

THE WEDDING BIBLE

***Your guide to a meaningful
and problem-free celebration***

MARRIAGE GUIDELINES HOLY SPIRIT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

We are pleased that you want to celebrate your wedding with our parish community and within the traditions and theology of the Episcopal Church. Literally hundreds of weddings have taken place at Holy Spirit, and we have a great deal of experience which we put at your disposal. We will do our very best to help bring meaning and joy to your celebration. However, there are a number of things we need you to understand and to accept responsibility for doing.

Firstly, since you are asking to be married within the tradition of the Episcopal Church, and specifically at Holy Spirit Parish, we expect you to worship with us regularly. We take our faith and our community seriously, and we ask the same of you. Our church building is not for rent; we are a living, breathing community.

Secondly, please choose no dates or music or make any arrangements until you have talked with the clergy, our Parish Administrator and the organist. The celebration of a marriage in the Episcopal Church has a fixed form that is very beautiful if understood.

Thirdly, do read this little booklet carefully, especially the section on music, and make a list of your questions. Each year we participate in many weddings, and we cannot possibly remember the specific details of each unless you write them out and give us a copy of the specifics.

Lastly, a bit of advice: Decide you want this celebration to feel and what you want it to say about you and your love for each other before you begin making decisions about how it will look.

Our congratulations to you and our prayers for a rich and meaningful celebration.

INTRODUCTION

“Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and woman in the presence of God. In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties must 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 this Church.” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 422)

“The intention of the parties to contract marriage shall have been signified to the minister at least thirty days before the service of solemnization.” (From the Canons of the Episcopal Church) Premarital counseling is required of all couples. More extensive counseling is required when there has been a previous marriage with a former spouse living and at least two months’ notice is required; also in this case the Bishop reserves the right to make the final judgement as to whether remarriage will be allowed under the auspices of the Church.

ARRANGEMENTS

Contact the church office to arrange a time to meet with the priest who will be officiating at the service. At the time of the first meeting with the priest a tentative wedding date and time will be set. Premarital counseling sessions will be planned, and the following details will be reviewed:

Music: Music is very important, but not all music is suitable for a wedding in church. Words of any vocal music should be in the spirit of the Bible, Prayer Book or Hymnal. We do not encourage the use of secular or folk music within the liturgy, and we suggest you arrange for such music to be played at your reception. Our tradition and pipe organ necessitate the use of classical or sacred music. Any other music desired must be approved by the Rector of the parish. All readings, Scripture or otherwise, are chosen with the consent of the priest doing your service. Because our weddings and memorial services are brief, no more than one non-sacred piece is appropriate. Should you desire accompaniment by any other instrument other than the pipe organ, and it is agreeable with the priest, it is your responsibility to arrange for the instrument and the musician. Pre-recordings do not work in our church and should not be used.

Organist: As our church organist, Dr. Nancy Cooper is the person who normally plays at weddings. If she can’t do it, she will engage another organist trained in the use of our organ. We do not encourage the use of friends of the bride or groom to play as organs are sensitive instruments which are expensive to tune. As regards classical and sacred music, Dr. Cooper, our organist, will help you decide what is appropriate. The organist will be present at the wedding rehearsal, and there is an established fee for her services. (For cost see fee schedule.) Arrangements must be made with Dr. Cooper for private rehearsal with any vocalist.

Vocalist: Although it seems a nice thought to have friends and relatives possibly sing at a wedding, we have a recommended list of trained vocalists to suggest to you. Wedding preparations are very time consuming, and we do not have the time to teach a solo piece to someone who does not read music. Please discuss any possible solo pieces with Dr. Cooper before making any plans.

Use of Church Building: The building in which your wedding is taking place is not a rental hall; it is the pride and joy and property of the people of Holy Spirit Parish. Please do not consume beverages in the church or smoke on church property or remove anything from the walls or back table in the church. Please do not adjust the ceiling fans or the lights. Toilet facilities are located in the hallway outside the sacristy, at the top of the steps leading to the Tower Room and at the top of the Guild Room stairs. Please do not congregate in the sacristy; the Altar Guild and clergy need this area to prepare for the service.

Flower Girls and Petals: Flower petals may not be thrown or scattered in the church building because they are so hard for the janitor to clean up. Flower girls may carry a basket of flowers instead.

Altar Flowers: Altar Flowers are not required, but, if they are provided, we have a rule that they are to be left in the vases for Sunday services and later taken to the sick and shut-in. Silk flowers are not allowed on the altar. We have liners that fit into the altar vases. Liners must be picked up and delivered to the florist a day or two in advance of the wedding. Any additional flowers may be displayed in stands provided by the florist. Silk flowers are allowed in these additional arrangements. These additional flowers may, of course, be removed and taken to the reception.

If you want to arrange for the services of Myrna Chaney, our Altar Flower Designer, to arrange your flowers, please note that a fee is required for this service and will have to be arranged with Myrna Chaney. A fee for this type of service is normally one-third to one-half of the cost of the flowers. To contact Myrna Chaney please phone her at 728-1941.

Candles: Candles on and behind the altar are always in place and are available for weddings without charge. Only the candles behind the altar are lit during the ceremony, unless Eucharist is a part of the wedding. In addition, we have two tall candelabra that stand below the pulpit and the lectern. Each holds seven oil candles and may be decorated with flowers.

Photographs: The wedding ceremony is all important. This is the moment when you are making life-long vows to each other in the presence of God and your families and friends, so we do not allow the taking of pictures during the ceremony. Photographers moving around and flashers popping can be very distracting. We request that you arrange to have your wedding pictures taken before the ceremony.

DVDs: Please check with the clergyperson performing your wedding for their preferences regarding recording of the wedding ceremony. Those doing the recording are not allowed to move about the building during the service. They may, however, reposition themselves during the procession and recessional. No additional lights are permitted.

Janitor: An additional cleaning of the church is almost always required after a wedding and before Sunday services, both inside and outdoors. See cost schedule for the modest amount of the janitor's additional compensation.

Rehearsal: Rehearsal times are set at the discretion of the officiating priest. Rehearsal times are normally scheduled for late in the afternoon during the week preceding the wedding and may or may not be followed by a rehearsal dinner.

Wedding: During the course of premarital counseling the bride and groom will be invited to select certain options in the service, notably the selection of a reading or two from the Scriptures. An important decision to consider is whether there will be a Eucharist. This should be discussed with the officiating priest. If you do decide to have a Eucharist, you will need to notify the church office of the number of people expected to take communion.

Dressing Facilities: We have two rooms in the parish hall suitable for changing clothes. There is the Guild Room in the parish hall with a bathroom at the top of the stairs and the Tower Room with a bathroom adjacent. No steamer or iron are available at the church. We request that someone from the wedding party be responsible for collecting the wedding party's belongings and removing them from the church hall before the wedding begins.

Rice: Rice may not be thrown in the church building because it is so hard for the janitor to clean up. Nor may it be used on the church grounds for the same reason. The same rule applies to confetti and other artificial substances. Many wedding parties now encourage the use of birdseed or bubbles.

Alcohol: It is the policy of the Vestry of Holy Spirit Parish that no alcoholic beverages be served before a wedding on church grounds.

FEE SCHEDULE

These fees are payable at least a week in advance at the church office. ***The separate checks must be made payable to the individuals performing the services.*** The secretary will tell you how to make out the individual checks and will disburse them.

Non-parish members: \$150.00, made payable to Holy Spirit Parish, for the use of the church to cover the cost of utilities, marriage preparation, etc. ***THIS FEE ALSO APPLIES TO NON-PLEDGING PARISH FAMILIES.***

Organist: \$125.00, made payable to Dr. Nancy Cooper or whoever is playing in her place. The organist's fee is ***\$150.00*** if a soloist is involved. ***(Any fee for a soloist is separate from the fee for the organist.)*** You may reach Dr. Cooper at her home number, 728-4376.

Janitor: This check should be made payable to Lori Cordis. For a wedding only the fee is ***\$50.00***. For any wedding scheduled to begin after 5 p.m. on a Saturday evening, the basic janitorial fee is ***\$75.00***.

Please have these checks in the church office at least a week before the wedding, along with your marriage license. Be sure to include the information about who your witnesses will be for the license. There is no charge for performing the sacraments of the Church. It is traditional, however, to make a contribution to the officiating clergy person. The average contribution is ***\$150.00***.

We hope that these details will help to make your wedding day the memorable occasion you hope for. May God bless you on that day and in the years to come.

Please contact the office at 406-542-2167 with any additional questions.