



Christian Marriage and Weddings at Trinity Cathedral

Trinity Cathedral congratulates you on your decision to be married. The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and faithful marriage continues to be one of life's great and gracious joys.

This booklet is designed to inform you of Cathedral guidelines and policies regarding Christian marriage and wedding liturgies. Whether you are simply inquiring of the Cathedral's availability or you are absolutely sure you wish to be married here, please read this material before developing substantial plans.

Christian Marriage

According to Episcopal Church Canon Law, "Holy Matrimony is a physical and spiritual union of a man and a woman, entered into within the community of faith, by mutual consent of heart, mind, and will, and with intent that it be lifelong." The Prayer Book states further 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. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently,

deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

Though marriage is a wonderful institution in itself, the nature of Christian marriage also assumes that engaged couples have a prior relationship with God and with the Christian Church. Should you request the sacrament of Holy Matrimony at Trinity Cathedral, we expect that you have already begun to build your relationship upon the presence and grace of God in your lives.

Christian marriage lasts a lifetime. The wedding ceremony is only the beginning of some hard, but rewarding, work toward living in relationship and learning about love.

WEDDING POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The following policies and guidelines are based on the above brief, but important, description of Christian marriage. A wedding is one of the regular, pastoral services of Trinity Cathedral, conducted for parishioners during times of life changes -- such as baptisms and funerals. Thus, a wedding is also a public event.

A couple's very first step toward a wedding at Trinity Cathedral is to make an appointment with the Cathedral priest whom they wish to officiate, or be responsible for, their wedding.

Membership in Trinity Cathedral

At least one of the parties being married at Trinity Cathedral must be a member in good standing of Trinity Cathedral Parish. A "member in good standing" is one who has been faithful in attending church and faithful to the Cathedral in working, praying, and giving. (Exceptions to this policy are granted only to other Episcopal clergy who make specific request on behalf of a couple. In those exceptions, the church cannot be reserved more than three months in advance.)

Explanation: The Cathedral cannot, in good conscience, provide a space for persons to be married without clear evidence of religious and community commitment. The Cathedral itself represents the "community of faith" which is meant to be a part of Christian marriage.

Reserving a Wedding Date

No date can be reserved on the Cathedral calendar without a prior conversation with the Cathedral priest responsible for the wedding. In fact, only a priest can reserve such a date. A couple may wish to request the services of another Episcopal priest (from outside the Cathedral); but even so, one of the Cathedral clergy must issue the invitation to the other clergy.

Possible Wedding Dates

Episcopal Church Canon Law requires 30 days between the request for a wedding and the wedding itself. Practically and spiritually, however, much more time should be allotted for preparation. The Cathedral calendar, in fact, is often reserved for weddings some 12 to 16 months in advance.

A note about the calendar: By long tradition, the Episcopal Church does not schedule weddings during the penitential season of Lent. Lent, the 40 days leading up to Good Friday and then the Resurrection, is when the Christian community prepares, with special devotion and solemnity, for the joyous season of Easter.

Times of day: Because the Cathedral must be prepared for Sunday worship and because weddings involve a host of Cathedral volunteers and workers (Altar Guild, acolytes, organist, sextons), Saturday weddings cannot be scheduled to begin later than 7:00 p.m. No more than two weddings may be scheduled on a Saturday and no less than four hours must be allowed from the end of one wedding to the beginning of the next one. Weddings are scheduled on the hour: 11 a.m., Noon, or 1 p.m. or evening weddings at 5, 6, or 7 p.m.

Pre-Marital Instruction

It is a canonical requirement that both parties desiring to be married receive pre-marital "instruction as to the nature, meaning, and purpose of Holy Matrimony." Your priest will speak more about this most valuable requirement. At Trinity Cathedral, this requirement is met by participation in one of four Pre-Marriage Workshops developed and led by Cathedral clergy and a meeting with your priest following the weekend. The workshop begins on Friday evening and ends early afternoon on Saturday.

Marriage of Divorced Persons

One of the teachings of the church is that in marriage, two persons are made "one flesh," joined together at the deepest possible levels. Because of this bonding, any divorce is an occasion of pain and brokenness.

Canon law of the Episcopal Church permits a pastoral approach to marriage of divorced persons. It is, therefore, important to assess the reasons and reality of a previous marriage, which has been dissolved and to deal with any remaining grief over the loss of that relationship. In this way, those who have been divorced might learn from the experience of the failed marriage, repent and forgive where it is appropriate, and so enter the new marriage with freedom and wisdom gained from reflection upon the previous marriage and divorce. We believe that this reflection process is a realistic, loving and pastoral approach, which affirms the ancient truth of "one flesh."

If either one or both of you has been divorced, the officiating priest will meet with you to help you reflect on your previous marriage and the divorce and to help you realize any insights that might be carried into your proposed marriage. At least one year should have elapsed between the final divorce decree and your meeting with the priest.

After such reflection, if the officiating priest is supportive about your understanding of Christian marriage, your ability to covenant such a marriage, and your intention to do so, he or she will write a letter to the bishop requesting permission to solemnize the wedding. The bishop requires 30 days between the time he receives the letter and the time his reply may be expected.

The Marriage Service

The order of service for The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is found on pages 422-438 of *The Book of Common Prayer*. If you have not already done so, you are encouraged to read this text together, paying particular attention to the instructions and to the words of the vows.

A traditional and appropriate way to mark the beginning of Christian marriage is to include Holy Eucharist as part of the wedding service. You should talk with the priest who will officiate at your

wedding about whether you wish to have Eucharist as part of your wedding. If Holy Eucharist is celebrated, all baptized Christians present will be invited to receive the consecrated elements of bread and wine.

OTHER GUIDELINES

Music for Weddings

Music to be performed during weddings in the Cathedral is selected in consultation with the canon or assistant organist and choirmaster, who also serve as organists for the ceremony. He will discuss and advise you on hymns and musical selections appropriate to the type of ceremony you are planning. You should schedule this consultation well in advance of your wedding date or notify the executive assistant to the dean that you do not wish to have music at your wedding.

In thinking of music for your ceremony, please remember that all weddings are worship services in the life of Trinity Cathedral parish, and therefore the music must adhere to Cathedral standards; it must be of a religious or content-neutral nature and in suitable style. The repertoire of appropriate music is enormous, with choices available for a wide range of wedding styles. Popular songs, show tunes, and pieces of a secular programmatic nature are inappropriate. Overused and cliché pieces such as wedding marches from Wagner's *Lohengrin* and Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* are discouraged.

A note about vocalists and other musicians: If additional musicians are desired, the canon or assistant organist and choirmaster will engage them. It has been the regrettably frequent experience at the Cathedral that friends or family members of the bride or groom who want to perform at the service are not up to the task, however earnest their desire to contribute. Cathedral staff musicians have numerous contacts with proven musicians in the Columbia area and can engage almost any type of soloist or ensemble desired.

Altar Flowers and Candles

The appropriate and necessary decorations for a wedding are altar flowers and candles with the possibility of candles on the center aisle for an evening wedding. All other decorations are those in use for that season's regular church services.

The Altar Guild and/or Flower Guild are responsible for arranging wedding flowers. For a Saturday wedding, you may wish to use the flowers, which will be on the altar for Sunday. In this case you will not be expected to pay for the flowers. You may wish to make a contribution to the Flower Memorial Fund and name the persons in whose memory flowers will be given at one of the Sunday worship services. In either case, a member of Trinity's Altar Guild or Flower Guild arranges flowers. You should contact the Flower Memorial Committee as soon as possible after your wedding date has been set if you wish to give a flower memorial.

If you wish to use pew torches (center aisle candles) for your wedding, you may choose to use some simple decoration such as ribbon or greenery on them. You should arrange for a friend or someone else to decorate these. Please do not use wire or tape to affix decorations.

Preliminary arrangements for wedding flowers are made in consultation with the executive assistant to the dean.

Wedding Rehearsal

A rehearsal is normally held on the evening before the wedding and will usually last no longer than one hour. Long before the rehearsal, the bride, the groom and the officiating priest will have made all ceremonial decisions. All members of the wedding party are expected to attend and the bride participates fully in the rehearsal. "Stand-ins" for the bride are not appropriate.

The officiating priest is responsible for conducting the rehearsal. There is no need to hire a wedding director. One of Trinity's group of "wedding starters" will be assigned to your wedding - remaining in the narthex to begin the procession and making sure that the wedding attendants are spaced appropriately. Wedding starters have experience in managing the logistics of a wedding. The starter will be at the rehearsal. The organist does not normally attend the rehearsal.

Photography

Because your wedding is a worship service, the officiating priest must approve plans for any photography or recording of the service. All still photography during the wedding must be limited to time exposure taken from the west balcony or west entrance (Sumter Street). Family members and guests should be reminded that flash photography during the wedding service is not permitted. A video camera is often allowed, if the camera is stationary. In some cases, it may be important for the photographer or person recording the service in any other way to attend the rehearsal.

Photographers and videographers must be informed of Cathedral policy before the wedding date. Furthermore, photographers are not permitted to move any Cathedral chairs or ornaments for pictures.

All post-ceremony photographs should be completed within 20 minutes of the end of the wedding. You may elect to take many photographs before the ceremony.

Marriage License

A valid South Carolina Marriage License is necessary before any wedding can be performed. You should plan to apply for the license at least three weeks before your wedding keeping in mind that there is a 24-hour waiting period in South Carolina. Please bring all copies of the marriage license to Betty Hudgens at least two weeks in advance of your wedding date. Your copy will be returned to you after your wedding, and we will file the appropriate copies with the State of South Carolina.

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