture. Read Section VI. Flowers and Decorations for guidelines on how to decorate the sanctuary for your special day.

4. Will couple need a musician: ❑Yes ❑No Will couple need a vocalist: ❑Yes ❑No
   How many selections will the musician and vocalist be required to render:_____

5. Will couple use unity candles: ❑Yes ❑No
   (If yes, couple must provide candles for ceremony)
   Will couple jump the broom: ❑Yes ❑No
   (If yes, couple must provide broom for ceremony)

6. Will couple celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion: ❑Yes ❑No

7. Will ceremony be: (✓ all that apply) ❑Photographed ❑Video-taped ❑Audio-taped
   (If yes, please refer to our Fee Structure in this Guide)

BRIDGE STREET WEDDING GUIDELINES

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding. We share your excitement about your engagement and wedding! This can be the most fulfilling relationship you've ever known. It is all a part of God's plan, "A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." Even though couples try really hard to become united in oneness of mind and spirit, the crippling divorce rates and separations of relationships in this culture make it extremely difficult for married couples to leave and cleave. Because of this, it is our desire to do all that we can to equip you for a successful marriage.

We know that the next months of planning and preparation will be packed with anxiety and excitement. We are pleased that you have chosen Bridge Street AME Church to help you plan for this exciting occasion. We will work hard to make your wedding the beautiful, momentous occasion we know you want it to be.

To accomplish this, we have developed the following guidelines to assist you and your guests in creating the perfect experience for your special day. Carefully read through this booklet to familiarize yourself with our wedding policy. Should you have questions about anything contained in this booklet, please contact the Church's Executive Assistant at (718) 452.3936 or via email at info@bridgestreetbrooklyn.org. Your wedding day is important to you – and us – and we want to provide you with excellent support and service!

I. WHAT SHOULD I DO FIRST

Now that you have made a decision to officially unite together as a couple under the civil laws of the state, you will need to:

- ✓ Decide on a date for the wedding.
- ✓ Contact your church to schedule an appointment for pre-marital counseling.
- ✓ Get the wedding date approved by the pastor of the church where the wedding will be performed.
- ✓ Complete and submit wedding contract with non-refundable deposit to secure church.
- ✓ Secure a wedding planner.

II. SECURING THE WEDDING DATE

Please make sure that you have received approval for your wedding date by the pastor of the church where you want your wedding performed prior to announcing or advertising the date publicly. If you plan to have your ceremony performed at Bridge Street, the wedding application and the $100 non-refundable deposit will secure your wedding date on the church's calendar, and must be paid before approval can be granted for use of the Church's facilities. All Saturday weddings must be scheduled prior to 4:00p.m. and conclude by 6:00p.m. to allow time for clean up and set-up for Sunday worship services.

III. PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

Marriage is a covenant between the couple and God, and is considered one of the most sacred unions a couple can engage. It is for this reason that we take the marriage covenant seriously and believe it to be the responsibility of the church, most specifically the pastoral leadership, to counsel couples on this sacred union. At Bridge Street, we will not marry couples without conducting a minimum of (2) two-hour pre-marital counseling sessions, so please do not ask us to perform your wedding absent the pre-marital counseling. The basic wedding fee covers the two pre-marital counseling sessions.

IV. SCHEDULING THE WEDDING REHEARSAL[S]

Wedding rehearsals can be held during the week between 9am - 8:45pm or on Saturdays from 8am to 3pm; however, they must be scheduled with the Executive Assistant prior to being held. Requests for rehearsals outside of those timeframes will result in additional costs to the couple to cover overtime costs for staff.

Rehearsals cannot be scheduled on holidays as the church is closed. The following holidays are observed by Bridge Street AME Church: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Easter Weekend, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, or on a weekend when conferences or retreats require use of the Church's sanctuary. *In special circumstances, the pastor may grant couples to conduct rehearsals on Sundays after the morning worship service; however, prior approval must be received from the pastor.*

V. PLANNING FOR THE REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal is important to creating a perfect wedding experience. Therefore, all members of the wedding party should be present and on time for the wedding rehearsal. The wedding party consists of: the bride, groom, parents of the bride and groom, flower girl, ring bearer, maid of honor, matron of honor, bridesmaids, best man, and groomsmen.

The rehearsal is under the direction of the Church's Executive Assistant and shall begin and end promptly on the times designated in this contract. Wedding rehearsals typically last about one to two hours if all members of the wedding party arrive on time. Under no circumstances shall the wedding rehearsal be allowed to last beyond the 8:45p.m. time limit. Therefore, it is advisable for the bride and groom to encourage all members of the wedding party to arrive on time. Attendance of the musician and vocalist at the rehearsal is *optional* and should therefore be arranged with the contracted musician and vocalist prior to the rehearsal should their presence be required.

PLEASE NOTE: NO FOOD OR DRINKS ARE ALLOWED IN THE SANCTUARY AT ANY TIME; NOT DURING THE REHEARSAL NOR DURING THE WEDDING. THE BRIDE AND GROOM ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SHARING THIS INFORMATION WITH THEIR GUESTS AND WEDDING PARTY.

VI. FLOWERS & DECORATIONS

If you have identified a florist for your special day and require access to the church sanctuary to plan where to place your flowers, please contact the Executive Assistant at info@bridgestreetbrooklyn.org or at (718) 452.3936 to arrange for the said visit. If you decide to light unity candles or candelabra, they must be provided. Please advise your florist that a covering must be placed under each candelabra to protect the furniture and carpet from wax drippings.

Flowers may be delivered on the day of the wedding at least two hours prior to the ceremony. Flowers may not be placed on furniture or musical instruments to avoid water damage. Confetti, rice, birdseed, and similar items may not be dropped on the floor by a "Flower Girl" or anyone else. Flower petals may be dropped by a "Flower Girl" ***only if*** the bride and groom provide a carpet runner.

If your ceremony will take place during a season when the church is decorated, such as Christmas or Easter, you are asked to plan the placement of your decorations and flowers around the decorations already displayed in the church, as they are to be left in place during the wedding.

Please ***do not*** put nails, pins, glue, tacks or staples in or on the walls, pews or the furniture. Tape is not to be used on the walls or furniture, since tape may cause damage to these items. Additionally, no tape or other method of marking positions on the carpet or flooring should be used which would leave gum, adhesive or any other material on the floor covering. ***All decorations must be removed by the wedding planner, wedding party or bride and groom immediately following the wedding ceremony; otherwise, they will be discarded by custodial staff.***

VII. MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

Christian weddings are an opportunity to not only show God's grace through the union of two persons committing themselves in holy matrimony, but it is also a time to experience God's grace through the liturgy and music that comprise the ceremony. As such, only music that is appropriate for a worship service is permitted during the ceremony. Since Bridge Street's musicians are familiar with what is appropriate sanctuary music, we prefer that you utilize our staff musicians. However, if you decide to use a non-staff musician, please make sure that all music selections are approved by the Pastor prior to being finalized.

Use of recorded music is permitted for use in the sanctuary, but must be arranged with the Minister of Music or her/his designee. If you contract with one of the professionally trained vocalists or musicians at Bridge Street, you are responsible for making payment directly to them. Their fee is not part of the basic wedding fee. Please keep in mind that prolonged or extra rehearsals may result in additional costs to the bride and groom by the musician and/or vocalist.

VIII. AUDIO // VIDEO TAPING OF CEREMONY

Although Bridge Street has a media ministry to audio record Sunday morning worship services, staff does not work on Saturdays, unless otherwise contracted. If you would like to have a member of the media ministry audio or video tape your ceremony, please advise us and we will arrange for you to contract with the appropriate person. **Only church approved sound techs will be allowed in the sound booth during a service or ceremony**. If you contract with a staff videographer, please keep in mind that Bridge Street does not guarantee the quality, content or professional nature of the audio/video work performed by the contractor.

IX. PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR CEREMONY

If you desire for your ceremony to be photographed and do not have a photographer, Bridge Street can provide you with a list of photographers that you may contract for your ceremony. However, Bridge Street does not endorse nor guarantee the quality, content or professional nature of the photographer's work.

Photographers hired for the wedding ceremony must confer with the pastor before the wedding to receive guidance concerning appropriate times for taking photos before, during and after the ceremony. It is generally preferred that photos of the couple and wedding party be taken prior to the ceremony. Photos taken after the ceremony should be limited to thirty (30) minutes if a reception will follow the ceremony.

The photographer is not allowed to stand on pews or sanctuary furniture to take photos of the ceremony, nor should the photographer position their equipment in the aisles during the processional/recessional. No flash pictures may be taken during the ceremony itself as the flash has a tendency to temporary blind the sight of the person performing the ceremony. Flood lights, flashbulbs, electronic flash units or other types of artificial light cannot be used during the ceremony

X. WEDDING OFFICIANT

The pastor of Bridge Street AME Church or his designee officiates at all weddings held at Bridge Street AME Church. If you would like for other clergy to participate in the wedding ceremony, they will have to be approved by the pastor prior to the ceremony. Ethically, no minister should officiate over services in another minister's pulpit or church unless such participation has been approved by the pastor of that parish prior to the service or ceremony.

XI. THE WEDDING LICENSE

By law, your wedding license must be obtained in the state of New York in order for the ceremony to be performed at Bridge Street AME Church. The officiator of the marriage must be licensed and physically see and validate the marriage license ***before*** the ceremony can be performed.

XII. THE SANCTUARY

The sanctuary is equipped with audio recording equipment and a sound system. There is also a piano, pipe and Hammond organ and a Motif keyboard. With three rows of pews on the lower level separated by two aisles, and a wrap around balcony on the upper level, Bridge Street's sanctuary seats approximately 500 people. The Mansfield E. Jackson Chapel is located adjacent to the sanctuary, and seats between 50-70 people. It is typically used for overflow seating should the number of guests exceed the sanctuary capacity.

The sanctuary pews are covered in wine/burgundy fabric with dark, almost black, wood finishing. The sanctuary is handicap accessible from the Jefferson Avenue side of the building.

XIII. PREPARING FOR THE CEREMONY

There are several rooms within proximity of the sanctuary that can be used by the bride and the bridal party to get dressed prior to the wedding. Arrangements for use of those rooms must be made with the Executive Assistant prior to the wedding.

The Church is not responsible for any personal property of the guests, vendors, florists, musicians or any contractors. The Church is not responsible for physical or personal liability should injury occur in or on the property of Bridge Street AME Church.

Please note that the following activities / behavior is prohibited by the bride and groom, their wedding party and guests while on the premises of Bridge Street AME Church:

- **NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES** or containers on church property.
- **NO** member of the wedding party under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs will be permitted to participate in the rehearsal or wedding.
- **NO SMOKING** is allowed anywhere on church property.
- **NO HELIUM BALLOONS** allowed in the sanctuary due to the high ceilings.
- **NO** rice, confetti, birdseed, and like materials may be thrown on church property.

XIV. THE CEREMONY

Your ceremony should be conducted in an atmosphere of spiritual dignity and reverence to God. To ensure that atmosphere, no weddings shall take place in the Church, except where an ordained minister is requested by the contracting parties and this shall be with the approval of the pastor. The Pastor shall use his own discretion about performing or refusing to perform wedding ceremonies. The Pastor shall see that the weddings meet the standards and ideals for a Church wedding and emphasize the sacredness of marriage; that it glorifies God as the founder of the home; that the ceremony will be one that honors the dignity of the Church and emprises the holiness of the occasion.

XV. THE WEDDING PROGRAM

The layout and printing of 50-100 black and white wedding bulletins is included in the basic wedding fee. Since Bridge Street AME Church is not a professional printer, should you desire to have bulletins in color or with complex designs, you will need to contract with an outside printer.

XVI. SAMPLE ORDER OF SERVICE

- Prelude
- Procession
- Prayer
- Solo *(Optional)*
- Scripture Readings
  - Old Testament
  - New Testament
- Wedding Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Solo *(Optional)*
- Lighting of Unity Candles *(Optional)*
- Pronouncement of Marriage
- Sacrament of Communion *(Optional)*
- Introduction of Newly Married Couple
- Jumping the Broom *(Optional)*
- Recessional

XVII. PARKING // TRAFFIC ASSISTANCE

Parking assistance is generally provided for Sunday services; however the church does not have resources to assist in traffic control or parking assistance during special services such as a wedding. In rare circumstances, such as the wedding of a high profile member of the church or community, traffic assistance may be provided by the 81st police precinct; however, Bridge Street does not coordinate that service. On a case by case basis, a limited number of orange cones can be placed in front of 277 Stuyvesant Avenue to reserve parking for the bride and groom's limo and persons who are physically challenged.

XVIII. CANCELLATION

If, for any reason, the ceremony has to be cancelled, and the couple did not attend either of the two pre-marital counseling sessions, a refund of $700 ($300 *for active members*) will be refunded to the person who paid the fee. The $100 deposit is non-refundable. ***An active member is defined as those members of Bridge Street Church who regularly attend worship services and who have financially contributed, on a consistent basis, to the work of the church within the last six months to one year.***

If the couple attended only <u>one</u> of the two pre-marital counseling sessions, one-half of the $400 pre-marital counseling fee plus $300 of the facility fee will be refunded; the $100 deposit is non-refundable.

If the couple attended <u>both</u> pre-marital counseling sessions, only $300 of the facility fee will be refunded to the person who paid the fee; $0 will be refunded to active members since they are exempt from paying the facilities fee.

Please Note: Bridge Street AME Church reserves the right to cancel any and all activities, events, and functions before or during the program that are not, in our opinion, in compliance with the tenets of this Agreement.

XIX. WEDDING FEE STRUCTURE / CONTRACT

The administrative and ministerial staff at Bridge Street AME Church is pleased to assist you in the planning of your special day. Listed below are the fees associated with conducting and facilitating a wedding at our facility.
The basic wedding fee of $800 *(for inactive/non-members)* **or $400** *(active members)* **includes**:

1) Set up and clean up of the sanctuary;
2) Two mandatory 2-hour counseling sessions;
3) Officiating at the ceremony; and
4) Printing 50-100 copies of a basic black-and-white wedding program.

A non-refundable deposit of $100 will reserve the date and time requested for your wedding. The final payment of $700 (for inactive/non-members) or $300 (for active members) is due at the last counseling session; otherwise, the date will be forfeited. Fees are payable by cash, check or money order (made payable to "Bridge Street AME church").

Persons contracted to plan the wedding or perform professional services [such as musicians, vocalists, videographers] are to be paid directly by the couple; such fees are not part of the $800[$400 for active members] basic wedding fee.

Please Note: An active member is defined as those members of Bridge Street Church who regularly attend worship services and who have financially contributed, on a consistent basis, to the work of the church within the last six months to one year.

The following fees apply:	**Active Member**	**Non-Member & Inactive Member**
Use of Sanctuary	No Fee	$400.00
Clergy Honorarium (counseling & ceremony)	$400.00[1]	$400.00[1]
Pianist/Organist	$150.00	$150.00
Soloist/Vocalist	See Below[2]	See Below[2]
Video/Audio Recording of Service	See Below[3]	See Below[3]
Use of Fellowship Hall (2-3 hours)	No Fee	$250.00
Use of Projector (during ceremony)	No Fee	$100.00

[1]The $400 honorarium includes two mandatory 2-hour counseling sessions and officiating at the wedding ceremony. Checks should be made payable to the minister conducting the ceremony. If other clergy are asked to participate in the ceremony, a separate honorarium should be made payable them.

[2] The fee for professional vocalists is $100 per selection. Checks should be paid directly to the vocalist. If the family desires to contract with another vocalist, they are free to do so.

[3] The fee for video/audio recording of wedding ceremonies must be negotiated with and paid directly to the videographer.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

We agree to the fees, dates, and guidelines set forth in this contract and accept responsibility for any damages, and costs associated with extended rehearsal time or extra clean up of the facility that is directly related to our wedding rehearsal(s) and ceremony. We understand that Bridge Street AME Church reserves the right to cancel any and all activities, events, and functions before or during the program that are not, in their opinion, in compliance with the tenets of this Agreement.

Bride's Name (Printed)	**Bride's Signature** Date
Groom's Name (Printed)	**Groom's Signature** Date
Church Representative's Name (Printed)	**Church Representatives Signature** Date

BRIDGE STREET AME CHURCH

PAYMENT SUMMARY

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

		Inactive/Non-Members	Active Members
Basic Wedding Fee		**$800.00**	**$400.00**
Includes:			
Use of Sanctaury:	$400.00[1]		
Clergy Honorarium (counseling & ceremony)	$400.00		
Non-Refundable Deposit (Due at the first counseling session)		**($100.00)**	**($100.00)**
Balance of Wedding Fee Due (Due at the second counseling session)		**$700.00**	**$300.00**

[1]Active members are exempt from paying this fee. An active member is defined as those members of Bridge Street Church who regularly attend worship services and who have financially contributed, on a consistent basis, to the work of the church within the last six months to one year.

Please Note: Fees and honorariums for contractors such as the musicians, vocalists, wedding planner, videographer, photographer, etc. are a separate fee from the Basic Wedding Fee and must be paid directly to the contractors performing the related services.

$100 NON-REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT TO RESERVE WEDDING DATE:

Name of Bridge Street Staff Receiving Deposit _____ **Signature of Bridge Street Staff Receiving Deposit** _____ **Date**

$700 ($300/ACTIVE MEMBERS) BALANCE DUE FOR BASIC WEDDING FEE:

Name of Bridge Street Staff Receiving Balance _____ **Signature of Bridge Street Staff Receiving Balance** _____ **Date**