

**CELEBRATING A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**  
**GUIDELINES**  
**FOR THE COUPLE TO BE MARRIED**

**All Saints Episcopal Church**

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## **I. Introduction**

### ***What is a Christian marriage?***

Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between two persons contracted in the presence of God. It is a sacrament of the Church, and an act of public worship. It is a gift of God for joining together a couple in a covenant relationship which expresses the relationship between Christ and his Church.

The Canons of the Episcopal Church and of the Diocese of Louisiana, The Book of Common Prayer, Christian tradition, and parish custom guide us in the planning and celebration of marriage at All Saints Episcopal Church. These guidelines may be revised from time to time to conform to any changes in the Canons of the Diocese of Louisiana or the Episcopal Church.

### ***Who may be married in the Church?***

Most basic of all is that Christian marriage is for Christians. The Church requires that at least one of the two persons be a baptized Christian.

Ordinarily, at least one of the two persons to be married is a member of the All Saints Episcopal Church congregation. If neither person is a member of this congregation, the marriage may only be performed after written permission is received from the Priest in Charge and the pastor(s) of the couple seeking marriage.

If either of the two persons is divorced, the permission of the Bishop of Louisiana must be obtained for the marriage to take place in the Church. The Bishop requires that a standard form be completed by the priest who will preside at the service and the Bishop's permission is requested after the counseling is completed (see below). Ordinarily, before re-marriage can be considered, a period of at least 12 months since the final divorce decree must have expired. Subject to the approval of the Bishop exceptions may occasionally be made for extenuating circumstances.

Please refer to the website of the Diocese of Louisiana ([www.edola.org](http://www.edola.org)) for the current policy regarding same-sex blessings and marriages.

### ***Pre-marital counseling***

Pre-marital counseling is required by the Canon Law of the Episcopal Church, and thus is not optional. Time spent with the counselor is usually pleasant and not intimidating. The couple should view this counseling as a creative opportunity to talk seriously with the counselor before entering into a covenant of marriage.

Ordinarily, the counselor will schedule at least three one-hour visits, during which the following matters will be addressed: 1) an initial interview and the completion of the Declaration of Intention; 2) topics such as interpersonal

relationships (power, sexuality and money); 3) marriage expectations (communication and management); 4) the theology of marriage; and 5) any prior marriage.

For couples not residing locally, pre-marital counseling should be arranged through an Episcopal church near their place of residency, preferably the church where they intend to be members following the marriage. The couple should request that the person conducting the counseling notify the Priest in Charge at All Saints Church when counseling has been successfully completed.

### ***The Declaration of Intention***

All persons who wish to be married in the Episcopal Church are required by Canon Law to sign the Declaration of Intention, which will be provided by the priest and discussed with the couple in the initial interview of pre-marital counseling. By signing this document, one declares that he/she believes that Christian marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful and lifelong.

## **II. Planning the Wedding**

### ***Selecting the date***

The date and time for a wedding at All Saints Episcopal Church must be determined in consultation with the Priest in Charge who will determine whether there is any conflict with other parish activities or clergy schedules. The date and time should be arranged no less than thirty (30) days in advance of the wedding date and after all prerequisites have been completed.

### ***License and witnesses***

All civil requirements of the State of Louisiana must be fulfilled before the wedding. A valid, current marriage license must be presented to the priest at the rehearsal. The couple should have two adult witnesses designated to sign the Canonical Parish Register at the rehearsal.

### ***Planning the ceremony***

The Rite of Marriage is a sacramental act. Since the couple has sought permission to be married in the Episcopal Church, they should expect that their wedding will be a religious service following The Book of Common Prayer, the traditions of the Episcopal Church and the customs of All Saints Episcopal Church. Prior to the rehearsal, the priest who will preside at the service will have a meeting

with the couple or their authorized representative to design the service based on these guidelines. As much time as required will be taken to go through the liturgy and to identify all elements of the service such as readings and music. Once the order for the service has been agreed upon at this meeting, the service may not be changed later.

***Honoraria and fees***

**Damage Deposit (required to reserve the facilities)**

Members - No deposit required for members.

Non-Members, including children of members **\$250**

Damage deposits less cost of any damage will be returned within seven days after the ceremony. The church reserves the right to charge additional fees for the price of repairs for damages not covered by the deposit.

**Church Musician (The regular Musician/Choir Director employed by All Saints Episcopal Church has the right of first refusal for all weddings)**

- For consultation, rehearsal, and wedding **\$175**

- For accompanying soloist, additional musicians **\$50**

**Cleaning**

- For cleaning church before wedding, opening church **\$50**

on day of wedding, (including accepting delivery from florist) and for cleaning & locking church after the ceremony.

This fee may be waived for church members who make other arrangements for cleaning.

**Altar Guild and Use of The Church**

Members – No fee for members, but a gift of \$100 is suggested.

Children of Members (Either Bride or Groom) **\$250**

Non- Members **\$500**

**Honoraria:**

While there is not a charge for the service of a priest at weddings, an honoraria is customary. For most weddings, a gift to the priest of \$200 is normal. For weddings of unusual complexity (including any wedding away from the church) a gift to the priest of \$300 is normal. Additional ministers required for the service (deacon, acolyte, eucharistic minister) should receive a gift for their ministry.

### III. Ceremony and Decoration of the Church

#### *Readings*

Appropriate readings from Holy Scripture may be found on page 426 of The Book of Common Prayer.

#### *Music*

The following is a list of suggested wedding music for solo and organ which is preapproved. Other selections may be used subject to the approval of the priest and musician:

#### **Organ preludes**

J. S Bach	<i>O Hail this Brightest Day of Days In Thee is Gladness Sheep May Safely Grace Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring Sleepers, Wake</i>
Walther	<i>O Holy Spirit, Enter In Praise to the Lord</i>
Milford	<i>The King of Love my Shepherd Is</i>
Vaughan-Williams	<i>Prelude on Rhosymedre</i>
Telemann	<i>Lord Jesus Christ, With Us Abide</i>

#### **Wedding Marches**

Campra	<i>Rigaudon</i>
Purcell	<i>Trumpet Voluntary in D Major Trumpet Tune in D Major</i>
Marcello	<i>Psalm XIX</i>
Handel	<i>Air from the <u>Water Music Suite</u></i>
Widor	<i>Grand Choer Dialogue</i>
Pachelbel	<i>Canon in D</i>

#### **Hymns** (from The Hymnal 1982)

*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling  
O Perfect Love  
Lord, Who at Cana's Wedding Feast  
Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven*

## Solos

Bach	<i>Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring</i> <i>Jesu, Shepherd, Walk Beside Them</i>
Beethoven	<i>Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee</i>
Brahms	<i>O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts</i>
Dvorak	<i>I Will Sing New Songs of Gladness</i>
Jacobs (arr.)	<i>Brother James' Air</i>
Lovelace	<i>Our Father, By Whose Name</i> <i>O Savior, Guest Most Bounteous</i>
Peeters	<i>Wedding Song</i>
Prouix	<i>How Blest Are They</i>
Schultz	<i>Wedding Prayer</i>
Vaughan-Williams	<i>Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life</i>
Schubert	<i>Ave Maria</i>

## ***Flowers, Candles, and Decorations***

All decorations to be used in the Church are to be discussed with the priest (or his/her designated representative) at least one week prior to the date of the wedding.

Access to the Church for the installation of decorations must be arranged with the Altar Guild at least one week prior to the date of the wedding. The florist and/or the wedding coordinator should discuss this matter with the priest, who will provide the names and phone numbers of the persons to be contacted for the necessary arrangements. All decorations are to be done in a way that does not leave any permanent marks or holes.

Candles and flowers at the altar are required for the wedding ceremony and Holy Communion. The altar candelabra and candles provided by the Altar Guild are to be used for the service, unless other arrangements are approved in advance. Floral arrangements for the altar vases and in the narthex of the Church (if desired) are to be provided by the wedding party; the altar flowers are to be left in the Church after the service.

Candles and flowers to be used at any other places in the Church must be approved in advance. Only live greenery and flowers may be used. Votive candles may be used in the windowsills. The organ should not be decorated. Do not put flower petals on the floor. Refrain from using bubbles in the church or parish hall.

## ***Service Bulletins (Programs)***

Service Bulletins are encouraged and may be used subject to approval of the content by the priest. They should be printed by a commercial printer after approval and should be completed at least one week prior to the wedding.

## **IV. Wedding Rehearsal**

The priest will conduct a rehearsal of the wedding service on the evening prior to the wedding, unless a different time is arranged at least thirty days in advance.

All members of the wedding party must participate in the rehearsal. The two adult witnesses who are to sign the Register must be present at the rehearsal.

A valid, current marriage license issued by the State of Louisiana must be presented to the priest at the rehearsal.

The Parish Hall may be used for a rehearsal dinner following the rehearsal. Arrangements must be made with the Priest in Charge at least thirty (30) days in advance. A copy of the latest guidelines, including fees, for rental and use of the Parish Hall for this purpose may be obtained from the church office.

## **V. The Day of the Wedding**

### ***Facilities at the Church***

The wedding party may use the rooms and facilities in the Church or Parish Hall for preparations such as flower arranging and clothes changing. Please use the trash cans. The microwave and coffee pot in the Parish Hall may be used, but not the stove and oven. Access to the Church buildings must be arranged with the Altar Guild at least one week prior to the date of the wedding. Normally, the Church and Parish Hall will be open one and one half hours prior to the service and one half hour after the service. The Church property should be left in a clean and orderly condition after the wedding. An additional cleaning surcharge of \$100 to be deducted from the damage deposit will be assessed if there is disorder.

### ***The Ceremony***

All ushers should be at the Church and ready to begin seating guests not less than forty-five (45) minutes before the wedding begins. The groom, best man and groomsmen should arrive at the Church not less than thirty (30) minutes before the ceremony. The bride, her attendants, and all other members of the wedding party (including mothers and family representatives) should arrive at the Church not less than twenty (20) minutes before the ceremony.



At five (5) minutes before the ceremony, grandmothers of the couple will be seated by the ushers. Each of the mothers of the couple will be seated by the ushers a minute or so before the ceremony.

A wedding coordinator should be present in the narthex, to give the appropriate signals to the organist and to help the bridal party to be spaced properly as they proceed up the aisle to the altar.

At the end of the ceremony, the wedding party will recess, followed by the couple's parents. The congregation will then be free to depart.

### ***Photographs***

Because of the dignity of a wedding as a service of worship, photographers must not distract from the ceremony in any way. The couple may choose any photographer they wish, but the photographer, in turn, must have the permission of the Priest in Charge (or his/her designated representative). The photographer must comply with the Photographer's Guidelines on page 11.

### ***Throwing of flower petals***

The throwing of rice is dangerous and, consequently, is not allowed within the Church or on the grounds. The use of birdseed is also prohibited. Real flower petals are permissible, but not inside the Church.

## ***VI. The Reception***

The Parish Hall may be used for a reception following the ceremony. Arrangements must be made with the Priest in Charge at least thirty (30) days before the wedding. A copy of the latest guidelines, including fees, for rental and use of the Parish Hall may be obtained from the church office.

## ***VII. Exceptions***

If there is no Priest in Charge assigned to All Saints Episcopal Church at the desired time of the wedding, the Senior Warden shall provide all approvals on behalf of the church as outlined in these guidelines, except those directly related to the ceremony. In such case the couple should arrange for another Episcopal priest to preside at the ceremony and fulfill any other requirements of these guidelines.

If it is desired to use the church facilities for other than an Episcopal wedding, the Mission Committee will establish additional requirements specific to the particular request.

## Wedding Checklist

Please complete this form and return it to the church office.

Date of wedding \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Date of rehearsal \_\_\_\_\_ Time (allow 1 hour) \_\_\_\_\_

Person to be married's name \_\_\_\_\_

residence \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Other person to be married's name \_\_\_\_\_

residence \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Outside officiating clergy, if any \_\_\_\_\_

church \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding party:

Names of Bridesmaids (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Groomsmen (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Ushers (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Names of flower bearers (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Names of ring bearers (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate number of guests attending \_\_\_\_\_

Music to be provided by \_\_\_\_\_

Titles of music to be used \_\_\_\_\_

Readings to be used \_\_\_\_\_

Florist \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

## **Photographer's Guidelines**

Because of the dignity of a wedding as a service of worship, it is expected that the photographer will be neither intrusive nor distracting. The following guidelines are to be followed:

- 1) The photographer must have the approval of the Priest in Charge (or his/her designated representative).
- 2) Flash photography and artificial lighting for videography are not permitted during the ceremony.
- 3) Once the service has begun, photographers are not to move around in the Church.
- 4) Photographs and videos of the wedding party in the Church and at the altar may be taken either prior to the ceremony or after the congregation has left the Church. Arrangements for either of these times are to be made in advance. If the photography is to be done prior to the ceremony, it must be completed no less than one hour before the ceremony.