



# **Holy Matrimony**

A Handbook on the Parish Policies  
of  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Maumee, Ohio  
Adopted by the Vestry, September 16, 2003

## **Welcome and Congratulations**

Congratulations on your engagement! It is the hope of the clergy and the people of St. Paul's that your wedding here is a most joyous and spirit filled occasion. We take our ministry to you very seriously as you make vows to one another which will govern the rest of your lives.

This booklet is designed to assist you in your preparations for planning a wedding here at St. Paul's. Whether you are a life long member of this parish, or looking for a new church home, this booklet outlines the things you should know about how we do weddings. It includes expectations and parish polices as well as helpful hints concerning your wedding day.

Please feel welcome to speak to the clergy if you have any questions.

## **Marriage is a Sacrament of the Church**

There is a distinction to be made between a wedding and a marriage. While this booklet is primarily focused on wedding preparations, it is your marriage that is the concern of the church. Our role is to help you prepare for, and live into, a Christian marriage.

When you marry in the church, two things are happening. You, as a couple, are seeking God's blessing upon your new lives together. You are also, in the presence of your family and friends, making a public statement about the nature of your relationship with Christ and with this Christian community.

It is the policy of this parish to offer the Sacrament of marriage to members of St. Paul's. The definition of member in this context includes persons who may have grown up in this parish but have moved away. In any case, active participation in the worship life of this congregation, or some other church out of town, is required for scheduling a marriage ceremony at St. Paul's.

Becoming a member of St. Paul's is very simple. Just speak to the clergy about your intentions. In the event that you live out of town and belong to another church, a letter from your priest or pastor offering their blessing for your marriage is sufficient to confirm a wedding at St. Paul's. (Note: see the section on pre-marriage conversation regarding your home priest's or pastor's blessing.)

### **Scheduling Your Wedding**

Please confirm the date and time of your wedding with the clergy and the parish office before renting a place for the reception. There are many activities at St. Paul's and we do not want you to reserve a place for the reception only to discover that the church is not available that day. In addition, if you have had a previous marriage annulled or dissolved we must wait for the consent of the Bishop before scheduling a wedding date.

After confirming that the date has been scheduled, the church secretary will help you with further planning. NOTE: Weddings are generally not performed during Lent except in very unusual circumstances. Because this is a penitential season, it is not appropriate to “celebrate” a wedding at this time.

## **THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW**

### Church Requirements

There are certain basic requirements called for in the Church Canons (laws) which need to be met before you can marry in the Episcopal Church. These include:

- at least one of you must be baptized
- instruction regarding the nature, meaning and purpose of Holy Matrimony (i.e. premarriage conversation)
- at least two witnesses
- Bishop’s Consent for divorced persons.

### **Declaration of Intention**

Canon Law of the Episcopal Church requires that both parties to a proposed marriage sign the following “Declaration of Intention.” Normally, you will do this at your first meeting with the priest. The Declaration is as follows:

*“We, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.*

*We believe that 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 to 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.*

*And we do engage ourselves, so far as is in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto."*

### Premarriage Conversation & Mentoring Program

This is a very important step before you enter into a marriage and, again, is required by the Canons of the Episcopal Church. During this time, you will explore your faith, your reasons for wishing to marry, and what you expect to bring to and take from your marriage. Generally, the clergy will ask for four or five sessions during the course of your engagement. This time is also used to discuss specific plans for the ceremony.

While we want you to have a beautiful wedding, please remember that our true goal is for you to have a wonderful marriage!

### Divorce

If one of you has had a marriage annulled or dissolved by a civil court and the former spouse is still living, you must obtain consent for marriage from the Bishop of Ohio, upon the recommendation of the clergy. If this is the case, please make it known to the clergy prior to the beginning of premarriage conversation. Also, you will be asked to produce a photocopy of the divorce decree, including the judge's signature.

## Legal Requirements

To be married in the State of Ohio, you need to have a Marriage License. For information about what you need to do to make your application, call the Lucas County Probate Court at 419-213-4775, or the Wood County Probate Court at 419-243-4223

## **PREPARING FOR YOUR WEDDING**

### Clergy

Usually, a priest from our parish officiates at all marriages. If you wish to have another member of the clergy, a friend, relative or clergy from the bride's or groom's church participate, please discuss it with the St. Paul's clergy. If appropriate, arrangements can be worked out and the Rector will send him or her an invitation to participate.

### The Rehearsal

The rehearsal is an important preparation for your big day and your entire wedding party needs to take part, if at all possible. This includes your parents and anyone who will be reading lessons or prayers. Usually, the rehearsal is held the day before the wedding. The rehearsal will take about one hour.

**PLEASE PLAN YOUR REHEARSAL DINNER AFTER YOU HAVE CONFIRMED THE WEDDING REHEARSAL TIME WITH THE CLERGY.** Sometimes two wedding rehearsals are planned for the same day.

## The Service

Services are typically held in the church. We encourage you to plan your wedding as a part of a celebration of the Holy Eucharist. When you include the Holy Eucharist, the service usually lasts 45 minutes, depending on the amount of music and the number of people who choose to receive Communion. If you choose not to celebrate the Eucharist, the service usually lasts about 25 minutes. The service can be found in the Prayer Book on pages 422-432.

## Readers

This is a good place to include family and friends in the ceremony. Please make sure that whoever you choose to read lessons or prayers are comfortable reading in public.

## Scripture

The Episcopal Church offers popular selections of scripture readings for wedding ceremonies. Any selection from the Bible may be used. Non-Biblical material is discouraged, but you are welcome to discuss the matter with the clergy.

## Music

Music can be a very important part of your wedding ceremony and can be tailored to make the service uniquely yours.

- Musical selections need to be approved by the Clergy and Music Director. Music needs to conform to Canon Law, that is, appropriate for Church use. This precludes the use of most secular music.

- We do not use the “traditional” Wagner wedding march (“Here Comes The Bride”). The music comes from the opera *Lohengrin* and recalls the marriage of two demons. There are many beautiful alternatives from which you may choose. The Music Director can help you make a selection.
- You may include hymns in the service, if you so desire. The Music Director can help you decide which ones best reflect your sentiments.

Guest instrumentalists and soloists need to be approved by the Clergy and Director of Music. If you are thinking of having a soloist, be sure to consider the person’s training and experience. Make sure they have the skill and confidence to perform under pressure. Friends and family members “with a nice voice” but without experience may have difficulty and could make for a rough moment in your wedding.

### OTHER FRILLS

A wedding coordinator will be available to answer any questions concerning the wedding preparations and will serve as a liaison for the Altar Guild, Sexton, and any other special arrangements.

Flowers- While flowers are not required at a wedding, they certainly are nice to have. For Saturday weddings, you are welcome to utilize our Sunday Memorial flowers, or provide your own. When you do provide your own, please note that the dimensions for floral arrangements are 28’ high by 24” wide inclusive of the vase and that they will be removed after the service to allow for the Sunday Memorial flowers to be put in place at each side of the cross. If you decide to use the Memorial flowers please do not disturb the arrangement in any way. Imitation flowers may not be used. Please let the church office and the coordinator know what the florist will be arranging and when the flowers will be delivered. Special arrangements may need to be made in advance if our usual florist is not used.



*Guild Room* – The Guild Room will be available as a dressing room for the bride and her attendants. A make-up table will be provided. We suggest that you not leave purses or wallets unattended in the Guild Room as they are not secure. No alcohol is permitted in the Guild Room.

*Aisle Runners* - Your florist can supply an aisle runner, if desired. The length of the aisle in the main sanctuary is 80 feet. We suggest that you do not use a runner if members of the wedding party are wearing high heels.

*Pew Decorations* – Bows may be attached to the pew by tying only. No tape or tacks as they ruin the paint.

*Rice, Birdseed, Confetti, etc.*- Please refrain from using rice, birdseed, or confetti at the church. We suggest that you save it for the reception.

*Service Bulletins*- If you want to have a service bulletin, the church office has catalogs from which you can choose a cover and can help you with this. Religious supply stores are another good source. The Church Secretary can type and print regular letter-size bulletins at a cost of \$35.00. You can get a form for names and other service information from the church office (these must be submitted no later than 2 weeks before the wedding). If you choose to do your own bulletin, the text needs to be approved by the Rector.

*Candles* - The Unity Candle is not part of a traditional Christian wedding. However, the clergy may be amenable to discuss its use. Decorative candles in the windows or aisles are not allowed for fire code reasons.

*Parish Hall Reception*- The Church Parish Hall is available for wedding receptions held at St. Paul's Church or elsewhere. The Parish Hall is not air-conditioned. You may not have alcoholic beverages at the reception. Your family may cater the reception although a paid housekeeper is usually required. Remember, as this is part of the church; please refrain from throwing rice, birdseed, or confetti.

## GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS

Photographs and videos are a wonderful way to capture the beauty of your wedding. We work with your professional photographer as closely as possible to ensure your memories are preserved. Some general guidelines for photographers include:

- Only the person(s), which you choose as your official photographer and/or videographer, may take photographs or shoot video after the ceremony has begun. They must be in their specified location and may not use extra lighting or flash. Please have your photographer/videographer talk to the priest who is officiating about these details. The presiding priest will re-enact any part of the service for the convenience of amateur and professional photographers after the service. As a courtesy, we ask that any photographs including the clergy be taken first.
- Your professional or designated photographer may take flash photographs of the bridal party processing in and out.
- All pre-ceremony photographs or videotaping should be completed 30 minutes before the service is to begin. This will allow you time for any last minute touch-ups before you go down the aisle.
- All video equipment needs to be in place and tested 30 minutes before the start of the service. The camera needs to be on a tripod and placed in a location approved by the clergy.
- All activity in the Church must be concluded within 45 minutes following the end of the service. Please plan accordingly with your photographer.

## FEES

There are some fees connected with a wedding at St. Paul's Church. The following fee schedule is intended to help you with your planning. Where genuine financial need exists, please talk to the Clergy. No one is denied the ministry of the church due to financial need.

- Clergy \$ 200.00\*
- Organist 150.00\*\*
- Church; Altar Guild & Custodian 150.00
- Bulletin Layout/Printing 35.00\*\*\*

\* The fee for Clergy is typically known as an honorarium.  
The fee is raised to \$250 when either the bride or groom are not active members of the parish.

\*\* An additional fee of \$50.00 will be accessed for every special rehearsal with guest soloists.

\*\*\* This covers only the layout and printing of the service bulletin, not the cost of the cover stock.

These fees are due **two weeks** prior to the wedding date. An invoice will be mailed to you.

