



Wedding Guidelines

Congratulations on your plan to be married!

We pray that the time of preparation for your wedding is joyful and as stress-free as possible. The following guidelines are made available in the hopes of helping fulfill that goal! It is our hope that we can answer your questions and give you a sense of what a wedding in the Episcopal Church in general, and at Holy Communion specifically, entails.

According to the Canons of the Episcopal Church, a marriage ceremony can be performed only when certain requirements have been met. These include:

1. At least one of the persons being married is a baptized Christian.
2. The marriage ceremony is taken from the approved liturgies of the Episcopal Church.
3. If either of the parties is divorced, a copy of the divorce decree must be given to the clergy at the beginning of pre-marital counseling. The priest will apply to the Bishop of the Diocese of Missouri for permission to officiate. The application is not onerous and is designed to offer a way to reflect on the relationship that has ended and the well-being of children (if any) from the previous marriage. A copy of any Decree of Divorce Absolute must be seen and verified.

Wedding Preparation Timeline

1. Call the Church to set the date, make an appointment to meet with the priest for an initial visit.
2. With clergy agreement, set the date and time. A non-refundable deposit is required to reserve a date on the church calendar. A date is considered open until the reservation deposit is received by Holy Communion. Payment of at least half of the remaining balance is due 90 days before the wedding date. Due to the penitential nature of the season of Lent, no weddings are scheduled during this portion of the Church's year. The Rector is unavailable for weddings the week before and the week after Easter and Christmas due to parish responsibilities.
3. Make appointments for marriage preparation with the rector or other clergy of Holy Communion, or another Episcopal priest located where you live or work in consultation with the rector
4. Contact the Director of Music, to arrange for music.
5. One month prior to the wedding, send completed bulletin components to the Director of Operations. The church office can make a simple bulletin, using covers provided by the couple. More elaborate bulletins are the responsibility of the couple.
6. Your wedding license must be received in the parish office the Tuesday before your wedding. **Note**, in Missouri, marriage licenses expire within 30 days of issuance.
7. At the rehearsal, bring the bulletins, if printed elsewhere, and all fees to the Church office.

Fees:

Use of the Sanctuary	\$1,000 (non-members only)
Organist	\$150 (+ additional charges for more musicians/music)
Custodian	\$125
Clergy	\$250

Music:

The organist for Holy Communion plays for all weddings, unless the organ is not being used. Please speak with Director of Music about your plans. All musical participants must be approved by the Director of Music. Paid singers/strings are usually \$125/each. The purchase of any music not currently in the church repertoire must be paid for.

Other considerations:

No outside facilitator/wedding planner is permitted to play a part in the rehearsal or ceremony.

No outside minister may perform a marriage ceremony at Holy Communion without the permission and invitation of the rector.

Live-Streaming of your wedding is possible, but arrangements need to be made well in advance. Speak with the clergy about this possibility.

Pre-Marital Counseling

Pre-marital counseling is a requirement of the Episcopal Church of all couples requesting a marriage ceremony regardless of whether it is a first or second marriage for one or both persons. At Holy Communion, this usually takes the form of 3 – 4 sessions with the priest. Additional counseling may be required at the discretion of the clergy.

Who may officiate

The officiating priest is usually the rector. Should another clergy person be desired, the couple should not speak to the other priest about it until the matter has been discussed with the Rector, who will make the decision about whether to invite the other clergy person to officiate.

Concerning the liturgy

The Episcopal Church marriage ceremony is a worship service that praises and thanks God for the blessings of this life. Thus, wedding planning should be regarded as planning a worship service. Please keep this in mind as you think about the additional elements of the wedding.

The latest start time for a wedding is 6 p.m. The wedding party and guests have access to the building for two hours before the ceremony begins and one hour after it ends.

Seating is available for 180 guests maximum.

Animals are not permitted with the exception of service dogs.

Property of the wedding party and guests cannot be stored overnight. This includes clothing, guest books, flowers or any other items. Holy Communion assumes no responsibility for theft or damage to vehicles.

Flowers and decorations

Designated placements are available for flowers and other decoration. These will be explained during the wedding consultation. Wedding decorations may not be placed on the exterior doors or anywhere outside of the building.

Bows may be attached to pews. Tape, staples, tacks or other items that may damage the pews may not be used. Unity candles, runners, floral arches, candles on pews and decorations other than altar flowers and pew markers are not permitted. Candles that are not the property of Holy Communion may not be used.

Distribution of materials such as rice, bird seed, confetti, feathers, bubbles, flower petals (or any others) is not permitted.

The wedding couple is responsible contributing for the church to provide one or two arrangements of altar flowers. The couple will use the church's florist that delivers the altar arrangements to the church. The altar flowers remain on the altar for the following Sunday services as a reminder to the congregation that a wedding has taken place. Prayers of Thanksgiving are said at the Sunday Service following the wedding.

Concerning Music

All Music will be discussed with and approved by the Director of Music.

Concerning Photographs

In order to preserve the dignity of the service, photographs should not be taken during the wedding itself. Pictures may be taken as the wedding party processes in and out of the church. If pictures of the ceremony at the altar are desired, they may be posed after the ceremony. Videography should be arranged with the church, using the church's video team.

Concerning the Rehearsal

The rehearsal always takes place under the direction and supervision of the officiating priest and not a wedding planner. Those participating in the rehearsal should be present 15 minutes before the appointed time. Outside wedding planners do not take part in the rehearsal.

Rehearsals usually take 1 hour for a 30-minute marriage ceremony. The couple practices their exit, entrance, vows, ushers practice escorting parents and grandparents, flower attendant and ring bearer practice their entrances, readers of prayers and scriptures, poems etc. practice their roles.

The Wedding Day

Those guests who are to be seated in the reserved pews, except parents and grandparents, should be seated fifteen (15) minutes prior to the beginning of the ceremony. Inform all family members/friends and the wedding party who are to be in pictures after the wedding to be readily available immediately after the ceremony, as there is not time to search for these participants.

Weddings at Holy Communion Episcopal Church start on time. There will be no delays for seating of guests who arrive late.

Inform all family members who are to be in pictures prior to the wedding of the designated time to be at the church. Two dressing rooms are available: the choir room (located in the lower level directly beneath the south end of the nave) and the lounge.