

## *Wedding Procedures*

### **ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

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*The Very Rev. Emily B. Richards, Rector*

*A wedding is a happy occasion in the life of a church community.  
We celebrate, with joy, the love of God which unites a husband and wife.  
To help make the planning for the great day easier,  
this booklet of wedding procedures has been prepared for you.*

### ***Declaration of Intent***

*"Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God."*

*The Book of Common Prayer*

The following declaration, which both parties are required to sign before the marriage, briefly summarizes the Episcopal Church's view of marriage:

"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 is set forth in the liturgical forms authorized by this Church.

We believe it is for the purpose of mutual fellowship, encouragement and understanding, for the procreation (if it may be) of children, and their physical and spiritual nurture, and for the safeguarding and benefit of society.

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

### ***Advance Notice***

Couples wanting to be married at St. Peter's must give at least six months notice to the rector. It is necessary to meet for marriage preparation and counseling (usually three or four sessions). At least one person must be a baptized Christian with the hope of their participation in this parish community.

In the event that either party has been previously married or divorced, additional advanced notice is necessary because permission of the bishop must be obtained for the clergy to officiate at such a wedding. His permission is based on an evaluation of the proposed marriage from the clergy at St. Peter's. In such a situation, counseling must be concluded at least sixty days before the wedding date.

## *Wedding Arrangements*

All arrangements for the wedding ceremony should be made by the bridal couple with the rector. Misunderstandings and confusion can result whenever family members or friends attempt to make any of the arrangements with the church.

## *The Service*

A wedding is a service in worship of God, the author of love. We normally use the service as set down in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 423. This rite is carefully developed liturgically, theologically and with uncommon insight about marriage. The Eucharist, or Holy Communion, is a part of the service, so that this feast of Christ's love is the first meal the new couple shares. Changes can be made in the service where appropriate but only in consultation with the rector.

The rector will be the presiding celebrant at the wedding. If the bridal couple have other clergy to include in the service, arrangements will be made with them by the rector.

There are usually three readings from the Bible that are part of the ceremony. You may choose them from each group:

### Old Testament:

- Genesis 1:26-28 (Male and female God created them)
- Genesis 2:4-9,15-24 (A man cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh)
- Song of Solomon 2:10-13;8:6-7 (Many waters cannot quench love)
- Tobit 8:5b-8 (New English Bible) (That she and I grow old together)

### The Epistle:

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (Love is patient and kind)
- Ephesians 3:14-19 (The Father from whom every family is named)
- Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33 (Walk in love, as Christ loved us)
- Colossians 3:12-17 (Love which binds everything together in harmony)
- 1 John 4:7-16 (Let us love one another for love is of God)

### The Gospel:

- Matthew 5:1-10 (The Beatitudes)
- Matthew 5:13-16 (You are the light ... Let your light so shine)
- Matthew 7:21, 24-29 (Like a wise man who built his house upon the rock)
- Mark 10:6-9, 13-16 (They are no longer two but one)
- John 15:9-12 (Love one another as I have loved you)

We encourage you to choose readers from among your family and friends for the first two lessons. The priest or deacon normally reads the Gospel. Also, friends or family may lead some of the prayers. Readings from other sources may be permitted with the rector's approval.

## *Music*

Music at weddings is to be appropriate for worship. Stan Fink, St. Peter's Minister of Music, will be happy to meet with you to discuss and play some possible choices and consider your suggestions. Mr. Fink may be reached at [music.saintpeters@gmail.com](mailto:music.saintpeters@gmail.com). If there is a soloist or instrumental music which requires accompaniment, the organist must be informed and arrangements must be made. We usually sing congregational hymns at weddings. Both the rector and the organist will be happy to make suggestions.

## *Flowers, etc.*

Flowers are customarily placed on the shelves behind the altar. Some additional floral arrangements are possible but approval of the rector and/or Altar Guild is necessary. Couples are free to use their own florist. If you wish your wedding flowers to be used at the Sunday morning service, please make arrangements with the church office (215-887-1765). It is your responsibility to have your florist call the church office to make arrangements for delivery of the flowers, generally one hour before the wedding. Since the church staff is not here Saturday mornings, delivery by the florist when no one is present can be a cause of great confusion.

## *Photographers*

In keeping with the religious nature of the service, no flash photography or artificial lights are allowed. All photo and video pictures must be taken from the back of the church or from the balcony (access to the balcony is with permission of Stan Fink only). Photo and video equipment must be in place at least one half hour before the service. We ask that all photographers and video people, including those in the balcony, avoid unnecessary conversation and movement from the time the organist begins playing (usually thirty minutes before the service).

You are welcome to take pictures in the church after the service. Many photographers like to use the altar as a background for formal pictures. Keep in mind that if you have a receiving line before the picture taking, you will be detained from the reception. It is expected that the church be free within a reasonable time after the wedding in order that the caretaker and the Altar Guild can prepare for the Sunday services.

## *Church Seating*

The church will seat approximately 325 persons. The first few pews on either side of the aisle are usually reserved for the bridal party and members of the family of the bridal couple. It is not required to observe the custom of "bride's" side or "groom's" side; the ushers can invite people to sit where they are comfortable.

The building is handicapped accessible, through the door off the driveway nearest the altar and from the parking lot in back of the church. There are places for wheelchairs at the end of several pews.

### *Rice*

Rice is not to be used on the premises. Birdseed and bubbles are acceptable.

### *Reception*

The Parish Hall is available for receptions. There is seating for at least one hundred guests. If an area is needed for dancing, consideration should be given to a reduction in seating capacity. If the reception is to be a standup affair, then capacity is at least one hundred fifty.

Couples interested in using this facility must make arrangements with the parish office well in advance in order to avoid conflicts in scheduling.

Wine and beer may be served at receptions by permission of the Vestry, which requires thirty days notice.

### *Fees*

Suggested contribution to the church: non-member	\$1,000.00
Suggested contribution to the church: member	\$300.00
Organist:	
• Wedding and one rehearsal	\$175.00
• Rehearsal with soloist or musicians	\$225.00
Soloist and/or musicians	Will set their own fees
Caretaker:	
• Wedding only	\$100.00
• Reception at the church, additional/hour	\$20.00
Parish Hall rental	See current fee schedule
Kitchen use	See current fee schedule
Clergy honorarium (to be paid to the rector)	\$300.00

### *License and Fees*

Couples are requested to present their marriage license to the rector at the rehearsal.

Fees should be paid the day of the wedding.

*Notes*

*Revised September 15, 2012*

