

# **Customary for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage at Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church, Jamestown, Rhode Island**

## **General Requirements**

- I. In the Episcopal Church at least one of the persons to be married must be a baptized Christian.
- II. According to the Canons of The Episcopal Church, a minimum of thirty (30) days notice must be given to the clergy by those contemplating marriage. (Title I Canon Sec. 3). For practical purposes, a couple *must contact Saint Matthew's not less than six (6) months prior to their desired date for the wedding.*
- III. A minimum of three (3) counseling sessions with the clergy are required to explore some of the theological, spiritual, and emotional aspects of marriage the Church affirms. When geographic considerations make this impractical to be done at Saint Matthew's the couple will arrange similar counseling where they reside. Alternative arrangements for counseling must be approved by the clergy of Saint Matthew's Church.
- IV. No public announcement, publicity, or the sending of invitations is to be done until the clergy have met with the couple and stated their consent to officiate at the contemplated marriage.
- V. Every priest of the Episcopal Church has the discretion to decline to preside or officiate at any marriage.
- VI. It is expected that at least one of the persons desiring to be married (or their parents or family) is a registered member of Saint Matthew's in good standing having given financial support of record.
- VII. On occasion, when neither the bride nor groom is a member of Saint Matthew's, the clergy may agree to officiate at their marriage. The primary concern is for the couple's continuing relationship to a parish community and their spiritual growth after their marriage. Requests from non-Episcopalians to "use" or "rent the church" cannot be honored.

## **Remarriage of the Divorced**

- I. Remarriage of divorced persons may be possible with the consent of the Bishop of Rhode Island. There are specific guidelines and requirements set forth by the Bishop's Office that apply in all cases.
- II. All other provisions of the Church's Canon on Marriage noted above under General Requirements apply.

## **The Wedding Liturgy**

- I. The Wedding Service: The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage (Book of Common Prayer pages 422-483) is first and foremost a service of Christian worship. Though the service has a personal and special dimension for the couple being married, it is primarily a sacramental and

religious ceremony that invites and acknowledges God's blessing on the couple.

- II. Planning the Service: The wedding liturgy is planned by both the couple and officiating clergy. The Prayer Book Service provides for flexibility and choices that the couple may exercise in consultation with the clergy.
- III. Other Clergy: Other clergy may participate and assist if the couple so desires with the permission of the rector of Saint Matthew's, who will then formally invite the guest clergy to participate in an assisting role.
- IV. Organist: The parish organist is responsible for the music at all wedding services. With the permission of the organist and rector, other persons skilled in music as soloists or instrumentalists known to the couple may be used in an adjunct way within the wedding liturgy. When other musicians assist, the professional fee for the parish organist still applies, and there will be an additional fee if the organist needs to rehearse with other musicians.
- V. Music. All music needs to be approved by the Parish Organist and/or officiating priest. A list of appropriate music is available. Musical selections are to be Christian in intent and expression in accord with the norms of the Prayer Book and the Hymnal. Popular music, show tunes and movie music are not permissible within the liturgy though such selections might appropriately be used at the reception following the service.
- VI. Rehearsal: The wedding license is to be brought to the rehearsal and given to the officiating priest. The entire wedding party is expected to attend and should arrive promptly. The rehearsal is under the direction of the officiating priest.
- VII. Ushers: During or before the rehearsal the couple should decide which members of the family they wish seated in special places and which usher will seat the mother of the groom and the mother of the bride.
- VIII. Unity Candle: The so-called "unity candle" is not part of the Prayer Book Service and it is not used at St. Matthew's.
- IX. Service Bulletin: The parish office will print a wedding service bulletin if one is desired, or a bulletin may be printed elsewhere at the couple's expense. The contents and the layout of the order of the service must first be approved by the officiating priest.

### **Altar Flowers & Decorations**

The Altar Guild will arrange and place the altar flowers ordered by the bride. Florist's arrangements are not used as altar decorations. If a wedding is held on a Saturday, it is the custom of this parish to leave the wedding flowers on the altar for Sunday services in thanksgiving for the marriage. Flowers delivered to the church for the Altar Guild to arrange should be cut with long stems and labeled with the name of the bride.

No flowers or decorations may be taped, nailed, or otherwise affixed to the pews, walls or doors of the church. However, small pew decorations may be tied in place in a manner which will not harm the painted surface of the pews. No rice, confetti or other material may be thrown in the church or on the church grounds.

## **Photographs / Video**

The photographer chosen by the couple must consult with the officiating priest prior to the wedding service, preferably at the rehearsal. Only the photographer designated by the couple is to take photographs during the service. Ushers should alert camera-carrying guests that photos are not permitted in the church during the liturgy.

Posing for photos after the liturgy produces the best pictures. We ask that the time for this be limited to one hour. Under no circumstances is it permissible for a photographer or others to move or remove candles, altar rail cushions, the lectern stand or any of the chancel or sanctuary furniture in connection with taking of photos.

## **Receptions**

The parish hall of the church may be used for a reception by contributing members at no charge. If the use of the hall is desired, it must be reserved in consultation with the rector. It will be understood that the hall will be left clean and in good order. Because of insurance liability, no alcoholic beverages may be served except beer and wine, and the family hosting the reception must sign a "hold harmless" agreement exempting the parish from any liability which may happen as a result of the reception .

## **Costs**

Church Fee:	\$400
Sexton's Fee:	\$50
Organist's Fee:	\$250 (plus additional fee if rehearsal with other musicians is required)
Altar Flowers:	\$50

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**Total: \$750**

**Non-member fee: \$1500**

*\*date of the wedding will be officially reserved when full payment is received by Saint Matthew's  
(check should be made payable to Saint Matthew's with "wedding" in memo line)*

*\*\* There are no fees for the rector. However, if you so desire, an honorarium donation may be made to the Rector's Discretionary Fund (check made payable to "Saint Matthew's" with "rector's discretionary fund" on the memo line). This is typically \$100-\$250. This fund is used for various mission and ministry expenses, including outreach to those in financial distress.*