

## Guidelines for Weddings at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

A wedding at St. Andrew's is a public celebration in the midst of a community of faith. Holy Matrimony is a sacramental rite of the church which celebrates the love of God made manifest in a life-long union. In Holy Matrimony, according to the Catechism in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the couple makes their vows before God and the Church, and receives the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows.

Because Holy Matrimony in the Episcopal Church takes place within the community which witnesses, affirms and promises to uphold these two persons in their marriage, St. Andrew's has established the following policies and procedures:

### **Eligibility:**

Under normal circumstances, we require at least five months' notice of your desire to be married.

- The bride or groom (or their parent or grandparent) must be a *communicant in good standing* at St. Andrew's. A *communicant in good standing* is defined as a member who has received Holy Communion at least three times during the previous year, and "who has been faithful in corporate worship (unless for good cause prevented) and has been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God." (*Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, Canon 30*).
- Newcomers are welcome to be married at St. Andrew's. We ask that they be active at St. Andrew's for at least a year before their wedding date.
- Either the bride or groom must be a baptized Christian of any denomination.
- The officiating minister must be a priest at St. Andrew's. Other minister may assist in the liturgy at the discretion of the Rector.
- Both must participate in a course of pre-marital preparation led by the officiating priest, to include at least three sessions.

### **Dates and process:**

No wedding plans are considered final until after the bride and groom have met with the clergy of St. Andrew's. At this point, wedding logistics, premarital counseling, canonical requirements and possible dates will be considered. Weddings may be scheduled at any time of the year except Lent.

### **Fees:**

- *Church*: \$350 covers both the custodial costs and a donation to the Altar Guild. This is due 30 days prior to the wedding ceremony, payable to St. Andrew's.
- *Musician*: The base cost for is \$150. If you require a rehearsal, or if you wish for the Minister of Music to rehearse with additional musicians, there would be an additional cost. This is due one week prior to the ceremony, payable to Ann Doyle.

- *Priest*: There is no fee for the priest. However, many couples choose to give an honorarium. If you choose to do so, please make this check payable to the officiating priest.

## **Music**

Music may or may not be a part of the wedding. The organ is the instrument of choice. However, the officiating priest will discuss and may approve other options. The Minister of Music at St. Andrew's provides all organ music, helps couples select appropriate music, and works with soloists as well as other instrumentalists. Only sacred music, whether traditional or contemporary, may be used.

Fees vary according to time required and services provided (see fees).

## **Requirements for Marriage in the Episcopal Church**

Because of the depth of the marriage commitment, the Episcopal Church requires that the couple preparing to be married participates in a program of premarital counseling, led by the officiating priest. Because every couple is different, premarital counseling may differ with each individual couple. However, premarital counseling at St. Andrew's will generally consist of at least 3 one-hour sessions, the scope of which will be determined by the officiating priest. We ask that counseling sessions take place during the work day. If you do not live in Greensboro, special arrangements may be made with the priest for premarital counseling.

If you have been married previously, please let the officiating priest know this in your first conversation, as this will require additional steps in order to meet the requirements of the Episcopal Church.

## **The Liturgy**

The wedding liturgy follows the *Forms for Holy Matrimony* authorized by the Episcopal Church and outlined in *The Book of Common Prayer*. The officiating priest will work with you to plan the service.

## **Rehearsals and Wedding Consultants**

Weddings and rehearsals at St. Andrew's are under the direction of the Clergy. Members of the Altar Guild will assist the Clergy. Clergy must approve all aspects of the ceremony. While wedding consultants may be helpful in planning, they are not permitted to direct either the wedding rehearsal or the wedding.

Rehearsals are normally scheduled the evening before the wedding. It is required that all participants in the wedding party, the bride and groom and the parents of the bride and groom, be in attendance. The rehearsal takes approximately one hour. Please note that the bride, groom, maid of honor and the best man must plan to stay following the rehearsal in order to sign the license and marriage register.

## **The Day of the Wedding**

Please note that the church will be open for the bridal party one and a half hours before the wedding, and will remain open for one hour following the end of the ceremony.

### **License**

The marriage license must be presented to the Clergy at the time of the rehearsal.

### **Dressing Room**

A dressing room is available for the bride and her attendants.

### **Rice**

No rice may be thrown in the church buildings or on the church grounds.

### **Photographers and Videographers**

No flash photography is permitted during the ceremony as it detracts from the primary intention of all Christian liturgy, the worship of God. Guests should be instructed to take pictures before or after the service. Professional photographers are equipped and permitted to take available light pictures provided they do not disturb the service. Please ask the photographer to check in with the priest upon arrival at the church.

The wedding may be videotaped, but camera placement is the prerogative of the priest.

### **Alcohol Use and Facilities Guidelines**

- Use of alcohol is limited. If the use of alcohol is planned, please contact the church office to complete a request form and receive a copy of St Andrew's alcohol policy.
- No smoking is allowed in any building.
- Fees will be assessed for dirty or damaged buildings.

### **Decorations**

Decorations are limited to floral arrangements behind the altar in the spaces provided and floral decorations on the pews, if desired. All decorations in the church are subject to the approval of the Altar Guild. Church furnishings may not be moved.

### **Parish Hall**

If you wish to use the parish hall, please contact the church office to check availability.