

Historic 132 year old Howell chapel ... a favorite wedding venue!

by George Moses

All Saints Chapel is an historic 132 year old building. Built in 1880. It was originally organized as All Saints Church and then it was changed to St. John's Episcopal Church. In 1995 it was purchased by Penny & Jim Myers who began using it as a wedding chapel.

"In 2003 I came to work for Penny as a coordinator in the chapel," said owner, Marilyn Johnson. "I bought the chapel from Penny in 2005 when Penny decided she wanted to retire. I've been doing the weddings in the chapel and the flower shop here since 2005."

The historic chapel is elegantly decorated with pew bouquets and flowers on the altar, with stained glass lancet windows, hardwood floors and a circular staircase to the balcony. It's a traditional church setting and seats 130 guests.

With enchanting Victorian charm and with the modern convenience of air conditioning, All Saints Chapel offers a bridal room and a groom's room. As a full service chapel, bridal consultants, traditional or contemporary CD music or musicians are all available if you wish. Professional photography packages are offered and a minister is available or you can choose your own.

"We do have ministers," says Johnson. "In fact I also am an ordained minister. And I have different ministers that use the chapel. Couples are welcome to bring in their own minister. It's probably 70 percent use our ministers and 30 percent will have their own."

At the side of the chapel there is a beautiful gazebo with a garden for your photos and small weddings.

The small building next to the church, once used by the church for meetings and Sunday school is now a flower shop. All Saints Chapel Florist and Boutique is a companion to the chapel, providing one stop shopping



Marilyn Johnson at the Chapel Florist & Boutique

for brides and weddings. To provide music, there is an organ in the balcony, but most wedding parties typically opt for a CD player for the music. The chapel is a good place for live musicians to perform because of the wonderful acoustics of the old sanctuary.

"We've had people bring in harps and string quartets and guitars and bagpipers. It's nice to be able to personalize the wedding. The acoustics are wonderful in there!" Johnson said.

All Saints Chapel hosts between 75 to 85 weddings a year. "We haven't hit the hundred mark yet in a year!" laughs



All Saints Chapel in downtown Howell

Johnson. "And that's mostly concentrated between May and October. So there are often Saturdays where we'll have two or three weddings. And then there are some Saturdays where we don't have any."

"We'll do them any day of the week. Friday evenings are popular. Last week we had one on Sunday afternoon. So we're open to pretty much any time. We've had very small weddings where it's just the couple and their witnesses come in, and they'll do that on a weekday. We've had them where we had to provide the witnesses for them, when it's just been

the couple. So we'll have a minister here and then I'll act as a witness. We've had them call and say 'We're at the courthouse. We're picking up our marriage license. Can we come over?' I'll say 'Do you have witnesses?' Sometimes they do. Sometimes I'll hunt for somebody else."

"We've had some small concerts in there. And memorial services and baptisms. Not just weddings. Absolutely. It's a



A picturesque old chapel with seating for 130

building for rent," says Johnson.

"We're open to renting the building for other uses. Not just for weddings. I think it would be really nice if someone would use it to do a Christmas concert. It would lend itself very well to that. We have had a fashion show in there. We've had a couple of them. One was a fund raiser."

It's also available for "Town Hall" meetings where elected officials or candidates can hold meetings with their constituents or supporters.

According to Johnson, the photographers who come into the chapel are very pleased with the pictures that they take in this antique, picturesque chapel.

All Saints also belongs to a Livingston County wedding networking group, The Wedding Solution. It offers photographers and limousines and other wedding service providers who all work together. This chapel is a good example of people putting an historic building to its best potential use in a modern day setting.

All Saints Chapel is located at 114 S. Walnut St. in downtown Howell www.allsaintschapel.net • (517) 548-7964