

Draft of Wedding Policies, Summer 2004

General Information

Weddings in the Episcopal Church are under the rules of the Canons and Prayer Book. 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 are most welcome to participate.

Requests to be married must be made at least 30 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 three one-hour meetings at least.

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 before the wedding to prepare the necessary forms.

Scheduling

The scheduling of people and facilities requires that you make no public announcement of the marriage until all arrangements have been completed with the church.

Weddings are discouraged during Lent and will not be held during Holy Week. Weddings are encouraged during festive seasons of the church year but 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 person will be 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 not allowed. Other than those used by the church in the liturgical year and the normal expectation of a place for Common Worship, no other candles, floral displays, or pew markers are required.

Flowers may be placed on the altar table as is done for any service of public worship. They are given to the Glory of God in celebration of the marriage and are distributed by the church to others at a later time. Florists are to contact the Flower Guild to arrange for necessary instructions on sizing and liners that may be brought to the church for use in our vases. Florists may not prepare arrangements in the sacristy or altar area. No flowers may be attached to the pews.

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.

Dressing rooms are not present but classrooms and lavatories 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 necessary; but, in fact, they can distract people from the service. But, if you would like to prepare a handout to outline the service and name the participants, please supply a proof of it to the celebrant 10 days before publishing it.

Guest books and receiving lines, experience has shown, are better used at the reception rather than at the church and are discouraged.

Photographs and videos are not permitted during the worship service. This includes time exposures from the balcony or narthex. Please inform the photographer and guests of this rule. Photographs may be taken as follows:

- On the grounds and in the parish hall or narthex prior to the service.
- In the narthex as the wedding party is lined up for the procession.
- Coming down the center aisle after the service is over.
- For up to 20 minutes, if respectfully done, in front of the altar after the service is over.
- As the bride and groom leave the church.

Receptions at the Church

Receptions may be held in the parish hall for church members only. They should be catered. Facilities must be restored to proper cleanliness 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 the consultation, rehearsal, and wedding time)
 - Sexton \$50 (to mop, vacuum prepare the facilities)
- Non-members of the church are charged, in addition to the above, an additional fee of \$500, which goes to the Building Fund.
- No fee is charged by the clergy of St. John's, either for the premarital counseling or the wedding. A thank-you gift to the church's Discretionary Fund for outreach is most welcomed.
- A check to the organist should be give before the rehearsal begins. A check for the fees for facilities should be delivered to the church along with the Marriage License three days before the wedding.