

General Policies and Procedures

Office Hours

The administrative hours of the pastor are 9:00 am until 2:00 pm Monday through Thursday. Appointments are scheduled through the office. Persons may contact the office (313-895-4800) or e-mail (st.stephen.ame@att.net). Business is not conducted on Sunday out of respect for the worship experiences. Business matters are to be discussed during the regular office hours and not on Sunday.

Members are advised to contact the pastor and the church office before scheduling an event. Forms are located in the church office regarding the scheduling of weddings, funerals or other events to be held at the church.

Wedding Policy

The wedding ceremony is a blessed occasion requiring attention and prayer. Persons are encouraged to consult with the pastor (or if he/she is unavailable the church's wedding ministry/coordinator) concerning questions upon the ceremony. It is empowering to know the significance of "what we do before we do it."

- Contact the Church and pastor. Both the wedding parties and the Directress should do this. Arrange for a time to meet with the pastor at the church.
- Schedule date and time on church calendar to determine and confirm availability of pastor BEFORE any announcements go forth.
- Plan on and schedule times for at least three (3) Pre-marital advice sessions with the pastor.
- Submit musical selections, alternate vows, requests for communion, unity candle, or "jumping the broom" to pastor for approval *at least thirty days prior to ceremony*.
- Submit payment of appropriate fees (pastor, organist and janitorial service) *at least thirty days prior to ceremony*.

Funeral/Home going Service

No one is ever prepared to handle the loss of a loved one, or even plan the home going service. In the event of the passing of a loved one, please contact the church and the pastor. Allow your church family to walk with you through the grieving process. To assist in the planning of the home going service, the church will provide an outline of the order of service, as well as information pertaining to the repast. Policies regarding the repast and fees associated with the service are discussed during the face-to-face meeting with the pastor and bereaved family. Please keep in mind the following:

- The Pastor and Funeral Director will be consulted to help finalize the date and time of the funeral.
- The Family Hour is for viewing and expressing personal condolences to members of the bereaved family.
- Remarks are to be made during the family hour. Organizations, such as Fraternities, Sororities, Masons or Eastern Star, are to conduct their service during this moment or prior to the funeral service.

Communion

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month. Members of the sick and shut-in list are asked to call the church if they need to be communed in their home or place of convalescence. In the event that a member on the sick and shut-in does not receive communion, please call the church office to schedule a visit by the pastor or designated minister.

Baptism

Those desirous of being baptized, or of having their infant(s) baptized are encouraged to contact the church office and the pastor to schedule this event. You are further encouraged to review our ceremony, particularly if the candidate is an infant. Parents and/or guardians must understand that in our ceremony no reference is made to *christening*. We do not “*christen*” babies. We *baptize* candidates into the Household of Faith. Prior to scheduling a Baptism, an appointment may be requested with the pastor to further explain this distinction.

Counseling

It is the pastor’s policy to consult with persons who desire pastoral advice. Please be advised that it is the pastor’s practice to refer persons to a **licensed and certified counselor**.

Hospital Visitation

If you are desirous in having the pastor or ministerial associate visit and pray with a loved one during a hospital visit, please notify the church. Members are asked to assist the pastor in this worthwhile endeavor by being the “eyes and ears” for our family. Please notify the church to inform the pastor. Please specify if a follow-up visit will be required.

FACILITIES USE GUIDELINES AND RESERVATION PROCEDURES

1. The facilities of Saint Stephen African Methodist Episcopal Church, its grounds and other properties must be used only for purposes that are consistent with the promotion of the Purpose and Mission of the same.
2. At no time shall the facilities be used for parties serving alcoholic beverages. Wedding Receptions may serve champagne or wine, *but only after receiving clearance from the Pastor*. There are no exceptions.
3. Saint Stephen African Methodist Episcopal Church and its facilities maintain a smoke-free environment.
4. The Board of Trustees or its designee must be informed of planned usage of the facility by organizations and individuals, internal and external to the church, and approve their use of the same. A calendar and room assignments shall be maintained in the church office and shall serve as the sole and official scheduling determinant. Applicants are encouraged to schedule events as far in advance as is possible, and to notify this office as soon as possible of any necessary schedule modifications or event cancellation. Only church-related activities shall be held on Sundays.
5. Outside groups, non-members, church members representing the former or individual church members shall be permitted use of the facilities on an as available basis for events, gatherings and celebrations such as:
 - Weddings
 - Funerals
 - Birthdays
 - Anniversaries
 - Banquets
 - Catered events
6. At no time may the entire facility space be leased to an outside organization. At least one (1) room must be reserved for emergency church-related meetings.
7. The order or priority of church-related functions is as follows:
 - a. Funerals take precedence over any and all other activities.
 - b. Church organizations and members receive first priority.
8. A Building Manager or Attendant must remain on the premises at all times during facility use by outside groups or individuals. The facilities cannot be left unlocked or unmonitored at any time. Keys cannot be distributed to facility lessees/users. There are no exceptions.

9. Removal and/or any rearrangement of church equipment or furnishings are strictly forbidden without prior request for the same and approval of the church administration or its designee.
10. The appropriate forms must be completed by all users; said form shall contain a waiver of the church's liability for personal injury, identification and contact numbers of the person or persons desiring to use the facilities and their assumption of responsibility for any breakage or destruction of church property.
11. There shall be attached a fee schedule specific to the desired event.