

# **TRINITY EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL WEDDING GUIDELINE INFORMATION**

## **The Church's Ministry at the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage**

### **Welcome and Statement of Purpose**

The members and staff of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral welcome you in planning a wedding in our facilities. This is an important ministry of the Cathedral, which seeks to extend the Grace and Love of God to others.

The mission of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral is to be a worshipping community, which through the power of the Holy Spirit, proclaims the Gospel, provides for Spiritual growth, encourages responsible stewardship and engages in loving service to Christ and the world. Trinity is the Cathedral Church of the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas. It is the oldest Episcopal Church building in central Arkansas and second oldest church building in Little Rock. It is almost entirely the result of the efforts of one man, Henry Niles Pierce, who came to Little Rock in 1870 as Missionary Bishop of Arkansas and the Indian Territory. The first service for the 67 parishioners was held on October 19, 1884; in 1991 there were over 1650.

By coming to the church for your wedding, you are expressing your desire to make your wedding ceremony a happy and sacred occasion, and the life, which shall follow, to be lived in the presence of God. We, therefore, want to do all that we can to help you make this a holy, beautiful, and lasting experience, and are available to assist you in maintaining the high standards associated with weddings in the Cathedral.

We wish you happiness in your life together. We urge you to make participation in our church services a vital part of your new life together. Please be assured that you would be welcomed as a member of Trinity Cathedral. The Cathedral has services every day of the year. Sunday morning worship is to bring us all together to praise God, receive his forgiveness, celebrate the sacraments ordained by Christ himself, and thereby have our vision sharpened, our path illuminated, and our lives steadied in a shaky world. Our worship is done with care and brings the best we have in music, preaching, and praise

### **Concerning Christian Marriage**

Christian Marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God. In the wedding service, the two people commit themselves to each other for life in God's name. The congregation prays that God will strengthen and guide them in their life together, and the minister asks God's blessing upon them. The sacred

nature of the service, and the importance of it for the couple, determines the decisions to be made about the wedding.

Marriage is a covenant that is made out of the Christian commitment of the two people and in the context of life in the congregation. In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties, must be a baptized Christian, and the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses.

### **Scheduling and Making the Reservation**

The scheduling of all arrangements for the wedding, the rehearsal, and the reception should be made as far in advance as possible with a member of the clergy on staff. This includes all dates, exact hours, and facilities desired. The office telephone number is (501) 372-0294.

The buildings and scheduled rooms will be open two hours prior to the wedding. Specific arrangements will have to be made if more time is needed.

Because of the penitential nature of the season of Lent, weddings are not celebrated during this season. Because of the full round of services on Sunday, weddings are not usually celebrated on that day.

### **The Minister**

Every minister of the Episcopal Church must conform to the laws of the state and the canons of this Church regarding the solemnization of Holy Matrimony. The canons require that persons desirous of being married in this Church must signify their intention to the minister at least thirty days prior to the service of solemnization.

Instruction and counsel in the nature, meaning and purpose of Holy Matrimony will be given to the couple before the marriage. This is usually done in four hourly sessions. In this way, the bridegroom and the bride will receive far greater benefit from the celebration.

They must sign the Declaration of Intention, which states that they intend to make a Christian Marriage. Therefore, before any date is set or other marriage plans made, the priest must be consulted by the bride and groom. By canon, the priest in charge of a church is given full authority in all liturgical matters. At Trinity Cathedral Parish, this authority is given to the Dean.

The Dean or priest will direct the rehearsal and the wedding. All persons desiring to be married at the Cathedral by a priest from another Episcopal Church must have the priest contact the Dean.

There is no charge for the services of the officiating clergyman but donations to his or her discretionary fund are accepted.

All couples are asked to make their appointments with the priest who will preside at the ceremony. These sessions are very helpful to the couple as they prepare to enter into the covenant of marriage.

### **The Eucharist**

It is appropriate for the Holy Eucharist to be celebrated with the marriage service, if so desired. Members of the congregation who are communicants in their own church are invited to receive communion at the service. Couples who desire communion should arrange this with the priest.

### **The Music**

Because the marriage ceremony is essentially a religious service of deep spiritual significance, special care must be taken in the choice of musical selections which will be in keeping with this Christian character. Only appropriate sacred music is allowed at a marriage service and the priest is the final authority in this matter. Music for the ceremony should be chosen in consultation with the Director and the officiating priest. Ordinarily, the Cathedral Organist is to be used for weddings and should be contacted as soon as possible prior to the service. Any other arrangements need to be cleared with the priest and organist.

If vocal music is desired, only those hymns or anthems, which are appropriate to the liturgies authorized by the Episcopal Church, may be used. The words are to be from Holy Scripture, the Book of Common Prayer, or texts congruent with them.

### **The Wedding Guild**

The Wedding Coordinator and Wedding Guild are charged with the responsibility of assisting the priest in carrying out the wedding arrangements. The following may be expected from the wedding guild members:

1. The primary purpose is to help create an atmosphere of calm and orderliness without the impression of “so many rules to follow.” Good taste and courteous consideration of others are usually the only guidelines needed.
2. The Wedding Coordinator will be assigned as a mentor to each couple getting married in the Cathedral. The purpose of the mentor is to serve as a liaison between the couple and the church. Responsibilities will include being available (by telephone, email or in person) to the couple to answer any questions and give them a feeling warmth and inclusion in the parish. Upon scheduling a wedding

- with the priest, the Wedding Coordinator will be in contact to set up a personal appointment lasting 1-1/2 hours including a tour of the Cathedral.
3. At the rehearsal, the Wedding Coordinator will have the chart of the wedding attendant processional, and the honored guests and parents, inform the ushers of their specific duties, and lead a tour of the facility if the wedding party is unfamiliar with the church. The Wedding Coordinator will advise arrival times and places for the following day.
  4. On the day of the wedding, the Wedding Coordinator and Guild members will be on hand to greet the wedding party. The wedding party will be shown to the dressing rooms, pin boutonnieres on groom, groomsmen and ushers, assist the bride and attendants in dressing, pin corsages on mothers and honored guests, synchronize timings with the priest, seat the honored guests in the proper order, at the proper time, and make sure that the processional begins *on time*.
  5. Signaling the organist, the Wedding Coordinator and Guild members will close the main doors of the Cathedral as the procession is to begin, allowing for a smooth walk for the bride and her party. *The ushers may seat late arrivals after the processional.* As the priest and groomsmen take their place, having entered from either the side door at the front of the church or by processing down the center aisle, the Wedding Coordinator and Guild members will coordinate the bride's procession, starting the members of the bride's party down the aisle.

### **Acolytes**

A trained Acolyte from the Acolyte Guild of the Cathedral will be chosen to serve the priest performing the ceremony.

### **The Flowers**

Arrangements for the altar flowers for the wedding ceremony may be made with the Flower Guild of the Cathedral, or a local florist, provided the florist follows the scale and proportions of arrangements used on Sundays. Regulations governing wedding and proper reverence and respect for the church will be explained to those planning to use its facilities.

Large and expensive arrangements of flowers and greens are inappropriate for a service in the church and are strongly discouraged. The altar flowers will remain in the Cathedral after the ceremony for the Sunday services following the wedding. Flowers should never dominate the altar.

The simpler the floral decoration, the more the church will look as it should, it will resound with quiet beauty and due reverence. Use of lilies or berries is prohibited in Trinity Cathedral. Flower arrangements may be no higher than the Cross, nor so deep as to interfere with the clergy who will officiate the service.

If candelabra are to be used, they may be tastefully decorated. Pew arrangements may also be used to mark the pews to be used by the family. No tacks, pins, tape, nails, or glue shall be used to attach floral decorations to the pews.

The florist must remove any floral equipment used in the nave immediately following the service. Any equipment left after the sexton has cleaned up will be placed in an outdoor storage area.

The Flower Guild will be more than happy to provide you with beautiful flowers for your special day, but need as much notice as possible to accommodate you, please contact them immediately after your initial visit with the clergy and Wedding Coordinator so they can get your wedding on their calendar. If they do not hear from you at least within one month of your wedding date, they will not be able to provide your flowers for you.

Flower Guild point of contact: Sandra Cook, 501 374-4447, 501 804-4716 or [scook@swbell.net](mailto:scook@swbell.net).

The fee is \$150-\$200 depending on the type of flowers desired, which is for two arrangements for the high altar. Contact Sandra to determine the exact fee for the flowers you desire.

Here is the information that will be needed when arranging for flowers:

Bride's Name

Date of the Wedding

Phone numbers (home, work and/or cell)

Email address

Flower and color preferences. (Some flowers may not always be available but every effort will be made to substitute something similar).

### **Tower Bells**

Tower Bells are available at selected times to be rung after the recessional. The bells are rung by a trained bell panel but are not always available for some dates. There is an additional fee for bell ringers. The fee is \$200.00. Arrangements for bells are made through the Wedding Coordinator. In the event that bells are not available after they have been paid for, a complete refund will be made.

### **The Rehearsal**

The wedding rehearsal is normally held the evening before the day of the wedding, usually at 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. All members of the wedding party are expected to attend and ***arrive at least 15 minutes before rehearsal begins.*** All members are expected to be ***on time.*** **The rehearsal is a very important part of the wedding experience and should proceed in a manner respectful to the church.** The rehearsal lasts for one hour and

shall begin **promptly** at the time scheduled. Strict observance of the following rules is required:

1. **Drinking or smoking is not permitted anywhere in the cathedral or on the grounds.**
2. **The rehearsal will not be conducted when any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcohol or substances.**
3. **Food and beverages are not permitted in the Cathedral.**
4. **The priest will be in charge of the rehearsal. The Wedding Coordinator will assist the priest during the rehearsal and wedding. *A wedding consultant is not needed for your rehearsal or for the ceremony.***
5. **Everyone in the wedding party should arrive *fifteen minutes prior to the rehearsal.***
6. **Parents and grandparents who will be escorted should be present for the rehearsal.**
7. **The ushers and readers should also be present for the rehearsal.**
8. **The groom should deliver the marriage license to the priest at the time of the rehearsal.**
9. **Any programs, pens, or bridal books should be brought to the rehearsal. If the Church is printing programs; they will be placed prior to the rehearsal.**

### **Photography**

A wedding is a sacred ceremony and is not considered a performance. As a service of worship, reverence is expected on the part of all present. Photography therefore should be conducted in a manner pleasing to the importance and holiness of the ceremony.

Photographs may be made prior to the ceremony. This is highly encouraged so as to allow the couple and bridal party to arrive at the reception in a timely manner. If photography is desired in the Cathedral after the ceremony, then it shall be limited to ***30 minutes at the maximum.*** Set the exact time for the photographer to be at the church. Photography is to be completed no later than 45 minutes prior to the ceremony. At that time, all members of the wedding party will promptly return to Cathedral House and the acolyte vesting room to prepare for starting the ceremony. All photographs made during

the ceremony must be made by the professional photographer and the photographer must be stationed behind the last pews of the Cathedral. ***The photographer shall not precede the bride down the aisle.*** Photography ***is not permitted*** in the chancel. ***No cell phones, tablets, or videos can be*** used by guests during the ceremony. ***Absolutely no photography may occur in the chancel.*** Anyone violating this policy will be interrupted by the Wedding Coordinator *or wedding guild*. Any photographs portraying the ceremony may be staged after the ceremony. Please have your photographer contact the Wedding Coordinator if he/she has any questions of what may or may not be appropriate. Responsibility for informing both paid professional photographers and wedding guests of these limitations shall rest with the Bride and Groom.

### **Sound and Video Recordings**

The most beautiful and sacred aspects of the wedding ceremony have been ruined for some by the inexperienced recorder operator and by the malfunction of equipment. If video recordings of the service are desired, they need to be very carefully planned. A professional videographer must be utilized for any desired videography. Please consult the priest conducting your service concerning these plans in advance prior to the rehearsal. Video equipment ***is not permitted*** in the chancel. The videographer may use the equipment in the side aisles and no closer to the chancel than the first columns, provided movement is kept to an absolute minimum.

### **Receptions**

If Morrison Hall or the Garth is desired for a reception, arrangement should be made well in advance with the church office.

A caterer must be retained for the reception. The caterer must provide all equipment to serve the event and provide clean-up service. Trinity Cathedral has a limited number of banquet tables (oblong or round) and chairs available at no cost. A Cathedral sexton will be on duty during the reception. There is a fee for the use of the Cathedral facilities for a reception.

### **Policy of the Vestry on Serving Alcoholic Beverages at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral**

The Episcopal Church has never endorsed the prohibition of using beverages containing alcohol among her adult members. Scripture offers Jesus' example of the use and serving of wine in his first miracle at Cana and in the institution of the Lord's Supper. However, if an adult member elects to serve alcohol at the reception, moderate usage is expected.

Church members should make themselves aware of those conditions that might consequently compromise the health and safety of themselves and others. The Church also supports and has a responsibility to those people who abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages for whatever reason.

**Except for wedding receptions, alcohol may not be served at parish or other functions where children are expected to be present. *Wine, beer and champagne* may be served at wedding receptions.**

**All applicable federal, state, and local laws are to be strictly obeyed.**

**Alcoholic beverages and food containing alcohol must be clearly designated and offered as such.**

**Whenever alcohol is served, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal attractiveness and accessibility.**

**The serving of alcoholic beverages at the wedding reception should not be publicized as an attraction of the event.**

**The host of the reception who wishes to serve alcohol must have permission of the Dean and Rector or someone designated by him.**

### **Wedding Information Forms**

You will be given wedding information forms either directly or by email by the Wedding Coordinator. These forms are to be completed and returned as soon as possible and ***no later than six weeks prior to the wedding.***

Please direct any questions you may have to the Wedding Coordinator or the clergy at **(501) 372-0294.**

### **Fees**

Wedding Ceremony fees are set by the Cathedral. Discussion of the fees will be made at the time of meeting and scheduling your wedding with the priest. Fees should be paid by personal check to Trinity Episcopal Cathedral and sent to Sherry Stafford at 310 West 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Little Rock, AR 72206 by **one week before the wedding**

## **The Marriage License and Forms**

The marriage license should be secured from the county in which either the bride or groom lives. In Pulaski County the license may be obtained from:

The County Clerk  
401 West Markham, Courthouse, Room 108  
Little Rock, AR 72201-1417  
(501) 661-2336 or (800) 637-9314

Males and females 21 or under must present a state-certified copy of their birth certificates or any active Military Identification Card or valid passport. Both male and female applicants must be present together when the license is issued. A Power of Attorney is not acceptable under any circumstances.

Males and females 22 or over may present a valid driver's license showing their correct name and date of birth or any of the above documentation.

The cost of a marriage license is \$60.00 **cash** and is valid for 60 days.

## **Notes**