

Weddings at
All Saints Episcopal Church
Parma, Ohio

To the Bride and Groom:

Congratulations on your approaching marriage! We offer you our best wishes and pray that God will bless your time of preparation as well as your future life together.

The celebration and blessing of a marriage is a joyous and sacramental occasion in the Episcopal Church. It is, as the marriage service in our Book of Common Prayer states, “not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.” As the intention of the couple is a life-long commitment to one another, the words and actions of the liturgy will reflect both the seriousness of their promises and the joy that making these promises brings to them and to their family and friends.

This guide is for couples who are deciding whether to have their wedding at All Saints Church. We hope it will give you a clear picture of what we in the Episcopal Church believe Holy Matrimony is about and also of our policies for weddings at All Saints. If you have questions or special considerations please address them to the Rector.

General Information

Church membership

According to the canons of The Episcopal Church, at least one of the marriage partners must be a baptized Christian. We expect couples to be active members of All Saints Church, worshipping regularly and contributing to the life of the parish. Couples looking for a parish home are welcome to begin attending All Saints during the period of preparation for their marriage. We hope that they will continue to be active members after their wedding ceremony, since marriages do benefit from regular worship and the support of a caring parish family.

Setting a date

The date and time for your ceremony must be set with the Rector at least 3 months before the proposed ceremony. Four or more months' lead time is preferable as it gives the couple and the rector more time for preparation. A wedding rehearsal will be scheduled a day or two before the wedding.

Premarital Counseling

Conversations between the couple and the Rector are required before the marriage takes place. Usually four such meetings are scheduled with three or four weeks between them so that the couple may explore their relationship in some depth and have the opportunity to talk about issues that present themselves during the sessions. The purpose is to ensure that those being married are compatible and committed to a lasting relationship.

Prior Marriage

If either or the marriage partners has been married before and divorced, additional time may be needed for pre-marital counseling. The reason is that the Rector is required to petition the Bishop of the Diocese of Ohio for permission to perform the ceremony and must present evidence, in the petition, that the couple is dedicated to a lasting marriage and that any children from a previous marriage are being well cared for. A minimum of one year must pass after a final divorce decree before the Bishop will make a judgment

No wedding invitations should be sent until your date is confirmed and plans for pre-marital counseling have been made by the couple and the Rector.

Wedding License

The couple must obtain an Ohio wedding license from the Clerk of the Court in the locality where you reside. These are usually valid for up to 60 days. The license should be given to the Rector at the wedding rehearsal.

The Marriage Ceremony

The Service

The form of the marriage service we use comes from The 1979 Book of Common Prayer of The Episcopal Church. Holy Communion is highly recommended as part of the liturgy. The Rector will be glad to loan you a prayer book so that you might become familiar with the words of the service, the vows, etc.

Music

All music for the ceremony is subject to approval by the Rector and the parish organist. Music should be chosen which complements the sacred nature of the wedding service. The text of music which is sung must be from a biblical source. Favorite secular songs are more appropriately planned for the reception. The couple should schedule time with the organist in advance of the ceremony to choose processional and other music. If a singer or instrumentalist will be part of your ceremony, the organist will need contact information well ahead in order to plan rehearsal time.

Photography

Photos and video may be taken before and after the service but no pictures, professional or amateur, should be taken during the wedding ceremony itself. Exceptions are as follows: 1) photos of the bridal party entering during the processional; 2) photos taken without flash during the ceremony from a single, inconspicuous place. The photographer must not be visible to the congregation! 3) photos from the back of the church as the wedding party exits. The parish hall may be set up for formal photographs before or after the service as long as no other events are scheduled there.

Please be sure that your photographer will adhere to the church's policy and spread the word among those attending that amateur snapshots with flash are also unacceptable.

Flowers and Decorations

Flowers are intended to enhance the celebration of worship and should not overwhelm the church or detract from the central focus on the bride and groom during the ceremony. A member of the Altar Guild will assist you in planning your flowers. If you wish to leave flowers for worship the following Sunday as a thank offering, please make this desire known to the Altar Guild ahead of time. Pew bow holders are available. Should you wish an aisle runner, this must be arranged with your florist. All Saints does not recommend the use of runners because they may be tripping hazards, and because the red carpet in our sanctuary looks very nice against a white dress.

Rehearsal

The rehearsal takes place at the church, usually the day or evening prior to the ceremony, and will last about an hour. All members of the bridal party should be present and prompt. The wedding license and checks in payment of fees should be brought to the rehearsal.

Other Wedding Traditions

Some practices are common in society today that are not a part of the Episcopal wedding liturgy. For example, the unity candle. The symbolism of marriage is very thoroughly addressed in the prayer book service, and additional symbolism tends to become a distraction, therefore such additional ceremonies are not usually included in weddings at All Saints.

Confetti/Bird Seed/Rice

The above are not permitted anywhere inside or outside the church building. Many couples have found bubbles or small individual bells to be excellent alternatives that require little cleaning up!

Dressing

There is a modest-sized room with bathroom where the bride may dress. A limited number of attendants can be accommodated there as well. It is best if the men arrive dressed for the event as there is no private space where they can change clothes.

Service bulletin

A service bulletin is a helpful aid to those attending and provides a memento to take home. The parish office will prepare the bulletin for a small fee. If the couple decide to make a bulletin themselves the Rector can provide samples from previous weddings to help with ideas, and the Rector will need to see a final draft well ahead of time and before copies are made.

Fees and Donations

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-members</u>
Church Use Fee	\$200	\$400
Sexton Fee	\$ 30	\$ 30
Clergy (suggested donation)	\$150	(fee) \$250
Wedding Bulletin (optional)	\$ 30	\$ 30

The above may be combined in one check made out to All Saints Church. The Church Use fee will be divided between the Altar Guild Fund and the General Operating Fund. The Sexton's fee will be paid to him from the church for being present at the rehearsal and the wedding. The Clergy donation will be assigned to the Rector's Discretionary Fund for use in aiding those in need. Members of the parish are asked to make a donation for the Rector's work with them. For non-members this is treated as a fee

Organist Fee	\$150	\$150
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If the organist is expected to accompany and rehearse with a soloist, there is an additional \$50 fee. The organist's check should be made out directly to him or her and paid at the wedding rehearsal.

Any additional gifts to the church for the furtherance of All Saints' ministry and mission will be greatly appreciated.