

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony
Wedding Guidelines
St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Marriage Requirements

- Holy Matrimony is a Sacrament of the Church. We trust that couples who desire to be married wish to enter into a sacramental relationship, to have their relationship blessed by God, and that the service to be held in the church is a Christian service.
- Canon Law of the Church specifies that the Rector must have at least thirty days notice. This is an absolute minimum – more notice is preferred
- One of the parties to the marriage must be a baptized Christian
- The order of service will be that Celebration of a Marriage in the Book of Common Prayer
- The Rector will require a minimum of three counseling sessions with the couple prior to the wedding to discuss issues relating to marriage
- Before the wedding is performed the couple must deliver to the Rector a license from the civil authority
- The Rector/clergy may decline to perform any marriage ceremony, and may or may not disclose a reason

Remarriage Requirements

- In all instances of remarriage the Rector/clergy must receive permission from the Bishop of the Diocese to do so. All petitions must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the proposed wedding date
- For a **second marriage**, a waiting period of one year from the date of the final divorce decree is normally required, unless there has been a lengthy (in excess of two years) separation
- In the event of **third marriage** the parties to the proposed marriage must consult a licensed marriage therapist as to their readiness for marriage. A written opinion from the therapist must be conveyed to the petitioning priest and included with the petition to the Bishop
- Petitions for a **fourth marriage** will not be considered unless under *very* unusual circumstances
- In all instances of remarriage the couple will have a minimum of four counseling sessions

Rehearsal

- A rehearsal is usually held the evening before the day of the marriage at a time convenient for the wedding party, the organist, and the officiating clergy

Music

- St. Mark's organist/Director of Music must be contacted at the beginning of the planning process, to secure the dates and times and to allow our musician to find a substitute if for some reason she is unable to play on that particular day

- The Priest and Organist/Director of Music are to be consulted about any music to be used in the service
- Music must be appropriate to a religious service; secular music is appropriate for the reception but not the wedding
- The couple must employ St. Mark's organist if there is to be organ or piano music; other music requests need to be negotiated with, and approved by, clergy and St. Mark's organist.

Flowers

- Flowers for the wedding are to be discussed with the officiating clergy
- Normally flowers are left in the Church after the wedding, but alternative arrangements may be made
- St. Mark's florist is McPhails, and they know our space and are recommended

Flower Girls

- No flower petals of any sort may be scattered in the aisle during a wedding procession

Photos

- Taking photos in the church must cease 30 minutes before and after the ceremony
- Taking photos during the service is not allowed
- Videographers are allowed in the choir loft only
- The wedding party is asked to inform the photographer of these rules.
Photographers who do not comply will be refused permission to take further pictures and will be denied permission to photograph future weddings at St. Mark's

Reception

- St. Mark's does not have a wedding guild to provide or serve wedding receptions. Any requests for receptions in the Parish Hall need to be coordinated through the church office. Any arrangements for receptions need to be handled exclusively by the wedding party
- If alcoholic beverages are served at the reception, there must be attractive, alternative, non-alcoholic beverages served as well

Cleanup

- For all weddings, the church sexton must be contracted by the wedding party

Fee Schedule

- **\$300 for Organist/Director of Music (and additional fees for extra musicians)**
- **\$300 (minimum) for Clergy**
- **\$100 for sexton**
- **\$200 for use of church**
- **Additional fees for use of Parish Hall if used for a Reception**