

Weddings
at
The Church of the Good Shepherd

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd

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Congratulations!

As you prepare to solemnize your relationship in a life-long partnership, it is wonderful that you have thought of the Church of the Good Shepherd as the place for your wedding service, and have begun to make plans for your wedding. This guide can help you in your decision-making and plans, and can also clarify any concerns you might have about a wedding at the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Marriage is understood in the Episcopal Church to be the “union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind” 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.” (BCP, p 423). The intent of marriage is life-long. It is one of the seven Sacraments of the Episcopal Church.

Marriage is the time for careful consideration on the part of the couple about how one feels about life, faith, trust, vocation, and other areas basic to human relationships. This consideration takes time; therefore, it is advisable to contact the priest as soon as possible to begin the conversation and arrangements.

Ordinarily, at least **ninety days’ notice** is required for a wedding, which gives time for counseling and preparation. If one or both of the persons lives out of town, then a longer time frame will be needed. Weddings with less than thirty days’ notice cannot be performed without the Bishops’ permission in writing, and then only in exceptional circumstances.

If one or both of the parties have been previously married, then the Bishop's consent must be obtained – please allow adequate time (**three months**) for this to happen.

Arrangements for your wedding at the Church of the Good Shepherd begin with speaking with the Rector or the priest in charge. Please **do not** make any plans until you have spoken with one of the clergy.

It is expected that the Rector or a cleric designated by the Rector will officiate at all weddings at the church. Should you wish to have another cleric or priest participate in your wedding service, please talk with the Rector as soon as possible. Any invitation to another cleric should be issued by the Rector or priest in charge.

CANON LAW

Canon Law of the Episcopal Church (the rules by which we operate) provides regulations for marriage in the Episcopal Church. The relevant Canons are printed at the end of this booklet. Generally, they state:

- In **all** marriages at least one of the persons to be married must be a baptized Christian.
- Both of the persons to be married must undergo pre-marital counseling, according to the directions of the Church.
- At least thirty days' notice must be given to the clergy prior to any wedding date.
- There will be two witnesses to the wedding.
- It is the prerogative of the clergy to decline to do any wedding.
- If a previous marriage has been annulled or dissolved, the Bishop's permission is needed in order for the wedding to be officiated in the Church or by a cleric of the Church.

GOOD SHEPHERD REQUIREMENTS

1. The **Church of the Good Shepherd** expects that all persons to be married in the Church be regular in attendance and contributors to the parish, or closely affiliated with the congregation. If neither of the persons to be married is closely affiliated with the Church of the Good Shepherd, we ask that the person(s) become active in attendance and support for at least **six months** prior to the wedding date.

Should neither of the persons to be married be regular and contributing members of the congregation, it is the sole discretion of the Rector to agree to perform the wedding. Additional charges will apply, including clergy fees.

2. At least **ninety days'** notice must be given to the clergy for weddings at the Church of the Good Shepherd, and **one hundred twenty days'** notice for persons who have been previously married.

3. It is expected that the persons to be married will meet with the Rector at least **three times** for pre-marital counseling and planning the service. Currently, the Rector uses PREPARE, a national pre-marital inventory, for pre-marital counseling. The cost of this is the responsibility of the persons to be married (currently it is \$35.00).

THE PLACE OF THE WEDDING

It is customary in the Episcopal Church to perform weddings in the church building. The wedding service may be either in the Church (which holds a maximum number of 250 people) or in the Chapel (which holds a maximum number of 40 people). It is entirely appropriate to have a “small wedding” in the Church with only a few people.

THE WEDDING SERVICE

The preferred service is “The Celebration and Blessings of a Marriage,” which is found on pages 423-432 of the Book of Common Prayer. Variations to this, using other authorized Episcopal or Anglican liturgies, are allowed, with the permission of the Rector. In the Episcopal Church tradition, wedding services are not written by the persons to be married, or are from other than Episcopal or Anglican sources.

Weddings are public services of corporate worship in which the whole congregation is to take part. The range of the service may be from simple to very elaborate, depending on the tastes of the persons to be married. It is desirable that there be persons to read the lessons from Scripture, and that the wedding service be as participatory as possible.

Eucharist is an appropriate act of the celebration of marriage, in which the couple shares a sacred meal together. However, if one of the persons to be married cannot receive the Eucharist, then this Sacrament is discouraged in use at the wedding.

MUSIC

The Director of Music will be in charge of arrangements for all music, as well as play for the wedding. **Final decisions concerning music rest with the Director of Music.** Other musicians may work with the Director of Music. If the Director of Music is available and is not used, then the Director will be paid anyway. Please plan an appointment with the Director of Music; the Director will be a resource for music, hymns, processional pieces, etc. In addition to the fee for the Director of Music there is an additional fee for the Director to be at the rehearsal.

DECORATIONS AND FLOWERS

The custom of the Episcopal Church and of the Church of the Good Shepherd, is that the flowers for a wedding are those placed in Church vases at the altar, on the aisle candle stands (if desired), and those used for the wedding party. Arrangements can be made through your florist or the one the Church uses.

There are candles on the altar of the Church or Chapel that are lighted during the service. It is also possible to have candles in holders down the aisle of the Church. There is an additional charge for the placement and removal of the aisle candle holders and candles.

An aisle runner, if desired, can be provided by the florist, and it should be delivered at the time that the flowers are delivered. An aisle runner is discouraged for use in the Church. If used, it must be securely attached to the floor to prevent tripping. Liability for tripping or falls is the responsibility of the wedding party, not the Church.

PHOTOGRAPHY

A wedding is a service of worship. We ask that no photographs of any kind be taken during the service. This includes friends and family members. Photographers may stand at the rear of the Church or Chapel and take pictures as the wedding party enters, and may also take pictures as the wedding party leaves. Please have the photographer meet with the clergy prior to the wedding.

For videotaping, the clergy must be consulted before arrangements are made. Videotaping is allowed only from the rear of the Church or Chapel.

If the persons to be married wish, they and others may reassemble in the Church or Chapel following the service to take pictures.

The Church or Chapel is open only **one hour** prior to a wedding or **one-half hour** afterwards for pictures.

THE WEDDING LICENSE

You may obtain the license at the office of the Town Clerk of any town or city in New York State; the license is valid for sixty days. It needs to be signed by two witnesses; the parish will assume responsibility for returning the license to the Town Clerk. The persons to be married and the witnesses, along with the cleric, need to sign the parish register; with the exception of the clergy, this is usually done at the time of the rehearsal.

THE REHEARSAL

The rehearsal gives the opportunity for everyone involved in the wedding to practice. The rehearsal is usually done the day before the wedding, at a time when everyone can be present. It will last no more than one hour. The persons who need to be present for the rehearsal are: bride, groom, best man, best woman, bridesmaids (if any), ushers, participants in the service, and offering bearers. Others are welcome to attend. The cleric is in charge of the rehearsal.

PLEASE bring the marriage license to the rehearsal.

THE WEDDING DAY

A wedding service ranges in time from 25 minutes (no Eucharist and little music) to an hour (Eucharist and music). This is a helpful hint for people wanting to time a wedding and reception.

The ushers should plan to be at the Church at least **one half hour** before the scheduled start of the wedding, and the bride and groom and wedding party should be at the Church at least **fifteen minutes** before the wedding.

There is to be no rice, birdseed, confetti, rose petals, etc. thrown or dispersed at the wedding in the Church or on the Church steps. This is a City of Buffalo regulation.

The Church, in accordance with local law and national Church recommendations, is a non-smoking facility. The use of incense is an exception to this.

WEDDING PROGRAMS

All materials and artwork for the wedding programs, along with an accurate number of programs to be printed, should be in the Parish Office at least **two weeks** prior to the day of the wedding.

FEES

No one will be excluded from the ministry of the church for financial reasons. The financial charges serve as guidelines. **All fees should be paid before the time of the rehearsal.** A check should be made out to the Church of the Good Shepherd. The Parish Administrator will disburse the funds.

For parishioners, there is no fee for the use of the Church or Chapel or for the clergy. However, a contribution to the parish (for use and utilities) and the Rector's Discretionary Fund is expected. Generally, a guideline is that 10% of the expenses of a wedding should go to the Church for its part in the celebration. This is in keeping with the tradition of a tithe.

QUESTIONS

Please contact the Rector if there are any questions. We will do our best to make your wedding day a suitably joyous occasion to celebrate your marriage!

The Church of the Good Shepherd

The Very Rev. David Selzer
Rector

The Rev. Edith Patterson
Deacon

Michael Salmon
Director of Music

Sextons

Janice Beam
Parish Administrator

FEES FOR 2007

An Invoice will be given to the Couple.

	Parishioners	Others
Use of Church or Use of Chapel	Contribution	\$200.00
Clergy	Contribution	\$250.00
PREPARE INVENTORY	\$35.00	\$35.00
Altar Guild	\$25.00	\$25.00
Organist (Rehearsal – additional)	\$100.00 \$50.00	\$175.00 \$50.00
Sexton	\$75.00	\$100.00
Aisle Candles	\$50.00	\$50.00
Wedding programs*	\$35.00	\$35.00

**This is a minimum charge. Actual cost may be higher, depending on the program design and printing.*

CANONS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CANON 18: Of the Solemnization of Holy Matrimony

Sec. 1. Every Member of the Clergy of this Church shall conform to the laws of the State governing the creation of the civil status of marriage, and also to the laws of this Church governing the solemnization of Holy Matrimony.

Sec. 2. Before solemnizing a marriage the Member of the Clergy shall have ascertained:

- (a) That both parties have the right to contract a marriage according to the laws of the State.
- (b) That both parties understand that 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.
- (c) That both parties freely and knowingly consent to such marriage, without fraud, coercion, mistake as to identity of a partner, or mental reservation.
- (d) That at least one of the parties has received Holy Baptism.
- (e) That both parties have been instructed as to the nature, meaning, and purpose of Holy Matrimony by the Member of the Clergy, or that they have both received such instruction from persons known by the Member of the Clergy to be competent and responsible.

Sec. 3. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall solemnize any marriage unless the following procedures are complied with:

- (a) The intention of the parties to contract marriage shall have been signified to the Member of the Clergy at least thirty days before the service of solemnization; Provided, that for weighty cause, this requirement may be dispensed with if one of the parties is a member of the Congregation of the

Member of the Clergy, or can furnish satisfactory evidence of responsibility. In case the thirty days' notice is waived, the Member of the Clergy shall report such action in writing to the Bishop immediately.

- (b) There shall be present at least two witnesses to the solemnization of marriage.
- (c) The Member of the Clergy shall record in the proper register the date and place of the marriage, the names of the parties and their parents, the age of the parties, their residences, and their Church status; the witnesses and the Member of the Clergy shall sign the record.
- (d) The Member of the Clergy shall have required that the parties sign the following declaration:

“We, A.B. and C.D., 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.”

Sec. 4. It shall be within the discretion of any Member of the Clergy of this Church to decline to solemnize any marriage.

CANON 19: Of Regulations Respecting Holy Matrimony: Concerning Preservation of Marriage, Dissolution of Marriage, and Remarriage

Sec. 2 (a) Any member of this Church whose marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a civil court may apply to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which such person is legally or canonically resident for a judgment as to his or her marital status in the eyes of the Church. Such judgment may be a recognition of the nullity, or of the termination of the said marriage; Provided, that no such judgment shall be construed as affecting in any way the legitimacy of children or the civil validity of the former relationship.

(b) Every judgment rendered under this Section shall be in writing and shall be made a matter of permanent record in the Archives of the Diocese.

Sec. 3. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall solemnize the marriage of any person who has been the husband or wife of any other person then living, nor shall any member of this Church enter into a marriage when either of the contracting parties has been the husband or the wife of any other person then living, except as hereinafter provided:

- (a) The Member of the Clergy shall be satisfied by appropriate evidence that the prior marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a final judgment or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction.
- (b) The Member of the Clergy shall have instructed the parties that continuing concern must be shown for the well-being of the former spouse, and of any children of the prior marriage.
- (c) The Member of the Clergy shall consult with and obtain the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese wherein the Member of the Clergy is canonically resident or the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Member of the Clergy is licensed to officiate prior to, and shall report to that Bishop, the solemnization of any marriage under this Section.
- (d) If the proposed marriage is to be solemnized in a jurisdiction other than the one in which the consent has been given, the consent shall be affirmed by the Bishop of that jurisdiction.

Sec. 4. All provisions of Canon I.18 shall, in all cases, apply.

Thanks to the Liturgy Commission of the Diocese of Western New York for the use of their materials for this booklet.

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