

A Wedding Manual



SAINT LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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CELEBRATING A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AT SAINT LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

According to *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 Prayer Book also states that “the bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation and is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.” Due to the serious nature of this commitment, there are certain requirements that must be fulfilled before a wedding can take place at St. Luke’s.

REQUIREMENTS AT ST. LUKE’S

Church Membership

The Episcopal Church requires that at least one of the two persons be a baptized Christian. In addition, St. Luke’s requires that at least one of the two persons be a member of St. Luke’s or a member of another Episcopal Church where they reside. A letter from an Episcopal priest stating that the person is an active member of that particular church and that he/she regularly attends Mass should be sent to the Rector of St. Luke’s prior to the first premarital counseling session.

Regular attendance at Mass on Sunday mornings is very important in nurturing a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Your participation in programs of Christian education, fellowship, outreach, study, and evangelism are encouraged. Your decision to give financially to support the mission and ministry of St. Luke’s is a sign of your commitment to Christ’s Body the Church.

Setting the Date

Before any plans are finalized or a wedding date can be scheduled on the St. Luke’s calendar, the couple should arrange an appointment with the Rector. Do not make the mistake of announcing a date before securing the necessary confirmations from St. Luke’s. You may find yourself in an awkward situation! ***Note that until the successful completion of premarital counseling, the wedding date remains tentative rather than finalized.***

Prohibited Dates

Because of the penitential character of the season, weddings are not scheduled during Lent. In addition, St. Luke's does not schedule weddings during:

- The last two weeks of Advent through January 2
- Easter Eve and Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Sundays
- Any other holiday St. Luke's elects to recognize by closing its offices.

Premarital Counseling

Premarital counseling is required for those wishing to marry at St. Luke's. The sessions vary in number depending upon the circumstances and needs of the couple, but typically there is *a minimum of 5 sessions*. The schedule is set in consultation with the couple.

*Premarital counseling must conclude **at least 60 days** before the date of the wedding.*

During the course of this process, the clergy will make a final decision on whether or not to proceed with the marriage. In some cases, it becomes clear to the clergy that the prospective bride and groom are not suited for marriage to each other. The clergy may decline to officiate at any time. ***Before any formal wedding announcement or invitation is published, premarital counseling should be completed.***

The Service

The liturgy for "The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage" in *The Book of Common Prayer* is used for all wedding services at St. Luke's. No other liturgical forms, choices for Scripture readings, or wording of wedding vows are allowed.

Off-Site Weddings

Because the liturgy for "The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage" is a sacramental rite and a worship service, weddings are normally conducted inside the church. Off-site weddings must be approved by the Rector. If a wedding is to be conducted off church premises, the location, facilities, and any planned decorative theme are discussed with the Rector. Certain settings and themes may not be appropriate for a Christian wedding.

Clergy Participation from other Episcopal Churches or Christian Denominations

If the couple wishes for a member of the clergy from another Episcopal church or denomination to assist in the marriage ceremony, they must first ask the Rector. If the Rector approves the request, the Rector will invite the visiting clergy person to assist. The Rector or other St. Luke's clergy will be responsible for the liturgy and will serve in the liturgy as the chief celebrant if there is Eucharist, and in other appropriate ways if there is no Eucharist.

Remarriage of Divorced Persons

Under certain circumstances, divorced persons may receive permission from the Bishop to remarry in the Church. The following requirements must be fulfilled:

1. **Holy Baptism:** At least one of the persons must be a baptized Christian.
2. **Parish Membership in Good Standing:** At least one of the persons must be a member of St. Luke's or another Episcopal church in the town in which he/she resides. A letter from an Episcopal priest in the town in which he/she resides stating that this person is an active member of that church and regularly attends Mass should be sent to the Rector of St. Luke's prior to the first counseling session.
3. **Time Between Divorce and Remarriage:** A full year from the date of the divorce decree(s) must have passed before the proposed date of remarriage can take place.
4. **Divorce Decree:** A certified copy of the divorce decree(s), with copies of any settled agreements, and a signed Declaration of Intention, must be maintained on file by the Rector, and so certified to the Bishop. Copies of the certified divorce decree(s) and any settled agreements should be given to the Rector prior to the first counseling session.
5. **Counseling:** A period of counseling from a member of the clergy and a person trained and certified in counseling is required. The purpose of the counseling is to understand the reasons for the failure of the previous marriages and to prepare for possible remarriage. A letter from the therapist(s) describing the issues involved, and indicating that in their professional opinion both parties to this potential marriage understand those issues and have the tools necessary for a successful marriage, must be sent to the Rector and shared with the Bishop.
6. **Bishop's Approval:** Upon successful completion of counseling, the Rector will submit an application for consent to remarry to the Bishop. The application must be sent to the Bishop no less than 60 days prior to the proposed date of the wedding.
7. **Marriage Announcement:** No announcement of the marriage shall be made until the Bishop's consent has been granted.

PLANNING THE WEDDING

In planning the wedding, please observe the following days and times:

Fridays: No earlier than 6 PM and no later than 7 PM. Rehearsal on Thursday at 6 PM.

Saturdays: During the daytime, no earlier than 11 AM or later than 3 PM. During the evening, no earlier than 5 PM and no later than 7 PM. Rehearsal on Friday at 6 PM.

Small weddings may be arranged at other times subject to the Rector's approval.

St. Luke's will not schedule more than one wedding per weekend.

Marriage License

All civil requirements of the State of Louisiana must be fulfilled before the wedding, and ***a valid, current marriage license must be presented to the priest prior to the rehearsal.*** Please plan to have three adult witnesses designated to sign the Parish Register.

Church Decorations

Candles: The only candles permitted in the Sanctuary (area behind the altar rail) are those on the altar and the reed table. "Unity candles" are not allowed.

Pew torches: For evening weddings pew torches are available.

Flowers: Flowers are appropriate expressions of joy and thanksgiving. Floral arrangements are limited to the Altar area. Brass Vases, one for each side of the Tabernacle, are to be used for Altar flowers. Simple floral arrangements may be done on the ends of the pews.

No streamers or runners may be used in the aisle of the Church. Flower petals are not permitted to be dropped due to the possibility of injury to guests.

Music

Music for weddings is the responsibility of the Rector and of those he may designate to share in this responsibility, namely the other clergy and the Organist. The Parish Organist will meet with the couple at the appropriate time to talk about all aspects of music. Soloists and other instrumentalists will be part of the discussion with the clergy and the Parish Organist. The decisions of the Rector or his designees are final.

Use of Church Halls

The use of Pope Hall or Witter Hall for receptions will be scheduled through the Church Office after consultation with the Rector.

Fees

Saint Luke's Church collects fees for services according to the following schedule. Fees marked with (*) are required for all weddings. Other fees are only charged when the indicated parties are involved in the wedding. **For all Church expenses please make one check for the total amount of all fees payable to St. Luke's Episcopal Church, noting the couple's names in the memo section.** The fees are payable in advance, and not later than the wedding rehearsal.

Church Expenses

*Clergy Discretionary Fund -- \$250.00

Assisting Clergy -- \$100.00

Parish Wedding Assistant -- \$125.00

Altar Guild -- \$75.00

Acolytes -- \$25.00 each

*Maintenance -- \$100.00

Reception Halls:

Pope Hall -- \$175.00

Witter Hall -- \$150.00

Checks to the following should be made payable to the individual musicians:

Organist -- \$200.00

Extra Instrumentalist -- \$150.00

Soloist -- \$150.00

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal will last approximately 45 minutes and will be under the direction of the officiating priest. The Parish Wedding Assistant will assist at the rehearsal and on the day of the wedding.

The entire wedding party, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, readers, and ushers should be present for the rehearsal. At St. Luke's, brides participate fully in the rehearsal. No "stand-in brides" are allowed.

Ring bearers and flower girls should be at least 4-5 years of age.

"Bridal Consultants" or "Wedding Directors" employed by those being married at St. Luke's have no part in the rehearsal or the conduct of the ceremony. Their duties end at the front door of the church.

Decisions about the liturgy, procession, and all other matters inside the church, church buildings, or on St. Luke's grounds are made by the Rector, other parish clergy, or the Parish Wedding Assistant.

THE DAY OF THE WEDDING

Members of the wedding party and family members that will be in photographs should arrive at least 1 ½ hours prior to the wedding.

Rooms available

"**The Library**" is available for the bride, bridesmaids, and mothers of the bride and groom.

"**The Youth Room**" located near the Church is available for the groom, groomsmen, and fathers of the groom and bride.

Ushers should be at the entry of the church to assist visitors 30 minutes prior to the wedding.

Photographs

Group photographs prior to the wedding are encouraged. No photographs will be allowed 30 minutes before the ceremony in the church. *No flash photographs are allowed during the ceremony except the following:*

- The photographer, standing at the front pew, may take pictures of the bridal party

coming down the aisle. There will be no pausing for a pose. The photographer may also photograph the bride and her escort as they enter the doorway.

Videographers will be allowed to have a stationary place inside the church in an out-of-the-way place. The camera must be on a tripod and no additional lighting will be permitted nor any movement of the camera.

No other photography or videotaping is allowed during the service.

Photographs after the wedding should be well thought out and a list made so that these may be done in a timely fashion.

USE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

Consuming alcoholic beverages prior to the rehearsal or wedding ceremony is inappropriate for all members of the wedding party. It is within the discretion of the clergy of the Episcopal Church to decline to officiate at any wedding at any time, and should evidence be found that this policy has been broken by **any** member of the wedding party, the clergy may take action deemed appropriate, ***including barring anyone who violates this policy from participation in the wedding, or even cancellation of the wedding.*** Your cooperation will keep all of us from this unfortunate situation.

WEDDING RECEPTIONS

If either Pope Hall or Witter Hall is reserved for a reception, the reception must end no later than 11 PM. Witter Hall is the better choice if there is to be a band and dancing.

Wine and beer are the only alcoholic beverage permitted at a reception at St. Luke's. A non-alcoholic alternative beverage must be offered.

Neither rice nor birdseed may be thrown on the grounds of St. Luke's.

St. Luke's does not provide table cloths, silver ware, wine glasses, plates, cups, coffee, or condiments for receptions.

Table decorations are the responsibility of the bridal party.

St. Luke's is not responsible for items lost, left, or stored at St. Luke's.

NOTES

ST. LUKE'S WEDDING APPLICATION

Date of Application: _____

BRIDE'S FULL NAME:

Address: _____ City: _____

Zip: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Office: _____ Cell: _____

Occupation: _____

Circle one: Maiden Widower Divorced Number of this
marriage _____

Baptized _____ In what
denomination: _____

Confirmed: _____ In what denomination:
: _____

Communicant _____ In what denomination:
: _____

Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth (*City/State*) _____

Father's Name:

Mother's Name with Maiden
Name: _____

Parents' Residence:

GROOM'S FULL NAME:

Address: _____ City: _____

Zip: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Office: _____ Cell: _____

Occupation: _____

Circle one: Bachelor Widower Divorced Number of this
marriage _____

Baptized _____ In what
denomination: _____

Confirmed: _____ In what denomination:
: _____

Communicant _____ In what denomination:
: _____

Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth (*City/State*) _____

Father's Name:

Mother's Name with Maiden
Name: _____

Parents' Residence:

THE WEDDING DATE

Date of Ceremony: _____

Time: _____ Place of Ceremony Church Chapel

Holy Communion Organist Flowers Fees

Rehearsal Date and Time: _____

Permanent Address after Marriage

BRIDESMAIDS:

GROOMSMEN:
