

Weddings at St.Peters

“Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a 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 it conform to the laws of the State and the Canons of this Church.”
- Book of Common Prayer, p.422

A wedding is not only a joyous occasion for the bride and groom and their families, but also for the Christian Community, and especially for the clergy called to preside. Saint Peter’s is happy and privileged to be involved in this, one of life’s most important turning points. Today weddings take place in a variety of settings and under many different circumstances. Christian Marriage, however, as understood in the Episcopal Church, is an extension of one’s commitment to the Mission and Ministry of the Church as promised in our baptismal Covenant (BCP, p.304-305). Therefore, more is involved in choosing to be married in church than opting for a traditional setting, for you will be choosing to be married under the auspices and guidelines of the Church. As an aid to making your choice and planning your wedding, such guidelines are outlined below.

1. You must give the officiating clergy at least thirty days notice of your intention, and at least 60 days if either or both parties are divorced. In practice, a significantly longer period of preparation is necessary. It is best to check with the church before making any other plans. The clergy may decline to solemnize any marriage.

2. At least one of the parties must be baptized.

3. Both parties shall participate in a series of pre-marriage instruction sessions with the clergy, or with other persons approved by the clergy.

4. Regular attendance at church is an expected part of the pre-marriage instruction.

5. The bishop must grant permission for the clergy to officiate the remarriage of divorced persons. A certified divorce decree is required. Those who have been divorced more than once will be asked to meet with a professional counselor prior to the pre-marriage instruction with the clergy.

6. You will be asked to sign a “Declaration of Intention” to the effect that you subscribe to the teachings of the Church on marriage, and that marriage is a lifelong relationship.

This includes the understanding that if marital unity is imperiled for any cause, it shall be the duty of both parties to lay that matter before a minister of this church before contemplating legal action.

7. It is customary, but not necessary, that the wedding take place in the celebration of the Eucharist as a reminder that marriage signifies to us the union between Christ and his church. All baptized persons present will be welcome to receive communion.

8. In planning your wedding you must be willing to be governed by the canons and customs governing any formal worship as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer (1979), or as otherwise set forth below.

9. The rehearsal generally is the night before the wedding and is under the direction of the clergy.

10. In the case that your wedding might be in some other church, the local customs of the host church as regards weddings will be honored.

11. Saint Peter’s seats approximately 130 people.

Music

Music is a most welcome way of expressing and enhancing the joy of the occasion. The Prayer Book rubric on hymns and anthems applies to weddings: “Hymns referred to in the rubrics of this book are to be understood as those authorized by this church. The words of anthems are to be from Holy Scripture, or from this book, or from texts congruent with them.” Secular music does not fit the nature of the ceremony and is far better employed at the reception. Usage, often wrongly called “traditional,” is an inappropriate criteria for the inclusion of love songs, operatic excerpts or popular songs before or during the service. Nor is it our custom to use the wedding marches of Wagner and Mendelssohn.

The planning of the music takes place with the Rector and the Organist who plays for all weddings or arranges for a substitute. If it is your desire to have someone else play, such arrangements must still be made with the Organist’s authorization, and the parish incumbent is still to receive the normal fee. Please contact the organist as soon as your wedding is scheduled with the Rector. Other instruments, as well as choral and solo vocal music, may be used with the approval of the Organist and the Rector. The singing of

congregational hymns is also encouraged. Our Music Director, Greg Fraser, may be reached at 410-730-0567

Flowers

Flowers for the altar are your responsibility. Please notify the head of the Altar Guild of the name of the florist and when delivery of the flowers is to be expected. These flowers remain at the church after the ceremony. Additional floral decorations, though unnecessary, may be used if approved by the Rector. Be sure to designate a member of the wedding party to distribute any corsages, bouquets or boutonnieres. Flowers may be arranged with our Floral Director, Deena Cate Bryant – 410-747-7073, or with a florist of your choosing

The use of a runner is discouraged for safety reasons.

We ask that the throwing of confetti, rice, birdseed, etc, be reserved for after the reception, not at the church.

We do not incorporate what is sometimes called “the wedding candle” as part of the church service.

Photography & Video

Photographs may not be taken during the service. This prohibition applies to family members and guests as well as to any professional Photographer or Videographer (“the Photographer”). The Photographer will talk with the officiant upon arrival to the church to determine what will be allowed during the procession and recession. The Photographer may take several shots without flash from the back of the church or the gallery. All video recording is to be done from the choir gallery only.

License

A valid Marriage License must be presented no later than the night of the rehearsal. This may be obtained at the Howard County Offices in Ellicott City.

Fees & Contributions

For current members of Saint Peter’s who are faithful in their attendance and financial support of the parish, there is a schedule of fees to cover the following:

Organist \$200.00 (extra rehearsal @ \$25.00/hour)

Bulletin \$30.00

For non-pledging members of Saint Peter’s there is a fee of \$500. For non-members looking to rent the church there are separate Wedding Rental Guidelines also found on this Worship Tab, Special Services.

These fees do not include a gift or honorarium to the Officiating Priest, which is customarily at least \$200. Some people also make a contribution to: The Saint Peter’s Discretionary Fund.

When circumstances necessitate, these fees may be adjusted or waived.

***ALL FEES ARE TO BE PAID BEFORE
OR AT THE REHEARSAL.***