

We're Delighted to Work with You for your Wedding Day and a Life of Marriage

Nothing can be more joyful than the announcement of an engagement and the prospect of celebrating a wedding! The choice to be married in the church is optional and means that a specific form guides the preparation for the wedding and a life-long marriage.

These steps for Holy Matrimony are offered to help couples prepare for marriage in The Church of the Good Shepherd. They are designed to enrich the couple's journey toward a marriage in Christ. A wedding is a one-time event. Holy Matrimony is a life together in and through the Church for Christ in the service of others. We honor the uniqueness of each couple's special history and the needs they bring to their preparation and ceremony.

This booklet outlines the process for preparing for Holy Matrimony and the wedding service at The Church of the Good Shepherd. The steps are to be carried out in the following order. In your planning, please follow the steps in order. If you are interested in being married at The Church of the Good Shepherd, please contact the Rector at 703-323-5400, ext. 104.

STEP 1: INTERVIEW WITH THE RECTOR

Please contact the rector and set up an initial interview to discuss your plans to be married at Good Shepherd. The purpose of this first interview is to meet you, to hear your desires for matrimony, and to explain the Good Shepherd Policy. The couple will be introduced to the Church's Declaration of Intention for a Life-Long Marriage. No wedding date will be finalized until the rector places the date on the calendar. Any wedding may be postponed or canceled at the Rector's discretion. After the first meeting, a tentative date may be listed on the parish calendar for weddings.

STEP 2: PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT AND ENRICHMENT

We are seeking to provide our couples with the very best preparation within reasonable limits. The Canons of the Episcopal Church require premarital counseling for each couple. At Good Shepherd, the Rector and Vestry have endorsed a policy which affords counseling that offers assessment on the social, psychological and spiritual levels with the primary purpose to enrich the relationship of the couple. We ask that all couples seek a professional assessment of their relationship from a social and psychological perspective. The understanding of these perspectives is important for a couple to grow and thrive together. The clergy will provide more detail about counselors in our area who can provide this assessment. We wish to make sure that everyone realizes that we as a parish will pay any and all expenses for this counseling if need be. When one or both members have been divorced, then we follow the guidelines of the Diocese of Virginia. The Rector will discuss these guidelines with those who inquire.

STEP 3: ASSIGNING THE OFFICIATING PRIEST FOR YOUR WEDDING AND SETTING THE DATE AND TIME FOR THE REHEARSAL AND WEDDING SERVICE

After completing your counseling assessment and enrichment, the rector will assign the officiating priest for your wedding and finalize your wedding's date and time. He will confirm these details in writing. Soon thereafter, the clergy will provide the couple with a biblical understanding of marriage as a sacrament in our liturgy. Many people are married, but marriage alone is not the same thing as Holy Matrimony in which we seek God's blessing for our lives together. We will do our utmost to work within the special circumstances of any couple. You will also be assigned a Wedding Coordinator who will work with the specific details of your wedding day.

STEP 4: MEETING WITH OFFICIATING PRIEST FOR YOUR WEDDING

Please contact your officiating priest for an appointment to discuss the spiritual nature of marriage and the service set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. We hope that each couple will use the spiritual insights derived from this session when choosing the elements of their service. At The Church of the Good Shepherd, we encourage the use of the Holy Eucharist and the participation of family and friends in the ceremony. Please remember that some marriage customs and service practices, such as a unity candle, are not consistent with the Book of Common Prayer. Please feel free to discuss any variations with the rector or officiating priest.

STEP 5: MEETING WITH THE WEDDING ADMINISTRATOR TO LEARN THE PARISH CUSTOMS AND TO PLAN THE SERVICE

The initial meeting with the Wedding Administrator will be to learn of the specific needs of each couple and to fully inform the couple of our expectations for the service itself. Detailed plans should not be finalized without consulting the Wedding Administrator to make sure that we can indeed carry forth the couple's plans. Please contact our Wedding Administrator, Mrs. Janet Bouchard (703-425-8245) to set an appointment.

She will discuss the customs and norms for flower arrangements, participants, photography, decoration of the sanctuary, and the details of the wedding day. In particular, we encourage that participants be age five or older and that the number of young children be limited to two. We also will need to know if the couple would like the church to provide the flowers. Before any outside agent is hired for a wedding, we will need to outline our regulations for their participation in the Church. It is the couple's responsibility to meet with all "contractors" for the wedding (such as the photographer, florist, caterer, etc.) and provide them with a sheet of our parish expectations. Please have them sign the proper form and return it for our files. This keeps the couple from being the church's agent to these independent contractors who are accountable to this parish. This also prevents any misunderstandings on the wedding day.

STEP 6: PLANNING THE WEDDING SERVICE MUSIC WITH THE MINISTER OF MUSIC

The details of the service music and any use of soloists or instrumentalists will be planned with our Minister of Music, Donna Renfro Williamson. Please call her at (703-323-5400 x 107) and set an appointment. Sometimes the Minister of Music may gather and work with several couples at one time. Your individual questions are always welcome as you plan the music. The service music will be in accord with the norms and customs of Good Shepherd as guided by Donna Williamson and the rector.

STEP 7: MEETING WITH YOUR WEDDING COORDINATOR

Not less than one month before the wedding, please contact and meet with the wedding coordinator assigned to review the day of the wedding and the progress of the details. We will review our expectations and any special needs of the couple.

STEP 8: WEDDING BULLETIN, LICENSE, AND FEES

(1) Wedding Bulletin: please submit information for your wedding bulletin two weeks before the wedding. We regret that we may not be able to accept last minute changes because of printing deadlines. Bulletins may be printed outside of the church with prior approval of the clergy.

(2) License: To obtain a license, both of you will need to offer proof of identification (example: birth certificate, passport, driver's license) to the Clerk of the Circuit Court. The license can be obtained no more than 60 days before the wedding date.

(3) Fees: Fees should not be an impediment for being married in this church. However, each couple must let the clergy know of any cases of need and a sliding scale can be used for any fee. Fees are as follows:

Checks made out to “Good Shepherd” and designated with the titles in bold below:

1. “Building Usage Fee”

Cleaning charge \$100.

2. “Altar Flowers”

If using the Good Shepherd Flower Guild, the fee would be what was discussed during the meeting with the Flower Guild Co-chair. This may also include a \$35 fee for the special candelabra.

3. “Parish Hall Reception”

The Parish Hall is available for receptions; please contact the Parish Office if you are interested, 703-323-5400.

Checks made out to the name of individuals:

1. Check made out in the name of the Organist

Please make check payable to the organist assigned to your wedding in the amount of \$250 for wedding only or \$300 if a rehearsal with a soloist is needed.

2. Check made out in the name of the Clergy

A separate check for \$250 for the clergy's overall direction of the wedding process, the rehearsal logistics, and oversight for the service itself.

STEP 9: SOME EXPECTATIONS FOR THE REHEARSAL

- The clergy assigned to your wedding will direct the rehearsal and be assisted by the wedding coordinators.
- Unity candles are not permitted. Other additions should be discussed with the clergy.
- Make sure that your wedding party arrives on time for the rehearsal. Please keep in mind the traffic congestion in Northern Virginia on Friday evenings.
- No alcohol is permitted at rehearsals or prior to the wedding.
- We do not permit "stand-ins" for the bride at the rehearsal.
- Flash photography and videos are more than welcome at the rehearsal.
- It is not customary for our clergy to attend both the rehearsal dinner and the reception. If the couple desires Clergy to be present for one of these events, please do so in writing with time to schedule it.

STEP 10: SOME EXPECTATIONS FOR THE ACTUAL DAY OF THE WEDDING

These general expectations are provided with the sincere interest of helping your wedding day to run smoothly and for maximum joy. We thank you for making sure that the wedding party has all necessary information.

- Please do all hair styling and cosmetics at home. (We do not have a formal dressing room.)
- One hour before the wedding, and if desired, you might elect to put on the wedding dress at the church.
- The groom and his party are asked to arrive dressed and 45 minutes before the wedding.
- Wedding pictures can be done one hour prior to the wedding itself.
- Please do not bring any alcohol to the wedding. We expect you to make this clear to all members of your wedding party.
- Please! No rice...but we encourage birdseed or even bubbles!
- We allow thirty minutes for photography after the wedding.
- We discourage the use of receiving lines.
- Guests are respectfully requested to refrain from all flash photography and/or videos during the service.
- After your wedding, the wedding coordinator will lead you into the library until guests

have left for the reception.

- We have learned from experience that many heartaches and inconveniences are spared by trying on all rental wedding clothes before the wedding day. Ladies who begin wearing their newly purchased shoes are happier on the day of the wedding!
- If you have employed your own wedding director, please advise that person to follow the lead of the clergy and wedding coordinators.

DECORATING FOR GOOD SHEPHERD WEDDINGS

Our parish has a very active, professional flower ministry and can be contacted to see if they can provide their services for your wedding at a very reasonable price. You may contact the parish secretary for the current chair of that ministry. She will be delighted to discuss our flower ministry with you.

Or, please know that we welcome all florists at the Church of the Good Shepherd and offer the following guidelines to assist your work. Please feel free to visit our parish to assess the use of space and color. We ask that you read the following norms that govern our weddings and thank you for your cooperation.

- (1) The parish has four large brass candelabrams, which may be used in our formal services. They may be used for a charge of **\$26.00**.
- (2) **FLOWERS:** Flowers are restricted to the two credence tables behind the altar. They may also be placed in moderation on the brick walls. The church does not provide pew bows.
- (3) **COLOR SCHEME:** The center aisle carpet harvest brown. The pews are a dark walnut color. The back wall behind the altar is an off-white color. The floor of the sanctuary is an off-white tile. There is an altar (table) in the center of the sanctuary that is raised up two levels.
- (4) Our principle altar hanging is a brocaded, off white material with a large gold cross in the center. Or, you may elect to use a more contemporary hanging described as: byzantine/coronation or a mixture of gold, green, deep red ornamentation on an ivory background. **Note!** Couples will choose one of the above; if needed, please contact the rector to see if a sample may be provided to pick out fabric for dresses or to take to a florist.
- (5) "House or Hurricane Lamps" may be carefully affixed to the pews by you or your florist...without damaging the pews. (Removal will be your responsibility.)
- (6) "Greenery" may be placed on the candelabra.
- (7) "Unity Candles" are not consistent with our ceremony and will not be used in this parish.
- (8) The parish provides a gorgeous, needle pointed kneeler" for the couple to kneel on for their blessing at the communion rail.

The couple is responsible for returning/mailling/faxing this letter of agreement to the church office.

NAME OF FLORIST _____

ADDRESS _____ **PHONE** _____

I have read and will abide by the above standards for decorations at Good Shepherd.

(Signature from Florist)

Wedding Party & Date

PHOTOGRAPHY AT GOOD SHEPHERD WEDDINGS

We want to welcome your photographers to our parish. As many professional photographers recognize, weddings are held in the local parish at the discretion of the parish. It is vitally important that the photographer join the others in respecting the local parish custom. This will honor and keep the sacredness of the service and be in the best interests of those who have employed you for your work. The following norms are provided to guide your work with the wedding couple while you are in our church. We ask that you read them carefully and abide by them during the wedding ceremony. We invite you to visit our parish and to see the use of space and light before the actual ceremony. We do not get “second opportunities” for weddings. Therefore, **failure to abide by the wedding customs will result in your being asked to leave the parish during the ceremony. No return invitation shall be granted.** We regret that previous negative experiences have led to this policy. We compliment those professional photographers who know how to work within a wedding ceremony without interference.

- (1) Names of photographers must be approved in advance.
- (2) Videotaping during the ceremony is allowed if done from certain pre-arranged locations in the Nave. We have determined that the best location for this videotaping is in the choir stall. We ask that you not move around with the camera or use any special lighting during the service.
- (3) Photographers are not to move about the nave and sanctuary during the ceremony.
- (4) Non-flash pictures may be taken during the ceremony from the narthex.
- (5) Flash photography may be taken from the fourth, rear pew as the bride enters the church nave...no more flash photography may be used until the recessional, or when she passes the mid-way point of the nave.
- (6) Prearranged pictures are allowed and encouraged one-hour before the ceremony. Each couple makes this decision. However, all photography must be finished 15 minutes before the ceremony begins.
- (7) The photographer is welcome to pose the bride/groom and their families for pictures inside the sanctuary. The candles will be left burning after the ceremony for this purpose...or may be lighted before the ceremony for picture taking.

The wedding couple is responsible for returning/mailing/faxing this form back to the parish office.

NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER _____

I have read the foregoing standards and will abide by them during the wedding.

Signature of Photographer

Wedding Party Name & Date