

Wedding Policies for Holy Trinity Episcopal Church

Congratulations on your engagement! The following policies will help you plan a joyful wedding and prepare for a marriage that is filled with the steadfast love of God such that you are given the grace to honor and keep the vows you make on the your wedding day. All weddings at Holy Trinity will comply with the laws of the state of Florida and the canons of the Episcopal Church.

What should we do first?

The celebration of your marriage is a unique moment in your life, and preparation for it is important. The first step in the process is to worship at Holy Trinity at one of our four weekend services. Please introduce yourselves to Rev. Pam or Fr. Steve when you come. Then call the office to set up an appointment with Rev. Pam. Please complete the Wedding Information Form and bring it with you.

Who can be married at Holy Trinity?

At least one of the parties must be a baptized Christian. While membership in the Episcopal Church is not required, we believe that worshipping together as a couple is an important part of laying a foundation for a strong marriage. Therefore couples preparing for marriage are expected to worship at Holy Trinity, and we invite you to consider making Holy Trinity your church home.

What if one or both of us has been divorced?

Persons who have been divorced should bring a copy of their final divorce decree to the first meeting with the priest. The Episcopal Church accepts the civil process for dissolution of marriage, but the consent of the Bishop must be obtained before re-marriage in the church. The application for marriage after divorce must be filled out and returned to the church so that it can be forwarded to the Bishop no less than 30 days prior to the proposed wedding. Please remember that it will take a few days to prepare the documents.

Preparation for Marriage

The Episcopal Church specifies at least 30 days notice be given to the priest before he or she may officiate at any marriage, but we suggest beginning at least four months in advance. Pre-marital counseling is required for all couples and is usually done at Everyone's Counseling Center next to the church. ECC is certified with the county so that after counseling is complete the couple qualifies for a reduced fee for the marriage license. For couples that do not live in the Melbourne area, the priest will help you locate appropriate marriage preparation near your home.

Declaration of Intention

All couples married in the Episcopal Church are asked to sign the following declaration:

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 fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community.

What is an Episcopal wedding like?

A wedding is primarily a worship service. We gather in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of the bride and groom in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The “Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage” as contained in The Book of Common Prayer (beginning on page 422) is used as the liturgical form for the service. This form contains a great deal of flexibility and gives ample opportunity for the couple to make their ceremony unique. The couple is asked to choose the Scripture lessons, the readers of the lessons, the music, whether or not they would like Holy Communion, and other particulars relating to the Service. If there is Holy Communion, all persons in the congregation are invited to partake of the bread and wine.

Who will officiate at weddings at Holy Trinity?

Normally one of the clergy associated with Holy Trinity will officiate at all weddings held here. Other clergy, either of the Episcopal Church or of other denominations who have a special relationship with either the bride or groom, may be invited by the Rector to assist with the ceremony.

What kind of flowers, candles, and decorations may be used?

Flowers in vases may be placed on the altar. Please contact the office for size restrictions. A basket of flowers may be placed on the floor in front of the altar. Bows and/or flowers may be placed on the ends of the pews using a method that will not scratch the wood. Please remember that the flowers and decorations should not obscure the altar, the cross or any other symbol of the Christian faith. The usual altar candles are normally lit during a wedding. A unity candle is permitted if desired. The church has a unity candle stand; the couple need only provide the large center unity candle and two tapers.

Photography

We suggest that you designate one person to take pictures during the ceremony. We ask that no flash be used during the ceremony so as not to distract from the worship. The photographer should remain at the back or side, never moving between the congregation and the wedding party. Other pictures may be taken before or after the ceremony as desired. A video camera may be used if placed on a tripod where it will not distract anyone.

Holy Trinity Wedding Guild

The Holy Trinity Wedding Guild will provide a coordinator to be present at the rehearsal and on the day of the wedding. He or she will instruct the ushers, assist with the procession, and be available to help as needed. A member of the wedding guild will call you in advance of the wedding in order to be prepared to assist you. Please note that professional wedding planners are not permitted to assist with weddings in the church.

Music

When choosing music for your wedding, please remember that it should be an offering to the glory of God. Secular music may be used if the lyrics are consistent with Christian marriage. If organ music is desired, the parish organist will be asked to play. The bride and groom are encouraged to meet with the organist to choose music. If other types of music are desired, please consult with the priest about your choices regarding music.

We wish you a wonderful wedding at this time of great joy. More importantly, we wish you a loving marriage in which your lives are spent in a growing relationship with God and one another. God bless you!