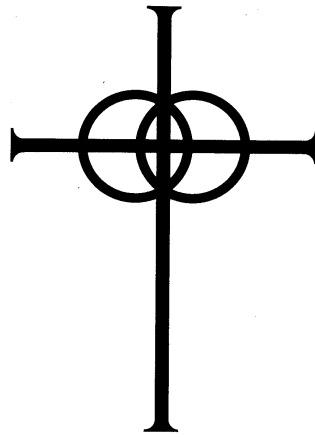


# WEDDING GUIDELINES



**Christ Episcopal Church**  
200 South McMorrine Street  
Elizabeth City, North Carolina 27909  
office 252-338-1686  
[www.christchurcheccity.com](http://www.christchurcheccity.com)

Revised: October 2022

## 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 typically scheduled during the Lenten Season, during Holy Week, or on Sundays. (Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Rector.)

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 Marriage Ceremony 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. 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

Eve Turlington 339-1144

## 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 at Christ 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 DURING THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

### Individuals

**No photographs may be taken by individuals during the wedding service.**

### Photographers

Photographers may take pictures from a stationary location without the use of flashes. Photographers should speak to the Rector prior to the service. 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 with use of lights.

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.
- 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 Director of Music-Organist at Christ Church plans the music for all weddings in consultation with the couple and at the direction of the Rector. The Parish's Director of Music-Organist (or a suitable replacement identified by the Director of Music-Organist) will play for your wedding. Any exception must be made with the consent of the Director of Music-Organist and may be subject to the normal fees. Additional instrumentalists, a choir, or soloists, if desired, and their fees can also be arranged in consultation with the Director of Music-Organist. Extraordinary rehearsal time or special preparations will require a higher fee.

If you wish to have music played and/or sung at your wedding, you should schedule an appointment with the Director of Music-Organist two or three months prior to your wedding date.

A wedding, though an obvious celebration of the couple's new life together in Christ, is first and foremost, a service of worship of Almighty God. All wedding music must uphold and support the dignity, solemnity, and spirituality of Holy Matrimony. Therefore, we refrain from music with overt secular overtones, either in the text or musical style. The Director of Music-Organist must approve all music. To underscore the communal nature of the service, we encourage the inclusion of a congregational hymn. The Director of Music-Organist can provide a list of appropriate hymns.

Normally wedding music begins 30 minutes prior to the start time of the service, or when guests begin to arrive and be seated. If the wedding is particularly large with guests arriving early, the organist will begin playing approximately 40 minutes prior to the service. The organist will play music following the recessional until the guests have exited the church.

### **FEES**

#### **Organist**

- Service fee \$300 (includes a pre-service consultation, wedding rehearsal, wedding, accompaniment of soloists or instrumentalists, hymns, entrance and exit music and Holy Communion if applicable)
- Rehearsal(s) with soloist(s) and/or choir: \$50 - \$100 per hour (half-hour minimum fee)
- Once music has been chosen and the date is secure, a check for the amount agreed upon must be sent to the Director of Music-Organist one month in advance of the wedding.

#### **Soloist**

- Fees are set by individual musicians; \$100 is usually recommended but could be more if the musician learn extra music or must travel.

#### **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).

### **Appendix A- LESSONS AT THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE**

In accordance with *The Book of Common Prayer*

*The couple may choose one or two readers (family members or friends who are skilled at public reading) to read the Old Testament and the New Testament (epistle) readings. The Gospel reading is proclaimed by a member of the clergy. These decisions will be discussed with the priest who will be officiating at the marriage during pre-marital instruction with the couple.*

### Old Testament Lesson

*Choose one from the four choices below:*

#### **Genesis 1:26-28**

God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

*or this*

#### **Genesis 2:4-9, 15-25**

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground—then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

*or this*

**Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7**

My beloved speaks and says to me: “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.” Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned.

*or this*

**Tobit 8:5b-8**

Tobias said to Sarah, “Sister, get up, and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety.” So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying, “Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.’ I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together.” And they both said, “Amen, Amen.”

New Testament (Epistle) Lesson

*Choose one from the four choices below:*

**1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

*or this*



**Ephesians 3:14-19**

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

*or this*

**Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33**

Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

*or this*

**Colossians 3:12-17**

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

*or this*

**1 John 4:7-16**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so

that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

New Testament (Epistle) Lesson

*Choose one from the four choices below:*

**Matthew 5:1-10**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

*or this*

**Matthew 5:13-16**

Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

*or this*

**Matthew 7:21, 24-29**

Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!” Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

*or this*

**Mark 10:6-9, 13-16**

Jesus said to the Pharisees, “But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

*or this*

**John 15:9-12**

Jesus said to his disciples, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

These readings are taken from The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible