

Weddings
at
St James Episcopal Church

St James Episcopal Church

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Congratulations!

As you prepare to solemnize your relationship in a life-long partnership, it is wonderful that you have thought of St James Episcopal Church as the place for your wedding service, and have begun to make plans for your wedding. This guide can help you in your decision-making and plans, and can also clarify any concerns you might have about a wedding at St James.

Marriage is understood in the Episcopal Church to be the “union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind” 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.” (BCP, p 423). The intent of marriage is life-long. It is one of the seven Sacraments of the Episcopal Church.

Marriage is the time for careful consideration on the part of the couple about how one feels about life, faith, trust, vocation, and other areas basic to human relationships. This consideration takes time; therefore, it is advisable to contact the priest as soon as possible to begin the conversation and arrangements.

Ordinarily, at least **ninety days' notice** is required for a wedding, which gives time for counseling and preparation. If one or both of the persons lives out of town, then a longer time frame will be needed. Weddings with less than thirty days' notice cannot be performed without the Bishops' permission in writing, and then only in exceptional circumstances.

If one or both of the parties have been previously married, then the Bishop's consent must be obtained – please allow adequate time (**three months**) for this to happen. Arrangements for your wedding at St James begin with speaking with the Rector. Please do not make any plans until you have spoken him or her.

It is expected that the Rector or a cleric designated by the Rector will officiate at all weddings at the church. Should you wish to have another cleric or priest participate in your wedding service, please talk with the Rector as soon as possible. Any invitation to another cleric should be issued by the Rector.

CANON LAW

Canon Law of the Episcopal Church (the rules by which we operate) provides regulations for marriage in the Episcopal Church.

- In all marriages at least one of the persons to be married must be a baptized Christian.
- Both of the persons to be married must undergo pre-marital counseling, according to the directions of the Church.
- At least thirty days' notice must be given to the clergy prior to any wedding date.
- There will be two witnesses to the wedding.
- It is the prerogative of the clergy to decline to do any wedding.
- If a previous marriage has been annulled or dissolved, the Bishop's permission is needed in order for the wedding to be officiated in the Church or by a cleric of the Church.

ST JAMES REQUIREMENTS

1. **St James Episcopal Church** expects that all persons to be married in the Church be regular in attendance and contributors to the parish, or closely affiliated with the congregation. If neither of the persons to be married is closely affiliated with St James, we ask that the person(s) become active in attendance and support for at least **six months** prior to the wedding date.

Should neither of the persons to be married be regular and contributing members of the congregation, it is the sole discretion of the Rector to agree to perform the wedding. Additional charges will apply, including clergy fees.

2. At least **ninety days'** notice must be given to the clergy for weddings at St James, and **one hundred twenty days'** notice for persons who have been previously married.

3. It is expected that the persons to be married will meet with the Rector at least **three times** for pre-marital counseling and planning the service.

THE PLACE OF THE WEDDING

It is customary in the Episcopal Church to perform weddings in the church building. The sanctuary at St James seats a maximum number of 210 people. It is entirely appropriate to have a "small wedding" in the Church with only a few people.

THE WEDDING SERVICE

The preferred service is "The Celebration and Blessings of a Marriage," which is found on pages 423-432 of the Book of Common Prayer. Variations to this, using other authorized Episcopal or Anglican liturgies, are allowed, with the permission of the Rector. In the Episcopal Church tradition, wedding services are not written by the persons to be married, or are from other than Episcopal or Anglican sources.

Weddings are public services of corporate worship in which the whole congregation is to take part. The range of the service may be from simple to very elaborate, depending on the tastes of the persons to be married. It is desirable that there be persons to read the lessons from Scripture, and that the wedding service be as participatory as possible.

Eucharist is an appropriate act of the celebration of marriage, in which the couple shares a sacred meal together. However, if one of the persons to be married cannot receive the Eucharist, then this Sacrament is discouraged in use at the wedding.

MUSIC

The Director of Music will be in charge of arrangements for all music, as well as play for the wedding. **Final decisions concerning music rest with the Director of Music.** Other musicians may work with the Director of Music. Please plan an appointment with the Director of Music; the Director will be a resource for music, hymns, processional pieces, etc. In addition to the fee for the Director of Music there is an additional fee for the Director to rehearse with a soloist or any other musicians.

DECORATIONS AND FLOWERS

The custom of the Episcopal Church and of St James is that the flowers for a wedding are those placed on the retable that sits behind the altar and those used for the wedding party. Arrangements can be made through your florist or the one the Church uses. Please plan an appointment with the Director of the Altar Guild; the Director will be a resource for floral arrangement placement, etc.

There are candles on the altar of the Church that are lighted during the service. It is also possible to have small candelabras on the retable behind the altar. There is an additional charge for the placement and removal of the candelabras. Unity candles are not permitted, as they are not a part of the Episcopal liturgy.

An aisle runner, if desired, can be provided by the florist, and it should be delivered at the time that the flowers are delivered. An aisle runner is discouraged for use in the Church. If used, it must be securely attached to the floor to prevent tripping. Liability for tripping or falls is the responsibility of the wedding party, not the Church.

PHOTOGRAPHY

A wedding is a service of worship. We ask that no photographs of any kind be taken during the service. This includes friends and family members. Photographers may stand at the rear of the Church or in the balcony and take pictures as the wedding party enters, and may also take pictures as the wedding party leaves. Please have the photographer meet with the clergy prior to the wedding.

For videotaping, the clergy must be consulted before arrangements are made. Videotaping is allowed only from the rear of the Church or the balcony.

If the persons to be married wish, they and others may reassemble in the Church following the service to take pictures.

The Church is open only **one hour** prior to a wedding or **one-half hour** afterwards for pictures.

THE WEDDING LICENSE

You may obtain the license at the office of the Town Clerk of any town or city in the state of Vermont; the license is valid for sixty days. It needs to be signed by two witnesses; the parish will assume responsibility for returning the license to the Town Clerk. The persons to be married and the witnesses, along with the cleric, need to sign the parish register; with the exception of the clergy, this is usually done at the time of the rehearsal.

THE REHEARSAL

The rehearsal gives the opportunity for everyone involved in the wedding to practice. The rehearsal is usually done the day before the wedding, at a time when everyone can be present. It will last no more than one hour. The persons who need to be present for the rehearsal are: bride, groom, best man, best woman, bridesmaids (if any), ushers, and participants in the service. Others are welcome to attend. The cleric is in charge of the rehearsal.

PLEASE bring the marriage license to the rehearsal.

THE WEDDING DAY

A wedding service ranges in time from 25 minutes (no Eucharist and little music) to an hour (Eucharist and music). This is a helpful hint for people wanting to time a wedding and reception.

The ushers should plan to be at the Church at least **one half hour** before the scheduled start of the wedding, and the bride and groom and wedding party should be at the Church at least **fifteen minutes** before the wedding.

There is to be no rice, birdseed, confetti, rose petals, etc. thrown or dispersed at the wedding in the Church or on the Church steps.

The Church, in accordance with local law and national Church recommendations, is a non-smoking facility. Please only smoke outside of the church in designated areas.

WEDDING PROGRAMS

All materials and artwork for the wedding program should be in the Parish Office at least **three weeks** prior to the day of the wedding. A master copy of the program will be mailed or emailed to the couple prior to the wedding. It is the responsibility of the couple to see that the correct number of copies are made and that the programs are made available, both during the rehearsal and wedding.

FEES

No one will be excluded from the ministry of the church for financial reasons. The financial charges serve as guidelines. **All fees should be paid before the time of the rehearsal.** A check should be made out to St James Episcopal Church. Please also complete the form on the final page of this document and attach it to your check. The Parish Office will disburse the funds.

For parishioners, there is no fee for the use of the Church or for the clergy. However, a contribution to the parish (for use and utilities) and the Rector's Discretionary Fund is expected. Generally, a guideline is that 10% of the expenses of a wedding should go to the Church for its part in the celebration. This is in keeping with the tradition of a tithe.

QUESTIONS

Please contact the Rector if there are any questions. We will do our best to make your wedding day a suitably joyous occasion to celebrate your marriage!

St James Episcopal Church

Staff

The Rev. Kim Hardy
Priest in Partnership

Carol Reichard
Director of Music

Diane Muckstadt
Parish Administrator

FEES FOR 2017

An Invoice will be given to the Couple.

	Parishioners	Others
Use of Church	Contribution	\$400.00
Use of Parish Hall	Contribution	\$1,500.00
Clergy	Contribution	\$200.00
(offsite – additional)	\$100.00	\$150.00
Altar Guild	\$25.00	\$25.00
(cost of flowers not included)		
Organist	\$100.00	\$125.00
(soloist rehearsal – additional)	\$50.00	\$50.00
Sexton	\$75.00	\$100.00
(reception – additional)	\$50.00	\$75.00

WEDDINGS AT ST JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

FORM TO ACCOMPANY PAYMENT
Please complete and attach to your check.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Disbursement of Funds:

	Parishioners	Others
Use of Church	_____	_____
Use of Parish Hall	_____	_____
Clergy (offsite – additional)	_____ _____	_____ _____
Altar Guild (cost of flowers not included)	_____	_____
Organist (soloist rehearsal – additional)	_____ _____	_____ _____
Sexton (reception – additional)	_____ _____	_____ _____