



SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

GUIDELINES FOR THE SERVICE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE *at Saint Mark's Cathedral*

Christian marriage is a service of worship, more aptly called **The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage**. The word celebration expresses the joy of the event and its public and communal nature. The word blessing is a reminder of the solemn, religious context of this holy covenant. It is sacramental work and is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly. Saint Mark's, therefore, has what may seem like high expectations for those wishing to be married in the Cathedral or one of its chapels.

In the wedding service, the two people promise in God's name to be faithful to each other for life. The congregation commits to support the couple and prays that God will strengthen and guide them in their life together. The priest proclaims God's blessing upon them. The sacred nature of the service and the solemnity of the promises made by the couple influence the decisions to be made about the wedding.

Christian marriage is a covenant that arises from the commitment of the two people, at least one of whom must be baptized.

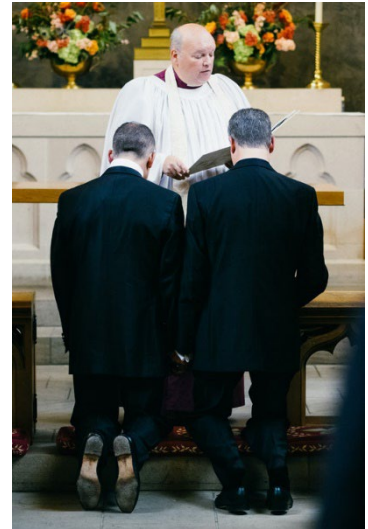
The service of Christian marriage assumes that **the couple are active participants in the life of Saint Mark's Cathedral**. Persons seeking God's blessing through the Church for their marriage are **expected to be regular in worship, especially during the months prior to their wedding**. Of course, it is hoped that couples who marry at Saint Mark's continue in regular worship following their wedding. The solemn vows of Christian marriage are expressed within the context of the living community of the Church.

Many people find that civil marriage is a more suitable expression of their vows. The Church fully recognizes civil marriage, and in many countries it is the norm. A civil marriage may be blessed by the Church later when the couple wishes. This is not another wedding rite; it is the prayerful blessing and affirmation of the marriage already engaged.

The marriage ceremony will be performed according to an authorized liturgy of the Episcopal Church. One of the Cathedral clergy will officiate in nearly all cases. The liturgy reflects the communal aspect of the Church's life and the reality that marriage is a sacramental rite grounded in the community's commitments to support one another.

First Steps

1. Read this entire booklet of wedding guidelines carefully. It will answer most of your questions.
2. Email weddings@saintmarks.org or call the church office (206.323.0300) to begin a conversation with one of the Cathedral clergy. The priest will review the steps you will take in preparing for your wedding, and will assist you in arranging for premarital counseling sessions and making contact with the organist. The priest can also discuss potential dates that are available on the church calendar. It is unwise to set a firm wedding date until you have conferred with the priest and the space has been reserved. Please contact the Church Office at 206.323.0300 for more information.



The Requirements

Every priest of the Episcopal Church must conform to the laws of the State and the canons of the Episcopal Church regarding the solemnization of Holy Matrimony. The canonical requirements are that: (1) persons desirous of being married in this church must signify their intention to the minister at least 30 days prior to the date of the service; (2) there be at least two witnesses to the ceremony; (3) the date and place of the marriage, the names of the parties, the age of the parties, their residences and their Church status are recorded in the proper register; (4) the witnesses and minister shall sign the record; and (5) the couple signs a **Declaration of Intention** (found at the end of this document) to enter into marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant.

In the case of marriage following divorce, the officiating priest must meet with you **at least 90 days prior to the wedding**. The following additional requirements apply: (1) the minister is provided appropriate evidence that any previous marriage has been annulled or dissolved (copies of all divorce decrees constitute evidence of the termination of any previous marriages); (2) the divorce decree or annulment has been in effect for one full year prior to the date of the re-marriage; (3) the minister consults with the parties as to continuing concern for the former spouse and children of the prior marriage; and (4) the minister applies for and obtains the consent of the Diocesan Bishop for remarriage to occur (this takes at least 60 days).

Because the request for the Bishop's permission occurs after the pre-marital counseling period, the typical preparation time for marriage of a divorced person begins several months prior to the wedding date.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING

While your wedding ceremony itself is very important, the development of a solid foundation for your ongoing marital relationship is of greater significance. Because we want to support your living

into your wedding vows in an intentional and faithful way, Saint Mark's requires pre-marital preparation of all couples.

Pre-marital counseling should be coordinated with the officiating priest. In some cases, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) will require several sessions before providing a general statement of support to the priest. Please note: The priest may decline to officiate the service at the priest's discretion.

SETTING THE DATE OF THE SERVICE

Technically, the priest cannot give consent to performing the service until after the canonical requirements have been fulfilled (see first paragraph under "The Requirements"). The wedding date is subject to the schedule of the priest and the availability of the church space. Because of the penitential nature of the season of Lent, it is not appropriate to perform weddings from Ash Wednesday until Easter.

THE MINISTER

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is a service of worship, and therefore is under the complete direction of the Dean of the Cathedral, in consultation with the Cathedral's priest associates, liturgists and musicians. Wedding consultants are not necessary. In fact, we discourage the couple from retaining a wedding consultant for the wedding liturgy because they often do not understand the design of the service, and can create confusion for the wedding party. If you do have a wedding consultant, please have them focus on aspects of your celebration other than what transpires in the church. The priest will conduct any rehearsal. Visiting clergy may request to participate by a letter to the Dean. Episcopal priests in good standing in this diocese are welcome to serve as the primary officiant for the wedding, if invited by the Dean of the Cathedral; clergy of other denominations may have a role but do not serve as the primary officiant. Please do not invite clergy not on the Cathedral staff to participate in your wedding until you have spoken with the Cathedral priest and received permission from the Dean.

THE EUCHARIST

Because the Eucharist (Holy Communion) is the Sacrament of unity, it provides a beautiful context for the wedding service. You are encouraged (but not required) to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in connection with your marriage. What better first act for a married couple than to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion together, with family and friends who celebrate the occasion with you!

THE OBLATIONS

It is customary for the couple, or for family members, to bring the bread and wine forward for the Communion.

THE CONGREGATION

Weddings are important occasions in the lives of the couple and their friends and families. It is expected that the invitation list will include many who are not members of the congregation. However, since the service of Holy Matrimony is a worship service, and since there are no "private services" in the Episcopal Church, it is understood that the local congregation is also invited and that an announcement to that effect may be published.

The Cathedral priest who officiates your wedding will facilitate several aspects of planning for the service, including:

- Receiving requests for and scheduling weddings.
- Providing you with resources and answers to your questions, and serving as an ongoing source of information, guidance and support.
- Connecting you with other members of Saint Mark's wedding and marriage preparation team, including music staff.
- Facilitating the wedding rehearsal and working with clergy, parish administration, musicians, facility staff, liturgical ministers, and photographers to ensure a smooth-flowing ceremony.
- Maintaining parish records.
- Serving as an ongoing contact for you following your wedding day, as you grow into your marriage and in your desires to further strengthen your relationship with the Saint Mark's community.

THE MUSIC

Only sacred music is allowed at a marriage service. The Cathedral organists have the first right of refusal on all weddings performed in Saint Mark's Cathedral. Other musicians may be invited, but such invitations come from the Canon for Cathedral Music. Please do not invite other musicians before conferring with the Canon for Cathedral Music.

The priest will inform you which Cathedral organist has been assigned to your wedding. You should contact the organist at least 30 days prior to the service. Any other arrangements need to be cleared with the priest and the cathedral organist. You are encouraged to use hymns for your wedding, especially if the congregation will be large enough to sing robustly. In addition, instrumentalists can add a festive tone to the celebration of a marriage. Such instrumentalists are under the direction of the priest and the Canon for Cathedral Music.

Solo vocal music is not necessary, but can be included if the music chosen is appropriate to the liturgies authorized by the Episcopal Church. The Cathedral is a challenging acoustical space and it is best to use professional vocalists. Non-professional vocalists, and any repertoire, must be

approved by the officiating priest or Canon Musician to ensure their capacity to sing successfully in the large Cathedral space. The words are to be from Holy Scripture, from The Book of Common Prayer, or from texts congruent with them. Popular music should be saved for the reception.



In our liturgical tradition the Lord's Prayer is a corporate act of prayer (see The Book of Common Prayer, page 428) and is said or sung by the entire congregation. It is not appropriate for it to be sung as a solo.

Wagner's *Bridal Chorus* ("Here Comes the Bride") and Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* are secular pieces and are not used in wedding services at Saint Mark's. On all music decisions, the priest is the final authority.

LITURGICAL POLICIES AT SAINT MARK'S CATHEDRAL

One of the reasons people love to worship at Saint Mark's and to be married here is the tradition of beautiful and inspiring liturgy. The use of symbol, sacrament, color and art is particularly important in the Episcopal Church. Everything done in worship has purpose and communicates meaning.

The Sacrament of Marriage is first of all a service of worship. Its focus is God and God's blessing given to the solemn vows made by the couple. The service is also a celebration; its mood is joyful. The symbols and ritual acts of marriage are the ways the meaning of the worship service is communicated.

The worship service of the Sacrament of Marriage at Saint Mark's is structured as follows:

BEFORE THE SERVICE

The congregation keeps silence before worship in order to prepare through prayer. Appropriate sacred or classical music may be played. A hymn or other sacred music may be sung or played by the musicians. The ushers may help worshipers to their seats. If the family of the bride and groom are not to be in the procession, they may be ushered to their seats prior to the beginning of the service.

THE ENTRANCE PROCESSION

Since marriage is an act of worship, the entrance procession looks similar to processions on

Sunday. As the congregation sings a hymn or as instrumental music is played, the ministers of the service enter down the aisle from the back of the church. The use of a processional hymn of praise, or organ fanfare, is particularly encouraged to highlight the worship aspect of the service. Here is the typical order of procession [optional parts are placed in brackets]:

[Thurifer with incense]

Crucifer with Cross

[Torches]

Priest [and First Member of the Couple]

[Deacon with Gospel Book]

[Choir]

[Other musicians]

[Parents of the Couple]

[Lay Reader(s) / Chalice Bearer(s)]

[Attendants]

Maid / Matron of Honor and Best Man

[Ring Bearer / Flower Girl]

[Priest]

The Couple

or if the Parent(s) escorts the Bride

Parent(s) and Bride

The procession enters in a smooth and dignified manner as one act of procession. Usually the couple (or the Parent(s) and Bride) have as much as half the aisle for their entrance at the end of the procession, typically using the same music as the procession.

THE FLOWERS AND ALTAR HANGINGS

One of the joys of being in a liturgical church is that it is already beautifully appointed for worship. There is no need to import flower baskets, ferns and candelabra to make it look festive.



In the Nave (the large main worship space), one or two large flower arrangements may be placed on the cornerstone and by the northwest pillar. Additional flowers may be placed in the rear of the Nave behind the pews.

In Thomsen Chapel, two smaller flower arrangements may be placed on the shelf above the high altar. An additional small arrangement may be placed in the rear of the Chapel near the entry.

Members of the wedding party may choose to carry bouquets or wear flowers. Only fresh flowers and real greenery are used. Flowers may be used for pew markers if desired. No other flowers are necessary.

The flowers should follow the scale and proportion of arrangements used on Sundays and other Major Feasts, and coordination of those details will be facilitated by the priest. If a wedding takes place on a Friday or Saturday, it is customary that the flowers remain at the Cathedral to be used in church on the following Sunday. We will offer a thanksgiving for the couple as part of our corporate prayers on Sunday morning. The Priest or Cathedral Sacristan can provide the names of florists who have successfully worked in our space in the past. If your florist has not arranged flowers in the Cathedral before, they are required to meet with the Cathedral Sacristan to discuss appropriate arrangements and acceptable locations in the space. Please note that the Cathedral Flower Ministry does not customarily arrange flowers for weddings.

LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Cathedral is an active, worshipping community and our worship spaces are used in a variety of capacities throughout the year. During various times/seasons of the year there may be additional decoration present that is part of our celebration of that season (e.g., Easter streamers, Advent wreath, etc.) Those seasonal decorations may not be removed. The priest can give you an idea of what might be present at the time of your wedding. The altar hangings may be either the seasonal hangings, or white. At times there are art exhibits hanging on the walls of the Cathedral. Those also cannot be modified in any way.

SOUND AND VIDEO

Weddings held in the Cathedral nave require a sound technician to manage the sound during the wedding (fee and payment to the sound technician covered in the fees section of this document). Additionally, weddings in the nave have the option of being livestreamed to the Cathedral's webpage, YouTube, and Vimeo pages. Please discuss this option with the priest if you are interested (there is a separate fee paid to the video technician for livestreamed weddings). Weddings held in the chapel do not require a sound technician, nor is livestream an option.

THE CANDLES

The Church's altar candles may be used during the marriage under the supervision of the Cathedral Sacristan. During Advent and Christmas, the Advent wreath candles are lit, and during the Easter season, the Paschal Candle is used at all services. If you wish to use a "unity candle," please save that for the reception. The cathedral does not use pew candles.

PHOTOGRAPHY

A wedding is a service of worship. Photographs may be taken from designated positions in the

Church during the service according to the guidelines appended to this document. This agreement which must be signed by the photographer. This is a firm requirement and is expected to be communicated to the photographer and to friends and family. The photographer may also take pictures in the Narthex (entrance area) prior to the procession.

Posed photographs may be taken either before or after the service, including any parts of the wedding service. If pictures are taken in the church before the service, they must conclude at least 30 minutes before the start time of the wedding.

There may be one stationary video camera on a tripod placed in the church behind the last pew or in the organ loft (in the Nave only; there is no organ loft access in Thomsen Chapel). It may be supervised, but the photographer should be dressed in keeping with the wedding party. Alternatively, livestreaming (and recording) of the service is available upon request.

Artificial light for photography is not used for a wedding.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Ordinarily, the acolytes (altar assistants) will be those of the congregation. If you wish to request specific parish acolytes, or ushers or altar guild members, please clear those choices with the priest in advance. You are asked to extend the invitations to the acolytes who would take part in the service.

THE REHEARSAL

Wedding rehearsals are usually held in the early evening of the day before the wedding, concluding no later than 6:00 p.m. The rehearsal usually lasts no more than one hour. All members of the wedding party are expected to attend, to be on time and to remember that the rehearsal is conducted with reverence. For some small weddings, it is preferable to have a brief rehearsal on the day of the wedding sometime prior to the arrival of the congregation, or at some other suitable time, at the discretion of the priest.

THE RECEPTION

If the reception is to be held in the Parish Hall (Bloedel Hall), arrangements should be made in advance to reserve the building and to ensure that the event occurs smoothly. You are responsible for cleaning up and returning everything to its pre-reception condition. All rented equipment and personal belongings must be removed from the kitchen and Parish Hall immediately after the reception. The use of alcoholic beverages must follow the parish policy. The cleaning service will normally come in afterwards to prepare the church for the following Sunday. The reception needs to end in time for the hall to be empty by 8:30 p.m. so the room can be reset for Sunday.



FACILITIES

The chairs and pews in the Cathedral Nave seat approximately 350 guests. Additional seating may be added with a maximum capacity of 800. Thomsen Chapel comfortably accommodates 40-60 guests with a maximum capacity of 70. Confetti, rice, birdseed, balloons or other such items are not permitted inside the Cathedral or on the grounds. Bubbles are a delightful alternative and may be used outside the Cathedral as you exit the worship space following your service. Please remove hangers, cleaning bags and other things from the dressing areas. Please do not bring or drink alcohol during the

rehearsal or during the time prior to the wedding. The cathedral has a strict policy that alcohol may only be used at receptions.

LIMOUSINES AND SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION

If you plan to be picked up after your wedding by a limousine or other special transportation, please note that the area in front of the Cathedral is a fire lane. Your driver should remain with the vehicle while waiting for the conclusion of your service. This must be coordinated ahead of time so that the bollards may be removed in time for the limousine to pull up, so please let this request be known to the priest.

FEES

The fees for a wedding are subject to change from time to time. The Priest or Cathedral Sacristan can provide you with a current fee schedule. A \$500 deposit is required at the time you reserve the Church for your wedding. The deposit is nonrefundable but can be transferred to another date. All fees must be paid in full prior to the rehearsal. You can pay online at the giving portal or through the church office during regular business hours, or you can give the checks to the priest before the

rehearsal.

If you have a reception at Saint Mark's Cathedral, there are additional fees depending on the space and length of time desired.

If you would like acolytes, the priest can make suggestions for servers. Customarily there is an honorarium (\$25.00 suggested) given directly to each acolyte.

Declaration of Intention

(to be signed by the couple to be married)

We, _____ and _____,
desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly
declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of two persons. We believe that
our union, in heart, body and mind, is intended by God for our 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.

Name

Name

Date

Date

Acknowledgement of Wedding Couple

We, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that we have read the contents of the
"Guidelines for the Service of Christian Marriage at Saint Mark's Cathedral," and we
understand that the wedding is a worship service which is conducted according to
the practice and tradition of the Episcopal Church. We understand, accept and
commit to comply with the guidelines regarding the service, photography, flowers,
candles and the respective roles of priest, liturgist and wedding coordinator.

Printed Name

Printed Name

Signature

Signature

Date

Date

Acknowledgement of Photographer

By signing below, I hereby acknowledge that I have read the contents of the “Guidelines for the Service of Christian Marriage at Saint Mark’s Cathedral,” and I understand that the wedding is a worship service which is conducted according the practice and tradition of the Episcopal Church. I understand, accept and commit to comply with the guidelines regarding the use of photographic equipment during the wedding service. Failure to comply may result in the service being halted by the priest, and may also result in the photographer being barred from future weddings at Saint Mark’s Cathedral.

Signature

Date

Acknowledgement of Wedding Coordinator (if applicable)

By signing below, I hereby acknowledge that I have read the contents of the “Guidelines for the Service of Christian Marriage at Saint Mark’s Cathedral,” and I understand that the wedding is a worship service which is conducted according the practice and tradition of the Episcopal Church. I understand, accept and commitment that the priest of Saint Mark’s Cathedral will conduct the wedding rehearsal and the wedding service.

Signature

Date