

Introduction

We are pleased that you are interested in having your marriage ceremony here at Christ Church. Marriages performed at Christ Church must conform to the *Book of Common Prayer, 1979* of The Episcopal Church and the governance of Christ Church. The definition of marriage is found on page 422 of the *Book of Common Prayer*: "*Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God.*"

The Canons of The Episcopal Church, say: "*that it shall be within the discretion of any Member of the Clergy of this church to decline to solemnize any marriage*", (Title I 18.4). Therefore all marriage ceremonies are at the discretion of the Rector of Christ Church.

We hope that the information that follows will assist you in your planning your marriage ceremony. Please read it to verify that you to meet the requirements and then contact clergy.

Since marriage is considered to be one of the sacraments of the Church, Holy Communion is a normative part of the wedding service. The Episcopal Church allows all baptized Christians to participate in Holy Communion regardless of denomination.

Remarriage is permitted but must be approved by the Bishop of the Diocese of Southwest Florida. If you have been previously married, you will be expected to submit legal documents to the Rector of Christ Church verifying your divorce so he can submit these to the Bishop.

The sacramental understanding of marriage is found on page 861 of the *Book of Common Prayer*: "*Holy Matrimony is Christian marriage, in which the woman and man enter into a life-long union, make their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows.*"

Section 1 – Scheduling

Do not set a date without consulting clergy. It is understood that Christ Church clergy and staff must have at least 90 (ninety) days notice of the expected wedding date. Remember that they have many other duties that may prevent them from performing a wedding ceremony.

It is important to remember also that Christ Church is not a wedding chapel that is rented. Our first priority is to be a place of prayer and worship. Our first consideration for marriage ceremonies is to our active members and their families. Next in consideration are Episcopalians where Episcopalian clergy has requested the use of the church for their parishioner. Special circumstances may permit a marriage ceremony for non-members. It is entirely at the discretion of the Rector whether he will allow for a non-member marriage to take place at Christ Church.

We do not schedule weddings on New Year's Day (January 1), Epiphany (January 6), Lent (from Ash Wednesday through Holy Week the actual dates vary from year to year), Easter, Memorial Day weekend, July 4th, Labor Day weekend, All Saints' Day, Thanksgiving Day (including the weekend that follows the holiday), Christmas Eve (December 24), Christmas Day (December 25), or New Year's Eve Day (December 31).

After contacting clergy and receiving approval to proceed with your tentative plans, you will be assigned a Wedding Coordinator by the Rector.

Section 2 – Premarital Counseling

Premarital counseling is required by the canons of The Episcopal Church. At Christ Church this can be done with our clergy or a counselor from the Center for Spiritual Development. The Rector may also give permission for other clergy to do required counseling. If permission is given, written documentation will be required to be received by the Rector of Christ one month prior to the ceremony. The Rector may, as a result of the counseling, decline to celebrate the marriage at Christ Church. That is why the date for the wedding ceremony is always tentative until the Rector has completed the premarital counseling.

Section 3 – The Celebrant

The Celebrant will be the Rector of Christ Church or in rare circumstances an Episcopal priest (licensed in the Diocese of Southwest Florida) that the Rector may designate to celebrate. Non-Episcopal clergy may assist in the wedding ceremony if approved by the Rector. If clergy other than staff members of Christ Church are allowed to be used, they will not be reimbursed for their services by Christ Church.

Section 4 – Readings

Genesis 1:26-28 or Genesis 2:4-9; 15-24; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 John 4:7-16; Ephesians 3:14-19; or 5:1-2, 21-33; Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7; Colossians 3:12-17; Psalm 67 or 127 or 128; Tobit 8:5b-8

Priest will select the Gospel

Section 5 – Music

All music arrangements and selections are made through Christ Church's Organist/Choirmaster, Dr. Richard Benedum. The Organist/Choirmaster will be the organist at the wedding. If the organist/choirmaster is not available, he will make arrangements for an alternate organist. (This is typically William Holt, our Associate Organist.) If an organist other than the Organist/Choirmaster or the Associate Organist is used, there may be an additional fee to be paid. Any additional musicians or vocalists must be approved by the Organist/Choirmaster and paid separately.

Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* and Wagner's *Bridal Chorus* are not deemed to be appropriate for a sacramental setting and may not be used. The Organist/Choirmaster may prohibit other music that he deems to be inappropriate for the sacramental setting.

Section 6 – Flowers and Other Decorations

All flower arrangements will be made by a professional florist who is approved by Christ Church. Flowers are only allowed in Christ Church's flower vase and are only placed in the flower stands that are behind and on either side of the altar. Other flowers or floral arrangements are not allowed in the Nave of Christ Church.

No additional decorations are allowed in the Nave of Christ Church. This includes but is not limited to: pew bows, ribbons, aisle runners, flower petals (real or artificial), rice, birdseed, bubbles, bells or animals.

Flower Arrangement Dimensions for Church and Chapel:

Church: 32" Wide x 33 ¾ " High

Chapel: 22" Wide x 24 ¼ " High

Section 7 – Dressing Rooms

The Bride and her attendants' dressing room is Meeting Room #1. This room is equipped with a restroom, sink, full length mirror and is adjacent to the courtyard and Nave. No alcohol is permitted at any time during the preparation to the marriage ceremony or during the ceremony with the exception of the wine used during communion. Violation of this no alcohol policy will result in the cancellation of the wedding ceremony.

The Groom and his groomsmen may use the Parlor in our Education Building as a dressing room. Again, no alcohol is permitted.

Section 8 – Personnel

The personnel of Christ Church involved in every marriage ceremony will include the Celebrant and the Wedding Coordinator as mentioned above in the Introduction. The Wedding Coordinator will be the primary contact along with the Celebrant for the participants in the marriage ceremony.

Our Facilities Manager (or other Christ Church employee or volunteer designated by the Rector) will be available to open buildings or rooms as necessary. The Facilities Manager (or other Christ Church employee or volunteer designated by the Rector) is also responsible for the cleanup of the facilities after the ceremony.

Our Altar Guild is responsible for setting up the service and for resetting the altar after the service.

Section 9 – Receptions on Premises

Receptions on the premises are allowed but there is an additional fee to be paid for the use of the Parish Kitchen and the Parish Hall. If permission is given for wine or champagne at the reception, these beverages may only be consumed in the Parish Hall or Parish kitchen.

Section 10 – Rehearsal

The Wedding Coordinator and Celebrant will schedule the wedding rehearsal. The Celebrant, the Wedding Coordinator, the Facilities Manager, the Organist/Choirmaster and all participants in the actual ceremony will be at the rehearsal. It is expected that the rehearsal will begin at the scheduled time and be completed in no more than one and one half hours. If members of the wedding rehearsal are not on time this will not change the completion time for Christ Church personnel.

Section 11 – Marriage License

The marriage license must be brought to the rehearsal. The license should be obtained from the Manatee County Clerk of the Court. The Clerk's office is at 1115 Manatee Avenue West. If you are a Florida resident, you may also obtain the license from your county of residence.

Section 12 – Photography and Videography

All photography and videography is done only with permission of the Rector of Christ Church (or his designee).

Flash photography is not permitted during the sacramental acts. Therefore it is limited to the rehearsal, the time prior to service, during the time of the seating of the parents of the wedding couple and up to one hour after the completion of the service.

Videography may be done only with permission of the Rector of Christ Church (or his designee). Videography, if allowed, will be from the balcony of the Nave under the direction of the Facilities Manager.

Section 13 – Fees

A deposit of one half of the fees must be received 60 (sixty) days prior to the ceremony. Full payment of the fees will be made no less than two weeks prior to the rehearsal. Failure to comply will lead to the cancellation of the wedding ceremony.

The basic fee for the wedding of a member of Christ Church is \$1,200.00. This includes payments for the Organist, Facility Manager, Wedding Coordinator, the Altar Guild and a contribution to the Rector's Discretionary Fund (used to help those in need in the parish and the community).

The basic fee for the wedding of a non-member of Christ Church is \$3,000.00.

Additional fees may be charged if the Parish Hall, Kitchen or other rooms are used.

The Rector may deem that special circumstances may be cause for certain fees to be reduced or waived.

Section 14 – Contact Information

The Reverend Joel Morsch
Rector of Christ Church

The Reverend Ronald "RJ" Johnson, Associate Priest
4030 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton FL 34205
revrjohnson@gmail.com
(941) 747-3709

Debbie Holt, Parish Administrator
Maryam Whitaker, Wedding Coordinator/Parish Facilitator
Dr. Richard Benedum, Organist/Choirmaster of Christ Church
Mr. William Holt, Associate Organist of Christ Church
Mr. Richard Odell, Facilities Manager of Christ Church