

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

At the Church of the Holy Spirit we welcome couples preparing for Holy Matrimony. We pray that God's grace will be a source of joy and strength in your life together.

In the Episcopal Church, we view marriage sacramentally. We believe marriage to be one of the ways entrusted by God to the Church whereby two persons are drawn so close to each other that they can affirm a personal experience of God's saving grace in their lives. We understand that Holy Matrimony is intended as a life-long union between two persons; persons preparing for marriage in the Episcopal Church are asked to sign a declaration confirming their agreement with this understanding.

Although it is not required that both persons be members of this parish, it is necessary that at least one be a baptized Christian. Further, it is expected that you will have a significant relationship of participation and support with our worshipping community. We believe the spiritual dimension of life is the vital core of a marriage. In our view, it is the Holy Spirit that transforms a human marriage into Holy Matrimony.

Remarriage Following Divorce

When one or both of the persons has previously married and divorced, permission for remarriage in the church must be applied for by the Rector from the Bishop of Massachusetts. The Rector can discuss with

couples the expectations, procedure, and requirements associated with such application.

Getting Started

An interview with the Rector is the first step in making plans for a wedding. Dates and times for the wedding and rehearsal should be confirmed with the Rector before arrangements are made for receptions. Other clergy may be invited to participate in the ceremony, but this should be discussed with the Rector before any invitation is issued.

No wedding will be conducted in which either person has agreed, in writing or verbally, to convert the spouse or raise the children in another community of faith. We believe such agreements undermine the integrity of marriage. When persons come from different faith traditions, premarital conferences will explore creative ways of reconciling such differences, that they may enrich the marriage rather than impoverish it.

Premarital Conferences and Church Regulations

The Episcopal Church requires that all persons intending marriage be instructed in our understanding of marriage. The Rector normally carries out this instruction privately, meeting with the couple for at least six hours over a minimum of three sessions. In unusual cases, in which the couple does not live near enough to attend sessions in Wayland, the couple may meet with another Episcopal clergy person, who will be asked to certify in

writing to the Rector, prior to the wedding, that the instruction has been completed faithfully.

Persons intending marriage must make their intention known to the Rector at least 30 days before the proposed wedding date; in the case of remarriage after divorce a minimum of 60 days is required, to allow time for the bishop to review the application. In the case of remarriage after divorce, a copy of the final ("absolute") divorce decree (not the "nisi" decree) must be presented to the Rector before any application for remarriage can be made. In the case of third or subsequent remarriages following divorces, the couple will be required to attend counseling sessions with a qualified therapist.

The Liturgy

The Episcopal Church's liturgy for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is found in the Book of Common Prayer, beginning on page 423. Appropriate additional readings or prayers may be added, but no part of the liturgy may be deleted or reworded.

It is appropriate that the Holy Eucharist be celebrated as part of the marriage rite. In the Episcopal Church all baptized Christians of any age or background are welcome to receive Communion. If, in a particular circumstance, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is not desired, it may be omitted.

The liturgy is conducted in the church's sanctuary. Rarely will the Rector conduct weddings outdoors, and never in secular locations.

All matters of procedure at the rehearsal and ceremony are under the Rector's direction.

Music

The parish musician, with the consent of the Rector, has charge of all music at weddings; music is selected in consultation with the parish musician, and is subject to the Rector's approval.

If special arrangements are made for instrumental or vocal music in addition to music provided by the parish musician, such arrangements should be made in consultation with the parish musician.

Candles, Flowers, Pictures, etc.

Altar candles and candelabras are provided by the parish Altar Guild. Arrangements for the use of any additional candles should be made with the Rector and Altar Guild.

Flowers from florists should be delivered on the day of the wedding at a time agreeable with the church staff or Altar Guild. If a runner for the aisle is desired, it should be purchased/rented from your florist.

Photographers should confer with the clergyperson before the service. Because flashes are distracting, we ask that only time exposures be taken during the ceremony. Pictures should be taken discretely from the rear or sides of the sanctuary. Video cameras may be placed in the balcony. Arrangements may be made for the clergy and wedding party

to reassemble after the service for ceremonial pictures.

Congratulatory missiles (rice, confetti, flower petals, etc.) are not permitted to be thrown on church property.

The Marriage License, and Fees

The couple is responsible for obtaining a marriage license, and bringing it to the rehearsal.

The organist's fee is set according to standards of the American Guild of Organists and the Association of Anglican Musicians; the rector will inform the couple as to the current fee. A donation of \$75 to the church is requested to cover altar supplies and other costs. If use of the parish hall is desired for a reception, there is an additional fee. A gift to the clergy is left to the couple's discretion; gifts to the Rector should be made payable to the Rector's Discretionary Fund. All fees should be paid at or before the rehearsal.

Blessing of a Civil Marriage

The Book of Common Prayer provides for this rite, and the Rector can discuss it with couples for whom it is appropriate.



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at

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The Church of the Holy Spirit
169 Rice Rd.
Wayland, MA 01778

508:358-7397
Fax 508:358-6137

chswayland@aol.com
www.chswayland.org