

INFORMATION
REGARDING
WEDDINGS

St. John's Episcopal Church
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Christian Marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman. In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties be a baptized Christian; that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conform to the laws of the State and the Canons of the Church

(Book of Common Prayer, 1979)

This guide explains the various requirements and expectations concerning Holy Matrimony at St. John's Episcopal Church. Other suggestions in this book are included to help you plan your wedding.

A DECLARATION OF INTENTION

We, desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.

We believe that the union of husband and wife, in heart, body, and mind, is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.

And we do engage ourselves, so far as it in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto.

REQUIREMENTS

All weddings at St. John's must be performed in accordance with the liturgy and canons (Church Law) of the Episcopal Church. The Rector must approve all arrangements. The following are firm requirements:

- 1) Possession of a marriage license issued in any County of this State. This license must be procured in advance and delivered by the couple to the clergy before the day of the wedding.
- 2) One of the two parties must be a baptized Christian.
- 3) At least thirty (30) days notice must be given to the clergy. This requirement may only be waived for compelling considerations by the clergy's direct petition to the Bishop.
- 4) If either party has previously been married and divorced, a special application must be made to the Bishop for his judgment. A firm recommendation from the parish clergy to the Bishop is expected. In such situations, one of the parties is expected to be a Communicant Member of the Episcopal Church, regularly attending and contributing to the Parish.
- 5) The couple must be willing to meet with the clergy for three conferences. The purpose of these meetings is to establish a relationship between the bride, groom, and rector, to plan the wedding and especially the service, and to discuss the vocation of marriage. Since mothers of the bride are often very involved in planning the wedding, many brides and their mothers will also find it helpful to schedule an early conference with the clergy.

- 6) All weddings must conform to the rite of Holy Matrimony as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. The service is flexible enough to allow personalized aspects reflecting the experience and backgrounds of the couple. The couple must be willing to sign The Declaration of Intention, printed elsewhere in this booklet. This is the Church's statement concerning the nature of Holy Matrimony.
- 7) The date and time of the wedding must be approved by the clergy. This should be accomplished as soon as possible in consultation with the Parish calendar. The wedding date, however, will not be set until the first conference between the bride, groom and parish clergy. It is highly advisable to begin planning for a formal wedding one year in advance.
- 8) One of the parish clergy will normally coordinate all matters related to marriage preparation, the rehearsal, and the wedding itself. Guest clergy may be invited to share in the wedding. If there is a Wedding Coordinator, that person will need to meet with the clergy and abide by all the provisions of this policy.

EXPECTATIONS

While they are not legally binding, the following considerations are listed as expectations of all weddings which take place at St. John's Church.

- 1) At least one party (and hopefully both), or their parents, should be regularly attending services and contributing to the Church. When the bride and/or groom are currently residing out of this community, participation in another church is greatly encouraged as an alternative. It is strongly recommended that both parties worship at St. John's prior to their wedding so that they may become comfortable in this setting.
- 2) As part of pre-marital preparation, both persons will be asked to take the Taylor/Johnson Temperament Analysis. This valuable tool is administered and interpreted by the clergy. There is no charge for this service.
- 3) Any persons married at St. John's who are not financial contributors of record (or whose parents are not contributors of record) are asked to make a donation to the parish of at least \$600.
- 4) Holy Matrimony is traditionally conducted at the altar of the Church. Other settings are discouraged.
- 5) The service should ideally include the celebration of a Nuptial Eucharist. Although communion is normally offered to all baptized Christians present, it may be limited on this occasion to the bride and groom and their wedding party.

6) Normal fees are as follows:

- a) Organist - \$250 including Wedding Rehearsal
- b) Sexton - \$50 for housekeeping before and after the ceremony.
- c) Candles - \$50 for aisle candles (see Candlelight Weddings). No charge for Altar Candles.
- d) Clergy honorarium – The amount is discretionary, but in answer to many inquiries as to what is proper, the amount ought not to be less than the organist's fee.
- e) The clergy honorarium is used for special purposes at their discretion.

These fees should be given to the presiding clergy prior to the day of the wedding (the rehearsal is suggested) and each honorarium should be marked and put in separate envelopes.

SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are intended purely as a guide. The clergy are always available to make helpful suggestions as requested. The Church address for invitations is:

St. John's Episcopal Church
Hanover and High Streets
Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013

The invitation may specify the celebration of a Nuptial Eucharist if communion is to be included. Samples of appropriate wording are available from the church office.

TRADITION

By tradition, the Bans of Marriage (the announcement to the congregation of the impending wedding) is made verbally during Sunday Services. At St. John's this announcement is made only once, on the Sunday before the wedding.

There is no "proper" hour or day for a wedding. Although most weddings continue to take place on Saturdays, many are now being scheduled for Fridays or other days. Occasionally, for a couple closely connected with the congregation, weddings may be scheduled as part of the Sunday morning parish Eucharist. Since a 5:00 pm parish Eucharist takes place on Saturdays, all Saturday weddings can begin no later than 3:00 pm. By tradition, weddings are usually not celebrated during the season of Lent and never during Holy Week, including Holy Saturday.

Liturgy

The Book of Common Prayer liturgy for Holy Matrimony provides great latitude. Scripture readings should be selected by the couple. Appropriate passages include the following:

Genesis 1:26-28 or 2:4-9, 15-24
I John 4:7-16
Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7
Matthew 5:1-10; 13-14; 7:21,24-29
Tobit 8:5b-8
Mark 10:6-9, 13-16
I Corinthians 13:1-13
John 15:9-12
Ephesians 3:14-19 or 5:1-2, 21-33
Colossians 3:12-17

Many optional prayers may also be included. At the conclusion of the wedding, a booklet consisting of the text of the Service and the Church's Wedding Certificate will be presented to the couple. The bride, groom, best man, and maid of honor sign the Parish register after the wedding.

MUSIC

All music is under the direction of the parish organist who normally plays the organ for all parish weddings. The organist will be happy to suggest music and accommodate the musical tastes of the bride and groom. In selecting the music, remember that the Canons of the Church stipulate the use of sacred as opposed to secular music. Contemporary sacred music is, of course, as appropriate as traditional music. Any arrangements with a singer or instrumentalist should be made through the family, in consultation with the parish organist, who should be notified well in advance. In the past, piano, strings, harp, guitar, trumpet, woodwinds and bagpipes have sometimes been added to wedding music.

REHEARSAL

In most cases a rehearsal is desirable and will be conducted by the presiding parish clergy. It should be scheduled during the week before the wedding at a time when all participants will be able to attend. **It is firmly requested that all participants arrive on time.** Those who must attend include: the Bride and Groom, the Father of the Bride (or whoever is to escort her), the Maid (Matron) of honor and Best Man, Bridesmaids and Ushers, including Ring Bearer and Flower Girl, the Organist, Singer or other musicians. The parents and family of the Bride and Groom are welcome to attend the Rehearsal as

well. Programs, if printed outside, should be provided. At all times in the church, attire appropriate to the dignity of the church is required.

GUEST CLERGY

Guest clergy are always most welcome to assist the parish clergy in the liturgy. The Service can be easily shared by two and sometimes more clergy. An Episcopal priest must, however, bless the rings and pronounce the nuptial blessing. The couple, in a personal letter, should invite any guest clergy to participate.

FLOWERS AND OTHER DECORATIONS

The only flowers needed in the church are the two matching arrangements for the altar. These are traditionally white, but may include flowers of any color and variety. The arrangements must fit the brass liners of the church vases. So long as this is understood, any florist may be used at the couple's discretion.

The arrangements of flowers must be delivered by the florist at the church at least two hours before the service. These flowers remain on the altar for the Sunday Service as a Thank Offering from the couple. The lighting of three matrimonial candles during the wedding ceremony has become increasingly popular in recent years. St. John's can accommodate this practice, if desired.

A white carpet runner is not permitted. Cloth or plastic carpet runners make footing very unsafe when placed over the church tile floor.

CANDLELIGHT WEDDINGS

An ever-popular option, the church has a special set of aisle staffs for candles. The electric lighting is dimmed. Such a wedding does not traditionally take place before 6 pm. The additional charge of \$50 covers the cost of the candles and the set-up/take-down required. The staffs may be reasonably decorated with bows at the responsibility of the wedding party. Candles with clear globes are available for use in each window.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO

Photographs are not permitted during the Service except by someone who can use available light, at the times and places previously arranged with the clergy. The wedding may be videotaped using available light and from the back of the church. Photographs with flash, however, may be taken during the procession and recession from the back of the church. A limit of ½ hour may be used at the conclusion of the Service for

photography sessions in the Church or the Church Yard. It is strongly urged that couples consider having all their photographs taken prior to the wedding.

Programs

Programs may be distributed to guests. They are especially helpful when the wedding includes the Eucharist and singing of hymns. The bride and groom might wish to include a personal message of greeting as well as the names of the wedding party. Program format and content must be approved by the clergy and may be printed professionally or through the parish office. If printed by the parish office, a donation of \$30 is requested.

RECEIVING LINE

Many couples elect to receive guests immediately after the service. The receiving line may form at the front door of the Church, or in the Church Yard, weather permitting, or in the cloister. The throwing of rice, confetti, or bird seed is prohibited. **The consumption of all alcoholic beverages and/or the use of any drugs is strictly prohibited in or on the church grounds, including the Church Yard and the rooms used by the bridal party.**

RECEPTIONS

The Parish Hall may be used for receptions. Kitchen facilities and ample space for up to 150 persons is available. There is a three (3) hour time limit for receptions. Alcohol usage is limited to wine or wine punch with approval of clergy. Catering arrangements are the responsibility of the wedding party, and must be coordinated through the church office. Rental fees are \$100 for contributing members of the parish and \$400 for others. A \$100 deposit is required.