

Wedding Policies at *St. Matthew's Episcopal Church*

330 North Hubbards Lane • Louisville, Kentucky, 40207 • 895-3485 • stmatt-ky.org

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! If you are interested in having a wedding here at St. Matthew's, please read these guidelines carefully.

A wedding is a celebration and blessing; it is also a sacrament. As the Book of Common Prayer says, "marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly". We want you to have a beautiful wedding, but even more, we want you to have a long and happy marriage, grounded in God's love.

1. Marriage requires a thirty-day notice. This is the minimum prescribed by canon law of the Episcopal Church, but a longer time is preferred. Second marriages require a ninety-day notice.
2. The canons give priests the discretion to decline to solemnize any marriage.
3. We do not "rent out" the church to persons to be married by another minister, and, except in rare circumstances, we do not perform marriages of persons who are not members of this parish.
4. Lapsed members, children of members, and persons in search of a permanent church home may speak to a priest about the possibility of a wedding at St. Matthew's after they have attended at least three Sunday services at the church.
5. Canon law also requires that persons being married in an Episcopal Church meet with the priest for pre-marital counseling. The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for the priest to get to know the couple, and for them to get to know him or her, as well as to allow time to raise issues of importance. Plans for the wedding itself will also be discussed at these times. If the couple live outside Louisville and are not be able to meet here, arrangements must be made to meet with a priest of the Episcopal Church in the area in which they live.
6. **Pledging members** of St. Matthew's Church are not charged for the use of their church, or for the services of the clergy (although a donation to the church, in thanksgiving, is always appropriate). The only charge for a wedding in the church is a fee of \$75 for cleaning. There are, however, 3 optional fees:
 - If you wish to have music, there is a \$150 fee for the parish organist's service at the wedding. She will also meet with the couple at a convenient time prior to the rehearsal in order to discuss the music to be used. She is not usually present at the rehearsal; if this is necessary, there is an additional fee of \$75. (Please review the policy concerning music later in this list.) The check for the organist should be made out to **Barbara Ellis**.
 - Our wedding service coordinator is available and should be used except in the case of a very small ceremony. She will advise couples, meet with florists and photographers, and organize the wedding party at the rehearsal and on the day of the wedding. Her fee is normally \$200. The check should be made payable to **Lauren Becker**.
 - We will provide a very simple service sheet for the wedding. If something more elaborate is desired, our parish administrator, **Mardi Galvin**, can work with you. Her fee is \$50, plus the cost of the paper.

All fees can be brought to the parish office at any time, or to the rehearsal. Cash is preferred for the sexton. Please talk to the priest if these fees are prohibitive.

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7. **Non-members** are charged \$500 for the use of the church, or 10% of the cost of the wedding reception, whichever is smaller. The above fees also apply. There is a fee of \$300 for the officiating priest; this is for the priest's discretionary fund.
8. Please bring the marriage license to the church prior to the day of the rehearsal, or to the rehearsal itself. We will not proceed without it.
9. The bridal party may dress at the church, and clothing and flowers may be delivered there on the day of the wedding. Please notify the wedding service coordinator if you are planning to dress at church, and what time you will arrive. NO alcohol is permitted before the ceremony.
10. **No flash photography is permitted during the ceremony by anyone.** A photographer selected by the bride/groom may take photographs using available light, and flash pictures before and after the ceremony, but must make arrangements for this with the wedding coordinator or the priest. Guests are asked not to take pictures during the ceremony either, and you are asked to share this information with your guests. Ushers are directed to ask guests with cameras not to use them during the ceremony. This should be noted on the service sheet or program. (Family and friends are invited to take as many pictures as they like at the rehearsal.)
11. A video may be made of the wedding. However, the camera must be on a tripod located in a place designated by the priest. If someone remains by the camera during the wedding, he/she is asked to wear dark clothing so as not to become a distraction.
12. The priest, assisted by the wedding service coordinator, is the only person in charge of the rehearsal and the ceremony. Bridal consultants are not allowed for church services.
13. A reception may be held in Saints Hall (the parish hall). There is a fee of \$500 for members (may be reduced at the discretion of the Rector); \$800-\$1600 (depending on size) for non-members. Arrangements should be made with the parish office (please check well in advance to be sure of availability). Alcohol may be served under the following conditions: non-alcoholic beverages must be visibly available; both must be clearly marked alcoholic or non-alcoholic; and those hosting the reception will be held responsible for anyone leaving the reception intoxicated.
14. **Rice or birdseed should not be used after the wedding or reception**, as it is a hazard for people walking over it the next day. However, some couples enjoy having guests blow bubbles, and that is acceptable.

POLICIES CONCERNING MUSIC

1. The parish organist, **Barbara Ellis**, is to play at all weddings (unless she designates a substitute organist), and will consult with the bride and groom concerning music.
2. Because Holy Matrimony is a sacrament of the Church it is not appropriate to use popular show tunes and love songs. Only music of a traditional or religious sort may be used. (The final decision regarding choice of music rests with the priest.)
3. Hymns are very appropriate during a wedding, and some suggestions can be made to you for possible congregational hymns.

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POLICIES CONCERNING THE SANCTUARY

1. Elaborate decorations in the sanctuary are not allowed. We use simple flower containers or baskets for flowers, which are placed in front of the altar. Our flower guild normally arranges flowers for the Sunday services and you may choose to use these flowers, which will remain in the church after your wedding. Alternatively, you may purchase your own flowers.
2. Four candelabras are available, if desired, and there is a fee of \$50 for fresh candles and set-up.
3. Pews for the families may be marked by ribbons or flowers, but tacks may not be used.
4. We do not allow the use of a runner for the aisle.
5. We do not allow the use of a “unity candle”. This is not a religious symbol, nor does it add anything to the meaning of the ceremony.
6. Please ask the wedding service coordinator or the parish administrator for more information.

POLICIES CONCERNING REHEARSALS AND WEDDING CEREMONY

1. A time for the rehearsal will be set at the convenience of the priest and the bridal couple. It should begin within a few minutes of the time set as the clergy and wedding service coordinator may have other engagements. If some persons are not present, the rehearsal will, nonetheless, begin at the time announced.
2. Weddings at St. Matthew’s begin on time, and that means that the procession will begin at the time announced.

POLICIES CONCERNING THE MARRIAGE OF DIVORCED PERSONS

If either of the parties is divorced, the permission of the Bishop of Kentucky must first be obtained before final approval is given for the service of Holy Matrimony. This is required by the canons of the Episcopal Church. Therefore, it is important that divorced persons begin to make plans for their wedding at least 90 days in advance of the date they have chosen. **Such permission is not given automatically but in relation to specific situations in each case, and to save yourself and others embarrassment you should not make public announcements of the date and place of the wedding until such permission has been granted.**

If this is a third marriage for either party, professional counseling is required.