

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

At



O gracious and everliving God, you have created us in your image: Look mercifully upon this couple who come to you seeking your blessing, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep the promises and vows they make; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Book of Common Prayer, page 425

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Weddings at Saint Mark's Church

The Episcopal Church requires that at least one of the couple be a baptized Christian, that the marriage be attested to by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conform to the laws of the State of Ohio and to the Canons of the Episcopal Church. This sacrament is celebrated both for couples of different and the same sex.

Saint Mark's offers our services to those who are active members of our parish and to their children or grandchildren, members of other Episcopal churches who for some reason require a different location, or anyone actively exploring Saint Mark's as their parish home.

The Episcopal Church does allow for marriage of divorced persons. However, if one or both of you has been married once before, the process requires consent of the Bishop after recommendation by the clergy. Ninety days is needed between the time of your first meeting with the clergy and your wedding date, in order to do the work necessary to obtain the Bishop's approval.

In the Diocese of Southern Ohio, the Bishop will not approve any third, fourth or more marriages, and so we are unable to offer the sacrament to you if either of you has been married and divorced more than once.

The Marriage Service

The traditional marriage service is found in the *Book of Common Prayer* (1979) of the Episcopal Church on pages 423-432. In 2015 this service was amended to make the language gender neutral. Either service may be used depending upon preference. Variations may also be made for inter-faith marriages. During the initial meeting, the priest will review the service with the couple.

Holy Eucharist may be included as a part of the marriage service. When Eucharist is included in the service, the entire congregation will be given the opportunity to receive communion. We do not do communion for the couple only.

Participation of Additional Clergy

If you wish to include a clergy person from another denomination or another faith tradition, that should be discussed with the priest at the initial meeting. Weddings at Saint Mark's are in accordance with the service in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Music

Our Director of Music will work with you to make sure that the music chosen for your marriage service is appropriate for the occasion and enhances the worship experience. Music for the wedding should be appropriate for use in the church. Because this is a worship service, modern popular music or music deemed overly "secular" is more appropriate at the reception.

The organist at Saint Mark's will be the organist at all weddings; or, should he or she not be able to be present at the service, a person whom he or she appoints.

Should you wish a soloist to sing, the organist has a list of persons who can perform this function. Sung music is also chosen in consultation with the organist.

Instrumental music other than organ is also a possibility, and such decisions should be made in consultation with the clergy and organist.

Should you wish vocal or instrumental music, they should make an appointment with the Director of Music **at least three months prior** to the marriage date to allow time for the learning and practice of the music.

If hymns are to be played, they should be familiar and joyful (such as “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”) to help the congregation participate.

Due to the sacred nature of the occasion, pre-recorded music is never appropriate.

Flowers

One large floral bouquet may be placed in front of the altar. Arrangements should all be lower than the Altar (36 inches). Bows, and/or flowers, may also be used on several of the pews. In the case of a Saturday wedding, the couple may wish to leave the flowers for the use of the church on Sunday.

Photographs and Videotaping

Photographs may be taken before the marriage celebration and after the exit procession. **However, we ask that no flash photos - by either the wedding photographer or guests - be taken during the service (which begins with the processional music).** Experience has shown that flash photography is disruptive to the worship experience.

A video camera may be used during the service. The appointed photographer and/or person videotaping the celebration should meet with the clergy one-half hour prior to the service to discuss placement and procedures during the service.

Saint Mark’s also has the ability to film and live stream services, please contact AV@SaintMarksColumbus.org for more information.

Posed photos in the church may be taken – with flash - before or after the service.

Additional Considerations

The church building will be open 2 hours prior to the service and one hour after, allowing ample time for preparation and photographs.

We do not use aisle cloths at Saint Mark’s, nor do we allow the scattering of flower petals inside the church (ie by flower girls coming down the aisle).

We do not allow the scattering of rice or confetti outside the church. We recommend the use of bird seed or soap bubbles.

The Bishop’s Library (on the first floor of the education wing) is available for the use of the women in the wedding party, and the Youth Lounge (on the second floor) is available for the use of the men in the wedding party.

Under exceptional circumstances, we may allow for a cake & punch reception in the parish hall following the marriage service. Saint Mark's does not provide any set up or clean up or food.

Marriage License

The marriage license (and related official state documents) and the checks to cover all fees should be given to the priest on the Monday prior to the wedding. If that is not possible, then these items should be given to the officiating clergy at the beginning of the wedding rehearsal.

Marriage Service Expenses

	For Members* and Their Immediate Family	For Non- Members
<u>Regular Fees</u>		
Use of Church	None [#]	\$750.00
Clergy Fee	None [#]	\$200.00
Organist	\$250.00	\$250.00
Maintenance Staff Fee	<u>\$50.00</u>	<u>\$75.00</u>
Total Regular Fees	\$300.00	\$1,275.00

Additional Optional Fees

Additional Music Rehearsal (if soloist or instrumentalist is needed)	\$35.00	\$35.00
Soloist from Saint Mark's Choir	\$100.00	\$100.00
Service booklets or bulletins	\$100.00	\$100.00

All fees should be made directly to the individual involved (ie - organist, soloist, etc) whenever possible and not to the parish.

** A member is a "communicant in good standing" as the term is defined by the Episcopal Church and is determined through the parish register listing on the date of application for the wedding. Briefly, this means that the member is active in the worship life of the congregation and also gives financially to God through the ministry of the congregation.*

There are no clergy fees or church use fees for members of the congregation and their immediate family. However, it is appropriate to make a gift to the Discretionary Fund of the officiating priest. Gifts on the order of \$150.00 are normal. Visiting clergy assisting in the marriage at the couple's request should be compensated directly by the couple.

Please note that no couple otherwise eligible to be married in Saint Mark's Church should be excluded from doing so on the basis of finances. Part or all of the fees listed above may be waived in cases of need.

Check List for Marriage Preparation

Six Months Prior to the Marriage Day

- ___ Meet with one of the clergy of St. Mark's Church

Three Months Prior to the Marriage Day

- ___ Meet with organist to select any special music (i.e., other organ or vocal or instrumental)
(Note: This is also the time required of clergy to submit to the Bishop a request to marry previously married/divorced persons.)

Thirty Days Prior to the Marriage Day

- ___ Complete service planning

While the clergy are honored to receive an invitation to the service - and invitations to the rehearsal dinner and reception – due to the number of services conducted every year, it is customary for them to only attend the church ceremony.

Day of the Rehearsal

- ___ Bring Marriage License and check for fees made payable to Saint Mark's Episcopal Church and give to the priest.

Contact Melanie Jacobs, office manager (officemanager@saintmarkscolumbus.org) or The Rev. Vicki Zust (rector@saintmarkscolumbus.org) with any questions.

