

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

Wedding Guidelines and Requirements

Many congratulations on your engagement!

Here is a small package that may help you in the preparation of your service at St. Matthew's Church.

With thanks and very best wishes to you both,
The Rev. Kelly Kirby, Rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

1. The Order of Service and the Book of Common Prayer.

We use the traditional Order of Service found in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer or one of the two other approved liturgies included in this package. There are several options that you will be asked to consider in the planning of the liturgy. It is not the usual practice to include a unity candle ceremony in the service or for the couple to write their own vows.

2. Music.

To discuss the music for your service, please contact the St. Matthew's Music Director, Robert Lee, as soon as possible. He can be reached at rlee@stmatthewsepiscopalouisville.org. The use of instrumentalists and soloists and the choice of music must be approved by the Music Director.

3. Videos, Recordings and Photography.

You are most welcome to capture your service at St. Matthew's on video or as a sound recording, subject to agreement from the Priest and Organist.

Videographers must speak with the Priest prior to the service.

Please discourage your guests from taking photographs during the service itself unless they are using a digital camera.

We encourage you to take your wedding party photographs prior to the service. If this is not possible, please advise your photographer that the church building will be closed 45 minutes following the service.

4. Flowers

The couple should talk to the Priest about their plans for flowers in the church.

Flowers are not permitted on top of the altar.

When we are due to conduct two services on a Saturday we will be glad to put the families in touch with each other, for possible liaison over the supply and arrangement of flowers.

We must ask that no berries are used in any flower arrangements, and no flowers be thrown as part of the procession.

All flowers must be removed following the service, unless arrangements have been made to leave the arrangements for the following Sunday.

5. Status within the church

In the Episcopal Church it is required that one member of the couple has been baptized in order to have a church wedding.

If either person has previously been divorced it is usually still possible to have a wedding at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. There is mandatory paperwork that must be submitted to the Bishop of the Diocese of Kentucky in order to gain his permission to conduct the service.

All couples married at St. Matthew's must attend pre-marital counseling, (usually this takes place during 4 one hour sessions with the Priest).

The church needs at least 9 weeks notification before the proposed date of the wedding.

6. Use of the Parish Hall.

St. Matthew's Saints Hall is a lovely place for receptions.

7. License

A license must be obtained from the county, and must be applied for at least two weeks before the wedding. The license should be brought to the Priest before, or no later than, the time of the rehearsal.

8. Fees

The organist fees are \$250 for the service and that includes the rehearsal. There is no cost for consultation. If the couple requests music outside of the Music Director's repertoire, there may be an additional charge of \$50/hour for music preparation.

The Priest's fee is \$200 (the check should be made out to the SMEC Discretionary Fund). Premarital counseling is included in this fee (This fee is waived for members of the parish in good standing).

The Church fee is \$900 for the service and that includes the rehearsal. (This fee is waived for members of the parish in good standing).

The church will be open 1 hour prior to the service and 45 minutes following. If you wish to have additional access to the building, it can be arranged for \$100 per hour.

The rehearsal will begin once the entire wedding party arrives. Should the rehearsal begin more than 15 minutes late, there is a \$50 fee for each 15 minutes. Rehearsals last no longer than 1 hr.

9. Misc.

St. Matthew's does not create wedding bulletins.

Members of the congregation wishing to be married during a regular Sunday Eucharist should speak with the rector.

10. Concerning the Service

St. Matthew's conducts Christian Marriage Ceremonies for all Christian Couples.

The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) states that "Christian Marriage is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman¹ in the presence of God. In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties must be a baptized Christian; that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conform to the laws of the State and the canons of this Church" (BCP, p. 422).

St. Matthew's welcomes same-gender couples seeking the blessing and support of the Church. The liturgy² is a service of blessing for same-sex couples who are in lifelong, faithful monogamous committed relationships.

¹ The Episcopal Church welcomes same-gender couples to the sacrament of marriage.

² In 2012, the General Convention of The Episcopal Church commended *Liturgical Resources 1: I Will Bless You, and You Will Be a Blessing* for study and use throughout The Episcopal Church. In the 2013-2015 triennium, the materials were widely used in a number of dioceses, and the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (SCLM) invited responses through several avenues. In response to comments by those who used the 2012 rite, the SCLM made some revisions to the original liturgical resource, "The Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant." The 2015 General Convention authorized this revised liturgy for use "under the direction and with the permission of the bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority" (Resolution 2015-A054).

In addition, heeding the concern that "separate but equal" rites are inherently unequal, the SCLM developed and recommended to the 2015 General Convention an adaptation of the 2012 liturgy that can be used for marriage for any couple, as well as "The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage 2," a gender-neutral adaptation of the marriage rite in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. The Convention authorized these rites for trial use, that is, as a proposed revision of the BCP. Resolution 2015-A054 directs that these liturgies be used under the direction and with the permission of the diocesan bishop, and stipulates that bishops exercising ecclesiastical authority or, where appropriate, ecclesiastical supervision will make provision for all couples asking to be married in the Episcopal Church to have access to the liturgies.