

Marriage Information and Application

St Timothy's Episcopal Church
Southaven, MS

First: Congratulations! Christian Marriage is a solemn rite of the church, in addition to being a deeply personal matter affecting two people (and their families), and also, in the United States, a matter of civil law. This document and the accompanying forms will provide you some important information about marriage in the church, as well as gather information needed from you.

The Episcopal Church's Teaching and Requirements

Marriage is a solemn and public covenant made in the presence of God. The church holds marriage to be a lifelong union, in heart, body, and mind, intended by God for mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the gift and heritage of children, and their nurture and knowledge in the love of the Lord. You will both sign a declaration that you understand this teaching and intend to make your best effort to fulfill it, with God's help. (See the following document, 'Two Become One: A Brief View of Marriage in the Episcopal Church' and the Declaration of Intention, to be signed prior to your marriage).

In the Episcopal Church, members of the clergy may solemnize a marriage using one of the liturgical forms authorized by this Church. In most cases, that means the liturgy of The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, contained in the Book of Common Prayer, though there are some decisions to be made in planning the liturgy, as well as some other supplementary options available. (See the Wedding Ceremony Planning Form included in this packet.)

The canons of the Church require the following:

- ❖ At least one of you must be baptized (please notify the clergy if yours will be an inter-faith marriage, or if one of you is Roman Catholic. Be advised that the Roman Catholic Church does not typically recognize marriages performed by Episcopal clergy for Roman Catholics).
- ❖ You must notify the clergy of your intent to marry at least 30 days prior to the wedding. (This may be waived if one of you is a member of the parish, and if there is a justifiable reason to shorten the time.)
- ❖ Both of you must have the legal right to contract marriage (e.g. age, termination of previous marriages, etc.)
- ❖ You must obtain a license and deliver it to the clergy prior to the wedding.
- ❖ You must certify to the clergy that you freely and knowingly consent to the marriage, without fraud, coercion, mistake as to identity, or mental reservation.
- ❖ You must receive instruction from the clergy (or someone known to them) on the nature, meaning, responsibilities, and purpose of marriage. (The format for this pre-marital instruction will vary according to circumstance, but will be agreed upon by both of you and the member of the clergy.)
- ❖ At least two witnesses must be present at the wedding.

If either party has been married to a person still living, the following apply:

- ❖ The clergy must be supplied with documentation providing legal evidence that any prior marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a final judgment or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction.
- ❖ You are advised that continuing concern must be shown for the well-being of the former spouse, and of any children of the prior marriage.
- ❖ The permission of the Bishop must be obtained *before* the marriage may be solemnized. The petition from the local clergy to the Bishop should be submitted *at least 45 days before the proposed wedding date*.

It lies within the discretion of the clergy to decline to solemnize or bless any marriage.

The Rector of St. Timothy's has final responsibility for the conduct of all services of the church, and all decisions regarding use of the church's facilities.

By signing this application, both of you signify your understanding of the foregoing, and your willingness to abide by these conditions and fulfill these requirements.

Signature & date:

Printed Name:

Signature & date:

Printed Name:

Two Become One: A Brief View of Marriage in the Episcopal Church

Jesus said to them, “From the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”
~Mark 10:5a,6-9

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 knowledge and love of the Lord.
~from *The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage*, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 423



In the Episcopal Church, holy matrimony, or Christian marriage, is understood to be a sacrament of the church—that is, it is a means of grace, given freely by God through the experience of the things of this bodily life. In Christian marriage, two people “enter into a life-long union, make their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows” (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 861).

In contrast to much modern thinking about marriage (e.g. “happily ever after”—unless the couple later decides they’d be happier elsewhere), the church has traditionally understood marriage as a means of sanctification, or growth in holiness—it is a “school of charity,” wherein we learn (often through considerable difficulty!) what it means to choose truly to be devoted to another in love. In this, the relationship of Christian marriage intends to reflect the relationship of self-giving love that God has with humanity through Jesus Christ. For the marriage couple, this covenant relationship takes precedence over all other human relationships in their lives. Each partner is called to consider the well-being of his or her spouse as of primary concern.

The marriage relationship is also to be a window into what the fulfilled kingdom of God will look like. As the original society, marriage is an ideal intended by God at creation for the loving union of persons. In other words, the marriage partners are to live in equality and mutuality, never using one another, but rather laboring in all things to build up one another.

Marriage is also the context in which the church affirms the sexual expression between partners. The church proclaims the goodness of God’s creation, including the gift of sexuality. The church thus holds up the marriage covenant as the arena in which sexual activity may find its expression in ways that are healthy, affirming, and loving, rather than dangerous, self-serving, and abusive.

Marriage often results in children—whether through procreation, adoption, or the blending of families. The self-giving love of parents and the care and safety they provide for their children further illustrates the character of marriage as the imitation of Christ’s love and as a window into the kingdom of God.

Though the church acknowledges with sadness that marriage covenants do sometimes break apart, it is the church’s expectation and the Christian hope that marriages blessed by the church will be unconditional in love, mutual and exclusive, faithful and lifelong. This is the model confirmed by Jesus as intended by God for our flourishing.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

~Colossians 3:14

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The Declaration of Intention

In accordance with the Canons of the Episcopal Church

We understand the teaching of the church that God’s purpose for our marriage is for our mutual joy, for the help and comfort we will give to each other in prosperity and adversity, and, when it is God’s will, for the gift and heritage of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God.

We also understand that our marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong; and we engage to make the utmost effort to accept these gifts and to fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community.

(The couple will sign the above Declaration after their pre-marital instruction and prior to the wedding.)

St. Timothy's Wedding Ceremony Planning Form

To be filled out in consultation with the Rector, who has final responsibility for all services.

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Expected number of guests: _____

Reception is being held at: _____ Time: _____

Approved by the Rector: _____

I. Wedding Party Information

Bride's Full Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

email: _____

Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

This marriage is your ☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd (or more)

Divorced? _____ (If "Yes," date: _____) Widow? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Baptized? ☐ Yes ☐ No If "Yes," what denomination? _____

Confirmed? ☐ Yes ☐ No If "Yes," what denomination? _____

Church Membership (present): _____

Father's Full Name: _____

Mother's Full Name: _____

Parent Address & Phone: _____

Groom's Full Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

email: _____

Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

This marriage is your ☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd (or more)

Divorced? _____ (If "Yes," date: _____) Widower? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Baptized? ☐ Yes ☐ No If "Yes," what denomination? _____

Confirmed? ☐ Yes ☐ No If "Yes," what denomination? _____

Church Membership (present): _____

Father's Full Name: _____

Mother's Full Name: _____

Parent Address: _____

Parent Phone: _____

II. The Liturgy: The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

Location for Ceremony (if not in the church):

Will there be a presentation or giving in marriage (see BCP pg. 437)?

Scripture Readings

The lessons are found on Page 426 in the Book of Common Prayer. One or more lessons may be read (and a psalm or hymn may be sung as a response to the lesson). If there is to be Communion, a reading from the Gospels is always included.

Indicate desired lessons and readers (the deacon or priest reads the Gospel)

1st reading: _____

2nd reading: _____

Gospel: _____

Will there be a homily after the lessons? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Which prayer will precede the Nuptial Blessing?

☐ p. 430 ☐ p. 431

Will the service include the celebration of the Holy Eucharist? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signing of the Register: Will this be done during or after the service?

☐ During ☐ After

Music

Please indicate requested music as applicable. All music should reflect that this is a service of the church, and must be approved by the priest and church organist. (Suggested appropriate pieces of music are available upon request.)

Prelude: _____

Entrance music: _____

Other hymns, psalms, or anthems to be used: _____

Exit music: _____

Postlude: _____

“At least two witnesses shall be present at the solemnization...”

Full names of the witnesses:

1. _____

2. _____

Contacts for additional planning or questions:

The Rev. Clay Calhoun, Rector

rector@sttimothysms.org 901.279.4415

Debbie Wisdom, Parish Bookkeeper

bookkeeper@sttimothysms.org 662.393.3100

St. Timothy's parish office

office@sttimothysms.org 662.393.3100

FEES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Base Wedding Fee \$300.

Includes custodial, facilities usage, and all other expenses related to preparing and providing for the day.

Security Deposit \$250.

Non-negotiable. Should be provided as a separate check, which will be returned if there are no damages.

Parish Hall \$700. (per day)

Includes use of the parish hall, available tables and chairs, and the church kitchen (for rehearsal dinner and/or wedding reception). (Additional approval and forms required. See: Parish Hall Use.)

Organist \$150.

Additional musicians shall be compensated at the same rate.

Payment – All fees and charges for facilities are due and payable at the church office at least four weeks before the wedding date. Payment is to St. Timothy's Episcopal Church. Billing questions should be directed to bookkeeper Debbie Wisdom in the parish office.

The church does not charge for sacraments. Accordingly, there is no fee for the priest to officiate your wedding, but an honorarium for the officiating minister is customary, in recognition of the time that will be spent in planning and performing the ceremony.

You may also choose to make a donation to the Altar Guild, which is responsible for preparing for all services: the setting of the altar, maintenance of vestments and communion vessels, changing of paraments, etc. Our volunteer Altar Guild teams devote considerable time faithfully and lovingly to planning and caring for the worship of the church and all pastoral services.

Hours Open on Date of Wedding – The church will be open three hours prior to the wedding time.

Seating Capacity – The total seating capacity in the nave is 200.

Service Leaflets – St. Timothy's typically prepares and prints all leaflets and bulletins for services of the church. If you desire to prepare and print your own service leaflets, please submit a draft to the church office for approval no later than four weeks prior to the wedding.

Flowers – Flowers may be left on the altar for Sunday Services. (See additional Florist Instructions form)

Forms to be submitted: Marriage Information and Application, and Ceremony Planning Form –

These should be completed and returned to the parish office at the time of reserving the priest and wedding date. ***Please do not publish your wedding date until you have received confirmation from the church office that it has been approved by the Rector and placed on the parish calendar.***

PARISH HALL USE FOR WEDDING RECEPTIONS

The use of the parish hall (CAB) for receptions, dinners, or other events in connection with a wedding must be approved in advance.

- A. A written request to use the parish hall for the wedding event must be completed and submitted for approval to the church office at least four weeks in advance of the event. The 'Facilities Rental Agreement' and related forms (including alcohol use policy) are available at the front desk.
- B. Candles are limited to tables by advance approval.
- C. No decorations may be fastened to walls, woodwork, or ceiling without prior approval.
- D. Only light alcoholic beverages may be served (champagne, table wines, beer, etc.). No hard liquor may be served (whiskey, gin, rum, etc.). Non-alcoholic beverages must be provided in a fashion equally attractive and convenient as the provision of alcoholic beverages. No alcoholic beverages may be served to minors. All alcoholic beverages must be consumed inside the parish hall (not in the parking lot or church).
- E. Rice, birdseed, or confetti may not be thrown in or around the parish hall. Sprinklers or fireworks are not permitted anywhere on the church grounds. This is a safety precaution.
- F. The church does not provide catering service. The wedding party must provide the parish office with a signed contract with the caterer 30 days in advance of the event. The contract must state that the wedding party and caterer assume all liability for the event and include proof of liability insurance as well as worker's compensation coverage if applicable.
- G. Tables, chairs, and table clothes are available for use upon request. They must be returned to their original location after the event. Table clothes should be laundered before being returned.
- H. Any damages or items unaccounted for after the reception should be communicated to the church office. Additional fees may be assessed, if the security deposit is not sufficient to cover any loss to the church.
- I. Any event in the parish hall should conclude no later than 11:00 pm.
- J. Immediately after the event the responsible person will make certain that the caterer or others remove all decorations from the parish hall. Cleaning up and returning all church furniture to its proper location is the responsibility of the catering service and the wedding family. If work remains for the church to return the parish hall to functional use, fees may be deducted from the security deposit.

FLORIST INSTRUCTIONS FOR WEDDINGS

The Florist shall follow the following conditions and instructions for all weddings at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church.

1. Wedding Coordinator: The florist shall contact St. Timothy's Wedding Coordinator or other designated representative of the church to discuss the decorations.
2. Location of Decorations: The amount of decoration may vary but the principle by which flowers, greenery, and other decorations are chosen is the enhancement of the present beauty of the church interior. All decorations must be confined to the choir area, center aisle, windowsills and retable behind the altar. Only fresh flowers and greenery may be used. We require that the florist furnish the containers for the flowers placed on the retable. These containers may be brass, white or dark green since the containers themselves seldom show. If two vases are used, they are placed between the candles and the large cross immediately behind the altar. Arrangements should be no higher than the cross's beam, 38". No vases are to be put on the altar itself.
3. Candles: Candles in addition to those in the altar area are limited to windowsill placement. Windowsill candles should be in glass containers or hurricanes. The Wedding Coordinator can advise the florist.
4. Additional Instructions: No nail tacks, carpet tape or wire may be attached to any part of the church building and no decorations are to be fastened in any manner to walls, rails, or church furnishings. If in doubt, ask the Wedding Coordinator. In case of Saturday afternoon or evening weddings, the decorations must be completed by noon, after which time the building is locked until the wedding party arrives. For weddings at Christmastide, the church decorations for the season will be left in place. No church furnishings or properties can be relocated. No rice, birdseed, or confetti may be thrown in or around the church. This is a safety precaution for those walking on the hard surfaced floors and walks. Flower girls may drop rose petals in the aisle. It is the responsibility of the florist to clean up any floral debris after the decorations are completed.