



The  
Celebration &  
Blessing  
of  
Marriage

# Weddings

St. Mark's Episcopal Church is a place of Christian worship, service, and fellowship. As such, St. Mark's seeks to be a place where people can experience the Presence of God through the Sacraments. This, of course, includes the Sacrament of Christian Marriage.

In the Episcopal Church there are several requirements for marriage:

- 1) At least one of the persons seeking to be married needs to be a baptized Christian. However, neither party needs to be an Episcopalian.
- 2) The couple must undergo pre-marital counseling either with the priest who will marry them, or an agreed-upon surrogate. This usually means 2-4 meetings which take place several months prior to the wedding.
- 3) The priest must have at least 30 days notice to perform the marriage.
- 4) And, anyone seeking to be married, who has been previously married, and subsequently divorced, needs to present the priest with copies of all divorce decrees, and join with the priest in making application to the Bishop of New Jersey to perform the marriage.

## Fees

*For A Member of St. Mark's Who Seeks to be Married by the Clergy of St. Mark's:*

Contributing members of St. Mark's are already providing for the ministries of the parish, and therefore no fee whatsoever is required. A member may want to make a contribution to the church and to the clergy member performing the marriage, but this is completely at the discretion of the couple. If the services of the organist are desired, the organist does require a \$250 fee.

*For A Non-Member of St. Mark's who Seeks to be Married at St. Mark's by the Clergy of St. Mark's:*

Fee to the Church and Altar Guild: \$500 (\$300 for Post Chapel)

Fee to the Organist (if required): \$250

Minimum Fee for the services of the Clergy: \$250

*For A Non-Member of St. Mark's who Seeks to be Married Somewhere-Other-Than St. Mark's by the Clergy of St. Mark's:*

Minimum Fee for the services of the Clergy: \$250

And the couple is responsible for paying for transportation for any venue further away than 20 miles. If the priest is to drive, the reimbursement rate is the current IRS mileage rate.

*For A Non-Member of St. Mark's who Seeks to be Married at St. Mark's by a Clergy Person not from St. Mark's:*

Fee to the Church and Altar Guild: \$500 (\$300 for Post Chapel)

All details regarding the decoration of the church for the wedding service, the scheduling of the rehearsal and wedding-day activities, and photography and videography must be made in consultation with the clergy officiating at the wedding.

We do not allow wire hangers of any type to tie decorations to the ends of pews. However, soft ribbons or ties may be used.

The clean-up of the decorations after the church service is the responsibility of the couple, unless the couple would prefer to pay an additional amount to have the church cleaning service do this instead.

St. Mark's never wants to deny anyone a Christian Marriage because of cost. If the above fees are prohibitively expensive, reduced rates may be worked out with the clergy of the parish. This policy was approved by the vestry of St. Mark's in November, 2010

# The Address

Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony. The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage 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.

Into this holy union \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

now come to be joined. If any of you can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, speak now; or else for ever hold your peace.

I require and charge you both, here in the presence of God, that if either of you know any reason why you may not be united in marriage lawfully, and in accordance with God's Word, you do now confess it.

# The Declaration of Consent

*The Celebrant says to the woman*

\_\_\_\_\_ will you have this man to be your husband; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love him, comfort him, honor and keep him, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

*The Woman answers*

I will.

\_\_\_\_\_ will you have this woman to be your wife; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

*The Man answers*

I will.

*The Celebrant then addresses the congregation, saying*

Will all of you witnessing these promises do all in your power to uphold these two persons in their marriage?

*The people answer*

We will.

Who presents this woman to be married to this man?

*or*

Who presents this woman and this man to be married to each other?

I do.

# The Collect for Marriage

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

O gracious and everliving God, you have created us male and female in your image: Look mercifully upon this man and this woman 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.

# Readings

If there is to be a Eucharist there must be a reading from a Gospel.

If there is to be no Eucharist, there must be at least one lesson from Holy Scripture.

The traditional compilation of readings goes as follows:

- A lesson from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)
- A psalm, read or sung
- A lesson from a New Testament epistle
- A lesson from the Gospel (in a Eucharist, read by a priest or deacon)

Suggested readings from the Book of Common Prayer:

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24 (A man cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh)

Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7 (Many waters cannot quench love)

Tobit 8:5b-8 (New English Bible) (That she and I may grow old together)

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (Love is patient and kind)

Ephesians 3:14-19 (The Father from whom ever family is named)

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33 (Walk in love, as Christ loved us)

Colossians 3:12-17 (Love which binds everything together in harmony)

1 John 4:7-16 (Let us love one another for love is of God)

Between the Readings, a Psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sung or said.

Appropriate Psalms are 67, 127, and 128.

Matthew 5:1-10 (The Beatitudes)

Matthew 5:13-16 (You are the light...Let your light so shine)

Matthew 7:21,24-29 (Like a wise man who built his house upon the rock)

Mark 10:6-9,13-16 (They are no longer two but one)

John 15:9-12 (Love one another as I have loved you)

# The Vows

In the Name of God, I, \_\_\_\_\_,

take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

In the Name of God, I, \_\_\_\_\_,

take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

*The loose their hands.*

*The couple offers their own vows to each other.*

# The Rings

*The priest is handed the rings, and blesses the rings*

Bless, O Lord, this ring to be a sign of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The giver places the ring on the ring-finger of the other's hand and says*

\_\_\_\_\_/ \_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (or in the Name of God).

# The Pronouncement of Marriage

*Then the Celebrant joins the right hands of husband and wife and says*

Now that \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ have given themselves to each other by solemn vows, with the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring, I pronounce that they are husband and wife, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

Amen.

# The Lord's Prayer

*If there is no Communion, the Lord's Prayer is said here. If there is to be Communion, the Lord's Prayer is said later, and the service continues here with the Prayers.*

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

# The Prayers

Let us pray.

Eternal God, creator and preserver of all life, author of salvation, and giver of all grace: Look with favor upon the world you have made, and for which your Son gave his life, and especially upon this man and this woman whom you make one flesh in Holy Matrimony. Amen.

Give them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their common life, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy. Amen.

Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may grow in love and peace with you and one another all the days of their life. Amen.

Give them grace, when they hurt each other, to recognize and acknowledge their fault, and to seek each other's forgiveness and yours. Amen.

Make their life together a sign of Christ's love to this sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair. Amen.

*Bestow on them, if it is your will, the gift and heritage of children, and the grace to bring them up to know you, to love you, and to serve you. Amen.*

Give them such fulfillment of their mutual affection that they may reach out in love and concern for others. Amen.

Grant that all married persons who have witnessed these vows may find their lives strengthened and their loyalties

confirmed. Amen.

*The Celebrant continues,*

Grant that the bonds of our common humanity, by which all your children are united one to another, and the living to the dead, may be so transformed by your grace, that your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven; where, O Father, with your Son, and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign in perfect unity, now and for ever. Amen.

# The Blessing of the Marriage

*The people remain standing. The husband and wife kneel, and the Priest says one of the following prayers*

Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love in sending Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to make the way of the cross to be the way of life. We thank you, also, for consecrating the union of man and woman in his Name. By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessing upon this man and this woman. Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown upon their foreheads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship; in their sleeping and in their waking; in their joys and in their sorrows; in their life and in their death. Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that table where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*or this*

O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*The husband and wife still kneeling, the Priest adds this blessing*

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favor look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace; that you may faithfully live together in this life, and in the age to come have life everlasting. Amen.

# The Peace/ Kiss

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
And also with you.

# Declaration of Intent

We understand the teaching of the church that God’s purpose for our marriage is for our mutual joy, for the help and comfort we will give to each other in prosperity and adversity, and, when it is God’s will, for the gift and heritage of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God. We also understand that our marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong, and we engage to make the utmost effort to accept these gifts and fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community.

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Date

# Vital Information

Date of Wedding  
Time

Venue

Rehearsal

Full Name  
Age at wedding  
Address  
Parents Names

Full Name  
Age at wedding  
Address  
Parents Names

*Second marriage for either?*

Best email  
Best phone

Number of Attendants on each side

Approximate number of guests

Will there be music? Is an organist needed?

Will there be Eucharist?

# Session 1

# Session 2

# Session 3

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