

THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE AT CHRIST CHURCH + WASHINGTON PARISH

Christian Marriage

Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman working to their utmost ability and strengthened by God to establish a life-long relationship of love and mutual support. The Church counts marriage as one of the sacramental rites of the Episcopal Church, as well as being a natural state and a civil matter. The ministers of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony are the couple themselves. The priest conducting the service is present to witness the vows on behalf of the Church and the District of Columbia; to pronounce the Church's blessing upon the union; and to preside at the wedding Eucharist, if there is one.

Canon Law Concerning Marriage

Christ Church + Washington Parish is a parish church of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. All weddings in this parish are performed in conformity with the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Episcopal Church; in obedience to its Canon Law and the laws of the District of Columbia; and conform to the directions of the Bishop of the Diocese and the Interim Rector of Christ Church.

As permitted by the District of Columbia and the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, same sex couples are welcome to marry in this church. There are some rules regarding who is able to do this, so please check with the Interim Rector before making plans.

At least one of the parties in the proposed marriage must be baptized in a Christian church before planning can proceed, and evidence of baptism may be required.

Divorce, in and of itself, is not a barrier to marriage in the Church. In the case of a divorced person seeking remarriage in the church, a priest must first agree to perform the marriage and then application must be made to secure the Bishop's permission to proceed. Generally the Bishop needs three months' notice. Permission is not normally given for a third marriage and is not given for a fourth. The priest performing the wedding is required to see a copy of the divorce decrees, if any, prior to the priest's consent to officiate at the wedding. Any priest of the Episcopal Church may, by Canon, decline to officiate at any wedding at any time without stating a reason.

Timing

A minimum of thirty (30) days' notice of the intention to be married is required by Canon Law, though earlier notification is strongly urged. At Christ Church, we prefer to have at least six months' notice and the scheduling of the wedding and/or reception will be at the availability of the church and with the Interim Rector's permission. Prompt contact with the Interim Rector

prior to the required thirty-days minimum will greatly assist in finding a mutually satisfactory day and hour for pre-marital counseling sessions, rehearsal time and date, and a date for the ceremony. Weddings are not usually performed at Christ Church on Sundays or during the season of Lent.

Pre-Marital Counseling

At the mutual convenience of the couple and the priest, a series of four meetings will be scheduled for instruction and sharing about Christian marriage, as required by the Canon Law of the Church.

The Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist is the central service of the Episcopal Church. Many couples find it meaningful to share in Holy Communion during a wedding. Others find it difficult to resolve varying faith traditions in their families by having communion. When the Holy Eucharist is part of the wedding service, all people are welcome to come forward to receive the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. If, for any reason, attendees do not wish to receive the Sacrament, they are encouraged to come to the communion station, fold their hands across their chest, and receive a blessing. When wedding guests and/or one of the wedding party participants are from other traditions, the couple is asked to discuss whether to have communion in the service. The priest will counsel the couple about this part of the service.

Flowers, Sconces and Aisle Cloth

All decorations in the Church will be under the direction of the Interim Rector and subject to approval. Flowers placed on the Altar for a wedding normally remain on the Altar for Sunday services. Appropriate notice will be given in the Sunday bulletin, and prayers will be offered for the newly married couple at the Sunday services. Flowers may be designated as a memorial as well. If sconces are desired, there is an additional fee of \$30.00 for the shining of the brass, payable to Christ Church + Washington Parish. This fee includes the cost of candles. If an aisle cloth is desired, arrangements must be made with a florist, as Christ Church does not own an aisle cloth.

Music

Music used in the services of the Church must be in accord with the common usage for worship and the Canon Law of the Church. Final determination about appropriateness rests with the Interim Rector and the Associate for Music Ministries. Much Classical and sacred music is appropriate. Often hymns may be sung as well. A meeting with the Associate for Music Ministries to plan music for the wedding should be scheduled at the earliest possible date following the first meeting with the Interim Rector. Scheduling this meeting is the responsibility of the couple.

Musicians

Any couple desiring the services of competent musicians in addition to (or instead of) Christ Church's Director of Music Ministries must receive prior permission from the Rector. *No musicians should be engaged until the Interim Rector has been consulted.* If for any reason other than illness or prior commitment, the Church's Director of Music Ministries does not play for the wedding, he will be compensated at the standard rate.

Photographs

Any professional or amateur photographs taken during the course of the service will be by permission of the Interim Rector only. High-speed photography is allowed from the rear of the church or in the balcony or behind the first pew. Videotaping is allowed, using available light. Following the service, pictures (with flash) may be posed in the church for a brief period of time. Couples are encouraged to make most of the photographs at the reception. No flashbulbs or artificial photographic lighting of any sort may be used at any time during the service itself. Lighting may be used during the procession and recession and during the Peace.

Other Services and Use of Parish Hall for Reception

The parish sexton will set up and clean up for the service and reception, if one occurs at the Church. The fees are listed below. If the Parish Hall is to be used for the reception, the couple may schedule a time to meet with the Parish Administrator and their caterer early enough to decide if the space will accommodate the reception. The Parish Hall seats 130 comfortably for dinner. Sometimes, in warm weather, couples rent a tent to put up in the courtyard to expand the space. Please keep in mind that loud music outside is distracting to neighbors and the occupants of the rectory. All activities must be concluded and cleaned up by 11 pm. Arrangements to use the Parish Hall should be made with the Parish Administrator following the Interim Rector's giving consent to perform the marriage. The Parish Hall has a sound system and the kitchen is adequate for a caterer's use. The caterer or wedding party should provide all paper products and consumables. At the end of the reception, all trash should be bagged, any leftover food removed, and the area left as neat as possible. The Sexton will vacuum, wipe off the cleared tables, mop floors, clean bathrooms, etc. after the reception. The Sexton's schedule must be consulted as well when the date of the reception is set.

Fees

The Sacraments, pastoral ministrations and other rites of the Church are neither for sale nor given or withheld on the basis of wealth or lack of it. However, the Church has a fee structure for wedding planning. *When neither the bride nor groom has been a member of Christ Church for at least a year, the couple is asked to adhere to the fee structure.* Individual needs may be discussed with the Interim Rector and no one is turned away for lack of funds. Members of Christ Church are asked to adhere to the fees for Organist and Sexton. In addition, members may make a contribution to the Christ Church Discretionary Fund as they wish.

FEE STRUCTURE FOR WEDDINGS:

Category of Fees	non-Members	Members
Music Director/Organist	\$450	\$350
Extra rehearsal with additional musicians	\$150	\$100
Sexton for wedding only/no reception	\$100	\$100
Sexton for wedding and reception	\$200	\$150
Use of parish hall/kitchen for reception	\$275	*
Use of Church for rehearsal/wedding	\$500	*
Liturgists Fee	\$50	*
Pre-marital counseling with Clergy	\$300	*
Priest's fee for the wedding if counseling done by others	\$200	*
Host Fee	\$50	*

* indicates no fees for members. Members are considered those who have been active in participation and through financial giving for at least the past six months. While there are no fees for these items, gifts to the Christ Church Discretionary Fund are welcome as well as a gift towards the liturgists' ministry as they volunteer several hours setting up and assisting for a wedding.

Checks for the Organist are made to Richard Thibadeau

Checks for the Sexton are made to Kevin Lindsay

All other checks made to Christ Church+ Washington Parish with the item in memo line

Notes on Fees and Licenses: Payments of fees is often most conveniently made at the time of the rehearsal or before. Please do not wait until after the wedding to settle the fees. In addition, the couple must present a valid **marriage license** from the District of Columbia (because of the location of the wedding) at the rehearsal. The clergy will not perform any wedding without the license. Please know that a waiting period of five business days is required in order to receive the license. The license may be obtained from Superior Court, 400 Indiana Ave, NW, Washington, DC. The license permits the particular priest to act as an agent for the District and is valid indefinitely for that priest (only) and that couple. The District must license any clergy person who performs weddings in the District of Columbia and the couple must indicate who the priest/minister is when obtaining the license. Our clergy are licensed.

Additional Notes:

The Priest presiding at the wedding will assist the couple in the planning of the liturgy for the wedding. The wedding vows must be from *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1979 of the Episcopal Church. The service will follow the liturgy of the Episcopal Church. No exceptions will be made. Readings may be selected from Holy Scripture and other sources. The Priest will help with suggestions as needed. The couple may choose persons to read the readings. The parish office

will be happy to prepare a simple bulletin (leaflet) for the service. The Church seats about 180 persons comfortably. Both the Sanctuary and Parish Hall are air-conditioned. The wedding party should arrive for the wedding already dressed as the Church does not have any dressing space.

Any questions should be directed to:

The Rev. Dr. Rick Miles, Interim Rector
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