



EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

RESTORING ALL PEOPLE TO UNITY IN GOD AND EACH OTHER IN CHRIST

Wedding Customary

Congratulations on your engagement and to the beginning of your life together. We, at the Church of the Holy Spirit, celebrate marriage and its witness of Christ's love for the Church. Over the coming months you will be preparing to spend the rest of your life together. It is my hope that this process will be enjoyable and that you learn a bit more about yourself and the person you are going to marry.

This document you are about to read is filled with information about what is required to be married in the Episcopal Church as well as at the Church of the Holy Spirit. Please know that in some cases, and for pastoral reasons, there may be exceptions or additions to what is expected from each party. Other times, because of what is required by the Episcopal Church, there may not be room to negotiate. Please know we, in this congregation, work hard to support every couple in their life together. I look forward to spending time with you and your fiancé over the coming months.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Jason T. Roberts
Vicar, Church of the Holy Spirit

A Prayer from the Marriage Ceremony

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.

From the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer Concerning Marriage

Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God. In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties must be a baptized Christian; that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conform to the laws of the State and the canons of this Church. A priest or a bishop normally presides at the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, because such ministers alone have the function of pronouncing the nuptial blessing, and of celebrating the Holy Eucharist. When both a bishop and a priest are present and officiating, the bishop should pronounce the blessing and preside at the Eucharist. A deacon, or an assisting priest, may deliver the charge, ask for the Declaration of Consent, read the Gospel, and perform other assisting functions at the Eucharist. Where it is permitted by civil law that deacons may perform marriages, and no priest or bishop is available, a deacon may use the service which follows, omitting the nuptial blessing which follows The Prayers.

It is desirable that the Lessons from the Old Testament and the Epistles be read by lay persons. In the opening exhortation (at the symbol of N.N.), the full names of the persons to be married are declared. Subsequently, only their Christian names are used.

Who may get married at the Church of the Holy Spirit?

Because Christian marriage best supported in the context of a worshipping community, the Church of the Holy Spirit performs marriages for members, children of members and grandchildren of members. If the couple does not have any of the above connections, it is expected that they will have a Christian worshipping community, wherever they live, in which they are active. After the marriage, their own congregation will be immediately informed so that it can be recorded in their records. For any marriage at the Church of the Holy Spirit, one or both parties must be baptized.

If you desire to become a member or to be baptized, we welcome and encourage you to have a conversation with a priest at the Church of the Holy Spirit about the process for both.

What is required for marriages at the Church of the Holy Spirit?

1. The Episcopal Church requires that each couple receive premarital preparation in at least three sessions. Marriage preparation must begin 3 months or more before the requested marriage date. The fee for this preparation is based on the Prepare/Enrich program which is currently \$35. This is an online questionnaire that should be filled out as soon as you and your fiancé receive your invitation.
2. Holy Baptism: In order to be married in the Episcopal Church, at least one of the parties must be a baptized Christian. The Episcopal Church recognizes all baptisms which have been done with water and in the name of the Holy Trinity.
3. The Declaration of Intention: This is a document that must be signed by both the bride and the groom. The purpose of Christian marriage is stated in the “Declaration of Intention” from the canons of the Episcopal Church.

This Declaration states,

“we do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. We believe that 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 Lord. And we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God’s help thereto.”

Both parties must affirm and sign this statement, no less than thirty days prior to the wedding. The canons of the Episcopal Church state that “It shall be within the discretion of any Minister of this Church to decline to solemnize any marriage.” Such action may be taken if the priest thinks that the couple does not intend to build a Christian marriage. For this reason counseling sessions must be completed and the celebrant should have given consent to perform the ceremony prior to any invitations being mailed.

4. Marriage of Divorced Persons: The Episcopal Church does allow remarriage of divorced persons, but strict guidelines must be followed. This process takes time and divorced persons contemplating marriage must take this into account in making their plans. The counseling should be undertaken first and then a date for the wedding should be set.
 - a. It is necessary that the Bishop give consent to the remarriage and diocesan guidelines state that no date for marriage should be firmly set and none announced until consent has been received from the Bishop. The priest who will solemnize your marriage will write the Bishop and will inform you of the Bishop’s decision. The letter to the Bishop must be mailed at least thirty days prior to the proposed date of the wedding. For obvious reasons, it is better to write the Bishop much sooner than

thirty days prior to the proposed wedding date. In order to do this you must begin the premarital counseling process in a timely fashion.

- b. You should bring your copy of the final divorce decree to the first counseling session, along with a copy for the Church's files. In addition to the premarital counseling process described above, the canons require that adequate continuing concern be shown for the previous spouse(s) and any children. Diocesan guidelines state that it is reasonable that at least one calendar year has elapsed since the date(s) of the final decree/s and the submission of the Petition. Exceptions are possible, but only if a minimum of 18 months' uninterrupted separation has occurred.
 - c. If any other minister of the Episcopal Church has declined to solemnize the proposed marriage this must be made known to the priest of this parish who is considering your marriage. It is required that the minister who is contemplating your marriage consult with the one who declined to solemnize it.
 - d. In the case where either party has had a second divorce the application for the Bishop's consent shall not be made (a) unless one year has passed since the final divorce decree, (b) unless both parties to the proposed marriage have sought and received professional marriage counseling, and (c) until the counselor has reported to the minister the belief that the two persons asking for permission to marry are, in the opinion of the counselor, adequately prepared for a lifelong union.
 - e. This professional counseling shall be in addition to the counseling described above and performed by a priest of this parish (or someone appointed by a priest of this parish).
5. **Expenses:** The Church of the Holy Spirit does not profit from weddings. However, fees are required to help offset expenses. The clergy do not charge a fee, although a thank-offering is customarily given to the officiant. This is traditionally offered by the groom on behalf of the couple. When an offering is made it may be given directly to the priest. Couples often ask what amount is appropriate and this is a matter of discretion. An amount between \$150-\$400 is appropriate, taking into account whether the person performing the wedding has also done your premarital counseling.
- a. Please see the current listing of fees on the bottom of the wedding day questionnaire. If any of the fees present a legitimate hardship, please speak to the officiant so that other arrangements can be discussed. When exceptions are made to these guidelines to permit, for pastoral reasons, the weddings of people who are not currently members or children of members the fee is typically double that of the one for members and children.

How do I know what to plan for the Ceremony?

After the counseling is finished the wedding ceremony itself may be planned. Typically, time is set aside to discuss this at the last counseling session. To avoid a stressful schedule during the month leading up to your wedding it is best that counseling be completed eight weeks prior to the ceremony. As noted, counseling should be completed prior to the mailing of invitations. By church law the celebrant is not able to give consent to perform the ceremony until the counseling is complete.

Here are some basic questions to help you make choices about a number of aspects of the ceremony.

1. Which lessons would you like to use (refer to the Book of Common Prayer for suggested readings or to Appendix A). Choose an Old Testament lesson, a New Testament Lesson and a Gospel reading. You may also choose a psalm.
2. Would you like a homily? If so, who should offer it?
3. Will the service include Holy Communion?
4. Do you want hymns or only instrumental music?
5. Who you would like to read lessons and offer the prayers after the exchange of vows? (It is recommended that you choose people to do these things and not have the celebrant choose them.).
6. Who you would like to serve as an acolyte?
7. Who would you like to serve as chalice bearers if there is communion?

After you have discussed these things with the celebrant for your wedding, you can make an appointment with our music minister to finalize decisions about the music. You will need to meet at least four to eight weeks prior to the wedding, so please take this into account when you are scheduling counseling sessions.

Music: After the completion of pre-marital counseling, the couple is to set an appointment with the Minister of Music of the Church of the Holy Spirit to discuss music for the service. Music

at a wedding follows the standards for music in the public worship of The Episcopal Church.

Final approval of the music rests with the Vicar (or with the Officiant of the service as approved by the Vicar) following consultation with the Minister of Music. When the couple wishes to have a choir sing at the wedding, they may request that a choir from the Church of the Holy Spirit participate. If available, this will be arranged by the Minister of Music. Other instrumentalists and soloists may be used, provided our Minister of Music agrees and assists in the planning. All instrumentalists and soloists must be approved by our Minister of Music. There is an additional fee if other musicians are used for the service and will be accompanied by our church musicians. (Please see the fee schedule in Appendix B.)

It is expected that the current music minister of this church will provide music for all services, including weddings. If there are extenuating circumstances where the choice of an musician is concerned, this issue may be raised with the Vicar and with the Minister of Music. If a musician other than the Minister of Music and/or accompanist of the Church of the Holy Spirit is approved and used, the Minister of Music and accompanist of this church will still be offered the fee by the party engaging the outside organist. (This is in compliance with the Code of Ethics of the American Guild of Organists.) If our musicians are not available, a substitute will be secured by the church musician. Regardless of who offers the music at the service, final approval of the music rests with the Vicar following consultation with the Church's musician.

The Minister of Music at the Church of the Holy Spirit functions as the liaison with outside musicians and a list of the music for the service should be submitted for approval to the Church through our Minister of Music.

D. A word about Visiting Clergy, Flowers, Candles, Photographs, etc.

An Episcopal wedding is a service of public worship and follows the liturgy of the church. The marriage services authorized by the Episcopal Church are straightforward, and the details of the ceremony are arranged to reflect those qualities.

All weddings in this parish will be conducted by the Vicar or by someone approved by the Vicar. The rehearsal will be conducted by the priest who will solemnize your marriage. A member of the staff or a Church volunteer may serve as wedding director. Ministers of other parishes and of different denominations may participate and assist when requested by the couple and when invited by the Vicar.

Flowers will be placed in two vases on the altar. These are ordered by the parish secretary and arranged by the Altar Guild. You may consult with the secretary on the colors or types of flowers. No other flowers are used in the Church, except those bouquets carried by the actual bridal party and simple pew markers. The church's requirements keep costs down for the bride and the bridegroom, and maintain the simple dignity of the Church. Flowers for the bride, ushers, etc. are your responsibility and are not handled by the Altar Guild.

The only candles necessary are office lights, the Paschal Candle and the Eucharistic candles. No photographs, with or without a flash, are allowed prior to or during the ceremony by members of the congregation. A photographer may be stationed in the rear of the church and

take photographs during the ceremony, provided no flash is used. Usually photographs are taken after the service and it is suggested that the couple have a list drawn up of each picture that needs to be taken so that the session may be expedited. A video recorder, without lights, may be stationed in the balcony to capture the ceremony.

E. Wedding Day Form to be sent to arrange for opening of building, using the Parish Hall for a Reception, Security concerns etc: *(Note: Not all things in this section apply to weddings while we are in our temporary location. All facility use must be worked out with the staff at Pedrotti's.)*

After plans have been finalized, please contact our church secretary, Pat McCarty, either in person, by telephone (210.314.6729) or email (pmccarty@chssatx.org) to arrange for building use, the services of our sexton and other services. The necessary form (attached as appendix B) should be filled out and returned to the church secretary. If desired, an appointment may be made with the Secretary to enlist her help in filling out the forms and to answer questions.

Also, please note, that we do not provide “security” to direct parking or to keep an eye on belongings during the wedding. All valuables should be removed from the building and locked in the trunk of your car during the ceremony.

We are glad for you to use our facilities for the reception, provided it does not conflict with church functions. As a general rule, no alcoholic refreshments are to be served at the Church. An extra fee is charged for the parish hall. Exceptions to this policy for wedding receptions must conform to the Bishop’s Committee guidelines. Please request a copy of this policy from the Vicar (or the priest undertaking your premarital counseling).

Rice, which is hazardous to the birds if ingested, may not be used. Bird seed is suggested as a substitute, if desired. It is important that you work out all the details of building use with the Church Secretary. We expect that you treat the facilities of the church as you would your own home. All groomsmen and bridesmaids should pick up after themselves. Food and all trash should be disposed of properly.

G. Bulletin: Church of the Holy Spirit will be glad to provide a bulletin for the service. This bulletin will look very similar to what we use on Sunday mornings. We only ask that you do the proof reading. All materials for the bulletin should be to the parish secretary no later than 2 weeks before the service. Please see the attached sample bulletin (Appendix C) for a guide to format.

IV. Time line:

12 to 9 months from desired wedding date...contact the Vicar and the Parish Secretary. Set date for ceremony and for premarital counseling. Where there is a divorce, more time may be necessary at this phase.

9 to 2 months prior to the ceremony...counseling undertaken

2 months prior to ceremony...counseling should be completed; obtain marriage license; plan ceremony with counselor/celebrant and then meet with organist/choir master

1 month prior to ceremony... file finalized plans for ceremony with Church. Return all forms to the Church Secretary and send all fees to Church.

V. Contact Information:

The Vicar – The Jason T. Roberts 210.314.6729 x11 or email: jroberts@chssatx.org. Please make this your first call.

The Church Secretary – Mrs. Pat McCarty 210.314.6729 x10 or email pmccarty@chssatx.org - Check with her to see if your desired wedding date is available on the church calendar.

The Minister of Music – Mrs. Rebecca Dawson 210.314.6729 x 13 or email rdawson@chssatx.org

Appendix A: Suggested readings – from the Book of Common Prayer, p. 426

The Lesson:

Genesis 1:26-28 (Male and female he created them)

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)

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

Appropriate Psalms are 67, 127, and 128.

The Epistle:

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

Ephesians 3:14-19 (The Father from whom every 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)

If there is to be a Communion, a passage from the Gospel always concludes the Readings.

The Gospel:

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)

Appendix B: Wedding Information Form: Please mail one copy to the Church: Pat McCarty,
11600 Bandera Road, Suite 102, PMB 15, San Antonio, Texas 78250

Wedding of (please use full names) _____ &

Location of Service: ☐ Pedrotti's ☐ Other: _____

Date of Ceremony: _____ Time: _____

Date of Rehearsal: _____ Time: _____

Telephone for Bride: (h) _____ (w) _____ (c) _____

Address: _____ After Wedding: _____

Parents' Names- Bride: _____

Groom: _____

Clergy: _____ Musician: _____

Communion: (yes or no) _____ If yes - # to prepare: _____

Crucifer: (yes or no) _____ If yes – name: _____

Altar Flowers: (Two vases only, to be ordered by church office and arranged by altar guild. Row markers will include flowers.) Colors, specific types, etc.

Number of seats needed marked off each side: Bride: _____ Groom: _____

Bride's bouquet and boutonnieres from _____ and delivered at
(time) _____

The Church will be unlocked two hours before the ceremony and for one hour following the ceremony. If this does not fit with your plans, please speak with the celebrant of your wedding to see if other arrangements can be made. This may involve a larger fee if the sexton must come early or stay late.

Is this time adequate: yes____ no____ If no, please explain: _____

Bride and/or bridesmaids dressing here: (yes or no)_____ How many?_____

Groom and/or groomsmen dressing here: (yes or no)_____ How many?_____

Will you need the Church to do your bulletin? (yes or no)_____ If yes, please see Appendix C.

Do you plan to take pictures in the church following the service? (Yes or No) _____

Fees (to be paid in full 3 weeks prior to wedding)

These fees are subject to change and may vary depending on your requests. For the following fees, one check should be written to the church.

Please speak with the people at Pedrotti's to discuss space rental fees

- Altar Flowers and Pew Markers: Cost + 10%
- Sexton: \$125 (\$25 each additional hour needed)
- Minister of Music: \$75 for planning
- Church Accompanist during Service: \$175
- If Minister of Music and Church Accompanist are the same person: \$225

There is a further charge of \$50 for each additional musician.

Appendix C: Bulletin Information Form

INFORMATION MUST BE RECEIVED AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE WEDDING
AND
BRIDE and/or GROOM MUST PROOF AT LEAST 1 WEEK BEFORE WEDDING

Prelude: _____
Processional: _____
Old Testament Lesson: _____
Gradual Hymn: _____
New Testament Lesson: _____
Hymn: _____
The Gospel Lesson: _____
Wedding Homily: (yes or no) _____ If yes, clergy? _____
Recessional: _____

THE FOLLOWING IN ITALICS IS ONLY DONE IF YOU ARE HAVING COMMUNION
Hymn during altar preparation: _____

Communion Hymn: _____

Would you like the altar flowers to be given in memory of any family?

Would you like Reception directions to be included on the back?

Would you like the couple's new address listed on the back?

The Minister of Music and the Rev. Jason T. Roberts can assist you in picking out hymns and other music. If you are interested in having other musicians participate, you should speak with the Minister of Music. Additional fees are charged when other musicians are used.

PLEASE INCLUDE A LIST OF THE WEDDING PARTY!