



The Wedding Policy



Joined in Marriage

Christ Episcopal Church

321 West Avenue

Red Wing, Minnesota 55066

651-388-0411

To the Bride and Groom:

It is our hope that your wedding will be a joyous celebration and expression of your mutual love. The wedding ceremony is meant to convey the profound bliss and promise of Christian marriage.

“Marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purpose for which it was instituted by God.”

Similarly the service of worship asking God’s blessing on your union commands a special respect as well. It is important to remember that you come to a church not to just get married (all that takes is a judge) but to ask God’s blessing on your marriage. A certain appropriate reverence and spirituality needs to be included in the actual ceremony to be true to this purpose.

The guidelines that follow are intended to help you in planning for your wedding ceremony. They are practical and will help simplify your efforts at a time when you are no doubt quite busy. Should special circumstances arise that call for the changing of these guidelines, the Clergy and Altar Guild will try to act in the best interests of all.

If you have any questions, please feel free to direct them to the Clergy or the Altar Guild Director. It is our desire to make this ceremony an occasion you will cherish for the rest of your life.

Faithfully yours, The Clergy of Christ Church

PLANNING FOR YOUR WEDDING AT CHRIST CHURCH

Premarital Counseling:

The church Canons (laws) require no less than 30 days notice to be given to the Clergy prior to your wedding date. Generally we prefer 120 days notice because it takes time to schedule the counseling. If one or both parties should be divorced, the marriage can still take place with the blessing of the priest, but the Bishop must also give approval. This is our way of trying to affirm the vows within the marriage service, while also knowing that we are to be forgiving. After meeting with the priest, if one of you is divorced, a letter will be sent to the bishop's office, and we will receive permission to proceed subsequent to that letter.

Generally, one of the Clergy meets with the engaged couple three to five times prior to the wedding ceremony. When a couple lives far away they may make arrangements with a suitable counselor or priest at another Episcopal Church. Arrangements for premarital counseling should be made as soon as possible after your wedding date has been set. A testing instrument which allows the couple to answer a whole range of questions may be used in the counseling. The modest charge for this test is the responsibility of the couple and is given to the clergy administering the test within the counseling.

Scheduling:

All scheduling for the wedding, including rehearsal date, is made through the church secretary (651-388-0411), but such reservations are only temporary until the rector has given permission for the wedding to occur. Often the clergy will want a first meeting with the couple before such confirmation. After the date and time have been set, please contact the Altar Guild Director (contact information available through the church secretary), who will advise you on the rules with respect to decorations, photographers, etc. within the church.

Visiting Clergy:

Clergy from other Episcopal Church or other denominations are welcome to assist in your wedding. If you wish to have another priest assist, please discuss this with the church's rector. You will most likely make this invitation yourself, but with the blessing of the rector.

THE SERVICE

The order of service is discussed with the Clergy. Generally you will be following the service form the 1979 Book of Common Prayer beginning at page 423. You may find a copy of the prayer book marriage service on the internet at <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/> (Click on 1979 BCP and you'll find you can read, copy and print any service from it.

When planning the worship your choices include the lessons to be read and whether or not to include the Holy Eucharist. Having the Holy Eucharist usually adds great meaning to the wedding. At Christ Church all your guest will be welcome to come forward and this invitation will be made clear in the bulletin as well as with a public invitation at the time of communion. As you plan the wedding you will want to think about the various people who might participate as it adds a great deal to the worship if others are involved along with the priest.

The suggested reading for the service is found on the Website edition of the prayer book or on p. 426 in the Book of Common Prayer. It is good to include a Psalm (some are suggested) which can include everyone. Involving everyone in worship adds to the quality of the service. It is also possible to place hymns between the lessons.

VOWS

Groom's Vows:

In the Name of God, I, N., take you, N., to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

N., I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (or I honor you in the name of God).

Bride's Vows:

In the Name of God, I, N., take you, N., to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

N., I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (or I honor you in the name of God).

OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

Organist:

Generally the church plays for weddings and should be contacted immediately. He/she will gladly help in the selection of music and will advise as to what music is appropriate and permitted. Please contact the office for the name and phone number of the Organist. If you wish to provide your own organist, you must obtain the approval of our church organist, and a consultation fee will be required. Only approved organists are allowed to use the organ.

A marriage ceremony is a church service and the music should be chosen accordingly. Light or secular music is appropriate for the reception but may not be for the service. The music used in the church should be selected from hymns, chorale preludes and other suitable music, having references specifically to scripture or the Christian faith and way of life. Vocal music, too, should reflect the sacred nature of the wedding ceremony. If you wish to have your own soloist, please bear in mind that he or she needs to practice with the organist. The added time for this should be born in mind when paying for these services. You will also want to consult the clergy about where to place solo music in the service. We generally avoid long performance pieces in a wedding.

Flowers:

By 10 AM on the day of the wedding, flowers for the church decorations must be at the church. Should you wish your altar flowers to remain at the church after the ceremony to be used for Sunday services, please check with the Altar Guild to see if this is a possibility. The Altar Guild Director can answer any question you have regarding flowers, including use of the church vases. Large baskets or rented candelabra are not used in the altar area of the church.

Wedding Bulletin:

Many couples like to have a bulletin to give to their guests who come to the wedding. The main purpose of the bulletin is to assist the guest in the worship so that they know what is happening and how best to participate. The best bulletin will have the entire service with in it, but that generally requires an 8 to 12 page bulletin. A simpler bulletin may also be used, simply listing the parts of the service in the order in which they come with the appropriate page and hymn numbers showing. Often these bulletins allow for all the key participants to be listed by name and for the couple to extend their thanks to the guests. There are sample bulletins in the church office. It is the couple's responsibility to put the bulletin together and to have it printed in sufficient quantities for all the guests. Before final printing of the bulletin, the parts that apply to the service itself need to be approved by the clergy. Since the couple must also review the service with the help of the clergy this is usually not a problem.

Miscellaneous:

We ask that you not use rice or confetti in the church or on the church grounds. Instead birdseed or bubbles may be used outside.

Church hours are seasonal, so please consult with the church staff for your needs (this might affect florists, photographers, decorators, etc.)

The wedding party may dress at the church. Please consult with the Altar Guild Director about this.

Keeping in mind that sacred nature of the service at the church, we expect that all of the participants in the wedding will refrain from the use of alcoholic beverage or other drugs prior to the rehearsal and on the day of the wedding ceremony itself. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the church or on the premises. Anyone under its influence on the wedding day (or at the rehearsal) may be asked to leave.

There is No Smoking within the church building or within 100 feet of any entrance to the church.