
ST. PATRICK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

4250 West Houston Street Broken Arrow, OK 918-294-9444
www.saint-patricks.com

WEDDINGS AT ST. PATRICK'S

Dear Parishioner:

Congratulations on your decision to enter into marriage, the solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God.

At St. Patrick's we enter into each wedding with joy and celebration and are eager to make it a special occasion of solemn worship and joyous fellowship together. This booklet on Holy Matrimony has been prepared to help guide you in planning your wedding.

It is important to consult with the Parish Administrator and me directly to plan the details and date prior to making any other arrangements.

If you have questions that are not answered in this booklet, please feel free to contact me or the Parish Administrator at the church office at 294-9444.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Shelby H. Scott
Rector

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

In the Episcopal Church it is required that at least one of the parties 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.

—*The Book of Common Prayer* (p. 422)

The sacrament of marriage is the celebration of the beginning of a lifelong union of a man and a woman. It is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God and the gathered community and is a means of grace by which God blesses those who come to him in love. Christian marriage is the union of husband and wife in heart, body and mind, and is intended 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. The Church, as represented in the Bishop or Priest, announces God's blessing and grace on the newly-united couple, and the union of husband and wife signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church.

Weddings are first and foremost worship within the Christian community. Nothing should be included that detracts in any way from the dignity and simplicity of the occasion. At St. Patrick's, we try to maintain these qualities in every liturgy. Toward that end, we have prepared these marriage guidelines to aid you in your wedding preparations.

Remembering St. Patrick's with a special contribution on your anniversary date in years to come will be a way in which you can stay spiritually connected with your church as your life together progresses and possibly even takes you away from St. Patrick's. We would love to hear from you.

We hope this booklet has been helpful to you in planning this very special and sacred day in your lives. Please know that we are happy to assist you in any way and to answer any additional questions you may have.

REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal takes place in the church, usually the day or evening before the wedding, and generally lasts approximately an hour. All members of the wedding party should be present and on time. Please make sure that all members of the wedding party have appropriate directions to the church and are aware of the proper time.

The Rector, or his appointee, conducts the rehearsal. Although florists, bridal consultants, or other persons may be present to help, they are not there to direct.

FEES

There are many people who offer their time and talents to ensure that your day is as special as you want it to be. At St. Patrick’s, there is no charge for the use of the church or the parish hall. It is customary to make a donation to the church in appreciation for the Rector’s time and concern and use of the facility.

The church does not currently have a sexton, who would ordinarily be responsible for cleaning the church before and after the service. The laundering of tablecloths or cleaning up food and beverages will be the responsibility of the family booking the church.

Please plan to present envelopes for the various fees at the time of the rehearsal.

Fees are as follows:

- Church facility Discretionary donation
- Organist..... \$150
- SoloistVaries

MARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS

One of the marriage partners must have been baptized, be a practicing Episcopalian in good standing, and be an active member of St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church. Both partners must understand the sacrament of marriage as taught by the Episcopal Church. In witness thereof, they will sign the “Declaration of Intention,” agreeing to enter into the covenant of marriage by making a lifelong commitment to each other.

According to Church canons, a minimum of thirty days’ notice must be given to the Rector prior to the wedding; however, six (6) months’ notice is greatly appreciated. Prior to any marriage in the Episcopal Church, instruction and counseling in the nature of marriage is given by the clergy. This premarital counseling consists of approximately six (6) sessions with the Rector or a designated Lay Pastor who has been trained to perform this service.

If either couple has been previously married, it is necessary to obtain permission from the Bishop. The Rector will assist you in making this application.

A license from the Clerk of Tulsa County must be obtained. The marriage license should be brought to the church office prior to the rehearsal.

The Rector must meet with the couple and know both of them prior to the marriage. At that time, there will be some personal information shared in order to for the Rector to agree to perform the ceremony. The approval of the Rector is necessary before finalizing any aspects of the service.

THE ROLE OF THE CLERGY

The Rector must approve the scheduling of every wedding in this parish. Because of the significant amount of time required to prepare a couple for marriage, i.e., arrangements, counseling, rehearsal dates, etc., it is necessary to give the Rector at least six months' notice if possible.

Clergy from outside our parish may not preside at weddings at St. Patrick's; however, they are generally always welcome to assist. Please note that if the clergy are not from this Diocese or if they are not Episcopalian, then permission to assist must be obtained from the Bishop as well as the Rector.

SETTING THE DATE AND TIME

St. Patrick's does not hold marriage ceremonies during the seasons of Lent and Advent. The Rector will help you choose an appropriate date. It is important to communicate with the Parish Administrator to ensure that your wedding and rehearsal dates have been reserved on the main church activities calendar.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public or formal announcement of the marriage date is to be made only after talking with the Rector. The date and hour of the marriage and the rehearsal (if any) will be decided at that time. Every effort will be made to suit your plans.

THE CHURCH FACILITY

Two hundred forty (240) people can be seated in the Nave. There are additional chairs available and the rear wall of the church can be opened to accommodate a larger wedding.

Receptions can be held in the parish hall. We have 20 round tables and several rectangular tables that can be used for receptions. The linens and serving pieces of the church are available for your use. There is no charge for the use of these items; however, you are responsible for having them cleaned. These charges are discussed in the Fees section of this booklet.

Types and use of alcoholic beverages must be discussed with the Rector. If alcohol is served, an equally attractive non-alcoholic beverage is required.

Please do not let the reception rule your wedding! There are many suitable places in the area for a reception whose proprietors will be paid well to meet your needs. The argument that a wedding must be held at a certain time or date because the place of reception says so is nonsense and somewhat of an insult to you and the church.

Please note that the Altar Guild must have access to the nave and sacristy no later than 9:00 p.m. on Saturday evening to prepare for the Sunday service. Although they will make every effort to be unobtrusive, they will be present in the nave. Although this is your special day, Sunday is a day of worship and must be honored as such.

All cleaning of the facility, including the kitchen and moving chairs and tables back to appropriate positions, must be done prior to the beginning of Sunday morning services at 8:00 a.m. Tablecloths and linens may be washed and returned later.

Although the church does not have a catering group per se, there are a number of individuals who enjoy putting special events together and may be interested in helping you prepare for your reception. For information on this service, contact the church office.

Rice is not allowed to be thrown at the departing couple. Birdseed can be used at time of departure but must be kept outside the building.

The Altar Guild Director will be happy to meet with you in order to ensure a good understanding of what you want and how you envision your wedding will be. If you want to include your florist or wedding coordinator in this meeting, please feel free to do so.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographs are lovely mementos of your special day, and you are welcome to take as many pictures as desired before and after the ceremony. NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHS, whether professional or amateur, may be taken during the ceremony. When the service is finished and the guests have left the nave, you may return to take as many pictures as you would like.

A videotape of the service may be made as long as the video camera is in a stationary position and in no way interferes with the service.

Please do not let photography delay the start of the wedding. The entire bridal party should be ready ten minutes before the start of the ceremony.

Photography should be discussed with the Rector prior to the service.

RECEPTIONS AND RECEIVING LINES

Following the service, you are welcome to form a receiving line outside the church entrance or in the parish hall.

Access to the church for preparation for weddings or rehearsals can be arranged through the Parish Administrator.

St. Patrick's is a smoke-free facility. There are designated smoking areas outside the building. Please do not leave cigarette butts in the grass or flower beds but dispose of them in the receptacles provided for this purpose.

Use of the facility is free to church members; however, you are responsible for clean-up after your wedding and reception or you must pay the sexton to do so. Charges for these services are discussed in the Fees section of this booklet.

THE WEDDING PARTY

A reasonable number of attendants can be accommodated comfortably in the nave. Additional friends and family members may be invited to be Scripture readers if you would like to include them in the service. Because the marriage ceremony is primarily worship, we advise that very young ring bearers or flower girls can at times detract from the solemnity of the service.

MUSIC

St. Patrick's has several accomplished musicians who are available to offer their talents for your wedding service. They and the Rector will assist you in choosing appropriate music. There is also a rich array of music available from which to choose. All music should be appropriate for a church service. As a member of the church staff and because of familiarity with the church's pipe organ, the church organist always plays for weddings unless she is not available.

All musical arrangements should be discussed with and approved by the Rector.

SERVICE BULLETINS/PROGRAMS

St. Patrick's uses a standard wedding bulletin/program format and will be happy to provide you with bulletins if you so desire. If you wish to have bulletins, please discuss this with the Rector and provide the information required to produce them. You may provide special paper at your expense if you prefer.

DRESSING ROOMS

Christian Formation classrooms and administrative offices are used as dressing rooms for the bridal party.

THE SERVICE

The marriage service set forth by the Church is over 400 years old and, although updated as to language, contains powerful and beautiful vows and actions. Therefore, Holy Matrimony is celebrated within the context of the Holy Eucharist whenever possible. You may make several choices in the service as to readings and other options.

Wedding kneelers are available for use during the service. One is white and one is a needlepoint kneeler. Photographs of these kneelers are available for viewing.

UNITY CANDLE

Although many churches have begun to use a "Unity Candle" during the ceremony, this is not included in Episcopal wedding services. The outward and visible signs of your marriage are the words of your vows, joining of hands and the rings given and received, and the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. If you desire to use the candle ceremony, it is more appropriately done at the reception where the candle might be seen to burn at your table throughout your celebration.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Any florist of the bride's choice may provide flowers or the family may furnish natural flowers of their own. Artificial flowers are not allowed. You may use the vases and flower stands owned by the parish or other suitable containers. Flowers are allowed in the sanctuary, and it is a welcome courtesy to leave the wedding flowers there for the following Sunday services. If the flowers will be left, it is important to notify the Altar Guild in order that they can refrain from purchasing flowers. This also helps bring the whole congregation into the wedding celebration.

Placement of flowers is important, particularly if Holy Eucharist will be celebrated during the service. It is best not to have flowers directly in front of the altar because they will not be seen. Flowers may be placed on the upper level of the font but cannot be placed in the font itself. Flowers may also be placed on the wall behind the altar.

Pew decorations are allowed, but all bows must be made of ribbon only. They must be affixed in a manner which does not mar the service of the chairs in any way. The florist should be able to do this. The church has twelve pew candles that can be inserted into holders on the nave chairs that are designed for this purpose. All candles must be dripless. The church does not have candelabra available, but they can be used if desired.

The church does not have an aisle runner. Although there is no objection to one, caution is advised because of the nature of runners to slide on the type of flooring in the nave. Tape is not allowed on the floor because it adversely affects the floor finish.

Florists are allowed access into the church at any reasonable time for a wedding on Friday or Saturday. For a Sunday wedding, there is no access to the church until after the 10:30 service is completed.