

WEDDING GUIDELINES

FOR COUPLES WISHING TO BE MARRIED
IN SAINT GEORGE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

JANUARY 2004

Wedding Guidelines for Saint George's Episcopal Church

*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,
forever and ever. Amen*

Preface

Christian Marriage is regarded as one of the Sacraments of the Church. The Episcopal Book of Common Prayer has one of the most enduring and beautiful liturgies ever written, one that has been emulated by many other denominations. *The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage* found in the Book of Common prayer is the standard liturgy for Weddings at Saint George's. It provides sufficient flexibility within the structure of the liturgy, while maintaining an appropriate sense of dignity and worship.

Who may be married at Saint George's?

Generally speaking, at least one person in a couple desiring to be married at Saint George's must be an active member of the parish. Family members of a Saint George's parishioner, who reside away from Savannah, may also be married at Saint George's if they meet other stipulations stated below. As required by the Church, at least one member of the couple must be a baptized Christian.

What is required of a couple wishing to be married at Saint George's

For couples residing in Savannah, at least one person must be an active member of the parish, attending worship on a regular basis and participating in the common life of the parish. Persons who do not attend worship regularly, no matter if they are in the parish register, may not be married in the Church.

For couples residing outside Savannah, related to a Saint George's parishioner, at least one member of the couple must be active in an Episcopal Church in their community as attested to by their parish priest.

All couples must participate in six sessions of pre-marital counseling; those residing in Savannah, with the Rector of Saint George's and those residing elsewhere, with the rector/vicar of the parish they attend. This requirement cannot be waived.

A wedding date may not be publicly announced until completion of the pre-marital counseling unless specifically permitted by the Rector of Saint George's

In the case of a previous marriage for either/both members of the couple, the Bishop of Georgia must consent to the marriage. Generally speaking the petition for this consent may not be submitted prior to completion of the pre-marital counseling. If one or both

members of the couple have been in more than one previous marriage, the Bishop of Georgia requires that the couple see a certified, licensed marriage counselor who must attest to the couple's potential for a life-long commitment. These requirements cannot be waived. A wedding date may not be publicly announced until the Bishop's consent is received by the parish priest.

Ceremony Guidelines

With very few exceptions weddings will take place in the Church. Dates and times will be approved by the Rector. Weddings at Saint George's will include the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. All Baptized Christians who are regular communicants in their own denominations will be invited to receive Communion.

The Rector of Saint George's is normally the Celebrant and Officiant at all Marriage ceremonies. The bride and groom may invite other clergy, to include clergy from other denominations, to participate in the liturgy, with permission of the rector. The Organist/Choirmaster of Saint George's is the organist for all wedding ceremonies unless unavailable on a particular date. Additional musicians may be allowed at the discretion of the rector. Organist fees are the responsibility of the couple being married.

The use of "wedding directors" is discouraged. The rector, as chief liturgist for the parish, takes the place of using a wedding director, a practice of many non-liturgical denominations. Couples should not engage a wedding director without the express permission of the rector.

Flowers may be placed on the platform behind the altar and/or on the floor in front of the altar and/or on pedestal tables on either side of the altar.. Flowers and/or bows may be used to designate reserved pews. The cost for all floral arrangements is the responsibility of the bride and groom.

Candles may include the altar candles, "torches" on either side of the altar and candles on the rear platform. Free-standing candelabra and "unity" candles are not allowed.

The use of very young children as "flower girls" or "ring bearers" is discouraged.

The wedding procession at Saint George's always includes (in order) a Crucifer (cross), the groomsmen and groom, the bride's attendants and maid/matron of honor, other ministers of the Eucharist, the Celebrant and the Bride(to include Father or other escort if desired).

Readings for the service include an Old Testament reading, a psalm, an Epistle and a Gospel reading. There are suggested readings in the Book of Common Prayer, or the couple may choose other readings as approved by the parish priest. The bride and groom may choose family members or friends to read the Old Testament lesson and the Epistle. Family and friends may also lead the Prayers of the People.

Without exception, vows for the marriage will be those contained in the Book of Common Prayer.

Music

All music for the ceremony will be approved by the parish priest and/or the organist/choirmaster.

All music must be Sacred in nature. Popular music may not be used during the ceremony, to include any solo performances.

The couple is encouraged to choose appropriate congregational hymns for the ceremony.

Fees

There is no fee for use of the Church for a parish wedding.

The parish hall is available for small receptions following the ceremony. It is not available for rehearsal dinners/parties.

There is no fee for the use of the parish hall, but the couple is responsible for all damages, and must be sure the parish hall is cleaned and put back in order at the conclusion of the reception. A cleaning fee of \$150.00 may be assessed if the parish hall is inadequately cleaned.

There is no fee required by the parish priest for officiating at the marriage ceremony. However it is customary to make a donation to the priest's Discretionary Fund.

Organist fees are the responsibility of the couple and should be negotiated with the organist/choirmaster.

All outstanding questions and concerns not addressed in this brochure should be brought to the attention of the Rector of Saint George's.

These guidelines are effective January 2004 and until further revised