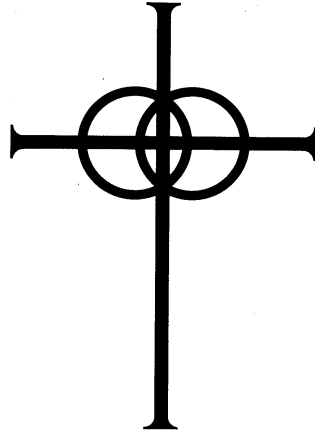


WEDDING GUIDELINES



Christ Episcopal Church
200 South McMorrine Street
Elizabeth City, North Carolina 27909
office 252-338-1686 /fax 252-338-3020
www.christchurch-ecity.com

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FROM THE RECTOR

We are pleased that you have decided to be joined together in holy matrimony at Christ Episcopal Church. Our goal is to support you in your new life together. We will be working with you to enable you to experience your wedding as a true spiritual celebration, doing our best to enhance the consciousness of God's presence with you and with those who share in your marriage service. As we progress through the planning of your wedding, we hope that you will come to know the depth of this Christian community's commitment to you. The Canons of the church require that we do Pre-Marital Counseling, and it is normally during this time that we can deepen our relationships with one another and our Lord.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Christ Church, Elizabeth City, assumes that those who seek to be married here wish their relationship and their wedding to reflect their active commitment to Christ and His church. A wedding in Christ Episcopal Church is only appropriate for practicing Christians who have an active life within this parish, either directly or through their parents. An exception to this policy may be made by the Rector for former active members who are now living away from Elizabeth City. Always reserve the Church (date and time) before making any other preparations.

No public announcement of your marriage should be made until arrangements with Christ Church have been finalized. Because a wedding is a worship service, the Rector has final approval of the ceremony, decorations, music, liturgy, and conduct of the service.

Requests to be married should be made to the rector **six months prior** to the contemplated marriage date. Divorced persons who desire to be remarried must consult the Rector at least six months in advance of the contemplated marriage date, at which time the priest will explain Title I, Canon 18 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church. In the case of re-marriage of a divorced person, the priest must petition the Bishop sixty days prior to the marriage for permission to officiate at the ceremony.

Weddings are not scheduled during the Lenten Season, during Holy Week, or on Sundays. (An exception may be made to the restriction of a Sunday wedding if it is very small, requires no rehearsal or floral decorations, and the day's schedule provides time for the ceremony.)

During the period from December 16 through Christmas Day (a busy time in the life of the parish for clergy and musicians) a wedding may be scheduled only with special permission of the Rector, and then only after the Rector has been assured that no conflict will be created with worship services or parish activities. Weddings scheduled between December 26 and January 6 will be held in the Church with the full Christmas decorations remaining intact. During other seasons of the year, when particular decorations are present, these will remain in the Church.

The marriage license must be given to the officiating priest or the parish office (along with all checks) **at least one week in advance of the wedding.**

CONSULTATIONS

As stated above, the Canons of the Episcopal Church provide that the parties of the marriage shall be instructed “as to the nature, meaning and purpose of Holy Matrimony.” This is usually done in the form of discussions with them about some of the essential elements of a healthy Christian marriage. Normally, the Rector does this counseling, and at least three pre-marital consultations are required. We are open to professional counseling sessions as well. Out of town couples can arrange for consultations at their local parish, with permission of the priest at Christ Church who will officiate at their wedding.

The Canons also require the parties to sign the following Declaration of Intention.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We (Name) and (Name), 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 it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.

We believe that the union of husband and wife, in heart, body, and mind, is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.

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.

The Declaration is signed by the bride and groom and dated, and this is done no later than the final pre-marital consultation session with the priest. The wedding license is signed after the rehearsal with the best man and maid of honor.

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

Rehearsals of weddings are entirely under the direction of the priest officiating at the service, assisted by the parish’s wedding directors. A family member or friend is welcome to assist the wedding party in preparations taking place outside of the sanctuary.

All members of the wedding party are to be present at the rehearsal at least 10 minutes prior to scheduled time.

Cameras are allowed at the rehearsal, but no photographs may be taken by individuals during the wedding service.(Please see special guidelines for photographers.) The church’s wedding directors will assist the rector with the processional, lining up the wedding party, and recessional.

Our Directors: Anna Biggs: 338-1318 Jane Harris: 338-1909

Nell Morrison: 338-5583 Tapp Robinson: 330-4216 Sue Thomson: 330-5534

THE DAY OF THE MARRIAGE

Bride and bridesmaids may dress in the Wright Room of St. Philip's Chapel. Groom, groomsmen/usher may use the Parish House Club Room, which is on the second floor of the Parish House. Groomsmen/Ushers should be dressed and in the narthex 60 minutes before the service. Ushering begins with the arrival of the first wedding guest. **Please notify the church office if limousines will be used in order that we may reserve appropriate parking in the front of the church.**

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage from *The Book of Common Prayer* is the service used in the Episcopal Church. No personally composed or other services may be used. The bride and groom may choose their scripture readings from the list given, and they may select members of the wedding party, their families, or friends to read these lessons at the wedding ceremony.

The Church also offers the bride and groom the option of including the celebration of Holy Communion as a part of their marriage ceremony. If a wedding includes Holy Communion, all those in the wedding party and in attendance who are baptized Christians are invited to receive. This celebration makes it possible for the newly married couple to receive Holy Communion as their first act in marriage along with the entire congregation. Holy Communion may also take place following the rehearsal on the day before with the wedding party and family members.

A worship bulletin can be prepared for the wedding service or you may print your own (pending Rector approval). This can be produced by a printer of the wedding couple's choice, or it can be printed by the church office with the couple paying for the cost of the printing and paper. In either case, the bulletin must be approved by the priest before it is submitted for printing.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographers are not permitted to take pictures during the ceremony. It is permissible to videotape the service from the balcony if no lights are used and if the camera is stationary on a stand. Photographs may be taken after the marriage ceremony.

Photographs may be taken as follows:

- In front of the altar one hour before the service.
- In the bride's room with the bride, family, bridesmaids, etc.
- In the rector's office or other designated area with the groom, best man, etc.
- In the narthex (entrance area) as the wedding party is lined up for the procession.
- A picture may be taken during the processional by standing at the back of church.

- Recessing down the center aisle once the recessional hymn begins by standing at the back of the church.
- In front of the altar following the service.
- Other times scheduled with the sexton but will include an extra fee.

DECORATIONS IN CHRIST CHURCH

- All decorations are to be planned under consultation with the rector and wedding director.
- Flowers may be placed on the retable behind the altar. Flowers and bows can be placed at the end of the pews.
- All flowers on the altar will remain there for the Sunday services. The wedding party should make arrangements with the Altar Guild if they wish to claim them after the final Sunday service.
- No flowers are to be used on the pulpit or lectern.
- The church kneeler will be used at the altar, as provided by the Altar Guild.
- The bride and groom may choose to use either white damask or white lace hangings.
- The use of rice, birdseed, rose petals, confetti (paper or edible), artificial flowers and greenery, etc., on the church premises is not permitted (for safety purposes).

GUEST CLERGY

In the case of a request for a guest clergy to be a part of the service, the rector should be given their contact information at their first meeting with the rector. Clergy guest will receive an invitation to assist the rector at the minister's discretion.

MUSIC FOR WEDDINGS

The character of music at a wedding should be dignified, in keeping with the joyful solemnity of the Sacrament of Marriage. The music, like the ceremony, should be an act of worship. The ultimate responsibility for the choice of music rests with the Director of Music Ministries and the Rector. Music suggested by the bride and groom may be included if it meets worship standards. Favorite secular songs are played at the reception or rehearsal dinner and not during the church service.

The Director of Music Ministries at Christ Church plays for all weddings. If unavailable, the Director must approve the substitute organist or other musicians.

Music for weddings includes a prelude before the service, a processional and a recessional. Sometimes vocal or instrumental solos are included, as well as optional congregational hymns. The bride and groom should arrange a conference with the

Director of Music Ministries several months before the wedding date to discuss possible music for the service. If desired by the couple, a vocal or instrumental soloist can be arranged by the Director of Music Ministries.

FEES

Organist

- Service fee \$150
- Wedding rehearsal with bridal party \$50/hour
- Additional rehearsals \$30/hour

Soloist

- Fee set by musician; \$100 recommended

Sexton

- \$100
To include 30 minutes prior to, during rehearsal, and 30 minutes following for securing facilities
To include 2 hours prior to, during wedding, and following service for cleaning and securing facilities
- Other times scheduled by wedding party at \$15 per hour.

One of the officiating priest's normal duties is to prepare people for Christian marriage and to celebrate and bless marriages in the name of God. The priest does not receive or expect a fee. You may wish to offer an honorarium (between \$75-\$200 is suggested), which will be added to the discretionary fund of the priest. This fund is used to help those in need who turn to the Church for assistance. This is a way you can say "thank you" to the priest and help others. Fees for the organist, soloist and, other fees are to be taken to the church one week before the ceremony (along with the marriage license).

