

St John's Episcopal Church Wedding Policies

General information

Weddings in the Episcopal Church are governed by the Canons and the Book of Common Prayer. At least one of the parties is to be a baptized Christian. Normally the priest of the parish officiates, but another Episcopal clergy person may do so with the Rector's consent. Other clergy may be invited to participate as well.

Requests to be married must be made at least thirty days prior to the date desired. Divorced persons need to plan on much more time as the Bishop's permission must be obtained. It is within the discretion of any minister of this Church to decline to solemnize any marriage.

Pre-Marital Counseling.

Under the Canons of this Church the couple is to meet with the celebrant to discuss "the nature, meaning, and purpose of Holy matrimony." This usually involves at least three one hour meetings.

Licensing

According to State law, the license must be obtained from the Registrar of Deeds at the county seat. No marriage can be performed without the State's license. The license must be delivered to the church at least three days prior to the wedding to prepare the necessary forms.

Scheduling

The scheduling of people and facilities requires that there be a public announcement of the marriage. (the Banns). Weddings are discouraged during Lent and will not be held during Holy Week. Weddings are encouraged during festive seasons of the church year but as a rule will not be done the week before or after Christmas.

The Service

The only form to be used is that of The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage from The Book of Common Prayer

Holy Communion is encouraged as the setting for the wedding service and all baptized persons are invited to receive communion. Music is to be appropriate to the occasion. The use of hymns is an excellent way of involving everyone. The Rector and Music Director have sole authority over the music to be used and can suggest appropriate hymns or other appropriate music. Our organist is normally expected to play for all weddings. In very special cases a substitute organist or other musicians may be used provided the Music Director and Rector agree. Decorations are those used by the church in the liturgical year and arranged by the Flower Guild in consultation with the wedding party. Any custom requests are arranged with representatives of the Flower Guild and the Rector.

Rehearsals are under the direction of the priest officiating and the member of the Altar Guild assisting. Wedding consultants are welcome to assist the bridal party before and after the worship service. There are no dressing rooms at the church, but classrooms, offices and restrooms may be made available. A member of the party needs to take responsibility for leaving the rooms in order and being sure no valuables are left behind. Bulletins or service programs are not required, but if one is desired, a template can be provided. Please supply a proof copy to the celebrant ten days prior to publishing. Experience has shown that guest books and receiving lines are better used at the reception, especially if photographs are desired following the service. Holy Matrimony is a sacred event and photography is done, if at all, with great subtlety so as not to intrude on the service. Modern photographic equipment can accomplish this from the balcony and the rear of the Nave. Photographs may be taken as follows:

- ❖ On the grounds and in the Parish Hall, or Narthex prior to service.
- ❖ In the Narthex as the wedding party is lined up for the procession.
- ❖ During the service from behind the back pews or from the balcony with **NO** flash used.
- ❖ As the bride and groom leave the church.
- ❖ For up to 20 minutes, if respectfully done, in front of the altar after the service is over.

Receptions at the Church

Receptions may be held in the Parish Hall. They should be catered. Facilities must be restored to proper festivities and order. Alcoholic beverages are restricted to wine or wine punch. In keeping with Church policy, non-alcoholic beverages must be offered as an equally attractive alternative. Tables, chairs, punch bowls, cups, and other items are available with approval of the church staff.

Fees for Weddings and Receptions

Members of St John's are charged no fee for the use of the facilities but are to pay the following directly:

- ❖ Organist: \$300 (for consultation, rehearsal, and wedding time)
- ❖ Sexton: \$50 to mop (to mop, vacuum and prepare the facilities)
- ❖ Flowers: \$75 for one arrangement, \$150 for two arrangements

Non members of the church are charged, in addition to the above, an additional fee of \$500, which goes to the Building Fund. No fees charged by the clergy of St John's either for premarital counseling or the wedding. A thank you gift to the church's Discretionary Fund is most welcomed. All checks should be delivered to the church along with the Marriage License three days before the wedding.