



PREPARATION FOR
THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING
OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

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INTRODUCTION

St. George's Episcopal Church congratulates you on your decision to be married. The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and faithful marriage continues to be one of life's great and gracious joys.

The information which follows will explain both what you may expect from St. George's Church and what the parish may reasonably expect from you as we prepare together to celebrate your marriage. If after having read this booklet you have questions about your wedding, your officiating minister will be pleased to answer them for you. The clergy, staff, and laity of this parish wish you well as you plan your future together and sincerely hope that the planning of your wedding ceremony will be an enjoyable and enriching experience for you.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God. The officiating priest acts as an officer of the state and is empowered to invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit at the marriage service. The congregation acts as witness to and supporter of the sacred vows pledged by the bride and groom. Couples who seek the sanction of the church and the blessing of God are making a solemn commitment to live together as husband and wife.

In the Episcopal Church, the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is one of the seven sacramental rites of the church and is intended for members of the church and their families. According to Episcopal Church Canon Law, "Holy Matrimony is a physical and spiritual union of a man and a woman, entered into within the community of faith, by mutual consent of heart, mind, and will, and with the intent that it be life-long."

The Prayer Book states further 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. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The following policies and guidelines are based on the above brief, but important, description of Christian marriage.

Membership in St. George's Episcopal Church

At least one of the two parties requesting to be married at St. George's Church must be a member in good standing of St. George's Church. A "member in good standing" is one who has been faithful in attending church and faithful to the church in working, praying, and giving. Immediate family members of active communicants of this parish are considered communicants in good standing.

Marriage of Divorced Persons

One of the teachings of the church is that in marriage, two persons are made "one flesh" joined together at the deepest possible level. Because of this bonding, any divorce is an occasion of pain and brokenness. Care and counsel must be taken when one or both of you has been divorced.

Canon Law of the Episcopal Church permits a pastoral approach to marriage of divorced persons. It is, therefore, important to assess the reasons and reality of a previous marriage which has been dissolved and to deal with any remaining grief over the loss of that relationship. At least one year should have elapsed between the final divorce decree and your meeting with the priest to plan your wedding. In addition, Canon Law requires that the officiating clergy receive permission from the Bishop of Tennessee to solemnize the wedding. The Bishop requires 30 days between the time the letter is received and the time the reply may be expected.

Scheduling a Wedding Date

Episcopal Church Canon Law requires 30 days between the request for a wedding and the wedding itself. Practically and spiritually, however, much more time should be allotted for preparation.

By long tradition, the Episcopal Church does not schedule weddings during the liturgical seasons of Advent or Lent. Weddings are also not scheduled on holidays such as New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

Weddings at St. George's traditionally take place on Saturday. Because the church must be prepared for Sunday worship and because weddings involve a host of church volunteers and workers (Altar Guild, acolytes, organist, sextons), start times for weddings must be scheduled to begin no earlier than 11:00am and no later than 7:00pm.

When a wedding at St. George's is desired the couple should first speak with Rebecca Teel in the church office to secure a date on the parish calendar. Her phone number is 385-2150 x 213. While every effort will be made to accommodate your wishes for a specific date, scheduling your first choice may not be possible. *Therefore, you should not make any arrangements for your wedding until the date has been officially confirmed by the church.* If the date you desire is available, your request will be given to the Rector who will approve the scheduling and assign a member of the clergy to officiate the wedding and to oversee the premarital counseling process.

Premarital Instruction

It is a canonical requirement that both parties desiring to be married receive premarital instruction. The priest who will officiate at your wedding will set up times for this preparation for your marriage.

Inasmuch as Holy Matrimony is a rite of the church, you should treat the occasion with the dignity and respect due any church service. Before your initial meeting with the clergy, become familiar with the order of service for The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage found on pages 422-438 of *The Book of Common Prayer*. The service is simple, beautiful, and dignified in every way. You are encouraged to read this text together, paying particular attention to the instructions and to the words of the vows.

A traditional and appropriate way to mark the beginning of Christian marriage is to include Holy Eucharist as part of the wedding service. When you meet with the priest officiating your wedding you can discuss whether you wish to celebrate Holy Eucharist as part of your wedding ceremony. The priest will also assist you in choosing appropriate scripture readings.

Altar Guild Wedding Committee

Members of the Altar Guild Wedding Committee are charged with the responsibility of assisting the clergy and the bride and groom in all non-liturgical aspects of the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. Members of the Altar Guild are well-trained, competent, and professional consultants. They offer invaluable assistance throughout the planning process and have complete knowledge of the wedding policies and traditions at St. George's Church. Our Altar Guild Wedding Committee will work with the entire wedding party to ensure that the ceremony flows smoothly and that your wedding is a joyous and holy experience for everyone.

Lynn Terry, our Altar Guild Wedding Committee Chair, will be in contact with you as soon as your wedding date has been confirmed by the church. She will arrange a meeting with you at the church so that you can discuss all aspects of your wedding planning. It is important that the three of you sit down together before any contracts are signed with outside agents (i.e. wedding planner, photographer, videographer, florist, etc.).

Music

According to the rules of the Episcopal Church, all music in public services of worship must have words “from the Bible, from the Hymnal, or from texts congruent with them.” These concepts should guide your music selections. Please note that it is the policy of St. George’s to avoid the use of Wagner’s Bridal Chorus, *Here Comes the Bride*.

Our Director of Music Ministries, Mark Ring, is responsible for all music at weddings at St. George’s Church. He should be contacted as soon as a wedding date has been confirmed. Mark will be happy to work with you to choose the most appropriate music for your service.

Prelude and postludes: there is a wealth of fine classical organ music which is appropriate for the wedding service. Music written for other media (i.e. orchestra, piano, chorus) does not always translate well to the organ. However, we will always do our best to honor requests.

The use of guest musicians must be approved by the Director of Music Ministries. Our organ is a magnificent instrument and the service will suffer no loss of grandeur or refinement if you do not elect to engage other instruments or singers. However, if you do decide to use singers or musicians we have a roster of wonderful people whom we know and trust and will be happy to recommend. We do not amplify the music or the singers. Please note that the playing of bagpipes is not permitted in the church.

Flowers

Altar flowers will consist of two floral arrangements. The flowers are placed on the altar as an offering to God. You will be able to designate your flower dedication, which will be printed in the Sunday bulletin. Altar flowers, once in place for the wedding, may not be removed. An additional floral arrangement may be placed in the narthex and two wreaths on the front doors of the sanctuary. Only fresh flowers and greenery are permissible. No artificial arrangements or pew markers may be used, and pew ends may not be decorated. The scattering of flower petals, either real or artificial, down the aisle is not permitted.

As soon as you have chosen a florist, please ask them to contact Lynn Terry, Chair of the Altar Guild Wedding Committee.

Only altar and pavement candles which have been approved by the church are utilized at the wedding. We do not allow the use of Unity candles.

Bride and Family Room

There is a beautiful Bride and Family Room designed and furnished so that brides and their families and attendants may prepare for the wedding and relax before the service. This room is available for three full hours prior to the time of the wedding service. It is connected directly to the Ladies room and has full length wall mirrors, a three-way mirror, and many closets. Feel free to “take over this room and enjoy.”

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers

We strongly recommend that any child participating in the wedding be at least five years of age. Children younger than five rarely have the emotional stability to participate without disrupting the service. Please give serious consideration to this matter to avoid putting unnecessary strain on the children, their parents, and the entire wedding party.

Acolyte/Crucifer

The church will provide an acolyte/crucifer for your wedding. You may ask a friend or family member to participate in this capacity if he or she has served as an acolyte or crucifer in an Episcopal Church.

Wedding Planners

If you will be employing a wedding planner, please note that wedding planners are not permitted to be involved in any aspect of the church wedding rehearsal or ceremony. If there are any questions, please have your planner contact Lynn Terry.

Wedding Rehearsal

Traditionally, all weddings at St. George’s take place on Saturday. Rehearsal is held the day before (Friday) at 5:30pm. All ceremonial decisions will be made by the officiating priest together with the bride and groom prior to the rehearsal. All members of the wedding party are expected to attend the rehearsal and *to be on time*.

Wedding Service Bulletins

The church will provide samples of the service bulletin to assure consistency and accuracy with our Order of Worship guidelines. Your wedding bulletin must be proofed by the officiating priest and the Altar Guild at least four weeks prior to your wedding date.

Photography ~ Audio/Video Recordings ~ Webcasts

Because your wedding is a worship service, no photography is permitted during the ceremony. Pictures may be taken in the nave prior to the wedding, but they must be completed 45 minutes before the start of the ceremony. Photographs may also be taken after the ceremony but are limited to no more than 15 minutes. Photographers must follow the rules of St. George's Church regardless of who is paying their fees.

You may choose to enlist a third-party contractor approved by St. George's to utilize the three-camera video system of the church. As a part of this service, you may request that the wedding video be streamed online in real-time. If you choose to hire an unapproved videographer, video camera use must be limited to a stationary camera placed in the balcony of the sanctuary. You will receive one audio recording of the service at no charge. This can be used by your videographer for editing purposes.

We do not allow brides and grooms to use individual microphones during the service. The officiating priest will be equipped with a wireless microphone which feeds the church's P.A. and hearing-impaired systems, so that everyone in the congregation may hear clearly. Except for the professional photographer, no cameras of any kind are allowed in the nave, and cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are to be silenced or turned off.

Marriage License

A valid Tennessee marriage license is necessary before any wedding can be performed. Without a marriage license, the priest cannot proceed; it is illegal. You can apply for the license up to four weeks prior to the ceremony. You must bring it with you either to the wedding rehearsal or before. Your copy will be returned to you after the ceremony and the church office will file the appropriate copies with the State of Tennessee. Couples who have completed premarital counseling are exempt from paying a portion of the licensing fee. Your officiating priest will provide you a signed and notarized copy of the Certificate of Completion form at the conclusion of your counseling sessions.

PARISH CUSTOMS



Not every guest at your wedding is likely to be Episcopalian or familiar with the particular traditions of this parish. In order to ensure that they feel comfortable and welcome, you may want to inform those who may be unfamiliar with some of the following customs which add to this solemn and joyous occasion.

- One may kneel in brief prayer upon entering the church pew.
- Guests may participate in the service by using *The Book of Common Prayer* found in the pews (pages 423-432).
- If there is Holy Communion, all baptized Christians are invited to share in the Holy Eucharist. The Bread is received in the ungloved palm of the right hand supported by the left. The wine is received from the chalice by placing both hands on the base of the chalice to assist the server in guiding the lip on the cup to your mouth.
- No cameras of any kind are allowed in the sanctuary, and cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are to be silenced or turned off.
- It is not our tradition to introduce the bride and groom at the conclusion of the wedding service.
- The throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, or any other material is not permissible. It not only detracts from the solemnity of the occasion but is a safety concern as well.
- No alcoholic beverages are allowed on church premises. The wedding is a sacred service of worship, therefore, we urge participants not to use alcohol prior to the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony.

FEES



Flat Fee \$750

Includes use of the church for the wedding and the rehearsal, along with the services of the Organist, Sextons, Audio Technician, etc.

If this fee creates a financial hardship, please let the officiating priest know.

Clergy & Counseling

St. George's Clergy do not charge a fee for pre-marital counseling or officiating at weddings. Should the couple wish to offer the clergy a gift or honorarium, it will be designated for the clergy's discretionary fund and utilized for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Supplemental Costs

Organist	\$50/hour	Extra fee for rehearsal with soloists.
Soloists	\$100-250	Estimate for each vocalist or instrumentalist.
Choir	\$100	Fee for each choir member.

**Musicians secured by someone other than the Director of Music must be cleared through the Director of Music.*

The flat fee is paid at the time the wedding date is secured on the church calendar. Any other fees (for soloists, choir members, etc.) should be given to the Wedding Guild member at the wedding rehearsal.

St. George's Church
WEDDING POLICY AGREEMENT FORM



Bride: _____

Groom: _____

Wedding Date/ Time: _____

*Rehearsal will be the day before (Friday), beginning at 5:30pm. All members of the wedding party must attend and be on time.

We have read and agree to adhere to the instructions, policies, and procedures as stated in the Wedding Customary of St. George's Episcopal Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

(Bride's Signature)

(Groom's Signature)

(Date)

**To secure your wedding date on the parish calendar,
please return this form along with your fee payment as soon as possible to:
Rebecca Teel, 4715 Harding Road, Nashville, TN 37205**

Updated April 28, 2011

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Rebecca Teel	Parish Secretary (Scheduling, Audio Recordings, Website Information) rebecca.teel@stgeorgesnashville.org	385-2150	Ext. 213
Mark Ring	Director of Music Ministries mark.ring@stgeorgesnashville.org	385-2150	Ext. 254
Lynn Terry	Chair, Altar Guild Wedding Committee lynn.terry@comcast.net	383-6055	
Davidson County Clerk's Office	Marriage License www.dcclerkonline.com	862-6256	

TIMELINE

Completion of Information Forms & Fees

(Please return all forms to Rebecca Teel in the Church Office.)

Please return:

As Soon As Possible:

- ~ Wedding Policy Agreement Form
(Located on page 11 of this customary)
- ~ Bride & Groom Information Form*
- ~ Fee for wedding

One Month Prior to Wedding:

- ~ Altar Guild Information Form*
- ~ Wedding Service Bulletin Proof
(samples provided)*

Wedding Rehearsal (or before):

- ~ Bring Marriage License

** Included with this mailing*

**St. George's Episcopal Church
CLERGY**



The Reverend R. Leigh Spruill
Rector
leigh.spruill@stgeorgesnashville.org

The Reverend Timothy Jones
Senior Associate Rector
tim.jones@stgeorgesnashville.org

The Reverend Marcia C. King
Associate Rector and Director of Ministries
marcia.king@stgeorgesnashville.org

The Reverend Malone Gilliam
Associate Rector
malone.gilliam@stgeorgesnashville.org

The Reverend Sarah Kerr
Associate Rector
sarah.kerr@stgeorgesnashville.org

The Reverend Roger Senechal
Priest Associate
roger.senechal@stgeorgesnashville.org

The Reverend Timus Taylor
Priest Associate
(no email)

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